

Men's

1811 Repurposed Costume

Instructional Packet

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## Fabrics, Colors, and Silhouettes

In order to achieve an historical look by repurposing modern clothes, there are some aesthetics that will help to make your costume appear similar to the clothing of 1811.

Desired fabrics: cotton, linen, wool...please no synthetic or polyester fabrics.

Recommended Color palette: white, blue, red, yellow, and green

No modern patterned fabrics, please use ONLY solids, stripes, or plaids.

Silhouette: Rolled top pants that are mid calf length

Open neck shirt

Unstructured jacket/waistcoat

Men can wear a tignon/turban/black hat

Whichever clothing you choose to repurpose, please keep in mind the above requirements, first and foremost. Almost every image of an enslaved man at the time had a white shirt on, so above all, please use a white shirt for this costume. It is best to find a shirt and your pants that are a little big. The men also wore clothes that gave them enough room to do their work. All men must have at least a shirt and pants, the jacket, waistcoat, and turban are great additions.

You will need:

- Pants (size bigger)
- Scissors
- chalk or pen for marking
- Ruler
- straight pins
- an iron is helpful!
- needle/thread

THE VEST LOOK



## PANTS

The easiest option is to use baggy linen pants that have a drawstring at the waist. choose bigger sized **drawstring pants**, roll your pants hem until they reach mid calf and tack them up so they don't unravel with some secure hand or machine stitches on both sides of the pants. Roll your pants waist a few times, then tie a rope or sash under the waist roll. You won't have to complete any of the other steps listed below.

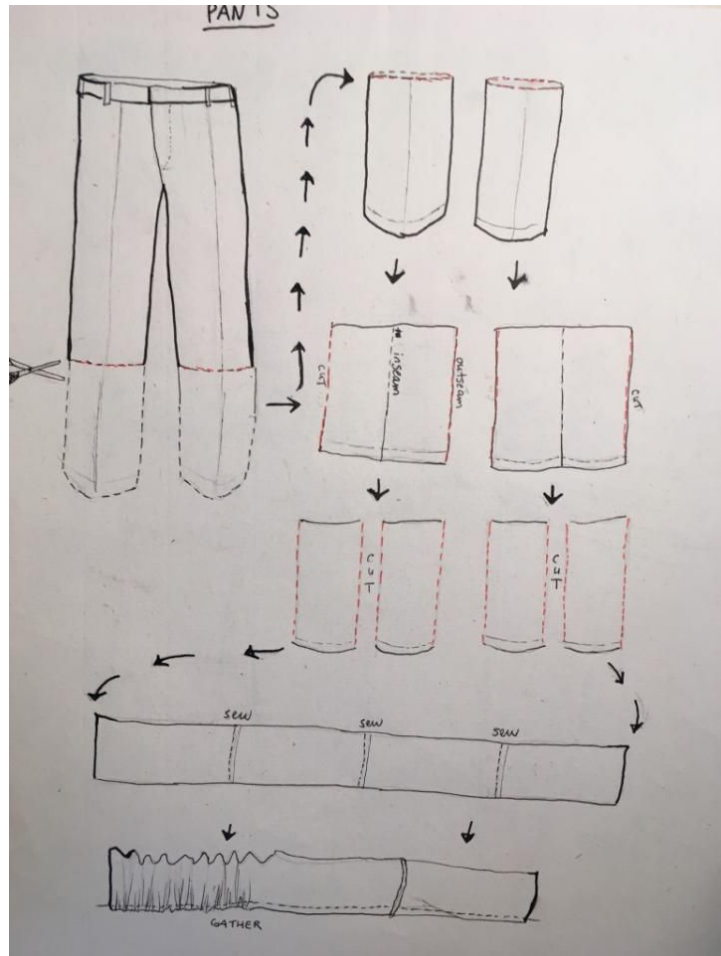
If you don't have drawstring pants:

STEP 1: Cut your pants somewhere around mid calf. One way to help you cut them evenly is take the left over fabric of the first pant leg you cut off and place it on top of the pant leg you haven't cut yet so the hems line up and you can easily see where to cut. Use a ruler or straight edge to help you mark your line. It doesn't have to be perfect but not exactly pointy

jagged pirate pants either. Keep your left over fabric!!! You will use them in the next step.

STEP 2: With your left over hem fabric, cut each of them along the seam so they are not a tube anymore. Now cut each of those in half vertically, so you have four pieces total. Now try to trim them down so they are all about the same width and length: four rectangles.

STEP 3: We want to achieve the appearance that the pant's waist has been rolled and tightened with a sash. Since these are dress pants that can't be rolled, we will be adding your pants



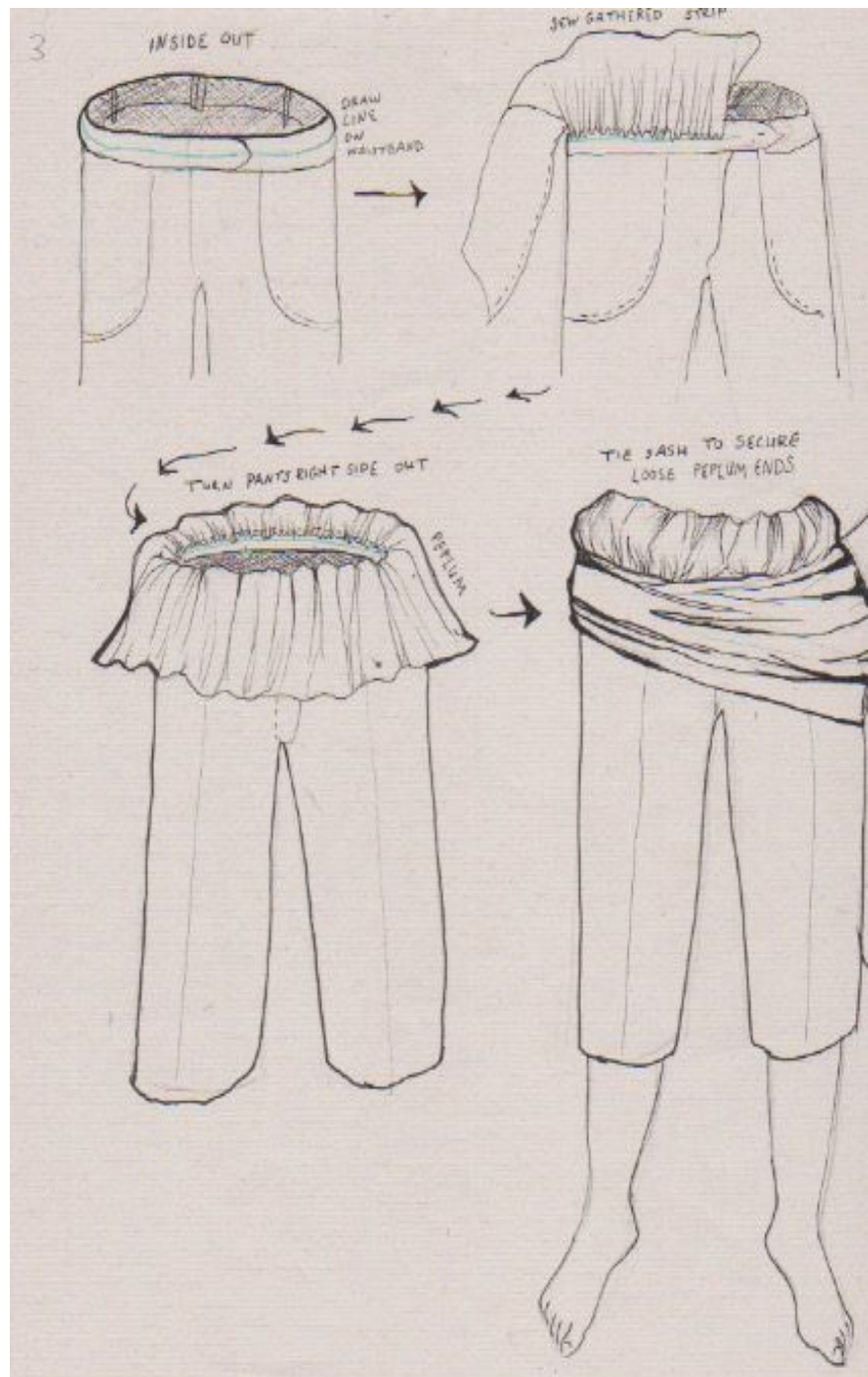
hem fabric to the pants waist to give it the illusion of a rolled waist. So take those (four) left over pant hems sew them all together so it's one long strip. Press the three seams that you have sewn with the four strips so its flat (peplum).

STEP 4: Now with a ruler and a marker, draw on the wrong side (inside) of the pants waist a line that divides it in half horizontally. This line is just a helpful guide while you pin your peplum to the pants.

STEP 5: Begin at center front of pants waist and with your hands and pins gather (bunch) the entire strip around the inside of the waistband of your pants. The strip is much longer than the circumference of your waistband so bunch/gather it up so it fits inside the pants waistband. The gathers should look like natural folds not precise pleats. Don't stress!

STEP 6: With your machine, or hand sew, sew your gathers down,  $\frac{1}{4}$  or  $\frac{1}{2}$  seam allowance. Flip the gathered strip over so it's now hanging over the right side of the pants, hiding the old waistband. It should look like a bunched skirt over the top of your pants... a peplum.

STEP 7: Tie a thick sash right over the mid to bottom of peplum so we don't see the raw edge.

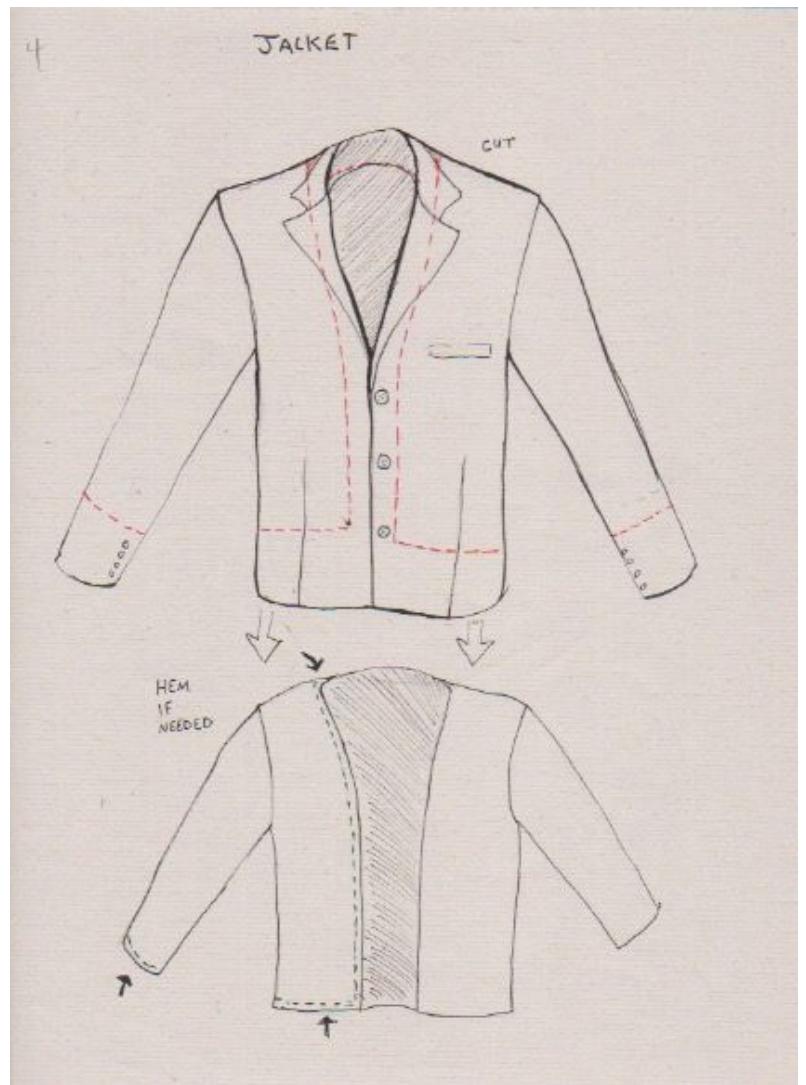




## JACKET

**The less structured/stiff your jacket is the better.** Select a jacket that may be slightly small in the shoulders, or a little tight because when the shoulder padding and all the interfacing is removed it will be much roomier. (Ask some women to use one of their old blazers, they are usually more interesting colors and less padding.)

STEP 1: Seam rip off any patch pockets. (patch pockets are sewn on the outside of the jacket rather than sewn into the lining) Hand sew closed any breast pockets if you have one.



STEP 2: The jacket we want you to make will not have lapels and collars like the jackets of our contemporary. So with some scissors cut them off. Make sure it's a smooth transition. Remove the front facings too. Look at diagrams for help.

STEP 3: Cut the sleeves so they are about an inch above the wrist or wherever the top sleeve button begins. We don't want to see those.

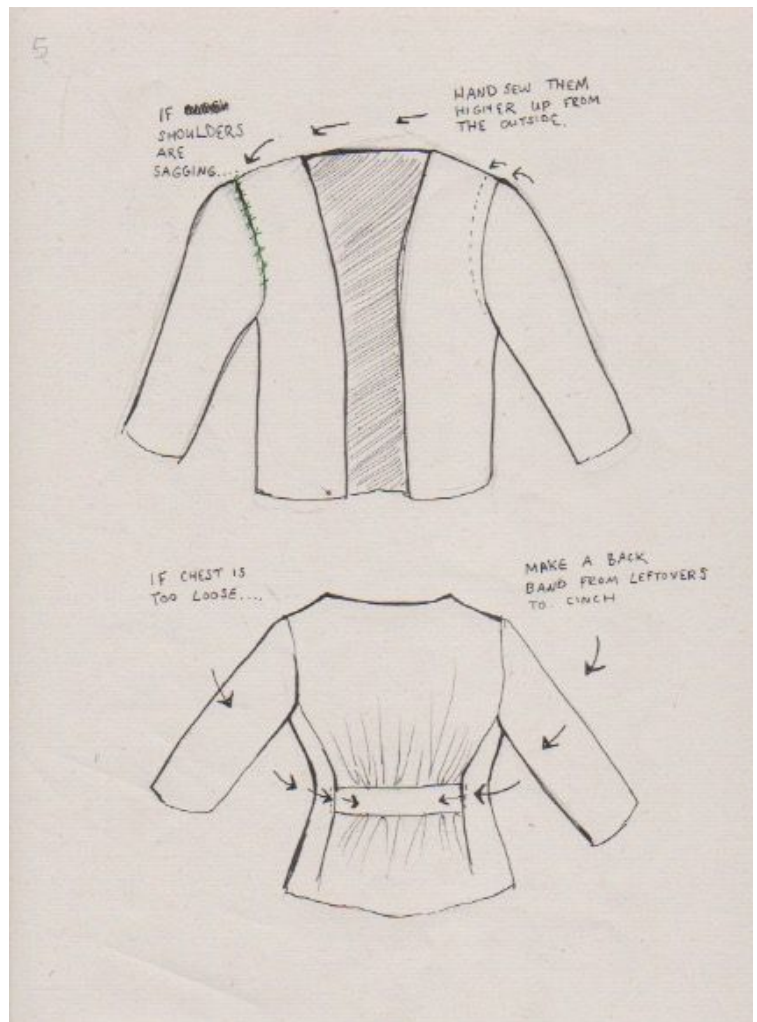
STEP 4: Make the jacket shorter by cutting it so it rests at your hips. You can mark with a pin where that is and measure how many inches off you are taking and mark that across the whole jacket to get a precise cut.

STEP 4: Remove ALL the shoulder padding and interfacing (the stiff stuff that is fused or sewn to the fabric to give it structure) You will have to cut open some lining to get to the goods. Hack away. Don't be shy.

STEP 5: Try on the jacket and assess if the shoulders are sagging too much now

that the shoulder pads are gone. If you see too much sagging fold the shoulder seam so that you tuck some excess shoulder sleeve. You can hand stitch the sleeve to the shoulder where you pinned.

STEP 6: If the raw edges along the jacket bottom hem and along the front where you removed the lapel is fraying and ugly, use your iron to press and sew a  $\frac{1}{2}$  hem so you have a finished edge. Thicker fabrics won't look so bad without a hem so you could get away with leaving a raw edge



## SHIRT

For the shirt, you will be altering a regular button down shirt. Please choose a shirt that is white or off white.

Select a shirt that is one or two sizes too big. As mentioned before, check out women's shirts too.

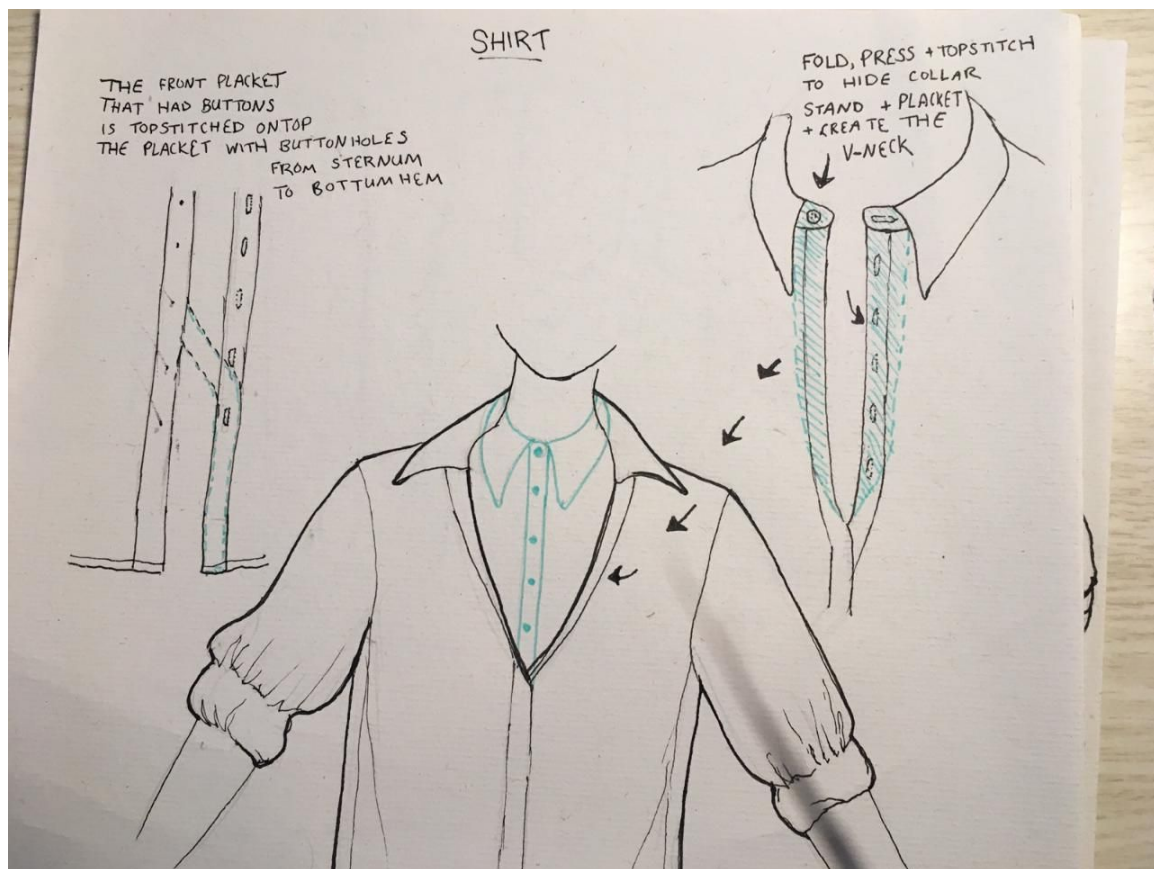
STEP 1: Cut the end of sleeve placket so that you can roll your sleeves more easily. Roll your sleeves to slightly below the elbow. Tack the roll in place with a few hand stitches.

STEP 2: Seam rip off the breast pocket.

STEP 3: Remove all the center front buttons.

STEP 4: Cut off the topstitching around the collar's edge and remove (by ripping most likely) all the stiff, interfacing that is inside the collar. You can do this by cutting open the underside of the collar. Also remove collar stands (plastic pieces at the collar's corner to keep it pointy). As

long as the front side of the collar, the side we see when you wear it, looks nice, it doesn't matter how it looks on the underside, so don't sweat it. We are aiming for a more relaxed, less stiff collar.



STEP 5: Now imagine a very low-cut, unbuttoned shirt, opening at your sternum. Mark that point with a pin on your center front shirt placket where that would be. From that point, pin the center front placket that previously

had the buttons on it, on top of the placket that has the buttonholes.

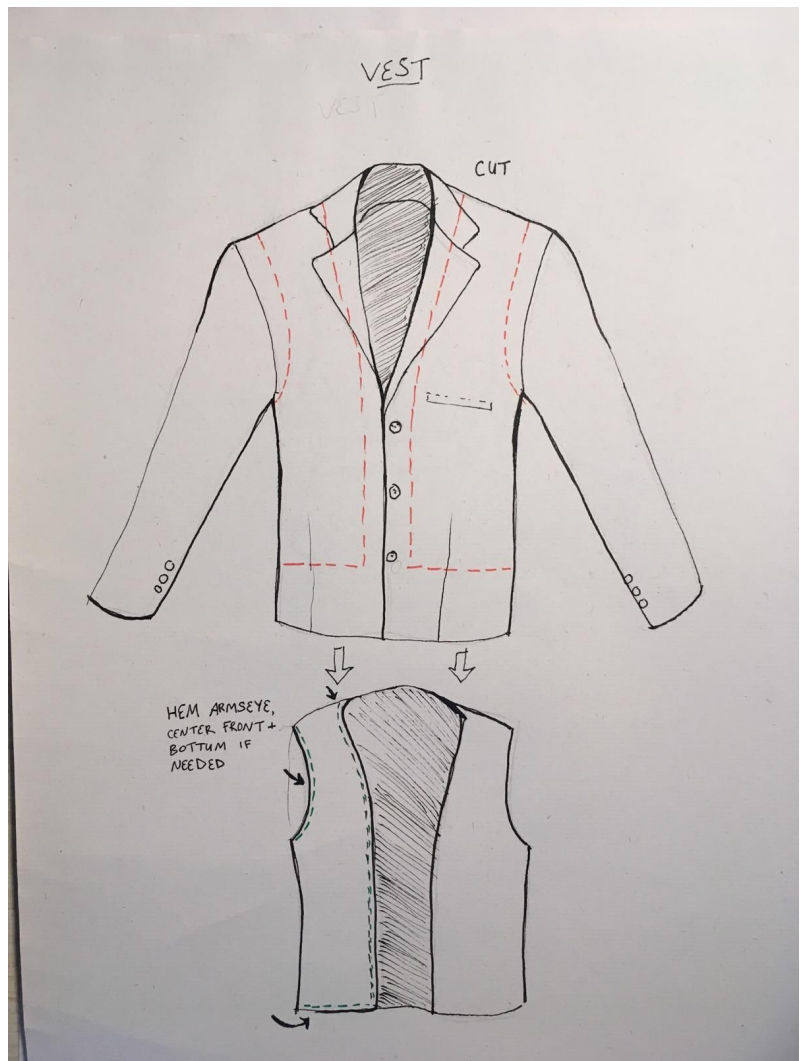
STEP 6: Sew the center front plackets together up to your sternum by topstitching. From now on, you will be putting on and removing this shirt over your head.

STEP 7: Fold under the collar stay and the center front plackets all the way to where the center front plackets are sewn together so it's a smooth line from the collar down to the opening. The goal here is to create a V-neck shirt with the collar still lying flat. You will be pressing the shape of long triangles with the skinniest point of the triangle finishing where the shirt is sewn together. Refer to pictures for help. Use your iron as you go! This will take some finesse.

STEP 8: Top stitch the V-neck (where you folded the placket and pressed)

# VEST

In order to make a vest, you will be cutting down a suit jacket/blazer. It will be helpful if you select a jacket that fits you on the smaller side. This vest will not need to close in the front. You will be wearing it open. When you start to alter it, your goal is for the vest to have roughly a 4" gap between both front edges. Because you are taking apart a suit jacket, this vest will initially be pretty huge. We will be including a few ways you can alter it to make it more form fitting, but if you get confused or overwhelmed feel free to take initiative in coming up with your own way to make the vest fit better. (If you have a lot of sewing experience, take it in the center back and side seams like you would for a typical alteration.)



STEP 1: Cut off the sleeves entirely around the armhole so that the shoulder width is roughly 4 inches wide.

STEP 2: Cut off your jacket's lapels and collar in a nice smooth transition. See photos for reference.

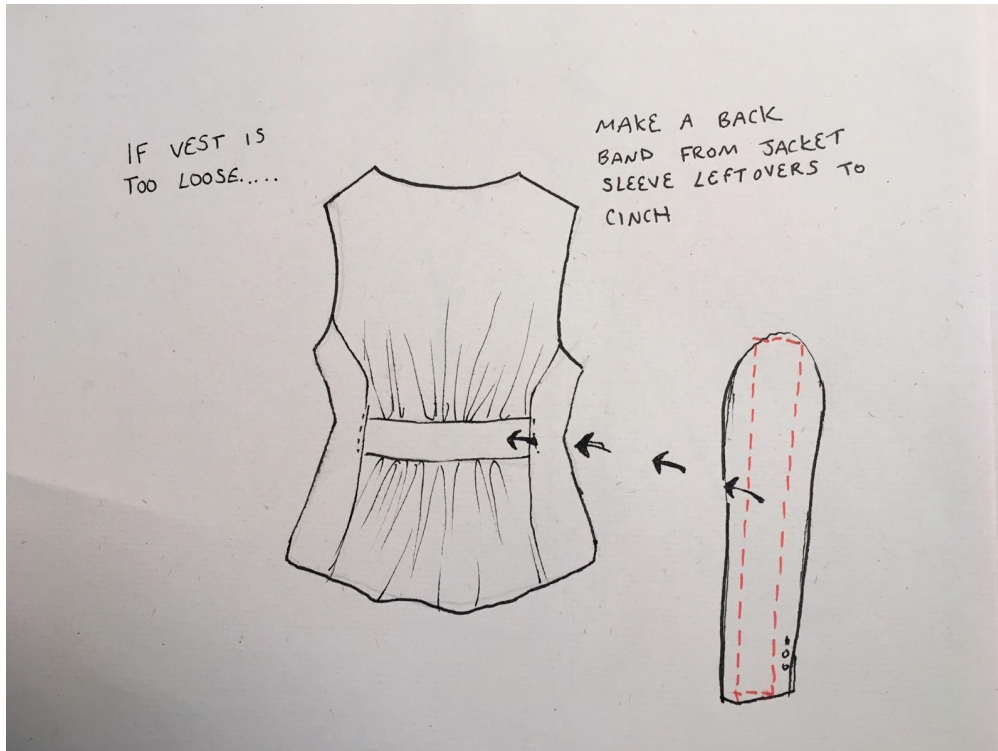
STEP 3: Cut the vest so that it rests at your hips. Slightly longer or slightly shorter is fine.

STEP 4: Cut and tear out all the lining, shoulder padding, and facing so that all that is left is the fashion fabric (fabric you see from the outside).

STEP 5: Take your left over jacket sleeves and cut(2) 2" wide strips the length of your sleeve. These will be the ties for your vest back.



STEP 6: Now try on your new vest and assess where it may be too large. Remember, there are plenty of options to make the vest fit you better so let this be a guide but not the rule.



STEP 7 Find the top of your side seams starting at the armseye (armhole) and make a pleat (like the first fold, of a paper fan) so that the side seam fold is heading toward the center back. See diagrams for reference. Make the pleat as big as you think you may need. This will make the armhole smaller. Topstitch this pleat along the side

seam 2" inches down that way so it is anchored in place. Do this for both Right and Left side seams.

STEP 8: Now stick your tie strips you made from the sleeves right below where you stopped sewing the pleat and stitch it on the fold. Now you have ties you can knot in the back.

STEP 9: If the raw edges along the vest bottom hem and along the front where you removed the lapel are fraying and ugly, use your iron to press and sew a  $\frac{1}{2}$  hem so you have a finished edge. Thicker fabrics you will get away with leaving a raw edge.

TURBAN / HEADWRAP