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Anita Andrews

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Extension Circular 297

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Successful Finishes

SOUTH DAKOTA STATE COLLEGE
EXTENSION SERVICE
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Brookings, S. D.

Successful Finishes

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Fashion dictates the finishes for clothing as well as the position of the waist line or the length of the skirt. Certain finishes are always in style, but others have their in and out periods. Hand decoration may be very popular one season, but it may be replaced in the next season by simple self trims or the line of the garment itself. Plain straight line dresses call for more decoration than dresses which depend for their style on the cut of the garment. The finishes of the garment include the seams and the decoration.

The Sewing Machine

Perfection in the machine stitching is essential to the well made garment. Many times faulty stitching is not due to the machine or tension, but to the size of the thread and needle. It is a common tendency to use thread and needles that are too heavy. The thread should be about like the thread in the material that is to be sewed. The needle and size of the stitch should be changed for different threads and materials, (see Fig. 1).

It is best in stitching very fine material to stitch on paper. Newspaper is good as it tears easily. Paper which is tough and heavy pulls the threads.

Pressing

No matter how nice the workmanship on a dress, if it is not pressed it does not appear well. All pressing should not be left till last, but the iron should be kept constantly at hand. Many basting stitches can be saved by using the iron. Seams should be pressed as they are made.

Wool and silk should always be pressed on the wrong side or a pressing cloth used. A damp cloth is very apt to spot wool unless it has been previously steamed and shrunk. Wool that is pressed on another wool cloth will keep that woolly appearance. Wool should never be ironed entirely dry as this tends to make it shiny. Many times if the ironing board is steamed with a damp cloth and then the silk or wool placed over it, enough moisture is present to remove any wrinkles. Cotton materials with sizing or dressing in them will also water spot. These should be pressed just like silk or wool.

If strips of paper are placed between pleats and seam edges while the pressing is being done the imprint will not show on the right side. Never press with a very hot iron for it is injurious to the material.

Seams

Seams are really a very important part of the garment. Poorly made and improperly finished seams may ruin the garment. A test for a good seam finish is that it looks well and serves the purpose for which it was intended. Seams in a dress which will be washed frequently must be so finished that washing will not weaken them. The finishing of a dress should be done very carefully. Choice of seam depends on the fabric, the place, and the type of garment.

Plain Seam.—The plain seam should be stitched about one-half inch from the edge and may have a variety of finishes.

THREAD SIZES	NEEDLE NOS.	
	HAND	MACHINE
8	3	19
10		
12		
16	4	18
20		
24		
30	5	16
36		
40		
50	6	14
60		
70		
80	8	11
90		
100		
100	9	9
120		
150	10	9
200		

Fig. 1. Needle chart.

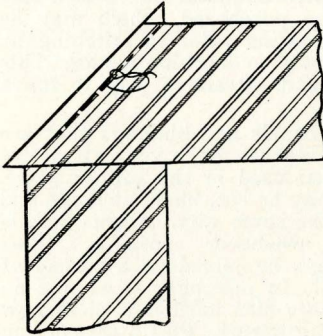


Fig. 2.—Bias correctly joined.

In some instances a second stitching may be put just next to the edge. This is used where it is not necessary to open the seam.

2. The seam may be pressed open and the edges turned once and restitched very close to the folded edge. It is a good finish for wash materials that do not ravel easily, and also for firmly woven silks.

3. The edges may be pinked by machine or hand. This is a very quick satisfactory way for wool and heavy silks.

4. The edges of the seams in material which is rather firm may be overcast. This is done with a slanting stitch and prevents fraying.

5. Binding the edges of a plain seam also makes a nice finish for heavy materials, such as wool, rayons or heavy cottons. Unlined coat seams are finished very nicely with binding.

French Seam.—1. The french seam is used on sheer transparent materials. The seam is made by stitching the two right sides together, trimming down to about $\frac{1}{8}$ of an inch, turning the material and restitching about $\frac{3}{16}$ to $\frac{1}{4}$ of an inch from former line of stitching on the wrong side. It is not usually advisable to use this seam on a bias joining, such as a gore seam. French seams are usually used in fine underwear and children's clothing.

2. The false french is made by making the first stitching about one-half inch from the edge on the wrong side and then turning in the raw edges toward each other and stitching again either by machine or by hand. This is the best method to use if a french seam is desired on a curve such as an armseye.

Flat Felled Seam.—The felled seam is used where a tailored effect is desired. Both stitchings may show on the right side or only one may show. In most cases the two stitchings on the right side are preferable. The seam is made by adjusting the pieces accurately so as to leave the top edge $\frac{1}{8}$ of an inch wide and the under edge $\frac{3}{8}$ of an inch. The seam is then stitched and creased and pressed to the side over the narrow edge; the wider edge is turned under $\frac{1}{8}$ of an inch and the second stitching is done on the very edge of this fold. This method may be accomplished without any trimming if the cutting has been done cleanly and accurately. It is sometimes necessary, however, in following a pattern to stitch and then trim the edges to $\frac{1}{8}$ and $\frac{3}{8}$ of an inch respectively.

Picoting.—Picoting may be used on some seams, but it is apt to draw in very sheer materials. It is an expensive finish for most dresses, but makes an inconspicuous seam.

Edge Finishes

A neatly finished armseye, neckline, or skirt, marks a dress as being well made. Edge finishes may be easily made that will give the dress that smart appearance which so many women find lacking in their clothes. Fit is probably the first essential of a good looking dress, and finishes the second. There are any number of edge finishes which might be used.

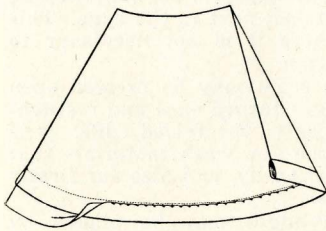


Fig. 3—False binding.

Bias Tape.—Commercially folded bias tape may be purchased, which may be put on by basting prior to stitching by machine or with a machine binder. This is a quick and attractive way to finish many edges.

Novelty braids and bindings that are now on the market make very attractive finishes when used in the proper place. Bias tape may be cut, made at home and applied in the same way. A true bias is preferable whenever possible. Bias should always be joined on a thread of the material. In putting bias around an armseye, baste bias until it is clear how

much will be needed, slightly stretch it in measuring. Pull a thread and cut on this thread. Join the bias, stitch, and then continue basting.

French Fold.—A french fold is an attractive finish for use on silk and sheer materials. This also must be a true bias. Cut the bias strip four times the width of the finished binding plus two seam allowances. Fold the binding at center, press, and stitch to the edge, on right side of the garment. Turn bias to wrong side and hem down folded edge above line of stitching. If machine finish is desired fold wrong side of binding slightly wider than right side, baste and stitch from right side, close to edge of binding but not on it.

False Binding.—A very satisfactory way of finishing the edge of a circular skirt is to finish with a false binding. The skirt should be hung $\frac{3}{4}$ to $\frac{7}{8}$ of an inch longer than the desired finished length. Turn $\frac{3}{4}$ of an inch to the right side and stitch slightly less than $\frac{1}{4}$ of an inch from the fold and hem down by hand. If a machine finish is desired, turn material $\frac{7}{8}$ of an inch to the right side and stitch slightly less than $\frac{1}{4}$ of an inch from fold. Turn fold slightly over first stitching line and stitch from the right side close to edge of binding but not on it. The appearance is the same as a french fold or flat binding.

Cording.—(See Decorative Finishes.)

Hems

The depth of the hem is regulated by the style of the dress. A very long, full skirt requires a deeper hem than a shorter, tighter skirt. The hem in transparent material is really a part of the design of the dress. Most hems in adult clothes should never be less than three inches and about four and one-half inches is an average width for long or medium length skirts.

Hems in heavy wash materials may be stitched in by the sewing machine. In lighter materials that are not transparent, the first turn of the hem may be stitched by machine, and then put down by hand with the hemming stitch or a slip stitch. In transparent cottons such as voiles and organdies, the first turn is basted and the hem put down with a fine hemming stitch.

In most silks the first turn of the hem should be stitched by machine and the slip stitch or blind hemming stitch used to complete the hem. Very fine hemming can be done in silk crepes by working on the right side. Baste the first

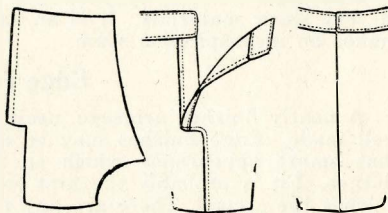


Fig. 4—A simplified pocket especially suitable for the small boy's suit.

turn but do not press. Then working from the right side the needle goes through this soft fold making a slip stitch. Beautiful hemming can be done in this way. The stitch can be made to lay with the threads of the material.

In wool every crease is apt to show when pressed. In the heavier woolen materials no small turn should be made. The edge should be pinked and catch stitched down, or the edge may be bound with silk tape and the hem put down with blind hemming stitch.

In the lighter weight woolen materials the first turn may be stitched by machine and then hem put down with either stitch.

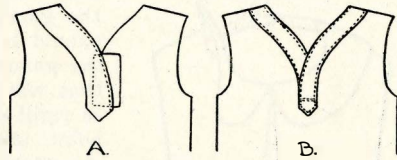


Fig. 5—(A) Wrong side of blouse showing piece and right side of facing stitched ready for turning.

(B) Finished front facing.

Plackets

Mothers of small boys who are forced to make many little suits very often let plackets worry them. A very simple and easy placket may be made by allowing material for the placket when the garment is out. Allow two inches in width down the front and back of the garment at each side. Then on both front and back make a $\frac{3}{8}$ inch hem. Then french seam the side seam. Fold back placket piece on front and leave it flat on back. The placket is completed ready for the band at the top. This placket cannot be used in all places, but it is very convenient for boys' wash suits and underclothing.

Facing

Facings need to be cut so that they fit accurately. Care should be taken so that bias edges are not stretched. The facing illustrated is especially designed for a small boy's suit or pajamas. However, it may also be used on other garments.

Children's garments should be simply made. Unnecessary decoration detracts from the child himself and may also interfere with his play. Added decoration usually causes more work in ironing. Garments for the small tots should be made so that the child may help himself wherever possible. Unnecessary snaps and buttons should be avoided. Large buttons should be used wherever buttons are needed; if at all possible, garments with no buttons are better.

Pajama Neckline

This neckline, usually called the pajama neck, is quickly and easily made. It provides an attractive finish and one with which the child needs no help. Face back and front of garment before shoulder seams are joined. The garment is cut down the center front and a basting continues the center mark. A piece is added on the left side. This is stitched on with the seam to the right side of the garment. The right hand facing is then laid on the wrong side of the garment, stitched and turned to right side. The left hand facing is then

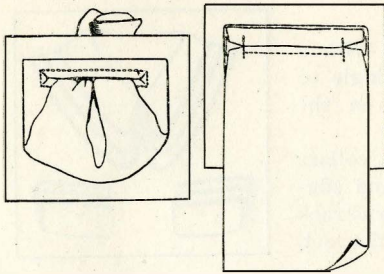


Fig. 6—Steps in making a bound pocket.

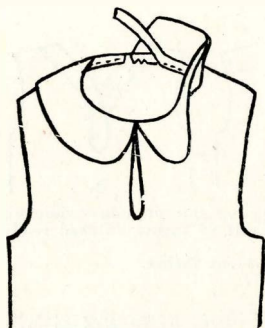


Fig. 7—Collars should always be attached with a bias fold.

laid with right side against wrong side of the garment. The center line of the facing should be laid exactly on the center line of the garment and stitched. Trim off material that was added to seam allowance and turn to right side. Turn in edges and stitch. The point should be neatly fixed. The edges should be turned and basted. To get a fine sharp point, turn the tip down first, then turn the side edges in, trimming them off at the top as much as necessary, if material seems bulky.

Bound Pockets and Button Holes

Mark the length of the pocket where it is desired. Take care to get it on a thread of material. Place a piece of material, which is twice the depth desired for the pocket plus three inches (usually ten inches), on the right side of the garment and about one and a half inches from the top of the pocket over the marking. Then cut on line to within $\frac{1}{8}$ of an inch from the end and diagonally to all four corners.

Turn binding piece through hole to wrong side. Pull back all binding at ends of buttonhole and press. Press the two cut edges back to the middle, letting the binding piece cover them. Press carefully, baste and stitch on the wrong side at each end, thus holding this binding firmly. On right side stitch in the crease of the binding on lower edge of the pocket. Fold pocket piece up to top and stitch from right side in crease at top of pocket. Now stitch the sides of the pocket. Edges may be finished by overcasting or as a false french seam.

The bound button hole is made very similarly. The piece used should be at least two inches wide and one inch longer than the desired length of the buttonhole. A facing may be used to finish the wrong side by slashing the facing at the buttonhole, and by turning the edges in and blind-stitching.

Slashes in blouses to allow for ties may be made as bound buttonholes. They may be made a nice decorative feature.

Collars

Collars should always be attached with a bias fold. They may be made of a single or double thickness of material, bound on the edges or stitched and turned.

A very interesting group of three collars was made of fine handkerchief linen and edged with very narrow $\frac{1}{8}$ of an inch rickrack braid. Three tiered cuffs matched the set.

(Note: This very narrow rickrack may be secured in a range of twenty colors. It is very interesting to use on children's clothing.

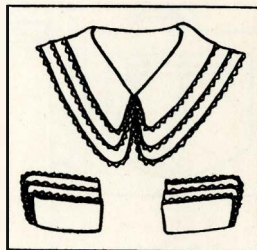


Fig. 8—Handkerchief linen and very narrow rick-rack are used for this attractive set.

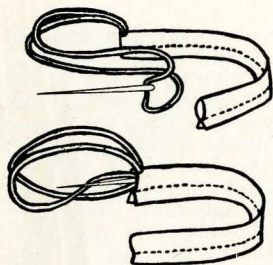


Fig. 9—Making cording, using seam for cord.

Decorative Finishes

Cording.—To insert a cord in a seam, cover the cord and stitch to one piece of the material, stitching as close to the cord as possible. Lay on the other piece of material and stitch over previous stitching.

To make cording to be used for loops, etc., without a cord use a true bias about $\frac{3}{4}$ of an inch wide, fold and stitch about $\frac{1}{4}$ of an inch from the edge. Press by running the edge of the iron along the stitching, but do not crease the fold. Fasten a strong thread on the edge of the fold at the end of the tube. Attach bodkin to the thread and pass the bodkin through the tube thus turning it right side out. Press lightly.

Fagoting.—Baste straight or bias strips of material to strips of paper and interlace these with thread of the same or contrasting color. Bring the needle up from the under side of the left hand strip and up through the edge of the right hand strip, moving forward diagonally. Pass needle back of thread in putting it back into the left hand strip. Repeat. Keep paper under the strip until the fagoting is completed.

Smocking.—Smocking is an interesting and attractive way of adding fullness to a garment. Smocking adapts itself especially well to children's clothing. Soft materials such as voile, gingham, pongee, wool jersey and challie, and silk crepes smock easily. Smocking needs some form of marking. Smocking patterns may be stamped on, or the markings may be made by even basting stitches usually one-half inch apart. The fullness is dependant on the distance between the marks.

The simplest smocking stitch is known as the cable. Begin at the left end of the upper row of dots bringing the needle up between the first two. Let the thread hang down from the needle, and insert the needle midway between the second and third dots, bringing it out in the second one. Pull the thread up at right angles to and away from the stitch just taken, making an even fold. For the next stitch the thread should be above the needle, and again insert midway between the next two dots bringing the needle out in the third dot. This time pull the thread down at right angles to the stitch just taken, thus forming another fold. Continue in this manner across the row, remembering at each stitch to alternate the thread above and below the needle. To make a double cable place two rows together.

Another interesting stitch is known as a one-step cable or V stitch. Bring the needle up through the first dot, throw the

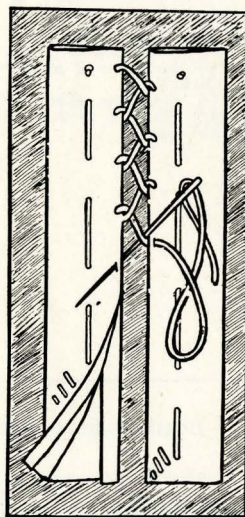


Fig. 10.—Fagoting.

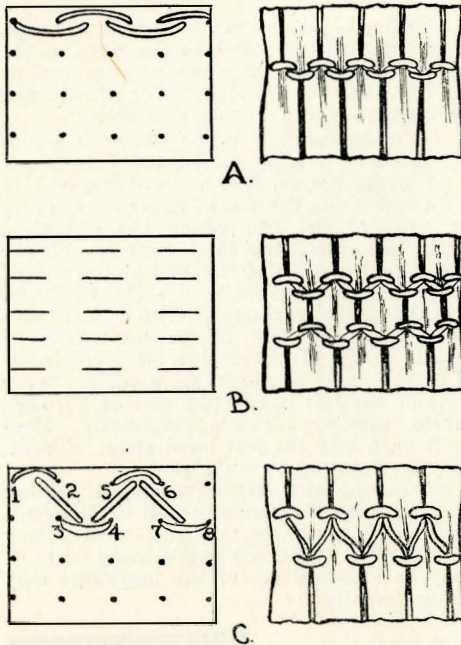


Fig. 11.—Smocking.

(A) Cable stitch.

(B) Basting used as marking and the double cable stitch.

(C) One-step cable or V stitch.

(B) Basting used as marking and the double cable stitch.

thread to the top and put the needle in at the second dot, bringing it out in the center between the first and second dot. Keep the thread below the needle and insert at the fourth dot and out again midway between dot three and four. Insert the needle between dots five and six and out at five. Throw the thread to the top, and insert needle at dot six and out midway between five and six. Repeat.

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