

The Round Tipped Pleated Hat, can be seen in a variety of portraits from England, Spain, and France. This particular hat has a rounded tip. The tip was traditionally made from formed felt or hair felt. The brim could be made from heavy paper with glue sizing or other stout materials. This is a structural hat meaning that it has a solid foundation under the fabric.

Origins and spread of the style:

One can trace the origins of the wearing of hats as far back as primitive man. Historical evidence has shown that some form of head covering was used for protection against the elements.

During the late 14th and 15th centuries hats played an important role in men's clothing and were considered an important fashion item as well as a status symbol. Rather like Jimmy Choo shoes of the period.



Round tip pleated hat as worn by Elisabeth Knollys - 1577

As hats gradually grew in popularity during the 15th Century, one begins to see tall foundation hats worn by the masses and not just the nobility. Additionally, one begins to see women co-opting the men's hats and making them a fashion statement for women.



Crowd scene from contemporary wood cut 1560 - England
Round Tipped Pleated Hats
Monica McKeon/Aurelia d'Ouessant

Note the number of round tipped tall hats worn by the crowd in the woodcut on the left.

With the increase in the number of foundational hats being demanded, there is an increasingly diverse range of materials used for their production. Silk, velvet, taffeta, leathers, and felted wool was used on the outside of hats and a variety of stout foundation materials were used. Some of the most popular foundation materials included, hairy paper, thick paper/cardboard, heavy glue sizing over burlap and other materials with glue sizing.

In England, France and Spain, as with most other regions at this time, hats are a testament to wealth and status. The use of expensive fabrics and large hats seems to suggest a more wealthy status, rather like cars today.

Styles of Hats

Hats come in a variety of shapes and styles. Note the hat worn by Queen Elizabeth in the picture above - this hat is pleated but seems to have a flat tip.



My version of a round tipped pleated hat:



A modern interpretation:

On the left is my interpretation of the round tipped pleated hat. I've used wool fabric, a felt tip, and 2 ply buckram for the brim. The hatband is made of freshwater pearls. While the agret (feathers) are made of Ostrich plumes.

The following table compares some of the differences between how a Round-Tipped Pleated Tall was likely constructed and

changes I made to make my hat a little more wearable. In the Modern Variations section, I actually only changed the use of modern buckram to simulate glue sized paper or linen.

	Period materials/Techniques	Modern variation
Over fabric	Wool, silk velvet, brocades, silk satin, leather	Same as period
Thread	Linen or silk thread	Same as period
Foundation Materials	Hairy paper, felt, paper mache, linen w/glue sizing	Tip – formed using 100%wool felt over a block Brim – two ply buckram simulates linen w/ glue sizing
Lining of hat	Silk	Same as period
Finishing Touches	Jeweled hat band, feathers, brooches, etc	Same as period

Making your own round-tip pleated hat:

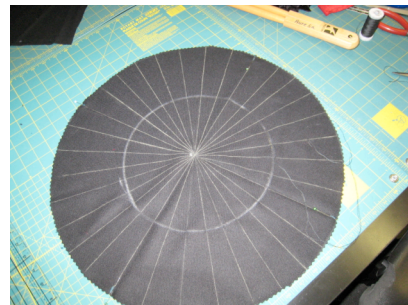
Needed Materials

- ◆ Round tip hat block (you may be able to rent on locally. In the bay area, Lacis in Berkeley will rent for about 7\$ /week.)
- ◆ 1/4 yard 100% wool felt
- ◆ 2 cups of liquid starch
- ◆ Large wash tub or sink
- ◆ Thread: Use a good quality thread - silk is best if you can find it, a cotton thread will work too.
- ◆ Millinery needles #14 #16
- ◆ 1/4 yard of 2 ply buckram
- ◆ Millinery wire #8 or #9
- ◆ Cotton wadding or French fleece
- ◆ Chalk or tracing paper
- ◆ Manila paper for pattern
- ◆ Silk embroidery floss
- ◆ Gold-tone beads
- ◆ 1/4 yard silk dupioni
- ◆ 1 yard of cotton gimp

The hat:

Construction the rounded tip:

1. Soak the wool felt in hot water. Gently massage the felt until it is completely soaked. Squishing the fabric is OK, but do not wring it.
Tip - I find it useful to wear rubber gloves for this process as it allows me to work in hotter water.
2. Once the felt is well soaked, remove it from the water and add 2 cups liquid starch to your water. Put the felt back into the hot water and continue to massage it until starch seems worked through the felt.
3. Squish excess water from felt and place over round tip hat block, press into shape.
4. Use a string or large rubber band to secure the felt at the bottom of the hat block
5. Put about 1 cup of undiluted liquid starch into a spray bottle. Once you have your felt stretched and secured onto the hat block, spray liberally with starch.
Tip - I find it useful to gently massage the starch into the fibers. Begin at the tip and work you way down.
6. Let dry completely. Usually a couple of days will do it.
7. Once dry, add millinery wire around the base of the stock.
8. Add French fleece or cotton wadding to the tip and down the stock of the hat. Secure with a large stab stitch randomly around the tip and stock.
9. Cut the wool into a circle that fits over the top of the tip and reaches to the bottom of the stock with about 1/4 inch to spare.
10. Mark the center of your circle.
11. Using a long ruler and chalk, mark long lines which transverse the center point in pie-like lines such that there is about 1/2 inch between lines at the edge of the fabric.
12. Using a hearty thread, stitch a guideline through your lines about 4" from center and 6" from center. Use thread that is the same color as your hat as these threads will remain visible on the outside of your hat.
13. Place the circle over your hat blank and pull the threads to make small pleats.
14. Arrange your pleats evenly around your hat
15. Turn the fabric under the edge of the stock, and stitch using a stab stitch.

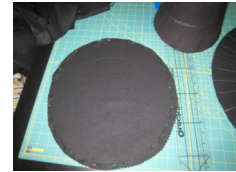


Brim:

1. Measure your head 2 inches above your ear and add 1/2 inch. This will be your head plate size
2. Add 1/4 inch in from your head plate; this will be where you cut the buckram for the brim. The extra 1/4-inch will be used as tabs inside the hat where you will join the stock and the brim.
3. Add 2-2.5 inches from the actual headplate line, this will be the brim of your hat. If you want a point in the front, simply add it at this time.

Using the brim pattern

1. Using the above pattern cut 2 brims from 2-ply buckram, one on the bias and one with the grain.
2. Steam the two pieces together (it is rather like basting them together)
3. Add millinery wire to the edge of the 2 pieces of buckram.
4. Add 1/4 inch to your brim pattern and use it to cut out 2 pieces of your fashion fabric
5. Place fabric on brim, pin securely
6. Turn each edge and sew using invisible stitches or use gimp to cover the edge
7. Using chalk or a marking pencil, mark your head plate. – *I like to sew a running stitch around this to secure the fabric while sewing the edges of the hat.*
8. Mark in 1/2 inch and draw another line, Cut the headplate along the inside line
9. Cut easing tabs out to the original headplate line
10. Fold tabs (fabric and buckram) up
11. Place stock on brim and sew through stock and tabs.



Adding a lining

I like to use silk dupioni for lining as it has enough body to stay up in a hat and not become floppy over time. You may wish to add a sweatband inside the hat for comfort and to finish the look.

1. Cut a circle the same size as the outside fabric, of lining fabric.
2. Sew large darts from the raw edge to 3 inches from the center - you'll need about 8-10 darts
3. Sew inside your hat folding under raw edges and securing with a short stab stitch.

Construction Tips:

- ◆ When buying buckram, make sure you get "2 ply buckram" I like to get my supplies from California Millinery in Los Angeles.
721 South Spring St
Los Angeles, CA 90014
213.622.8746
- ◆ Be patient when pleating, pleats must be small or it won't work
- ◆ I like to use a steamer when steaming pleats rather than an iron that can flatten your pleats and silk pile.
- ◆ In order to get a good head plate shape; you might find it useful to invest in an "architect curve". It lets you measure around odd shapes and retains the shape so you can trace it. This allows you to have an exact head plate. If you don't have a curve, feel free to use the plates at the end of this paper.

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