

Lesson 25

Constructing Seams



Objectives

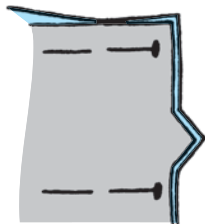
This lesson will help you stitch seams and finish seam edges. You will apply the following, previously acquired skills:

- Lesson 5: Reading the Instruction Sheet
- Lesson 11: Operating the Sewing Machine
- Lesson 12: Pressing As You Sew
- Lesson 14: Seams
- Lesson 15: Clipping, Notching, Trimming, and Grading
- Lesson 16: Seam Finishes

Helps for Success

Well-constructed seams are the most basic part of any garment. For seam and seam finish variations, see Lessons 14 and 16. Other guidelines for sewing seams are given here.

Pin Basting Seams



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The seam should be pinned before stitching. Match the ends of the seam and all notches. Pin the layers together.

Place the pins at right angles to the seam so that they may be easily removed during stitching. Remove pins before sewing over them.

Adding Stretch to Seams

Some seams will need to have more give. For instance, when sewing on knit fabric, seams should stretch with the fabric. Always test your stitching on a fabric scrap to see if it is strong enough to withstand any stress applied.

Sergers provide excellent stretch stitches. However, the following conventional sewing machine stitches also provide stretch: narrow zigzag, multiple stitch zigzag, straight stretch, overcast stretch, or serge (pine) stitch.

If you must use a straight stitch, some stretch may be added by gently pulling on the fabric in front of and behind the machine needle. Be sure you allow the fabric to feed under the machine foot as you pull gently. Test this method on your fabric because it may cause the seam to pucker.

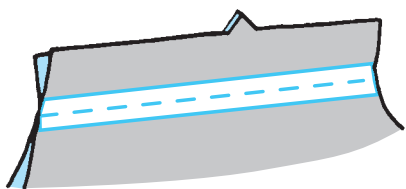
Directional Stitching

Seams should be stitched with the grain of the fabric. On an edge that has already been staystitched, seams may be sewn in any direction. This is because the area has already been stabilized. (For instance, the neck seam may be stitched in any direction.)

With napped or pile fabrics, stitch with the nap even if it is against the grain.

When you are unsure of the direction to stitch, a good rule is to stitch similar seams or seams that will be sewn together in the same direction. For instance, stitch all pant leg seams from the bottom to the top.

Stabilizing Seams

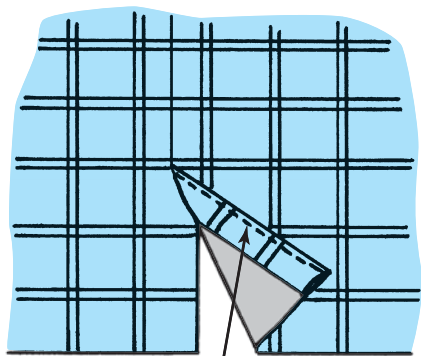


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Stabilizing seams is especially useful on knit fabrics and in garment areas where greater stability is needed. Such areas include shoulder, armhole, neckline, crotch, and waistline seams.

To stabilize the seam, stitch narrow hem tape, twill tape, or sheer stay tape into the seam. Where some stability and more stretch is desired, as with knit fabrics, clear stretch elastic may be used.

Matching Plaids



fusible thread

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When stitching seams on plaid fabric, you will need to carefully match plaids along seamlines. Four methods can help you do this.

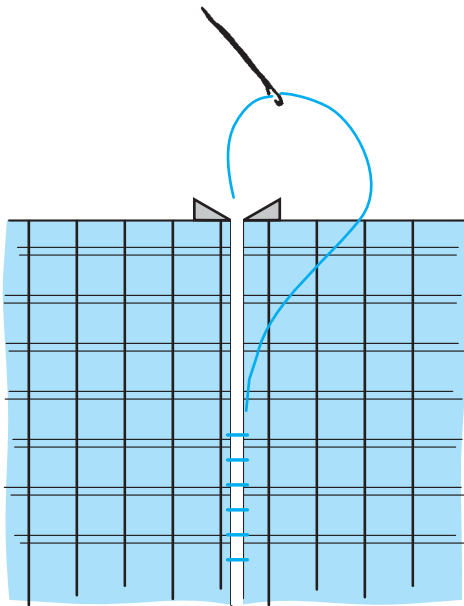
Method 1: pin basting. To match plaids by pin basting, follow these steps:

1. Pin the layers of fabric together. Make sure each pin is positioned in a manner that will line up the plaid on the two layers of fabric.
2. Stitch up to each pin before removing it.

Method 2: fusible thread. To match plaids using fusible thread, follow these steps:

1. Press one seam allowance under along the seamline, then open out the fold. With fusible thread in the top of the machine and regular thread in the bobbin, stitch on the right side of the fabric just inside the seam allowance. Fold seam allowance back to the wrong side.

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2. Lap the pressed edge over the other garment piece. Match stitching lines and color bars. Press. Let cool. Open out fabric. Stitch seam.

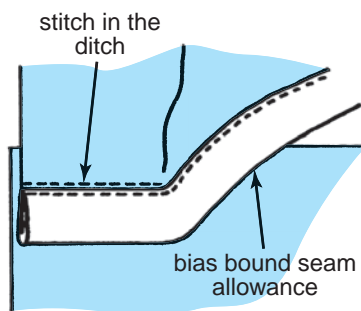
Method 3: hand basting. To match plaids by hand basting, follow these steps:

1. Press under a $\frac{5}{8}$ -inch seam allowance on the garment pieces that are to be sewn together.
2. With right sides of the garment pieces up, hand baste the seam together being sure to match the plaid.
3. Place right sides of garment pieces together again, and machine stitch the seam. Remove the hand basting stitches.

Method 4: basting tape or glue stick. To match plaids using basting tape or glue stick, follow these steps:

1. Press a crease along one seamline. Apply basting tape or glue stick in the seam allowance along the crease line.
2. Place the seam allowance of the second garment piece over the one with the tape or glue. Finger press both layers of fabric together, aligning the plaid as you go.
3. Turn pieces to the wrong side and machine stitch along the seamline.

Decorative Seams

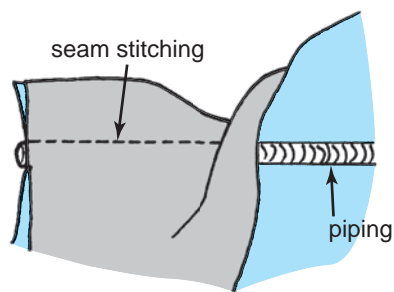


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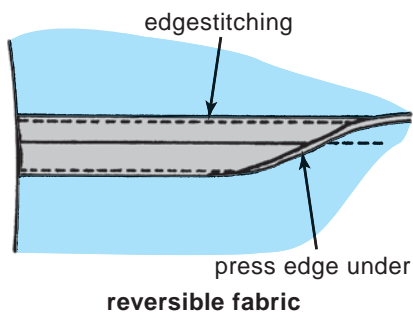
Decorative seams can add interest to garments. You may decide to use a fringed seam on sleeves or the back yoke or, perhaps, a piped seam on collar, lapels, and pockets. Consider the following decorative seams possible:

Bound and lapped seams. Begin by deciding which seam allowance you want to lap over the other. Then cut bias strips two times the finished width of binding plus $1\frac{1}{4}$ inches. Cut the strips the length of the seam plus 2 inches. Bind the overlapping seam allowance with bias binding. Then place the bias bound seam allowance over the other seam allowance matching seamlines. Stitch in the ditch created by the bias binding.

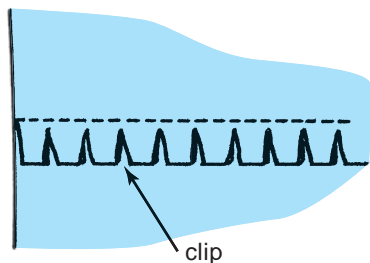
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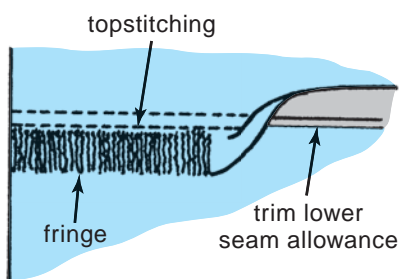
Piped seams. Single or double piping can be inserted into the seam. Try using piping in a contrasting color.



Edgestitched seams. Using reversible fabric, stitch seams wrong sides together. Press seam open. Turn edges of seam allowances under and press. Pin in place. Stitch close to the folded edges, through all layers. The reverse side of the fabric in the seam allowance provides a decorative effect on the outside of the garment. This technique is best on straight seams or seams with only a slight curve. To make curved seams, stitch $\frac{1}{4}$ inch from the raw edge of the seam and clip to the stitch line.



Frayed seams. Use this seam with washable fabrics only. Test to make sure fabric frays as desired. Begin by cutting seam allowances from $\frac{3}{8}$ inch to 2 inches in width. Stitch the seam with wrong sides together. Clip to within $\frac{1}{8}$ inch of seamline, spacing clips $\frac{1}{4}$ inch to 1 inch apart. Wash and dry the garment several times until cut edges curl and fray.



Fringed seams. Begin by cutting out the garment with $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch seam allowances in the areas you wish to fringe. Stitch the seam, wrong sides together. Trim one seam allowance to slightly less than $\frac{1}{4}$ inch. Lap the longer seam allowance over the shorter and topstitch $\frac{1}{4}$ inch from the seamline using a short stitch length. The seam is then raveled to make fringe. This technique is best used on straight-grained seams. Test to make sure fabric fringes as desired. Warp (lengthwise) and filling (crosswise) yarns may give a different look.

A fringed seam may also be constructed by making a fringe trim from a fabric strip and then inserting it inside other seams. For thicker fringe, use two layers of fabric. Stitch strips in the seam and then fringe.

Name _____ Date _____ Period _____

Evaluation Criteria: Seams

Before you begin construction, read through the criteria listed below. After constructing each detail, complete this form according to your teacher's directions. Turn this sheet in to your teacher and be prepared to discuss each item.

	<i>Did not follow procedure correctly</i>	<i>Followed procedure but had some difficulty</i>	<i>Nicely done but with more practice could do better</i>	<i>Exceptionally well done</i>
Stitching is straight.				
Seam is even in width.				
Edge of seam is finished appropriately for fabric being used.				
Seam is backstitched at both ends.				
Appropriate stitch and stitch length is used.				
Appropriate method of constructing the seam is used.				
Seam is pressed.				
Threads are clipped.				

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