

# WAISTLINES AND ZIPPERS



## SEWING SKILLS

Waistlines and zippers should be smooth and straight. Using tape to reinforce the waistline assures a smooth, well-fitted waistline and a strong, secure seam.

### ATTACHING STAY TAPE

Reinforce the waist before joining the bodice and skirt. Use a strip of fabric selvage, rayon seam tape, or woven cotton tape.

Measure your waist over the foundation garment you plan to wear with the dress. Take a snug yet comfortable measurement. Add 2 inches for seams and cut the tape this length.

With pins mark off 1 inch at each end of the tape. Divide the remainder of the tape into four equal parts and mark with pins.

Also divide the skirt waistline into four equal parts. Start measuring from the side seamlines, not from the cut edge. The quarter marks will not fall at the seams because the skirt back is smaller than the front.

Turn the skirt inside out and work from the wrong side. Match quarter markings (Fig. 1). Pin tape so lower edge is  $\frac{1}{8}$  inch below waist seamline.

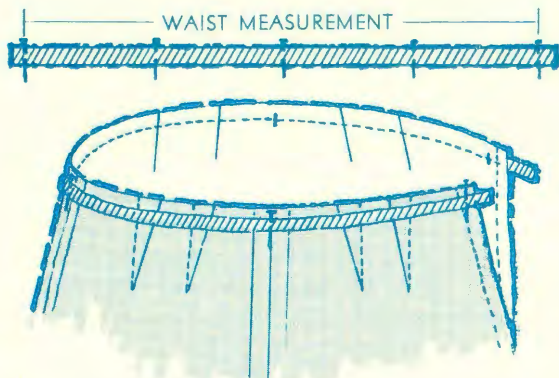


FIG. 1—Divide tape and waistline into four equal parts. Turn skirt inside out. Match quarter markings and ease in fullness.



FIG. 3.—For side zipper, angle stitching from the side seamline to the raw edge.

Pin at each quarter. Ease in fullness by tightening staystitches. There may be  $\frac{1}{2}$  to 2 inches of ease in a straight skirt. Pin in place.

Turn the skirt right side out. Stitch the tape in place just inside the  $\frac{5}{8}$ -inch seamline. Trim the ends of the tape at the cut edge (Fig. 2).

### JOINING SKIRT AND BODICE

Match center front, center back, and side seams of bodice and skirt. Match any other seams and darts. Ease in bodice fullness. Stitch together just below stitching on waistline tape.

If the dress is to have a side zipper, angle the stitching from the side seamline to the raw edge of the side opening (Fig. 3). This gives extra ease and will make a smoother placket.

Trim the waistline seam near the placket opening to eliminate bulk. Press the seam upward.

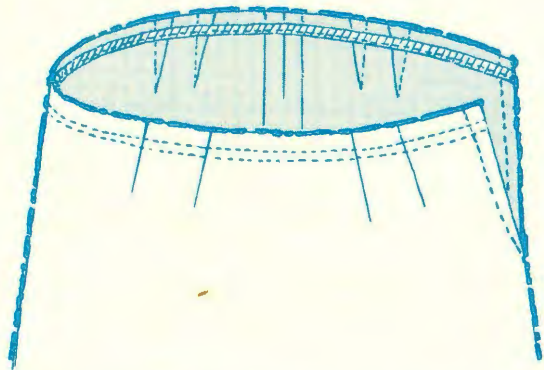


FIG. 2—Turn skirt right side out. Stitch tape to skirt just inside the  $\frac{5}{8}$ -inch seamline, about  $\frac{1}{8}$  inch from edge of tape.



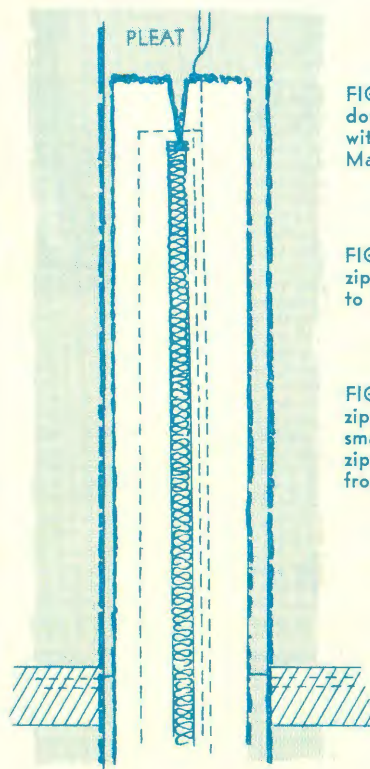
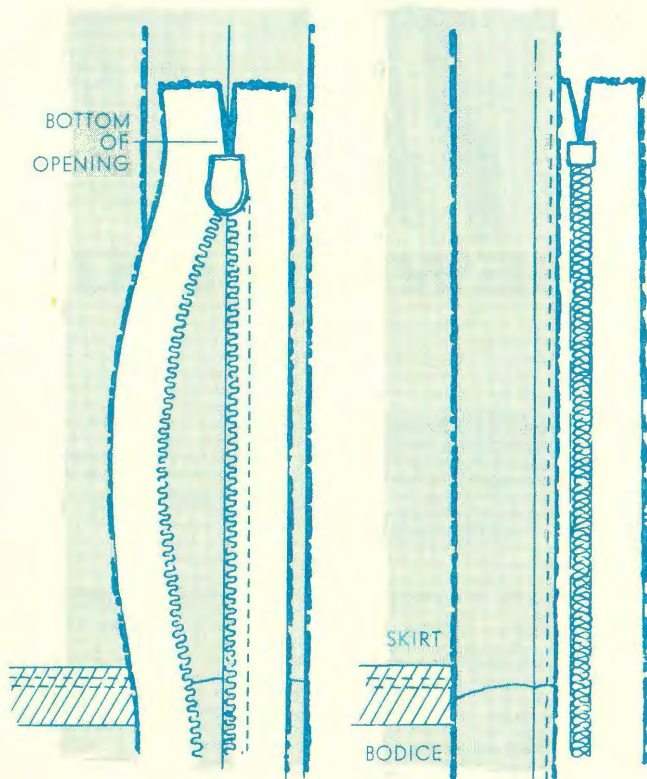


FIG. 4—Open zipper. Lay face down on back seam allowance with teeth next to seamline. Machine baste close to teeth.

FIG. 5—Turn seam allowance so zipper is face up. Stitch close to fold with regulation stitch.

FIG. 6—Lay garment flat with zipper face down. There will be small pleats at each end. Baste zipper in place. Start stitching from bottom end.

## APPLYING THE ZIPPER

The lapped zipper method conceals the zipper with a fold of fabric and makes an inconspicuous closing at the side or center back. Patterns suggest the length of zipper to use.

Leave an opening in the seam the length of the metal part of the zipper plus  $\frac{3}{8}$  inch for the pull tab. Machine baste the opening with a  $\frac{5}{8}$ -inch seam. Remember to match waist and neck seams.

Attach zipper foot and adjust to right side of needle. Lay garment wrong side up with the bottom end of the opening away from you. Fold the back of the garment under but leave the back seam allowance extended.

Open the zipper and lay it face down on the back seam allowance. Lay edge of teeth along seamline and the end stop at the bottom end of the basting. Starting at bottom of tape, machine baste close to teeth through tape and seam allowance only (Fig. 4).

Close the zipper and turn face up by folding the seam allowance under. Smooth the fabric away from the zipper.

Move the zipper foot to the left of the needle and use a regulation stitch. Stitch on the fold close to the teeth starting at the bottom end of the tape (Fig. 5).

Now spread the garment flat with the zipper face down on the seam allowance. There should be a small pleat in the back seam allowance at each end of the zipper. Pin or baste these pleats in place. They assure enough overlap to cover the teeth on the right side of the garment.

Pin or baste the zipper in place. Then stitch across the bottom and up the side of the zipper (Fig. 6). For a side dress zipper, continue stitching across the top. Tie thread ends, press, and remove the basting from the seamline.

You may wish to do this final stitching from the right side of the garment. It is easier to get an even overlap.

A hand-sewn zipper is best in pile or fleece fabrics and with fine chiffon and lace fabrics. The first basting may be done by machine but all top stitching is done by hand. A half backstitch, like that used on pockets, is a strong, inconspicuous stitch to use.

*This bulletin was prepared by Hazel L. Roberts, Extension Clothing Specialist, Washington State University.*