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One Easy Way to Iron a Shirt

Helen Bell

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One easy way to iron a shirt



One easy way to iron a shirt

Adapted from a similar publication of the Agricultural Extension Service, The Ohio State University.

Helen E. Bell, *associate professor, home management extension*

Men take pride in wearing well-ironed shirts, and usually like them done a certain way.

To continue to please the men in your family, yet use less time and energy, here's an easy way to iron shirts. With practice, you'll find you can iron a shirt in 4 to 5 minutes.

Washing

No shirt can look well-ironed unless it has been well-washed. No matter what method you use, loosen any stubborn soil streaks on collars and cuffs before you put shirts in the washer. Dip collars and cuffs into warm water, sprinkle with dry detergent or pour on liquid, and rub. You may use a dilute bleach solution to remove any yellowing on white shirts provided they have not been treated with a resin finish to give them easy-care features.

After you have washed and thoroughly rinsed the shirts, starch as the wearer likes them. Lightly starched shirts iron more easily, stay fresh longer, and give up soil more readily when washed than do unstarched shirts. Some women like a plastic starch since they don't have to repeat starching more than once every nine or ten washings. Some women prefer to prepare dry starch to their own desired stiffness. Others like the convenience of liquid or spray starch.

Shirts of wash-and-wear fabrics seldom need starching or dampening. However, when necessary, follow the procedures described. Pressing wash-and-wear shirts with a steam iron will usually keep them fresh and crisp looking. Use the same steps suggested for ironing a dampened shirt to save time and energy.

Dampening

You must work out for yourself the best dampness for ironing. Too much dampness lengthens the ironing period, and makes the collar, seams, cuffs, and front hems harder to iron. Too little dampness makes it difficult to iron out wrinkles.

Dampening with warm water shortens the time shirts need to stand before ironing. Generally, it takes 2 to 3 hours for moisture to be uniform throughout the fabric.

When dampening, fold the shirt so it will be in position for ironing. If you sprinkle, here's how to do it:

Spread the shirt flat on a work surface. Smooth out as many wrinkles as possible, then sprinkle the front and sleeves.

Turn collar and yoke down over the front about one-third the length of the shirt. Sprinkle the collar. The yoke needs little moisture since it absorbs moisture from the collar.

Fold the shirt so that the tail is on the underside. (Note position of the shirt when you unroll it. Step 1.) Fold the shirt lightly; tight rolling tends to deepen the wrinkles.

If you use the plastic bag method of dampening, fold shirts as described and place layers of them in the bag before pouring in warm water.

Ironing Equipment

An adjustable ironing board assures a comfortable working height. Find the height that allows you to keep an erect posture while reaching the full width of the board. You can then iron either sitting or standing, without strain

on neck, arms, and back. Selecting a satisfactory working height is an individual problem because women vary in body proportions, such as elbow height, arm length, waist and bust measurements.

Ironing boards with legs that support the ironing surface firmly yet provide knee room are more comfortable for sitting-down ironing than some other boards. An ironing board that's too low and isn't adjustable can be raised on blocks of wood to bring it to a comfortable height. If the board is too high, try sitting on a stool with foot and back rests while you iron.

A well-padded wide board speeds up ironing of shirts and flat pieces since it permits more surface to be ironed at one time. You can set a wide ironing board on top of an adjustable board or on a table that will provide a comfortable working height. The board pictured is 20 inches wide and is made of $\frac{7}{8}$ -inch plywood. Another way you can speed up ironing of flat pieces is to reverse the ordinary ironing board and use the wide end.

A posture chair provides comfortable sitting at an ironing board. Most posture chairs adjust easily. You can raise or lower the seat so you can sit with feet flat on the floor and feel no strain on leg muscles. The back of the chair adjusts to give you a comfortable chair depth. The back also raises or lowers so that it fits into and supports the small of your back. Wheels on the posture chair allow you to move easily as you iron.

A combination steam and dry iron will iron dampened shirts and also press the easy-care ones that need only a little touchup with steam



and heat. A cord holder attached to the ironing board will keep the cord out of the way.

Some accessories make ironing easier. A wheeled laundry cart holding dampened pieces can be rolled next to the ironing board. Height of the cart reduces stooping. A wheeled table near the board will hold ironed pieces. The cart or table may be rolled to parts of the house where ironed items are to be put away. You may also select a lightweight, portable clothes rack to hold ironed garments on hangers until ready to store.

Ironing

Step 1. Place folded, dampened shirt at left end of the board. As you unfold the shirt it will be front side up, tail will fall over the side, and collar will be toward you. No flipping or shaking is needed.

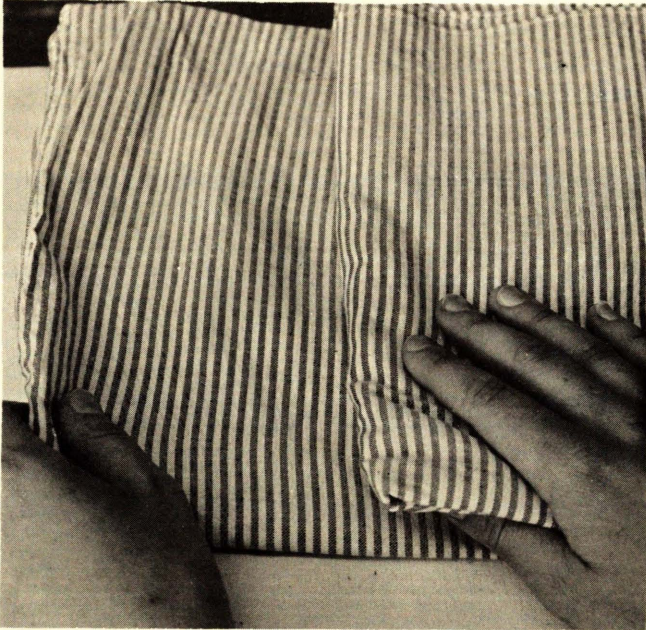
Step 2. Pick up right sleeve by cuff and shoulder; turn it placket side up. Start ironing in center of sleeve toward the shoulder. Shift iron to left hand when ironing into cuff. With

iron in right hand, iron inside of cuff. Turn sleeve over and repeat.

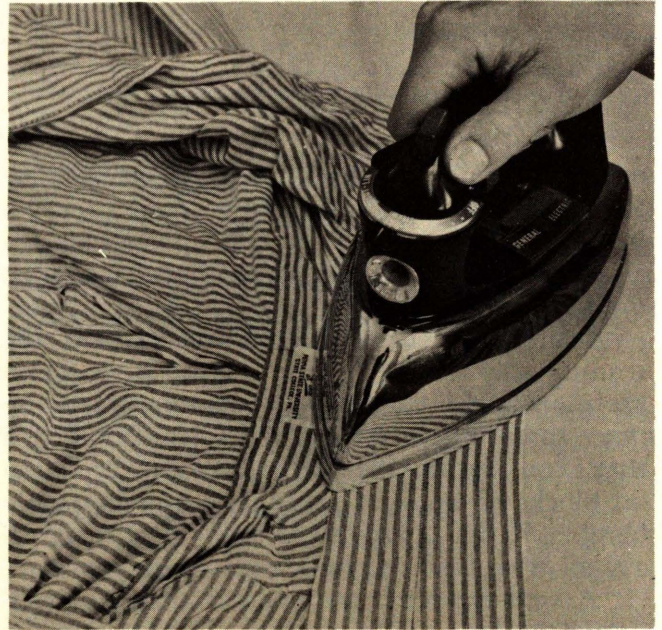
Step 3. Without moving the shirt, iron top of collar and band. Iron enough to get collar and band dry and to give a polished finish.

Step 4. With shirt in same position, fold yoke across back and iron. Don't always fold at seam; constant creasing may cause fabric to break.

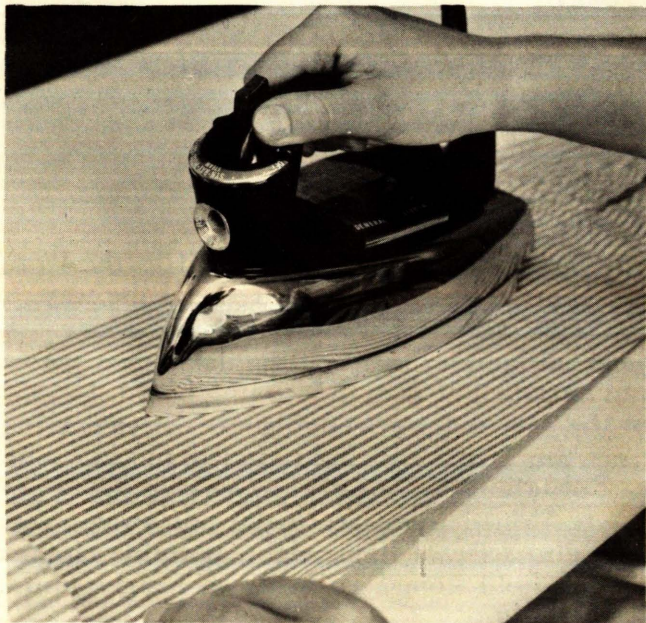
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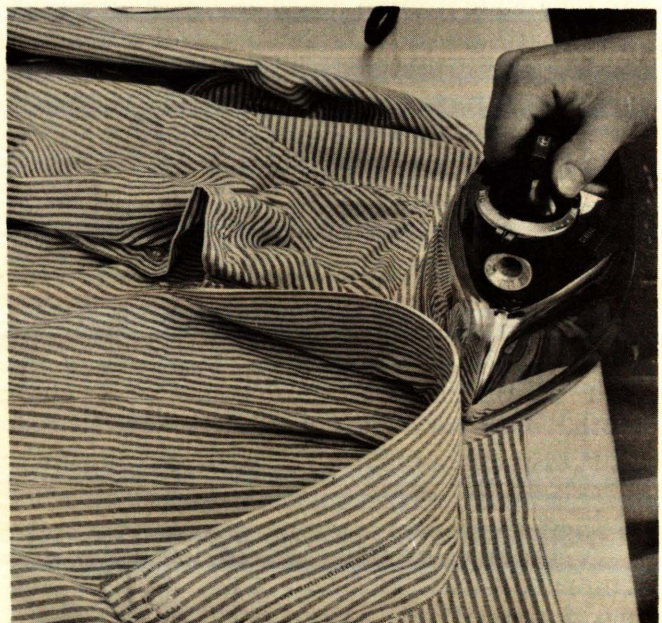
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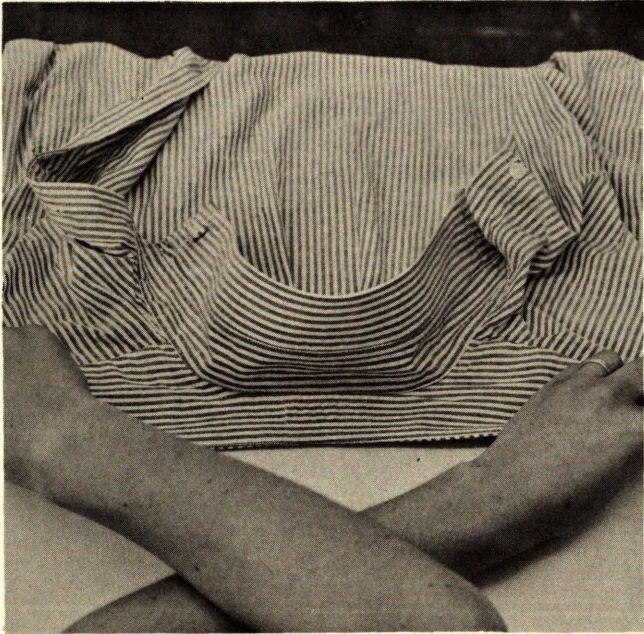


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Step 5. Cross your arms to make a Z turn. Flip shirt over with back up, and right sleeve hanging free over left end of board. Left sleeve will fall into position for ironing.

Step 6. Iron left sleeve in same way as the right. Press all seams dry to prevent puckering. Again, shift iron to left hand when ironing into fullness of the cuff. This saves twisting your body or moving the shirt.

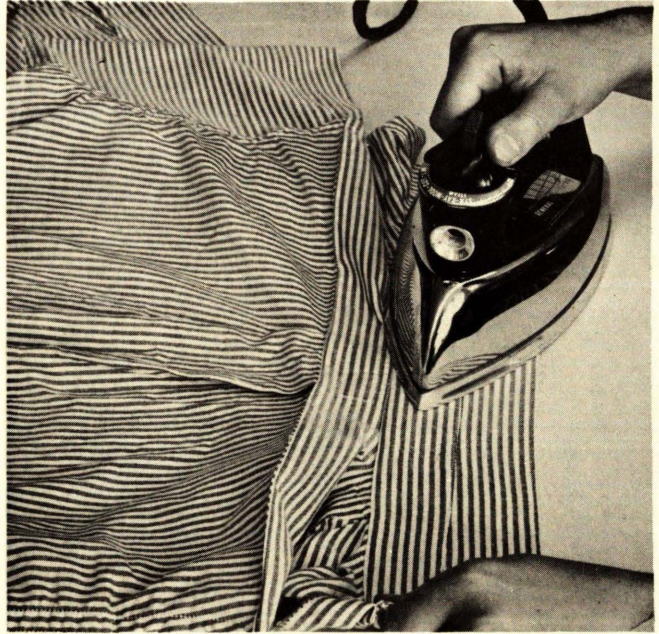
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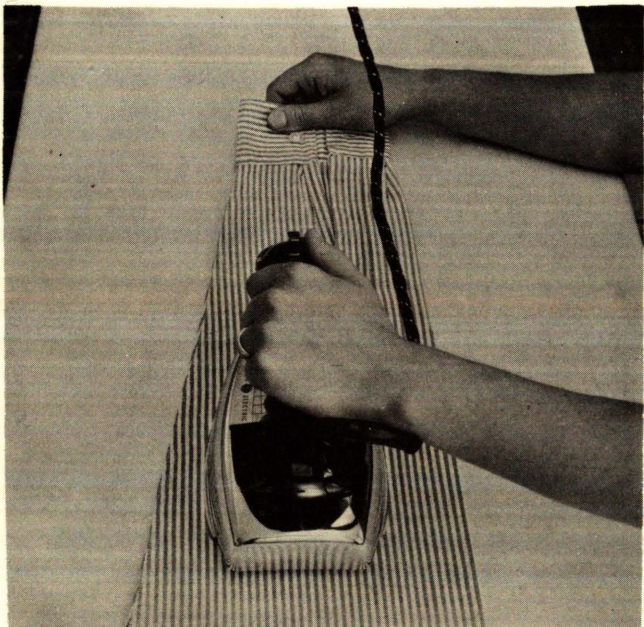
Step 7. Without moving shirt, iron back of collar and band; no folding is needed. You may turn and press the collar if you wish.

Step 8. Grasp left shoulder of shirt with left hand, and right shoulder with right hand. Place shirt lengthwise on board so inside of back is up. Iron left side of back and yoke. Stretch and iron underarm seams, pressing until dry.

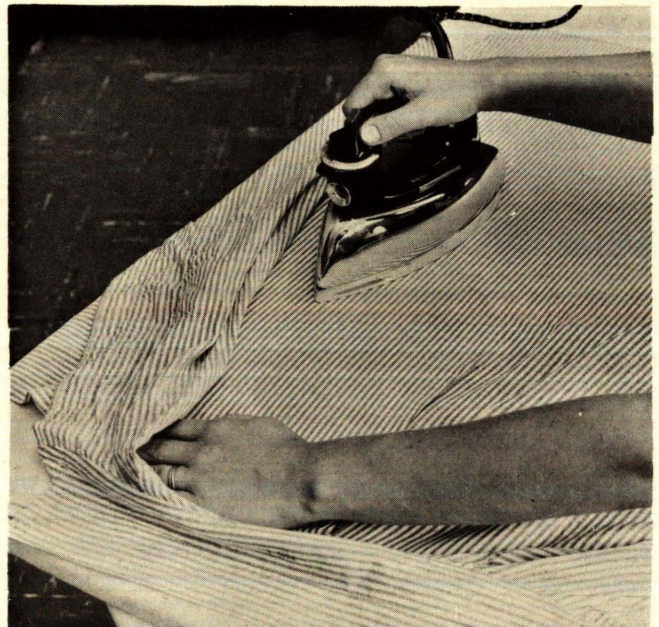
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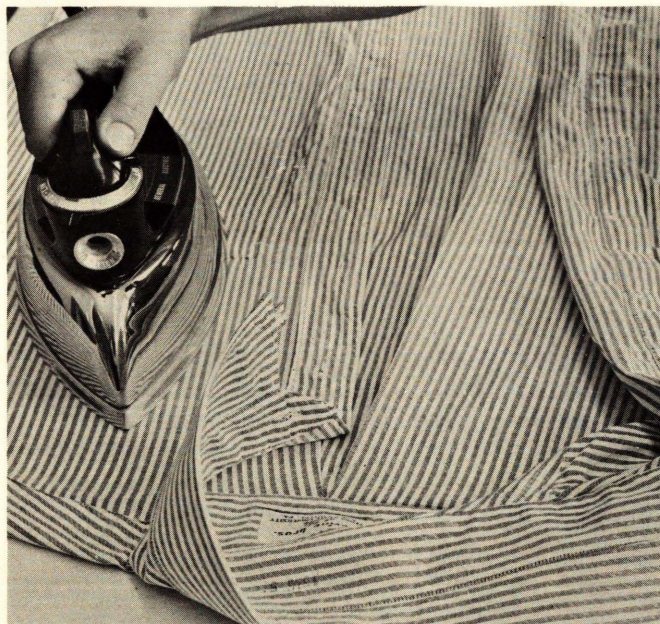
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Step 9. Fold unironed left front over ironed back, smooth and iron it. For extra speed on work shirts, you can eliminate Step 8 and iron front and back at the same time if the fabric isn't too damp.

Step 10. When ironing the buttonhole band, place iron at bottom of band, grasp top of band with your left hand, pull firmly, and iron until dry.

9



Step 11. If facing under buttonholes is wrinkled or extra pressing is needed, turn band over ironed front, stretch, and press. If press marks show on the already ironed front, slide iron over them.

Step 12. Move shirt slightly away from you so the right side covers the board. Iron right side of back and yoke, turn front over back, and press as in Steps 9, 10, and 11. Iron between buttons.

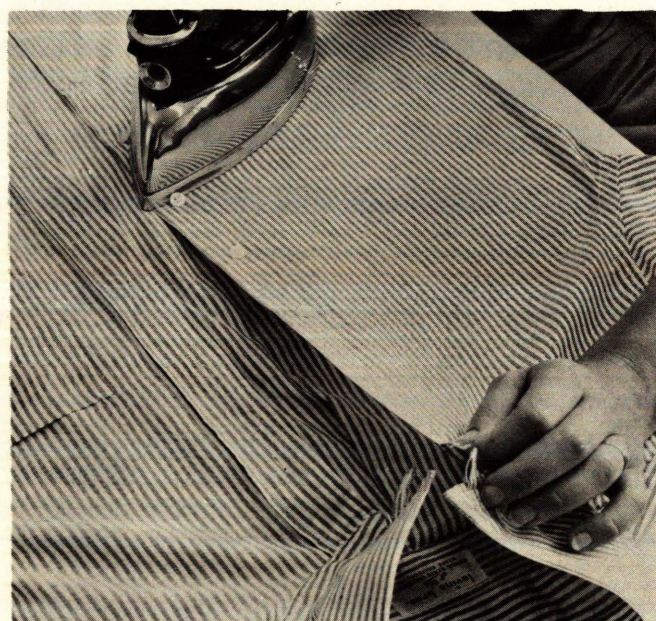
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Folding

You turned the shirt only $2\frac{1}{4}$ times with a slight additional move when ironing the back. You handled the shirt as little as possible and prevented wrinkling it. The shirt is now in position to fold. Button the collar and the third and fifth buttons.

Some women prefer to hang ironed shirts on clothes hangers. Unless allowed to hang freely with plenty of space between them, shirts may have a wilted look when men want to wear them. This wilted appearance is more likely to occur during warm, damp weather.

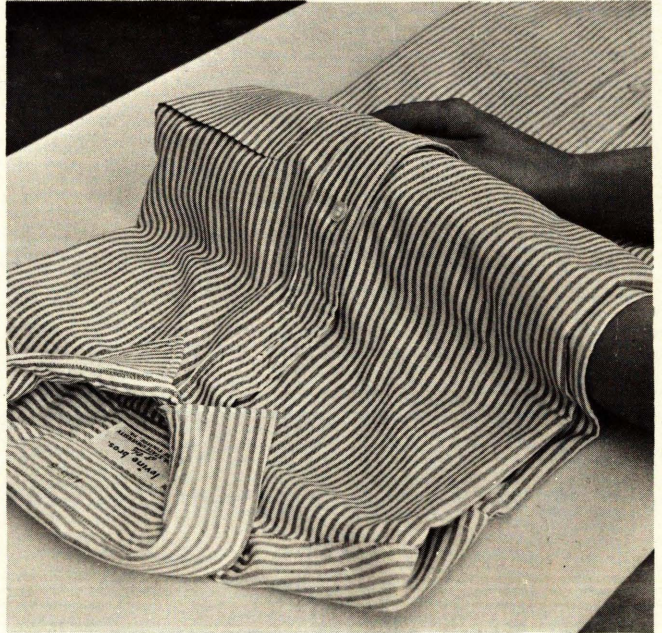
Method 1

A. With the shirt front up, grasp yoke with left hand and tail of the right half with right hand. Fold about halfway between collar and armhole and full length of the shirt. Bring top edge of sleeve along this fold. Turn the fold and sleeve back under body of the shirt. Repeat on right-hand side of shirt.

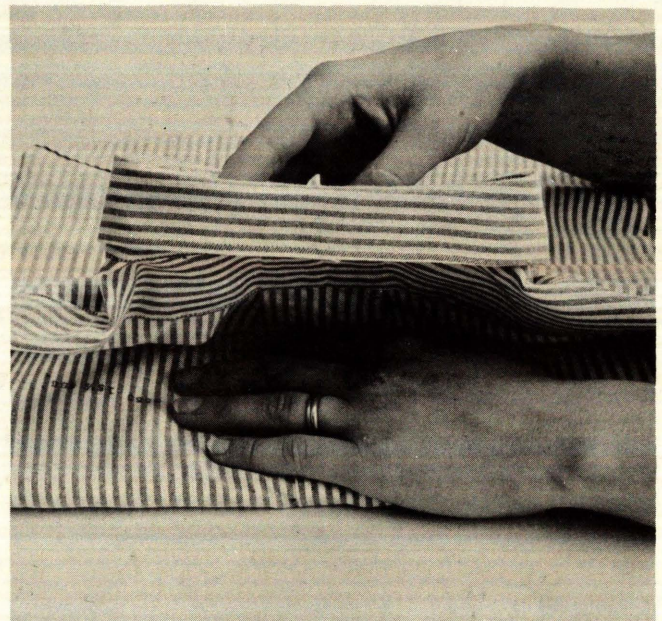
B. With left hand under the shirt, lift it; with right hand, bring tail under the top.

C. Leave about 6 inches of the tail to tuck under yoke and to hold folded shirt in place. This is easier than pinning the shirt together.

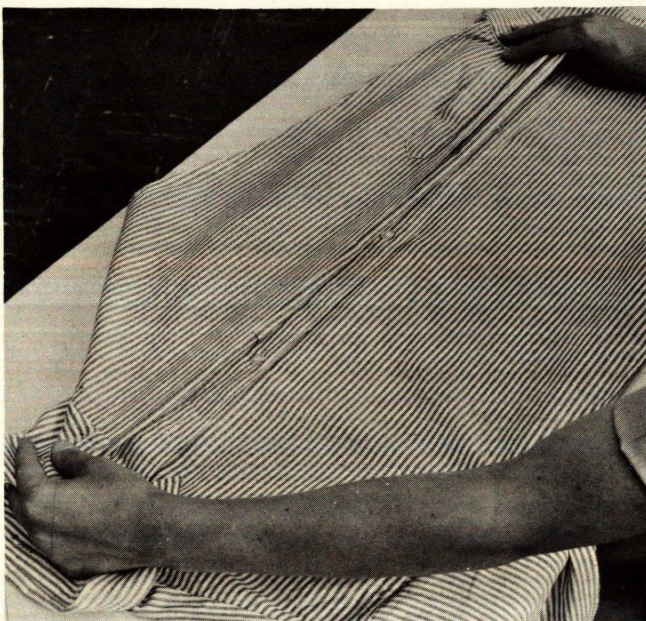
B



C



A



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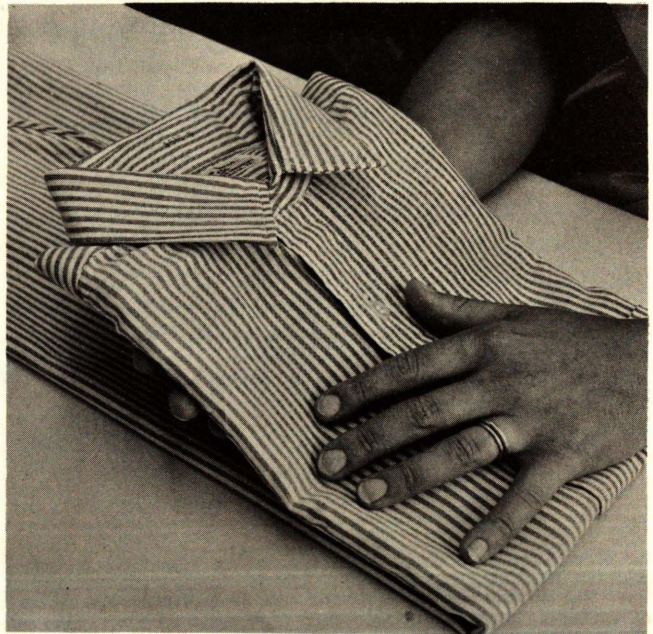
Method 2

This is an easy way to fold a shirt small enough to pack in a traveling bag or put in a small chest of drawers.

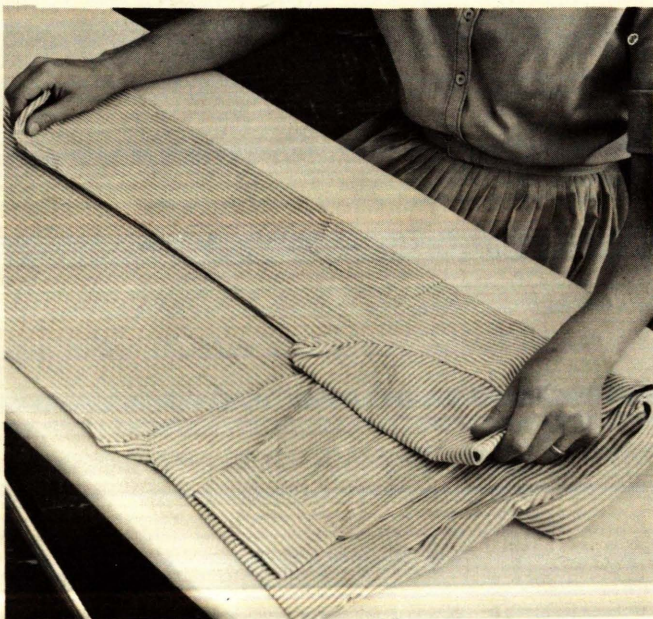
A. Turn shirt over with back up, then fold right sleeve across the back to bring cuff to the left armhole. Fold left sleeve across right sleeve the same way. Fold sides over the back, creasing them at shoulder about halfway between collar and cuff.

B. Place right hand about one-third of the shirt length below the collar. Fold front over the back, and tuck shirt tail under collar between the folds as in Method 1.

B



A



COMPLETED SHIRT

