

## HOW TO IRON A SHIRT, A PRIMER FOR BACHELORS, PART II

By Dennis Knight

When we left off, you had set up your ironing board for the first time. Exhausted, you went to bed. Weeks have gone by, and your ironing board still serves as a buffet as you continue to have your shirts done at the laundry where the price has gone up another dime. Your iron is still plugged in, and it's time to use it.

The components of a man's dress shirt are: collar, yoke, right front, left front, back, sleeves and cuffs. The right front has buttons, and the left has a center placket with button holes. Buttons are on the cuffs, and there are two more if it's a button down collar. The shirt tails are comprised of the bottom quarters, front and back.

After you have moved the dishes and restored the tableaux to its proper role, you may focus on the iron. Add tap or distilled water, set it for 'hot' and 'steam', and turn it on. This time, stay there until it comes up to temperature. Do not go to the other room to catch the ball game or you will fall asleep again and it will be another six weeks before you return to this precious moment in your bachelorhood. Strike while the iron is hot.

Begin with the collar which you will spread face down. If you have a can of starch or sizing, spray the target lightly and apply the iron to the underside. This is called "pressing", a bad thing in baseball but good for shirts. Guide the iron, pointed end first, from corner to corner. Doesn't that look nice? You will iron the other side of the collar later in the process, but now you should move the shirt forward a few inches to work on the yoke.

For clarification, the yoke is the part that covers your shoulders. It is the core and carries every component of the garment. Without it, the other parts would flop around and your belly button would show. It has nothing to do with where you dripped your egg. Found it? Now spray it lightly with starch and press neatly. Now you're getting it!

Continue next with the right front where you will be negotiating around the buttons. Maneuver the tip carefully around the first button. Withdraw and do it again from different angles. You have many buttons to go, but be patient or you may knock one off. In that case watch for my instructional article, “How to Sew a Button On”, soon to be published.

Do the back next. It’s the largest piece, and you’ll have to reposition it several times to get it all. You may skip the tail if you are a traditionalist who tucks his shirt in but untuckers must iron it all. The left front is next and we recommend a little extra starch to stiffen the center placket where the button holes are.

It is time now for the sleeves and the fun part of the job, the “grand lunge”. With the seam lengthwise to the board, place the iron at one end of the sleeve and assume the stance. Declare “en garde!” as you lunge the length of the sleeve. Lunge the other side, take a moment to iron the cuff, and then do the other sleeve, lunges and all.

You are almost done now. Return to the collar, apply starch, and iron it face up, then turn it down and press a crease along the seam. Hang the garment and celebrate with a “Touche!”

Now you may go catch a few minutes of the ballgame as you contemplate whether another forty-five minutes to save a buck-eighty-five makes it worth ironing another shirt now or ever again.