

improve your Sewing Skill

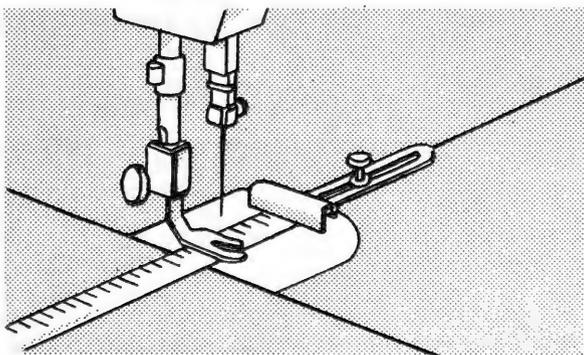
Lesson 9
Extension
Bulletin 520
April 1957

HOW TO MAKE YOUR DRESS BLOUSE

This lesson shows you how to start making the blouse of your dress. Remember to follow the unit method of sewing. Complete and press each dress section before joining it to another. You will learn why and how to stay-stitch, how to use the sewing machine to transfer pattern markings from the wrong to the right side of the fabric, and how to put in darts and a neck zipper.

Set the Seam Guide

Because the line for stay-stitching is slightly outside the regular seamline, decide where the seamline will be first. For accuracy, use the seam guide that comes with your sewing machine. Or mark the seam allowance with a strip of cellophane, masking or adhesive tape fastened to the bed of the machine. Some machines have markings to the right of the needle to indicate various seam widths. Most patterns allow $\frac{5}{8}$ inch.



If there are no markings for seam allowance on your machine, use your tape measure to set the tape or the seam guide the correct seam width. Measure from the needle hole to the edge of the seam guide. Then, tighten the screw.

Stay-Stitch the Seams

Stay-stitching is the first step in making your blouse and an important one, especially for fabrics that stretch in handling. It means just what the words say—a row of machine stitching through a single thickness of fabric to hold in place or “stay” the threads of the fabric along a bias seamline. This stitching keeps the fabric from stretching out of shape while you work with it. The stitches are placed $\frac{1}{8}$ inch outside the seam allowance line toward the cut edge. Use matching thread and the stitch length you will use for your seams.

Always stay-stitch in a certain direction. If you run your finger gently along the seam edge in one direction, the threads will lie smooth. This is the direction you should stitch. If you run your finger along the same edge in the other direction, the threads will rough up. Stitching in this direction will stretch the fabric. On some patterns you will find arrows to tell you the direction to sew and press your fabric.

Another way to remember the correct direction of stitching your blouse is to stay-stitch from



EXTENSION SERVICE

STATE COLLEGE OF WASHINGTON

Pullman, Washington

the highest point along the seam edge to the lowest point. For example, on the shoulder seam the highest point is the neck edge, so stay-stitch from the neck edge to the armhole.

You are now ready to stay-stitch the seams of your blouse. Start with the neckline as shown. Stitch in the direction the arrows point.

HIGH NECKLINE

. . . from shoulder seam at neck edge, to center front and center back.

SHOULDER LINE .

. . . from neck edge to armhole.

ARMHOLE . . .

from shoulder edge to underarm.

SIDE SEAM . . .

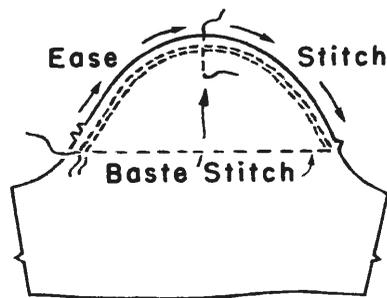
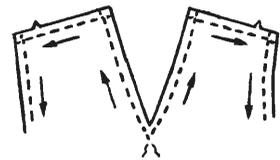
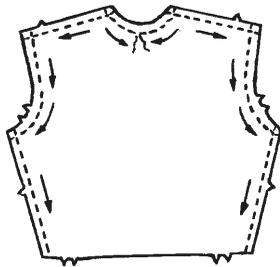
underarm to waistline.

V NECKLINE . . .

from center of V to shoulder.

SLEEVE . . .

Ease-stitch between notches around the cap in a continuous line. Make a second row of stitching outside the first



with left edge of the presser foot against the first row of stitches. Baste-stitch grain line of sleeve cap between notches. This will help you to set your sleeve in the armhole correctly.

Be sure that both the needle and the bobbin threads are under and back of the presser foot. Bring the fabric just over the needle hole, making sure that the seam edge of the fabric is less than 1/8 inch from the tape or seam guide. Then, lower the needle and presser foot and begin stitching. You do not need to fasten the threads at either end. Keep the edges of your fabric neat

by clipping off the long threads at the beginning and end of the stitching.

Baste-Stitch Pattern Markings

If your blouse fronts have carbon or other markings at center front, center back, top of sleeve cap, fold of facing, pocket or buttonhole placements on the wrong side of the fabric which need to be transferred to the right side of the garment, do it now. Lengthen the machine stitch as far as you can, and baste-stitch from the wrong side of the fabric.

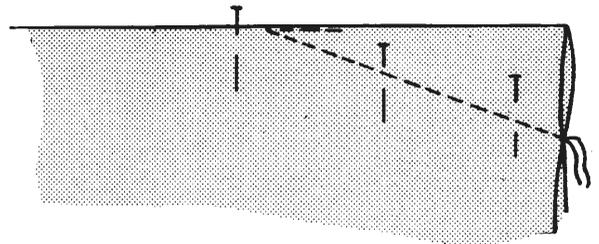
Stitch along the marked lines of any construction details that need to show on the right side. Follow the lines exactly. If you want the markings to show clearly on the right side, change the bobbin to a contrasting color of thread.

While the fabric is still flat, change the stitch length regulator to a short stitch and do any reinforcement stitching necessary a thread or two outside the seamline. An example is a seamline at a corner where the pattern indicates that the seam is to be clipped to the seamline at that point.

Put in Darts

After you have done everything you can to the blouse while it is flat, begin to shape it by putting in the darts at the shoulder, underarm or waistline seams. Here is a good method for making a smooth, even dart:

Put a pin down through the marking on one side of the dart and up through the fabric on the opposite dart line. Bring the two lines together, so that they match, then run the pin through the fabric on the marked line to hold it in place. Repeat this with more pins along the length of the dart. Stitch the dart from the cut end toward the point catching only one thread at the end. Stitch back 1/2 inch along the dart fold.

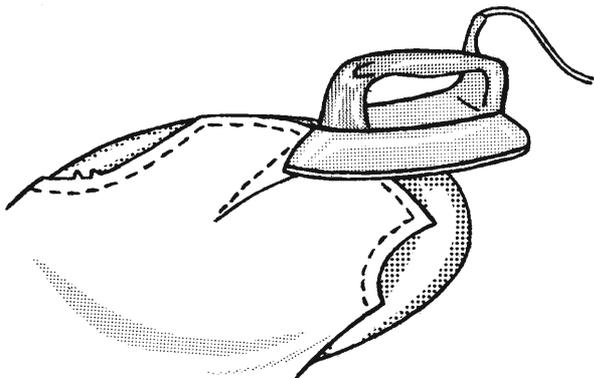


To be sure of a straight line, bring a strip of paper right up against the needle, hold the edge along the marked dart line and stitch along the edge of the paper. This is more accurate than a pencil mark. For a bust dart from an underarm seam of a full-busted figure, you may prefer a slight curve toward the dart fold rather than a straight line.

Press Each Unit

When you have finished all the construction details on your blouse front, you are ready to press. A good rule to follow is "Never cross one stitching with another until the first stitching has been pressed". Press with the same grain of the fabric as you followed for stitching so that none of the threads will be pushed out of place.

Always shape darts over a tailor's ham. Press horizontal darts down; vertical darts toward the center. For heavy fabrics slash the dart through



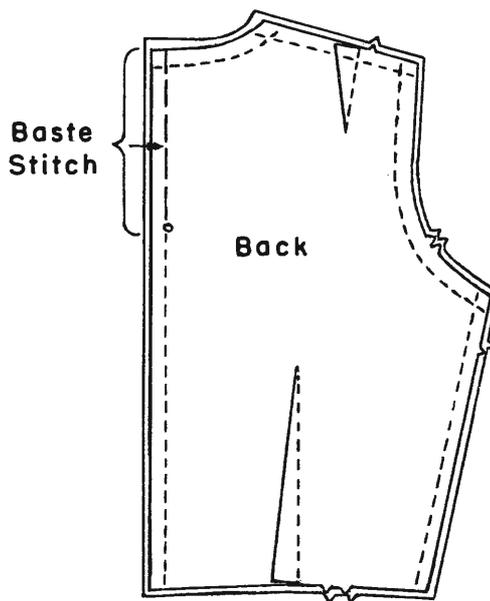
the center to within one inch of the point and press open. Snip the cut edges at end of slash to make a dart lie flat. Press first on the wrong side; then the right side to finish. Use a press cloth for fabrics that shine easily.

Put a Zipper in a Neck Opening

Some dresses use a zipper closing down the front or back. The zipper may be put into a center seam, or inserted in a slash. The first is hidden by the seam; the second shows.

To put a zipper into a center seam, follow these steps:

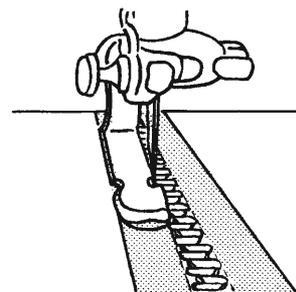
1. Stitch seam from bottom of blouse to opening. Fasten thread ends.



2. Baste-stitch the opening. Press seam open. The length of the opening should be the length of the metal part of the zipper plus about $\frac{1}{4}$ of an inch for ease. Add, also, the seam allowance at the top to this measurement.

3. Put zipper or cording foot on your machine.

4. Lay blouse on table wrong side up. Open the zipper and put the right side against



5. basted seam opening. Metal teeth should just touch the seamline.

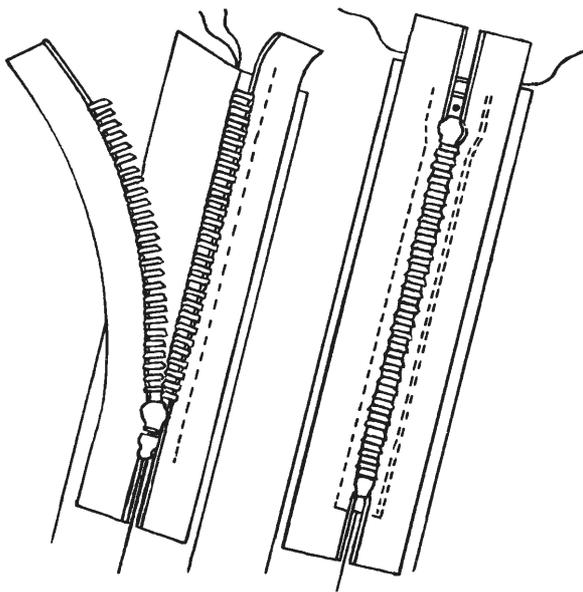
6. Stitch one side of zipper tape to single thickness of seam allowance (not through to right side of garment). This is to hold zipper in place. Ease the blouse fabric to zipper tape slightly to avoid a stretched look and a puckered zipper.

7. Close the zipper, flatten the garment so that the fabric is smooth. Stitch zipper tape to both seam and garment guiding your stitching along the metal part of the

zipper. Or baste flat and stitch from the right side of the blouse.

7. Stop your stitching when you have reached a point about $\frac{1}{8}$ inch beyond the metal part of the zipper at the bottom. This should be just where the opening ends and the permanent center seam begins.
8. Leave needle down, raise presser foot and turn a square corner. Stitch across the end of the zipper. Be sure to make exactly the same number of machine stitches on each side of the center seamline.
9. Break thread and stitch down other side of the zipper to join bottom stitching.
10. Clip and remove basting threads, if used. If correctly done, the zipper will lie smooth and flat; the edges of the fabric will meet right at the center of the covered zipper. Fasten thread ends.

To put a zipper into a center front or back neck line where there is no seam, follow these steps:



1. Mark with a basting thread the desired length of opening.
2. Cut a facing of fabric length about 4 inches wide and 3 inches longer than the metal teeth. Fold and mark center with a row of basting.
3. Lay the right side of the facing piece against the right side of the garment with centers matching. Stitch $\frac{1}{8}$ inch from center basting to an inch from lower end. Shorten stitch length for strength and stitch around corner. Make the corner square. Lengthen and stitch to top. Remove bastings and press smooth.
4. Cut through center to within $\frac{1}{4}$ inch of end. Cut diagonally to each corner but do not cut stitching.
5. Crease flat and turn facing to the wrong side. Baste edges and press for sharp edge.
6. Lay zipper flat on table, right side up. Put facing side of garment opening over the zipper. Bring finished edge of the opening just to the metal part of the zipper on either side and at end. Pin and baste in place.
7. With zipper foot in place, machine stitch around edge of opening from the right side of the blouse. The metal part of the zipper will show. For fabrics that slip with the presser foot, begin rows of stitching on both sides at the top and stitch toward the bottom. Make square corner.

Lesson 10

In the next lesson you will learn how to make seams on your dress.

This bulletin was adapted from a bulletin prepared by the Clothing Specialist of Iowa State College.