

Performance Ensemble Concert Uniforms: Hemming Tuxes & Dresses

A tux jacket & pants or concert dress are fitted to each student each year to enhance the overall appearance of the band.

General Practices:

- * **Stitch hems by hand**, not by machine. Machine sewing is used for seams.
- * **Use BLACK thread.**
- * **Use doubled thread.** Two strands hold up better over the length of the school year.
- * **Make note of the hem depth needed** if it is being made shorter and it is marked with a pin. The alteration tag may not include the desired amount the hem should be shortened, so do make a note of the distance on the tag just in case the pin comes out.
- * **Make the new hem relative** to where the old hem was.
It might help to put a pin in at the bottom of the old hem for measuring the new hem length.
- * **Take out the old hem** before making the new hem.
Even if it seems easier to just roll the existing hem over, it is harder on the uniform and will shorten the life. This is important since they are paid for out of our tax dollars. The fold should always have a single layer of dress, pant or of jacket sleeve with lining.
- * **Do not cut the fabric**, since we might need it for a future student's alteration.
- * **Work one leg or arm at a time.**
Make all the adjustments needed for one arm or leg to the new length before working the other so you have a reference point for the old length and you can check your work.
- * **Press the new hem** when finished
You do need to set the new hem by ironing. Please use a pressing cloth between the iron and the uniform to avoid scorching, and use a medium setting for polyester blends. An old sheet makes a nice pressing cloth.
- * **Mark DONE and initial the alterations instruction slip** to indicate that you completed all of the requested changes.
- * If a requested change seems too complex, return the uniform to the Alterations Needed rack so someone else can pick it up.

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- * **Return completed uniforms** to the rack marked as Alterations Completed in the DV Uniform Room.
- * We'd like to have the uniforms back at least 3 days before the first concert (see schedule on Google Calendar), but if you will not be able to bring yours back at that time, please let the committee chair know.
- * If you have any questions, please contact the Concert Uniform Committee Chair.

Concert Dress

- * The adjustment we make on the dresses is the hem.
- * Use black thread, doubled.
The dress fabric is heavy, so two strands do hold up better over the length of the school year.
- * If you know how to sew a blind hem on a sewing machine, that can be used. Otherwise, stitch hem by hand (yes, it is a long way around). Use any comfortable stitch for you, like a whip stitch or a blanket stitch.
- * Stitches should be no more than ½" apart.
- * The edge of the dress has a wider diameter than the body, so you will need to gather the hem slightly to ease the extra distance.
- * When shortening the dress, you do not need to take out the old hem before making the new hem.
If the old hem is not falling out, and is a single layer, it is okay on the dresses to roll the existing hem up if the result would have 3 layers of fabric along the newly stitched hem. The hem shown is okay to roll.



Tuxedo Jacket & Pants

- * The adjustments we make to the tuxedos are to raise or lower the hem on the pants and the jacket sleeves, move the buttons on the jacket sleeves, and to move the button closing the jacket side to side.
- * Use black thread, doubled.
Two strands do hold up better over the length of the school year.
- * Stitch in the hems on the jacket and pants by hand, not by machine. Use any comfortable stitch for you, like a whip stitch or a blanket stitch.
- * Make the new hem relative to where the old hem was.

It might help to put a pin in at the bottom of the old hem for measuring the new hem length.

The picture shows the sleeve hem being shortened by 1". The fold of the old hem is right of the blue seam depth indicator. The tip of the measure is at the new fold, 1" away from the old fold.



- * Take out the old hem before making the new hem.
Even if it seems easier to just roll the existing hem over, it is harder on the tuxedo and will shorten the life. This is important since they are paid for out of our tax dollars. The fold should always have a single layer of pant or of jacket sleeve with lining.
- * Do not cut the fabric, since we might need it for a future student's alteration.
- * Work one leg or arm at a time.
Make all the adjustments needed for one arm or leg to the new length before working the other so you have a reference point for the old length and you can check your work.

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Sleeves:

- * Notice that the sleeve is lined, and it has seam binding around the arm opening. I find it easiest to turn the sleeve inside out to work on the hem.
The maximum sleeve length is when only the seam binding is turned under, as shown.



- * Carefully trim only the threads holding up the old hem.
- * Be sure the sleeve's satin lining lies flat against the sleeve and that it folds smoothly into the hem.
- * Stitch the hem to the sleeve lining, not through to the outside of the sleeve. The stitches should not be visible from the outside.
- * The lining will be longer than the sleeve edge, so gather small amounts into the hem to ease the extra length.

Sleeve Button:

- * If the button needs to be moved, be very careful to only cut the threads holding the button, and not cut the sleeve or the jacket.
- * The button position is centered about 2" up the arm, as shown. Anywhere between 1" above and 3" above is okay.



Center button:

- * When the jacket is not a perfect fit, the button used to close the jacket may be move left or right to change the fit around the torso.



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Pants:

- * I find it easiest to work by turning the pant leg inside out.
- * Carefully trim only the threads holding the old hem. The surged stitches over the pant edge are there to help keep the fabric from fraying, so we want to keep them.
- * Start measuring the new hem at the outside seam (the one with the satin edge as shown).



- * If you are creating a large hem in the pants (resulting hem would be about 5" or more from the bottom to the pant hem edge), you will need to open the center seam (the seam without the satin strip) to be able to lay the hem fabric flat on the pant leg. Carefully cut the seam stitches open as far as you need to lay the new hem fabric flat, as shown for a 6" overall hem depth.



- * If you are taking out a large (5" or more) hem to make the pants longer the center seam of the pant would have been opened up to help the hem lay flat. You will need to figure out if you need some of the opening with the new hem length, and if so, mark the position to where the center seam should be sewn closed again. Re-stitch the open section of the seam using a sewing machine.
- * If you do have a flair V to make a large hem lay flat, stitch along the edges so that a student doesn't get a toe stuck in the V and then keep pulling and ripping out the hem.
- * When stitching near the outside seam (the one with the satin strip), be extra careful to only stitch into the seam selvage and not through to the side satin strip since that would be very visible.

If you have any questions, please contact the Concert Uniform Committee Chair.

Thank you for your help! ☺