

CLOTHING — CONSTRUCTION

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SEAMS

by

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Women and girls can help save our nation's raw materials, labor and machinery for production of war goods through construction and conservation of clothing.

Seams make possible interesting lines and shapings. There are a few fundamental seams, but by a variety of finishes many interesting effects can be secured.

There are no rules which tell just what seams to use. Use your judgment and adapt seams to:

Fabrics of different weights and textures.

Different locations on the garment.

Design and type of garment.

Whether wrong side as well as right side may show.

Seams should be:

Strong.

Flat.

Either inconspicuous or decorative.

Non-fraying.

Easily and quickly made.

Uniform width throughout length.

Turned in one direction only.

Seam Width:

A standard for seam widths which is practical and solves most problems is as follows:

Average seams $\frac{1}{2}$ ".

Armseye seams $\frac{3}{8}$ ".

On dainty sheers as batiste and organdy, $\frac{1}{8}$ " to $\frac{3}{16}$ " (never over $\frac{1}{4}$ ") for French, false French, and standing fell seams.

Side seams $\frac{3}{4}$ " or 1" where the wearer expects to use the garment more than one season (less on transparent fabrics.)

In some instances extra wide seams are used to allow for changes from one season to another; especially for children.

Machine stitching:

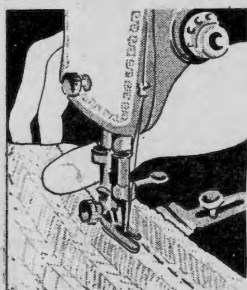


Fig. 1.—Using the seam gauge

Seams must be stitched accurately and with perfect tension. See clothing construction bulletin "Learning to Sew" for details. Always test the stitch on a scrap of the fabric you are using. Use thread of correct size for the fabric and needle the right size for the thread. Use the seam gauge to make a straight stitching. Screw it in place so that the straight edge is a seam's distance from the needle. It is easier and more accurate than following a basting thread. See Fig. 1.

Good machine stitching makes a durable seam.

Good machine stitching should have a pliable tension.

Test before stitching garment on a bias sample of two or more thicknesses.

Line of stitching should be either **exactly** straight, or a direct, even-flowing curve.

Should be same length of stitch throughout, properly graded to the texture of material. For example: 16 stitches to the inch on percale.

Pinning seams:

Work on a table and lay the material with edges together. If one edge is gored and the other straight, lay the straight edge on the table, and the gored edge on top to prevent stretching the bias side. Pin seam edges together, **pins at right angles to the seam.**

Pinning at right angles to the seam:

Prevents stretching the top material.

Makes basting easy over the pins.

Makes it possible to eliminate basting and machine stitch over pins.

Avoids pricking fingers as you sew.

Keeps a straighter line of basting.

Turning seams:

Plain seams pressed with two edges together or French seams

Turn in one direction throughout the length of the seam.

Turn toward the front at the underarm.

Turn toward the side with the lesser amount of fullness (as at the waistline turn down).

Turn toward the front at the shoulder.

In trousers and shorts, turn the crotch seam of the front and back of the garment in the same direction either to the right or left, and the leg seam in both legs in the same direction, either to the front or back.

When a hem or facing is turned to the right side of a garment, it is desirable to reverse part of the seam.

Plain Seam

A plain seam, pinked or not, is good for most firmly woven fabrics. A plain seam pressed open gives a smooth, flat seam. A plain seam may be pressed to one side on some percales and sheer cottons, if desired. No finish is needed on the raw edges if the fabric does not fray. See Figure 2.

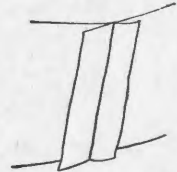


Fig. 2—Plain seam

Plain Seam—edge turned and stitched

Turn edges under $\frac{1}{8}$ " and stitch on the very edge. This seam finish is used on very loosely woven, light-weight fabrics and on seams that are apt to show when the garment is worn, such as in unlined jackets. Care needs to be taken in pressing this seam so that the seam edges will not make ridges on the garment. See Figure 3.

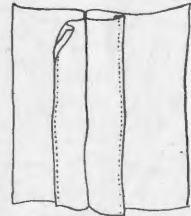


Fig. 3—Plain seam - edge turned and stitched

Plain Seam—edge stitched

Stitch very near the cut edge of the seam before pressing. This seam finish is used on materials that are apt to ravel a little. It makes as smooth a finish as an unfinished plain seam. See Figure 4.

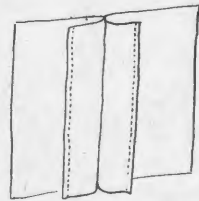


Fig. 4—Plain seam - edge stitched

Plain Seam—overcast

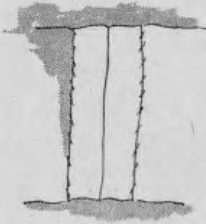


Fig. 5—Plain seam - overcast

This finish is used when a material ravel easily, and when turning the edge under and stitching (as in Figure 3) would make too bulky a finish. This finish is often used on seams that are not pressed open as on the waist and arm-hole seams where to stitch the edge would either be difficult to do or it would prevent the edge from being pliable. Seams cut on the straight of goods often ravel easily and need overcasting. To overcast take over and under stitches. The thread should not be taut. See Figure 5.

Plain Seam—edge bound

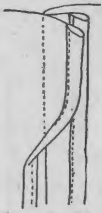


Fig. 6—Plain seam - edge bound

This seam finish is used in unlined jackets (especially wool). Fold seam binding tape with one side a trifle narrower than the other. Press. Slip over the edge of the seam with narrower edge up. Hand or machine stitch on, so that one stitching will catch both edges. The binding should be held easily and thread not drawn too tight. Long machine stitches are better than short ones here. A machine attachment may be used. Seam binding or rayon bias binding is most often used. Cotton is sometimes used on wool if there is no possibility of the binding causing a ridge when pressing. See Figure 6.

Plain Seam—edge rolled

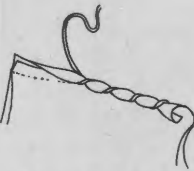


Fig. 7—Plain seam edg rolled

This seam is used on transparent fabrics requiring a very narrow seam. Stitch a plain seam, trim one edge to about $\frac{1}{8}$ " , between thumb and forefinger roll wider edge over narrower edge and take stitches over and under the roll to the machine stitching, but not through the roll. See Figure 7.

French Seam

This seam is used on transparent fabrics that require frequent laundering. First, make a plain seam on the right side, taking less than $\frac{1}{2}$ of seam allowance. Trim raw edges evenly. Press open. Turn. Press again so stitching line comes on edge. Stitch. Use narrow French seams on sheer materials and on small garments. Keep this seam about $\frac{1}{8}$ " wide. Be sure no raw edges show on right side. See Figure 8.

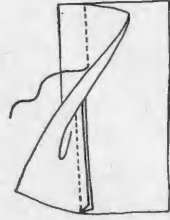


Fig. 8—French seam

False French Seam

Stitch a plain seam on the wrong side of the garment; turn the edges in toward each other and hold with running stitches or an overhand stitch. This type of seam is used where a French seam is desired, but the first stitching must be done at the exact finished line (matching plaids). This seam does not draw so much as a French seam so it can be used on a fitted seam as a side skirt seam where a French seam is not desirable. See Figure 9.



Fig. 9—False French seam

Flat Fell Seam

This is a sturdy seam for wash garments. It is a comfortable seam for pajamas, trousers, shorts, and slacks. It is decorative as well as durable.

Method I. Place two wrong sides of material together. Pin, baste, and stitch a plain seam. Trim one edge to within $\frac{1}{8}$ " of the stitching, leaving the edge that is to form the fell about twice as wide. Turn under the wider edge so that it encloses the narrow edge, and crease both edges flat. See Figure 10. Baste the seam flat and stitch on free edge. Two stitchings are generally used on the right side. However, if only one stitching is desired on the right side, start seam by placing two right sides together.

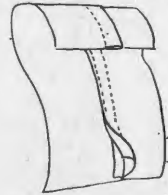


Fig. 10—Flat fell seam

When the seam has two stitchings on the right side, turn as follows:

At shoulder and underarm, toward the front.

At armseye, toward the sleeve.
 On yoke, turn down.

When the seam has only one stitching showing on the right side, turn the seam in the opposite direction in each case described.

Method II.

To keep the seam allowance correct, trim off (B) $\frac{1}{4}$ inch from edge. Pin the two edges of seam together extending one side (A) $\frac{1}{4}$ inch beyond the other (B). Figure 11.

Fold and press the $\frac{1}{4}$ inch over the other side (A over B). Pin. Baste. See Figure 12.

Stitch with sewing machine on the right side of seam $\frac{1}{4}$ inch or width of the wider side of the presser foot from the folded edge. See Figure 13 (C).

Open out. Smooth ridge. Lay seam down. Press and stitch as close to the edge as possible. Figure 14, (D).

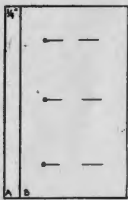


Fig. 11—Flat fell seam (Step 1 Method 2)



Fig. 12—Flat fell seam (Step 2 Method 2)



Fig. 13—Flat fell seam (Step 3 Method 2)

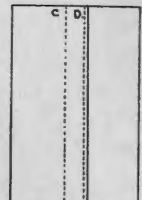


Fig. 14—Completed flat fell seam

Standing Fell Seam

This seam may be used where a French seam would be desirable from the standpoint of appearance, but cannot be handled satisfactorily. Join edges as for a plain seam. Trim one seam edge to about $\frac{1}{8}$ " of the stitching line; for example:

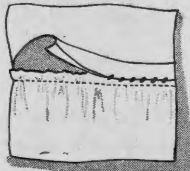


Fig. 15—Standing fell seam

Trim the gathered edge in attaching a single cuff to a gathered sleeve.

Trim the garment edge in an armseye seam.

Trim either edge in a seam where 2 plain edges are joined.

Turn wider edge of the seam over narrower edge and baste. Finish either by hemming or machine stitching the folded edge close to, but outside the line of machine stitching. See Figure 15.

Lapped Seam

Used when stitching is desired for decoration and when the two edges are angular or very much curved. A lapped seam is not stitched like a plain seam; instead one seam edge is folded under and lapped over the other. Pin, baste, and stitch **close** to the folded edge. See Figure 16.

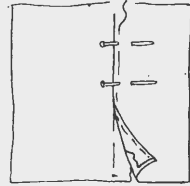


Fig. 16—Lap seam

Variation of Lapped Seam

Used on slips in place of lock-stitched seams. Stitch a plain seam, turn both edges in one direction, top stitch close to the first stitching line. See Figure 17.

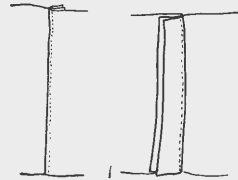


Fig. 17—Variation of lapped seam
Right side wrong side

Top-stitched Seam

This seam makes a firm, stiff and decorative seam line. It is also called a double-stitched seam. Make a plain seam and press open. On the right side, stitch on each side of the seam using narrow or wide side of presser foot as a guide to keep stitching an even distance from the seam line. See Figure 18.

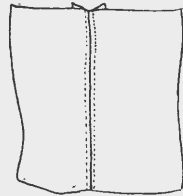


Fig. 18—Top-stitched seam

Variation

Make an extra row of stitching on each side. Allow extra wide seams in cutting when fashion calls for broad-stitched seams, as last rows of stitching must catch seam edges. Do stitchings before turning hems or joining yokes, etc. See Figure 19

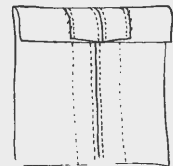


Fig. 19—Variation in top-stitched seam

Welt Seam

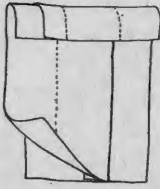


Fig. 20—Welt seam

This seam is used on heavy fabrics where a tailored finish is desired, but a flat fell is too bulky. Pin, baste, and stitch a plain seam. Trim under-seam edge narrower than the other to prevent thickness and a ridge in the garment after pressing. Press wide seam edge over narrow edge and baste close to first stitching. Stitch in place from right side using one side of presser foot as a guide to keep stitching an even distance from the first stitching. See Figure 20.

Open-Welt or Tuck Seam

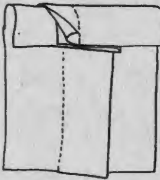


Fig. 21 — Open-welt seam or tuck seam

These seams should be made in firm fabrics that tailor perfectly and hold their shape. In fabrics like flannel, the welt or tuck is often stitched as much as an inch from the seam line. Provide extra seam width when wide tucks are desired.

Baste seam line with even short stitches, but do not machine-stitch. Press both seam edges to one side; then machine stitch on top, the distance from the seam line that you want the tuck to be. The tuck appears when the basting is removed. If using heavy material, the edge of the seam next to the garment may be trimmed narrower than the other to avoid a ridge on the outside of the garment after pressing. See Figure 21.

Slot Seam

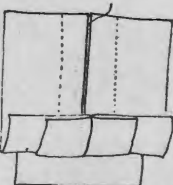


Fig. 22—Slot seam

This is a decorative seam giving a tailored effect and may be a means of eliminating piecing in remodeling garments. Baste as for a plain seam, but do not stitch. Press open, cut lengthwise strips 1" wider than the seam allowances. Place strip directly under the seam and baste in place. Stitch each side an even distance from the basted seam line. Remove seam bastings. See Fig. 22.

Strap Seam

This is a decorative seam and may also have possibilities in remodeling garments. Stitch plain seam, press open. Take true bias or lengthwise strips of material, twice the finished width the strip is to be. Turn edges of strip together so they meet on wrong side; fasten together with diagonal basting that is never removed. Press. Baste over seam. Stitch along both edges. Remove basting and press on wrong sides. See Figure 23.

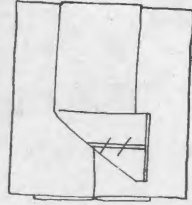


Fig. 23—Strap seam

Piped Seam

This is a decorative seam and is used to accent certain lines of the dress. True bias, ribbon, or braid is used to pipe seams. Fold piping lengthwise with one edge in a scant $\frac{1}{8}$ ". Press. Baste piping to one seam edge. Baste other seam edge in place over this. Stitch. When topstitching is used, turn top seam edge back, baste, and stitch it in place. See Figure 24.

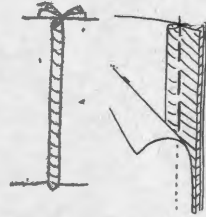


Fig. 24—Piped seam

Corded Seam

Make similar to the piped seam except that a cord is stitched in a bias strip. It is necessary to have a cording foot on the machine in order to be able to stitch close to the cording. An ordinary presser foot which has one side filed off will serve for a cording foot. Unless such a foot is used the cord must be stitched into the seams by hand. Proceed as for a piped seam. A corded seam is difficult to handle on angular or very much curved edges. See Figure 25.

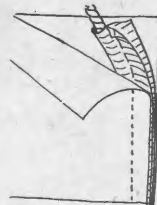


Fig. 25 — Corded seam

Curved Seams

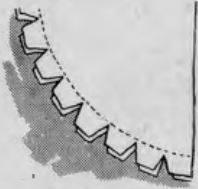


Fig. 26—Outer curved seam

Outer curve seams should be notched and inner curve seams slashed before turning. See Figure 26.

Joining Seams

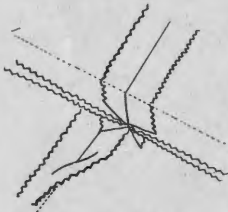


Fig. 27—Joining seams

Joinings and crossings should be smooth. Always open and press seams as soon as they are stitched, and before they are joined or crossed. See Figure 27.

Matching Stripes or Figures in Seams

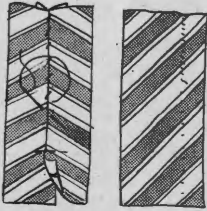
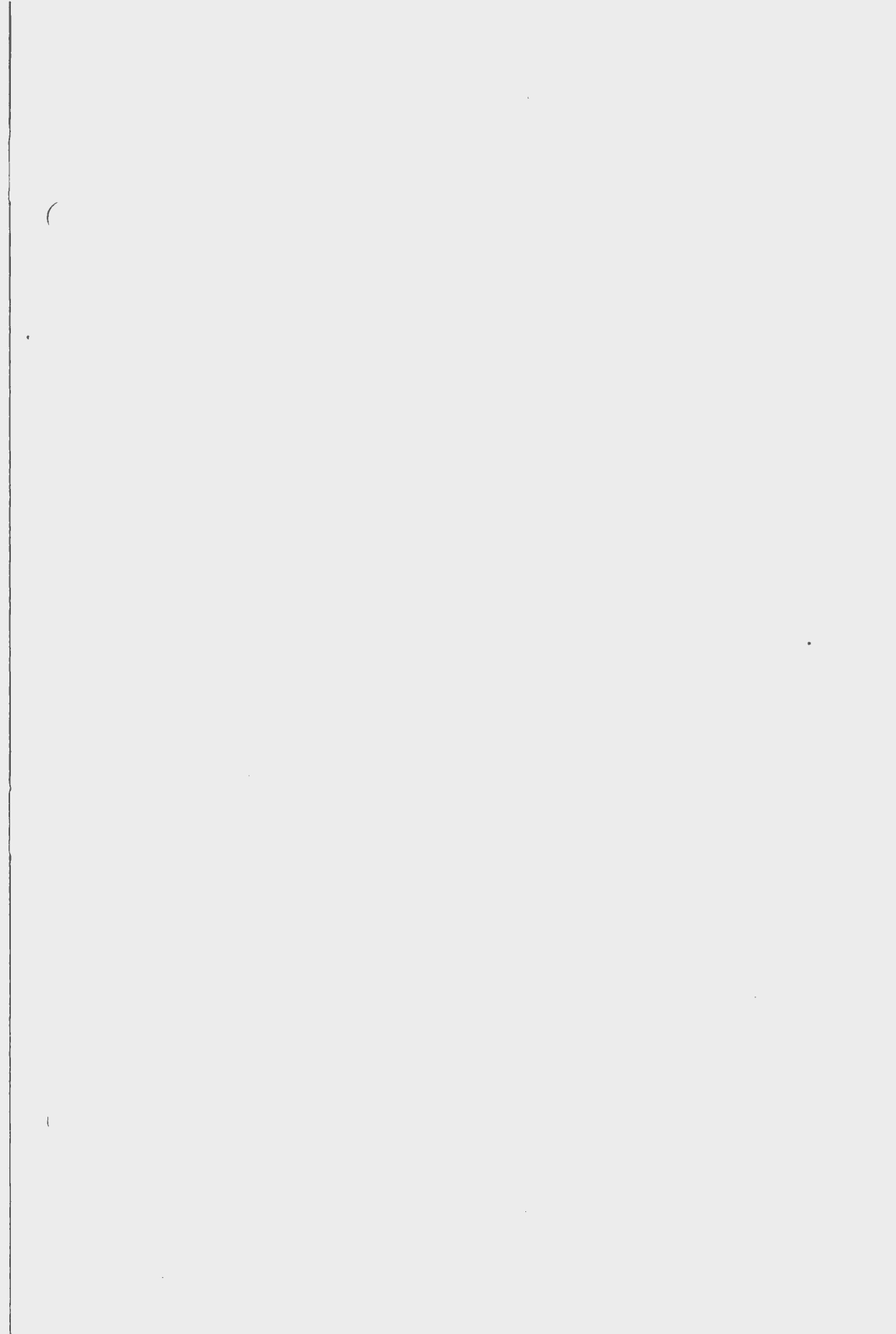


Fig. 28—Matching stripes in seams

Lay one piece of garment on the table; turn in the edge of the piece to be matched and lay it directly on the traced seam line of the other piece, hold folded edge to the other, but do not take deep or close stitches. Turn the garment to the wrong side and stitch through the hemming stitches; remove hemming stitches. The stripes or figures will be perfectly matched. See Figure 28.

References

- Modern Dressmaking Made Easy—Mary Brooks Picken
- Clothing Construction—Brown, Gorham, Keever
- Clothing for Women—L. I. Baldt



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