How to sew buttonholes

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Supplies:
-   -Garment/item needing buttons and buttonholes
-   -Buttons
-   -Needle, thread (regular sewing thread is fine, silk buttonhole twist is great)
-   -Small sharp scissors and/or seam ripper
-   -Measuring tape, ruler

Step 1: Determine how long to make your buttonholes
Use the measuring tape to measure around the top half of the button, using the diameter as a measuring point. This is how long your buttonhole should be.

Step 2: Decide on placement of buttons and buttonholes, spacing between them, overlap on the garment sides, direction of buttonholes.
There is no correct side for buttons and buttonholes for men and women in the Middle Ages or Renaissance Europe. Choose whichever side makes you happiest. The space between buttons and buttonholes will be affected by the size of the buttons and the fit of the garment. Larger buttons will need more space so as not to crowd each other. Fitted garments will need buttons spaced closer together to avoid gapping. Try pinning the garment closed at each button placement first before making a final decision. Most medieval garments had as many buttons as possible so as to display the wealth and status of the wearer, but each garment will have its own requirements. Some garments show the buttons attached at the edge of the garment, and others have buttons placed in from the edge to allow for overlap. Most buttonholes are oriented horizontally but you may orient them vertically if you choose.

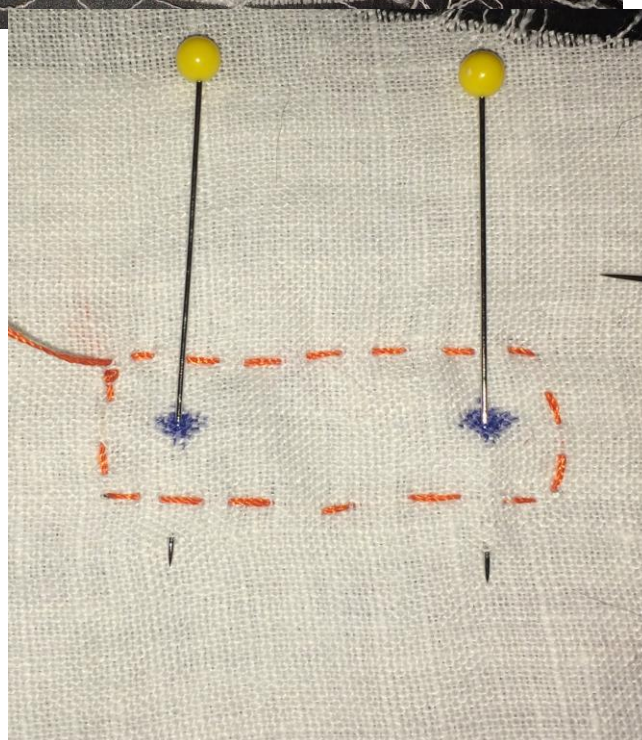Step 2B: Prepare the buttonhole side of your garment
It is usually preferable to have either a facing or strengthening addition behind your buttonholes. This will help when you are sewing them and will help them wear
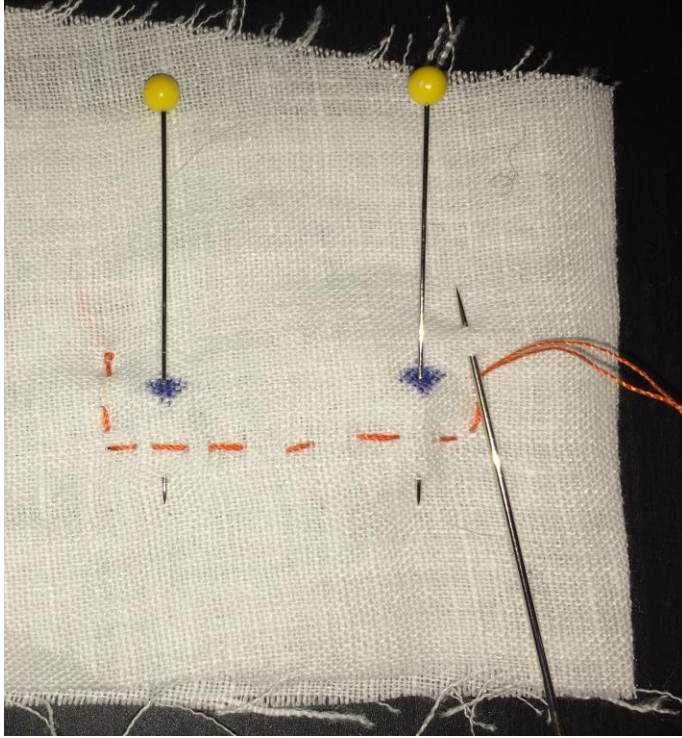
better. An extra bias strip can always be added to the inside of your garment if you have not prepared for this adequately.

Step 3: Once you know where you're putting a buttonhole, mark each end. I like to use pins, perpendicular to the direction of my buttonhole.
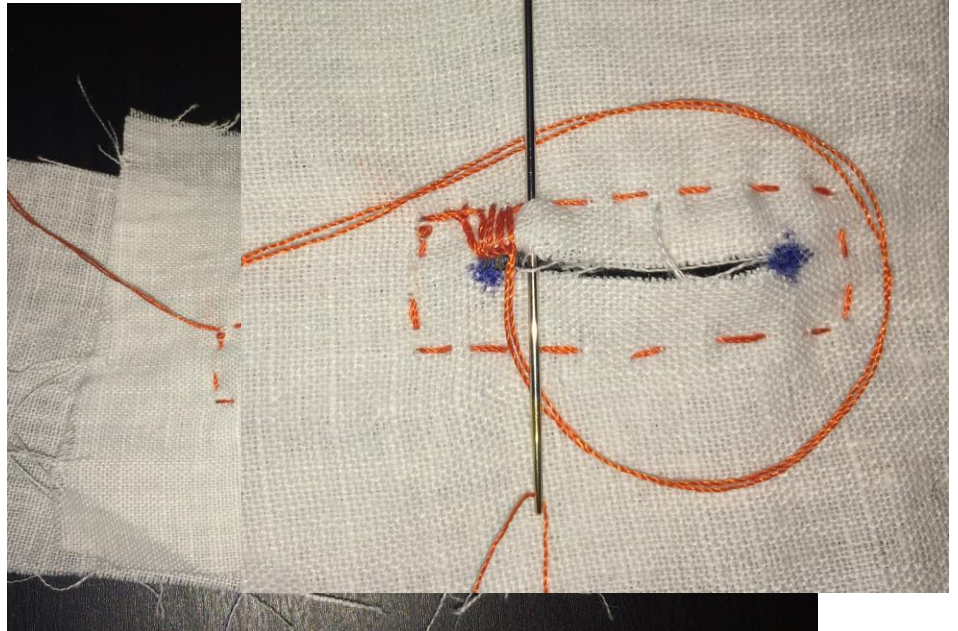

Step 4: Sew a running stitch in a small rectangle around your marked buttonhole. Try to keep your rectangle at the same length away from the marked buttonhole. I like to start and end on the side towards the rest of the garment. The running stitch will be your guide for the length of your stitches and help keep your fabric together. We do not have documentation showing this method in our period but it's a very helpful step.
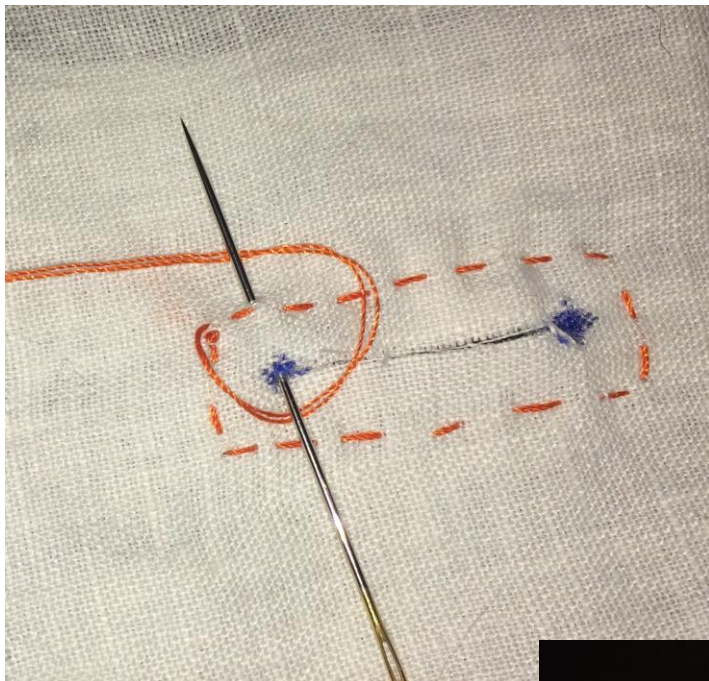
Step 5: Cut the buttonhole open. Be careful not to go past your end points and not to cut your running stitch.
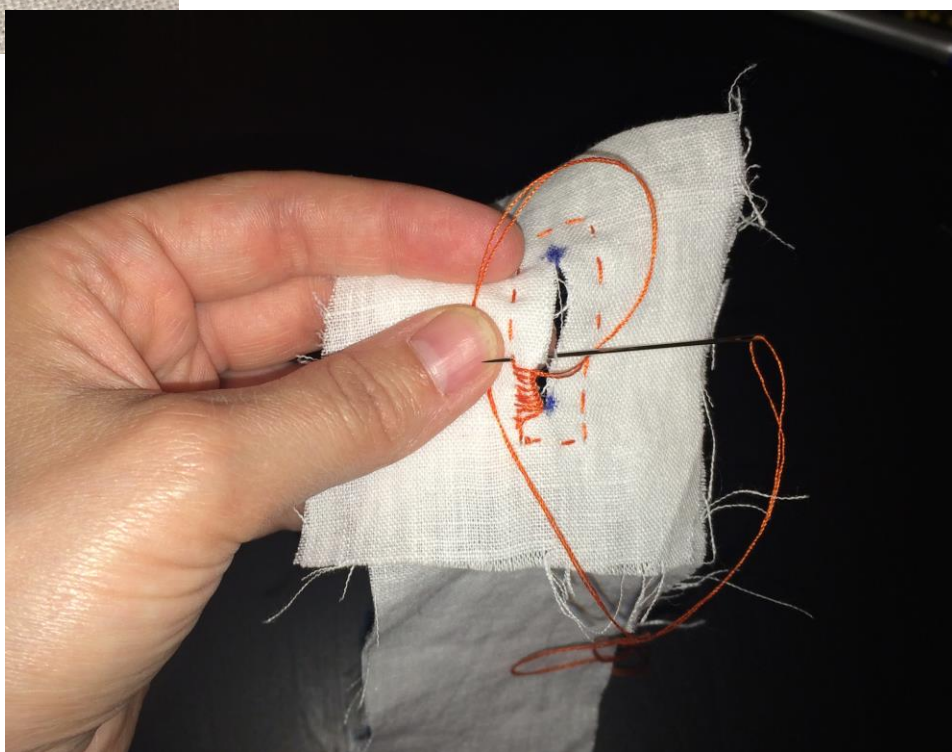
Step 6: Begin your first buttonhole stitch and continue down one long side of the buttonhole. The knots will be along the edge of your buttonhole. Continue until you reach the end of the buttonhole.

Step 7: You may continue the buttonhole stitch around the sides of your buttonhole or you can work bars across the short sides. You may also choose to leave the short sides alone.

Step 8: Work the other side of your buttonhole until you reach your start again. Finish by burying the tail of the thread into the garment or back into your buttonhole stitches.

Other resources to use:
http://www.personal.utulsa.edu/~marc-carlson/jennifer/buttons/Buttonhole%20page.htm
http://cottesimple.com/tutorials/how-to-sew-medieval-buttonhole/right-handed