

Restoring the Pleats in your Hakama

You'll need:

a steam Iron,

a spray-bottle (to spray water),

a ruler,

a large flat area (open floor is good) that you can iron on,

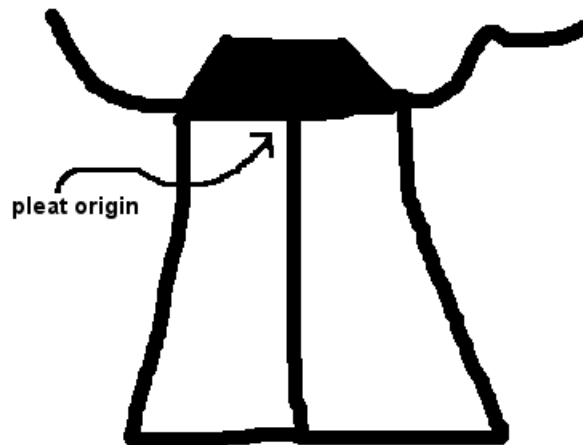
safety pins or clothesline clips, or some other kind of "clamping device" (the large "chipbag clips" are great!),

and a bit of patience.

There are 5 main pleats, on top of a hidden 6th pleat in the front, and two in the back.

Lay the hakama out on a flat surface (floor or big table) neatly with the back upwards (see you can find the rear pleats). Before finding the pleats, try to position the hakama as if you were wearing them. Make sure the seams on the sides are actually at the sides, the pants aren't flayed out etc...

Now, on the back there are two pleats one for each leg of the hakama. Look at the top of the hakama by the "Koshiita" (the firm backplate) and find where the spot where the pleats originate. You'll notice that one pleat is on top of the other (the one on your right should be on top). Depending on the hakama, the right leg can overlap the left around 2.5cm- 5cm.



Neatly move away the right leg's pleat material so you can work on the left pleat freely. Just be sure not to disturb the "neatness" of the hakama, i.e., make sure the seams that you lined up stay lined up.

The left leg pleat is made by excess cloth of the left leg being folded over itself. Again the depth of this pleat is anywhere around 2.5-5cm. Since it is sewn pretty much in place

near the koshiita you can at least find the very top of the pleat there. Find the top and using your ruler measure the depth of the pleat. Then begin restoring the pleat down the length of the hakama keeping the same depth all the way down. Do not Iron it yet.

To keep the pleat even it is crucial that you have the seams lined up and straight along the sides of the hakama.

Once you finish restoring the general form of this pleat iron it to make it crisp.

You may be able to see the remnant of where your pleat was when you first got it. If you can, try and use these as a guide for where you iron it.

Now, return to the Koshiita and find the origin of the top (right) pleat. Find how deep this pleat is and how much it overlaps the left (bottom) pleat. Once you have this use your ruler and carefully restore the right pleat over the left. Keep the same depth all the way down. Once done, use your iron and iron in the right pleat (just iron the right one right on top of the left one).

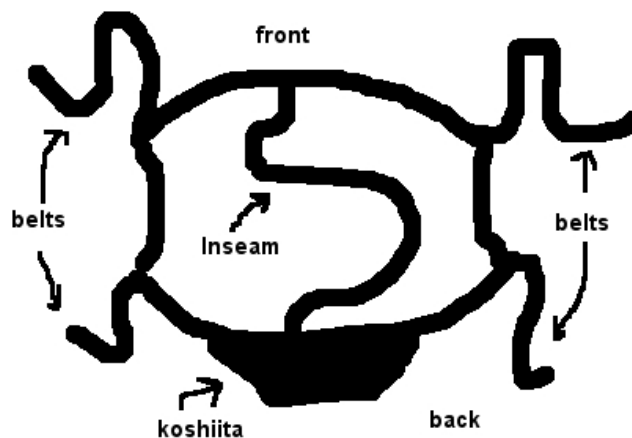
If you can find the original pleat marks, try to iron along those. As you iron, be sure the side seams are intact and perfectly lined up, etc.

Once you have these pleats restored, you are ready to tackle the front. They are more complicated, but the procedure is EXACTLY the same.

Use some kind of clip or clamp to clamp the bottoms of the hakama together (where your feet stick out).

Once clamped together, pick up the hakama by the waistbands as if you were going to put them on. Hold the koshiita and rear waistband under your chin and look inside the hakama to find the inseam. (crotch).

You may or may not notice, depending on how bad your pleats are destroyed, that the inseam itself forms another pleat.

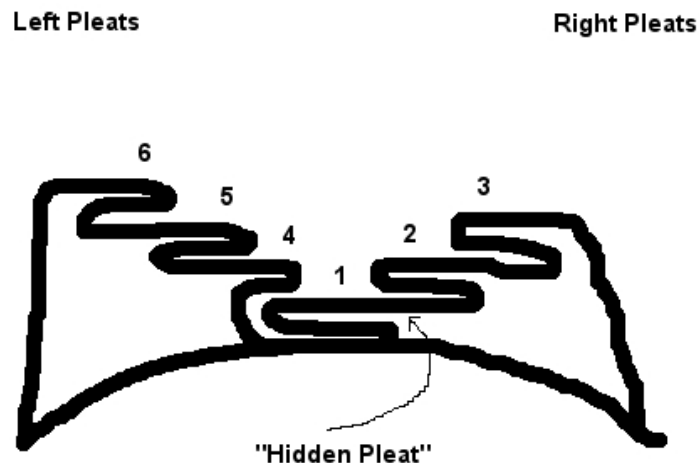


Pull the center majority of the inseam over to the right, but you should notice (due to the stitching and such) that it naturally takes the shape shown in the picture. So, don't force it over to the right. You may even have some residual "pleat" shape for the inseam from the original pleats.

Once the inseam is "folded" bring the back and front waistbands together flush with one another. You may want to use clips to hold them in this position.

Lay the hakama down neatly with the front facing upward. Be sure that the side seams are straight, and that the back pleats are in tact and neat.

There are 5 pleats in the front of the hakama and one "hidden pleat" underneath these five.



Once you have the hakama laid out neatly with the seams aligned, fold back the 3 left side pleats (labeled as 4,5,6) and the 2 right pleats (labeled as 2,3) so that you can work with the "hidden pleat".

Find where the hidden pleat originates at the front waistband and measure its depth. As with the back pleats, use your ruler to restore this pleat down the length of the hakama. Once in place use your steam iron on it to make it crisp.

Once you have the hidden pleat established, restore the two right hand pleats in the same manner. Don't iron them until both are in place AND the seams at the side of the hakama are still even. Then, with the upper tip of the iron, iron each pleat individually without folding the upper one back. Again, if you can find the remnants of the original pleat line try to iron along it.

Lastly, restore the three left pleats in the same manner as the right.

Once all are restored, wet the pleats with the spray bottle thoroughly and then iron them again. Allow them air dry fully, and then fold them as normal. Voila!

