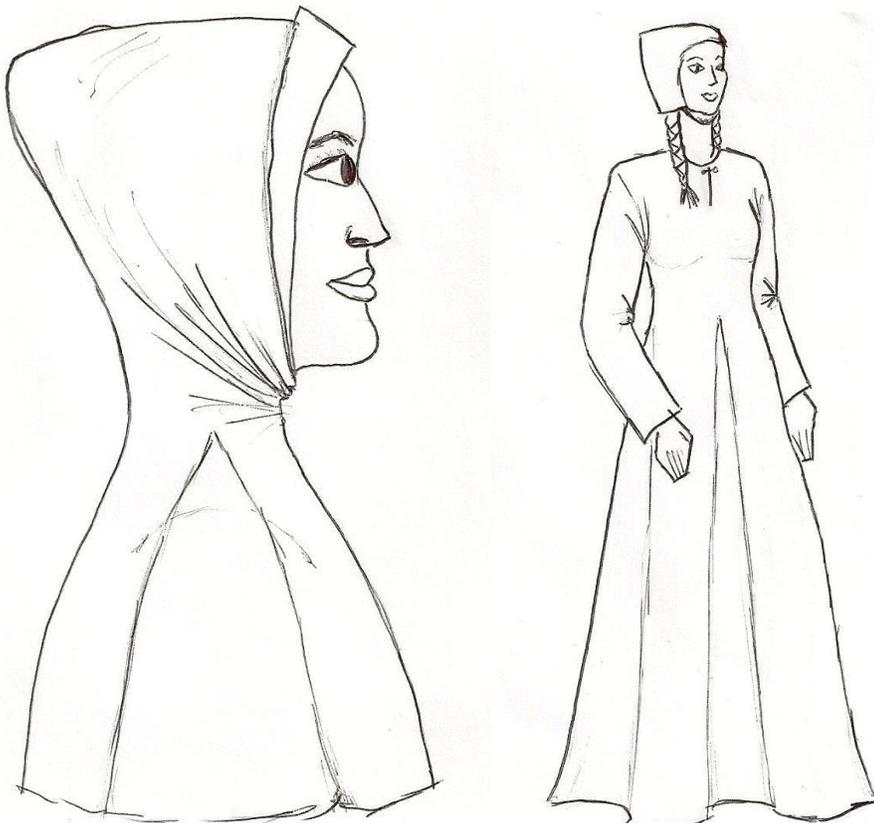# Inserting Gores into Flat Fabric

Making a nice looking pointed insert (or gore) is a very useful skill to have. It allows you to use your cloth more efficiently, and in a more medieval manner, giving your garb a more authentic look and feel. The two most common places people use gores are in the centre front and back of their tunics, and at the shoulder in their hoods.

Gores should be placed where you need extra room in the garment. On tunics, the point usually sits at belly button level (though it can be higher if you are expecting a child or wish to look as if you are). If you put them in too low they look odd- adding fullness where there is nothing to accommodate. Measure from your shoulder where it attaches to your neck on the side, down to your belly button. This measurement can then be applied to your tunic to set in the gore. On hoods they start where the head and neck meet, to allow room for the shoulders to protrude. You can experiment with hood patterns yourself, or you can purchase one at the end of class

When using gores in a project, try to do them at the beginning of the process- they are easier to execute if you have a minimum of extra cloth flopping around. Keep in mind that the point is the most important thing in this process, it must always be respected. Always start your sewing from the point, and progress away from it. Do the seam finishing on your gore in at least a temporary manner before you go on to the next step in your project so that the small seam allowances are protected from stress.

To Set in a Gore, or Pointed Insert

Make sure that the following marks are in place before you begin:
On the body piece:
- o The insertion line
- o Notches on the sides of the insertion line. Numbering the notches is not necessary.
- o A line perpendicular to the insertion line at its top.
- o You may wish to mark the stitching line on either side of the insertion line, as a visualization aid. (see step 2 and Figure 3)

On the gore piece:
- o The seam allowances on the sides up to the point.
- o The notches on the sides. Numbering the notches is not necessary.

Note: Some people find that it is easier to sew only the top two to three inches of the pointed area, and then check their work (step 7). Then if a mistake has been made, there are fewer stitches to remove.

1) Cut up the insertion opening to within one half inch (one cm) of the top.

2) Align the hood and gore pieces on one side of the insertion opening, placing right sides together and matching the marked top of the insertion opening to the intersection of the seam allowances of the gore piece. Also match up the notches if you have marked any. Pin along the stitching line. Note! The seam allowance on the body piece will be uneven. It will taper from the usual 1/2" about six inches from the point to virtually nothing at the top of the insert. If you attempt to make this seam allowance consistent, it will not work. However, it should taper in a reasonably straight line.

3) Sew this seam from the point to the end of the cloth using the marked gore piece to help you sew a straight line.

4) Cut open the remaining half inch of the insertion opening.

5) Align the second side of the insertion opening, again with right sides together and matching notches. Be careful that the top of the point is aligned smoothly. Again: the seam allowance on the hood piece will be tapered from nothing at the point, to 1/2" about six inches away from the point. Pin all matched areas.

6) Sew this seam from top to bottom (i.e. from the point, to the edge of the cloth) using the marked gore piece to help you sew a straight line.

7) Turn right side out and admire your work!

8) Do the second side in the same way.

9) If you wish to reinforce your work on the sewing machine by over sewing your hand worked seams, now is the time. However you won't _need_ it once you have finished your seams properly.....

Remember that regardless of how you finish your seams, you should stitch the seam allowance of the gore to the body fabric of the garment around the point. This will keep the very small seam allowance from fraying away and leaving a hole!

Trouble shooting:
If the top of the point looks like it is bunched or pleated, your seam allowance on the hood piece at the top of the point was too large.

It is better for the point to match up than for the side notches to match up: if the point doesn't match everything will hang crookedly.

Finishing gore seams

Seams can be finished in a variety of ways: Running stitch, and flat felling are both period and quick.

Running stitch is used on fabrics that don't fray very much- like fulled wool. To make this finish: press (with fingers or iron) the seam allowance towards the hood pieces and sew the seam allowances down to the hood panel with small running stitches. This encloses the area with a small seam allowance at the top of the insert and prevents it from fraying or falling apart.   (Figure 1)

Flat felled seams (Jeans seams) are used for fabrics that can fray (silks, linen and cotton). To make this finish: trim the hood panel's seam allowance to 1/4 inch in length. Then press both seam allowances towards the hood panel. Then wrap the long seam allowance over the short one, so that the edge is tucked inside the folds, towards the stitched line. Sew the fold down to the hood panel with running stitches. (Figure 2)
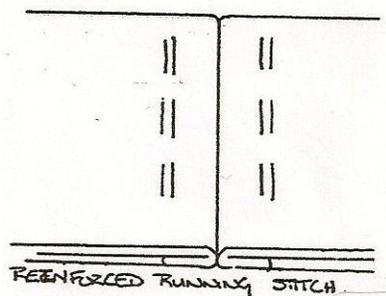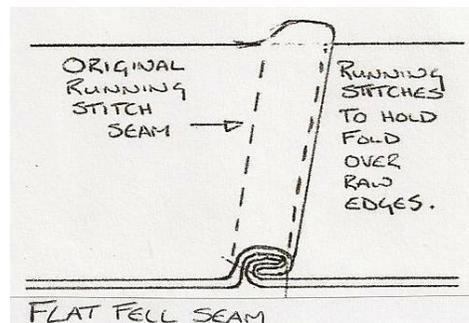

Figure 1

Figure 2

A Sample pattern for practicing your pointed insert

FIGURE 3.

SEAM ALLOWANCE FOR GORE PIECE.

B

STITCHING LINES

GORE PIECE

SEAM ALLOWANCE FOR GORE PIECE.

A

THIS IS WHAT THE BODY OF THE WORK WILL LOOK LIKE.

INSERTION LINE

SEAM ALLOWANCE FOR GORE INSERTION

NOTE THAT IT TAPERS TO NOTHING AT THE TOP.

NOTCHES
THESE ARE
6" FROM THE
POINT.
B

STITCHING LINE FOR GORE

A