

e ducation

Pressing Essentials
by Sheri McKillop



There are many types of pressing equipment available to make pressing an easier task. The most important piece of equipment is the iron. A good dressmaking iron should have a burst of steam as well as a strong, regular flow of steam.

A pressing ham (1) is a firmly stuffed "cushion" used for pressing curves. One side is wool, which holds the steam longer and the other cotton. Mold the area you want to press (i.e.: darts, princess seams, hip curves) to an area on the ham and you can accurately press the curve. A press mitt is used for similar purposes but is softer and fits over your hand. It enables you to access tighter areas such as a sleeve cap.

A seam roll (2) is a padded cylindrical cushion used on seam lines. The main part of the garment falls away from the seam allowance as you press and does not cause an indent. Thin strips of paper inserted between the seam allowance and the main fabric also help. It is useful for accessing tight areas.

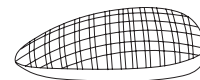
A sleeve board (3) looks like a miniature ironing board. The size allows you to slide a sewn sleeve or pant leg onto it and press the seam without the rest of the garment being creased.

A tailor's board (4) is made of hardwood and has a number of rounded and flat surfaces, allowing you to access tight spots and press seams open.

A similar product is the point presser (5). This hardwood tool has a long, narrow surface that ends in a point. This is used to access the inside points and long edges of a collar or other seams. Some point pressers come with a clapper attached although you can purchase a separate clapper (6). This is a rounded wood block used to exert pressure on a cooling seam causing the edge to stay crisp. It is especially useful on wool where the bulk inside seam lines can be excessive if not clapped.

A velvet board is a stiff cloth covered with fine needles that allow the nap of a fabric to slip between the needles and not be crushed when it is pressed. If you don't have a velvet board you can also use a scrap of the same napped fabric or a thick terry towel to cover your ironing board.

① Pressing Ham



② Seam Roll



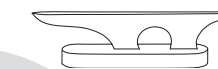
③ Sleeve Board



④ Tailor's Board



⑤ Point Presser



⑥ Clapper

