MADEWELL-INSPIRED

Denim Jacket

From fabric to finished garment: fit, construction, and the questions this build still has open.

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sewing.com · [Author bio pending sign-off]

Who This Project Is For

Self-check before you buy fabric

THE PREREQUISITE

Finish one prior woven project with topstitching first.

A chore coat, a tote bag, or a button-front top all count. This jacket assumes you already know how to sew a straight seam under pressure and handle a bulky seam allowance.

WHY IT MATTERS

This isn't gatekeeping. It's the difference between finishing in a weekend and stalling at the collar.

A first woven project with topstitching teaches your hands what a bulky seam feels like under the presser foot. That muscle memory is what this pattern builds on.

Fabric Selection

9–12

OUNCES

Mid-weight to heavy rigid or stretch-blend denim

WHY THE WEIGHT MATTERS

Anything lighter will not hold the boxy shape or the crisp topstitched edge this style depends on.

ESTIMATED YARDAGE

2 to 2.5 yards of 54" wide denim.

Confirm against your chosen size and cutting layout before you buy. Pre-wash and press flat before cutting; denim shrinks unevenly if you skip this step.

What You'll Need

Notions checklist

Fusible interfacing	For the collar, cuffs, and button placket
Seven to nine buttons	1/2 inch, sew-through style
Denim or topstitch needle	Size 90/14 to 100/16
Topstitch-weight thread	Needle only — regular weight in the bobbin
Walking foot	Optional. Useful on multi-layer areas like cuffs and collar points

Affiliate picks for these notions are NOT APPROVED pending hands-on editorial testing. Per-page FTC disclosure required once approved.

Choose Your Size

Sizing method for a boxy, oversized fit

Oversized does not mean one size fits every body.

1. Measure straight across your high bust, under the arms and above the fullest part of the bust.
2. Select your pattern size from the high bust number, not the full bust number.
3. Before your final topstitching pass, button the jacket and check the front placket.
4. It should lie flat with no horizontal pull lines. If it gaps or pulls, size up one and recheck before permanent stitching.

MY MEASUREMENTS

High bust

Waist

Hip

Fill this in before you select a pattern size.

Cutting Layout Guidance

GAP IN SOURCE MATERIAL

Scaled, printable pattern pieces are a separate deliverable from a pattern drafter and are not included in this source material. What follows is general cutting guidance only — not a to-scale layout.

Pre-wash and press

Wash and dry denim the way you'll care for the finished jacket, then press flat before cutting. Denim shrinks unevenly if you skip this.

Cut single layer

Heavy denim shifts on the fold and throws off grain on bulky pieces like the back yoke.

Extra seam allowance

Give interfaced pieces (collar, cuffs, placket facing) a little extra margin if this is your first time fusing interfacing to denim.

Transfer every mark

Notches and dots before a piece leaves the table — denim's texture hides chalk marks more than quilting cotton does.

Get Your Machine Ready

Most topstitching failures on denim are machine problems, not skill problems.

1. Re-thread the machine from scratch, even if it worked fine on your last project.
2. Install a fresh topstitch or denim needle, sized 90/14 to 100/16.
3. Load topstitch-weight thread in the needle, regular weight in the bobbin.
4. Test the stitch on a scrap of doubled denim, the same thickness as the collar and cuffs.
5. If stitches skip or thread knots underneath, stop. Tighten upper thread tension slightly and retest on scrap.

STEP

1

of 7

Prep and Interface

Cut all pieces, then apply fusible interfacing to the collar, cuffs, and button placket facing before you sew a single seam.

IMAGE BRIEF — Thread Frame Prompt #1

See the Image Brief for Visual Team document for this step's exact shot description.

STEP

2

of 7

Construct the Yoke and Shoulder Seams

Sew the back yoke to the back panel, then join the shoulder seams. Press every seam open before you cross it with another seam.

IMAGE BRIEF — Thread Frame Prompt #2

See the Image Brief for Visual Team document for this step's exact shot description.

STEP

3

of 7

Sew the Side Seams

For an everyday jacket on a weekend timeline, a lapped seam gives a clean flat-felled look without the extra folding step. For a jacket meant to last years of wear, take the extra time for a true flat-felled seam. Choose your method based on how the jacket will actually be worn.

IMAGE BRIEF — Thread Frame Prompt #3

See the Image Brief for Visual Team document for this step's exact shot description.

STEP

4

of 7

Set the Collar

Attach the interfaced collar, understitch the facing before turning, and press flat.

Understitching is what keeps the collar from rolling to the outside after a few wears.

IMAGE BRIEF — Thread Frame Prompt #4

See the Image Brief for Visual Team document for this step's exact shot description.

STEP

5

of 7

Attach Sleeves and Stitch Side Seams

Set sleeves flat before closing the side and underarm seams in one continuous pass.

IMAGE BRIEF — Thread Frame Prompt #5

See the Image Brief for Visual Team document for this step's exact shot description.

STEP

6

of 7

Finish Cuffs and Hem

Interface and attach the cuffs, then hem the jacket body with a double topstitched edge to match the rest of the garment.

IMAGE BRIEF — Thread Frame Prompt #6

See the Image Brief for Visual Team document for this step's exact shot description.

STEP

7

of 7

Topstitch and Add the Button Placket

Topstitch all visible seams last, once construction is complete, using your tested needle and thread combination. Mark and sew buttonholes, then attach buttons.

IMAGE BRIEF — Thread Frame Prompt #7

See the Image Brief for Visual Team document for this step's exact shot description.

Common Mistakes to Avoid

Skipped stitches

Almost always the needle, not your skill. Re-thread and swap in a fresh topstitch or denim needle before troubleshooting anything else.

Bobbin-side puckering

Usually means topstitch-weight thread ended up in the bobbin instead of the needle. Keep the heavy thread on top only.

A jacket that doesn't sit right

Almost always traces back to skipping the button band fit check before final topstitching. Check it before you commit to permanent stitching.

Thread that won't run smoothly

Thicker topstitching thread will not run smoothly through most home bobbin cases. Test your thread combination on scrap before your collar or cuffs.

Fit & Project Notes

Track your adjustments for next time.

REMEMBER

Nothing here requires couture training. Just a fresh needle, a scrap test, and a size chosen from your own measurements.

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