

OREGON
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FACINGS and ENCLOSED SEAMS

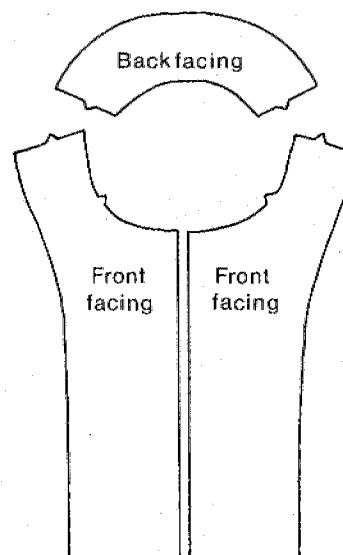
A.W. Koester

A facing is a piece of fabric used to finish a garment edge, such as the neckline, sleeveless armholes, front and back openings, and details such as patch pockets and cuffs. The facing usually is placed on the inside of the garment edge, where it gives body and sharpness to the edge. Sometimes the facing is partly folded to the outside, as in a lapel. The seam edge that results from applying a facing is an enclosed seam. A facing generally is made of the same fabric as the garment, but where the garment fabric is bulky or rough textured, a lighter weight or smoother fabric may be used. As part of the garment design, a fabric of a different color or texture may be used for the facing.

A well-finished facing has a sharp, clean, even edge enclosing the seam and a smooth, flat surface. If there are corners, they should match exactly. To help you achieve a sharp edge and smooth surface, use an interfacing between the facing and the garment.

There are three types of facings: *separate shaped or fitted facings*, *extended shaped or fitted facings*, and *bias facings*.

The *separate shaped or fitted facings* are cut in the same yarn direction or with the grain and cut to match the edges of the garment section. Shaped facings are used to finish the front and back openings around the neckline and sleeveless armhole edges, the underside of shaped collars and cuffs, and other similar areas requiring the same detail.



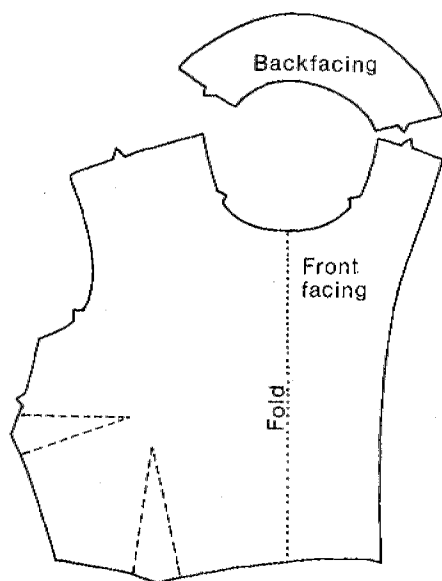
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Ardis W. Koester, *Extension textiles and clothing specialist, Oregon State University.*

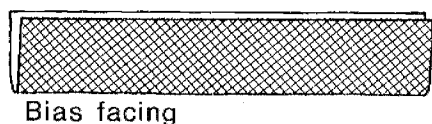


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An *extended shaped or fitted* facing is essentially a shaped facing that is cut in one piece with the garment section and is folded back along the garment edge. Extended facings are used to finish the front and back openings and the underside of straight collars and cuffs. The instructions for shaped or fitted facings in this publication apply to both separate and extended facings.

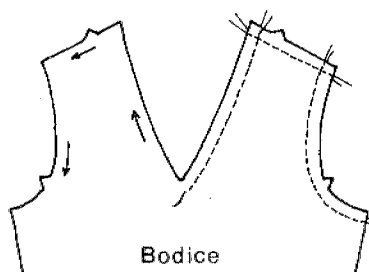
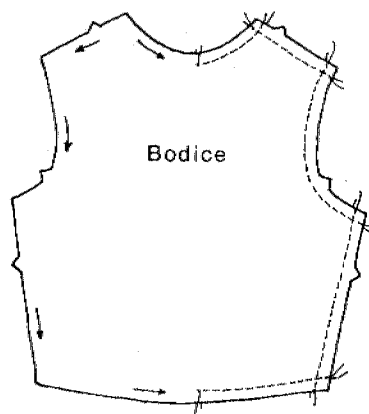


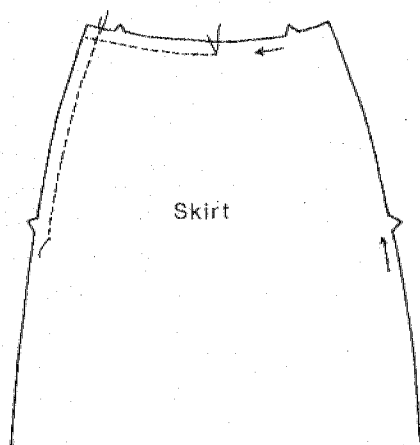
A *bias* facing is a bias strip of fabric that can be shaped to gently curved edges such as hems, enlarged necklines, and sleeveless armholes. A bias facing may be used on garments of sheer or bulky fabrics because this facing is narrower, detracts less, and adds less bulk than a shaped or fitted facing. However, the bias facing may be more difficult to lay flat if the edge is very curved.



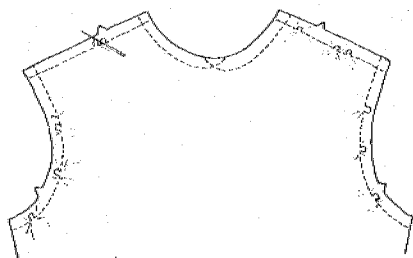
Preparing the garment

Since you may be working with a curved edge, it is important to support the yarn intersections and prevent the fabric from stretching or changing shape in the seam area by doing *directional staystitching*. Staystitching is a row of regular-length machine stitching placed just inside the seamline to prevent it from changing shape during construction. Staystitch immediately after removing the pattern from the fabric sections before any further construction. Stitch with the yarn direction or grain, using matching thread and the same stitch length as will be used for the seams. Locate the staystitching just inside the seam allowance (usually $\frac{1}{2}$ inch or 1.3 cm from the cut edge if the seam allowance is $\frac{3}{4}$ inch or 1.5 cm). Staystitch through a single layer of fabric. If you use interfacing, staystitch both fabrics at once. Stitch with the yarn direction, or change the stitching direction whenever necessary.





Staystitching. Staystitching is just as important to prevent knits from stretching. After staystitching, lay the pattern on top of the fabric to determine whether the size and shape are exactly the same as the pattern. If the knit has stretched, draw up the staystitching gently with a pin at 1- to 2-inch (2.5 cm to 5 cm) intervals until the fabric matches the pattern.



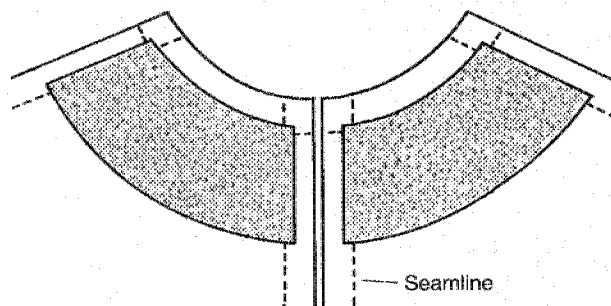
Interfacing. Interfacing supports and reinforces the shape of the edge, giving a sharp edge and a smooth surface. Interfacing is applied to the garment edge before staystitching or before the facing is applied. The type of interfacing is determined by the garment fabric and must have the same care requirements as the garment fabric. It should give support and body to the garment fabric without overpowering it or making it appear stiff and bulky.

If you use a fusible interfacing, be sure to test a small amount on a scrap of your fabric. Check that the fusible interfacing instructions are followed; be sure that the heat, moisture, pressure, and time required are satisfactory for your fabric and that the garment fabric has not been damaged or changed by the fusible. After preparing a sample of the fusible and your fabric, look at the right side of the fabric for ridges, uneven texture, or

stiffness. The following guidelines will help you determine the use of fusible interfacing. Apply the fusible interfacing to:

- the outer garment fabric *only* if the interfacing does not change the texture or the look or cause a ridge.
- the facing fabric to give a firm edge while maintaining a soft look and preventing the seam allowance from showing through. Use this application when the facing becomes the outer layer, as in lapels. The top collar also must be interfaced with fusible to give the lapel and collar the same amount of firmness.
- the entire garment section to give body and a crisp, tailored look.
- the entire garment section and the facings if the interfacing is very light-weight and more body is needed.

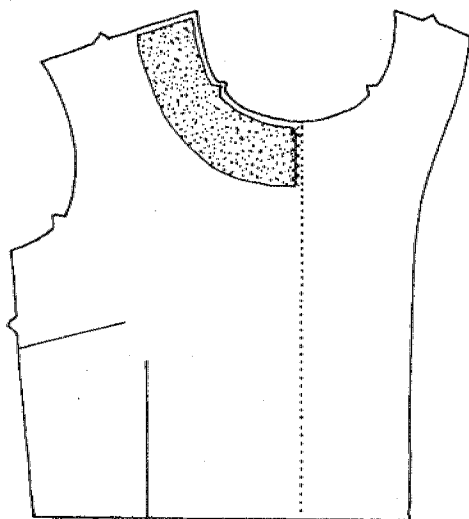
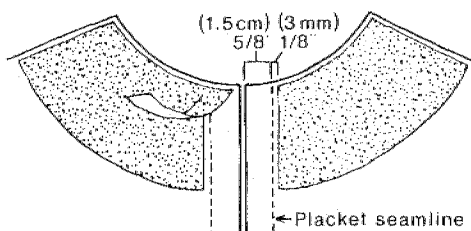
Cut the fusible interfacing from the facing pattern piece, but trim $\frac{1}{2}$ inch (1.3 cm) from the edges so that the interfacing does not extend beyond the seamline or the completed facing. You may use pinking shears to trim the interfacing for a softened outer edge.



Fusible interfacing

Apply fusible interfacing using the technique from the testing procedure. Be sure to lift and lower the iron; do not slide it across the fabric.

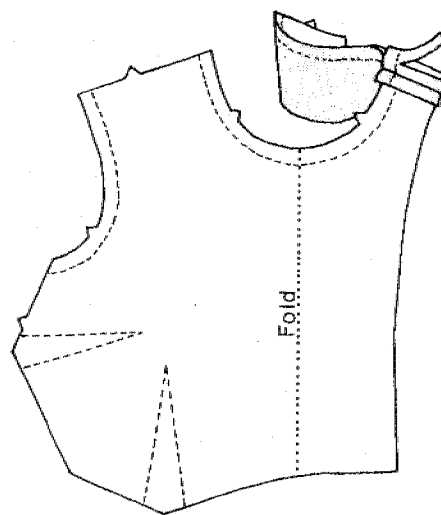
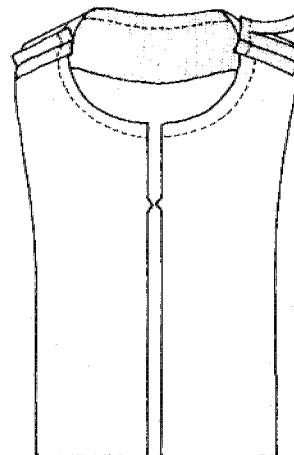
Apply a sew-in interfacing by pinning it to the wrong side of the garment, matching the shaped edges. Use directional staystitching on both the interfacing and garment together. If the facing is the extended type, match the straight edge to the fold line. Attach the interfacing edge to the fold line with a loose blindstitch or catchstitch, which is invisible on the right side. If the edge will be topstitched, then the stitching will hold the interfacing in place.



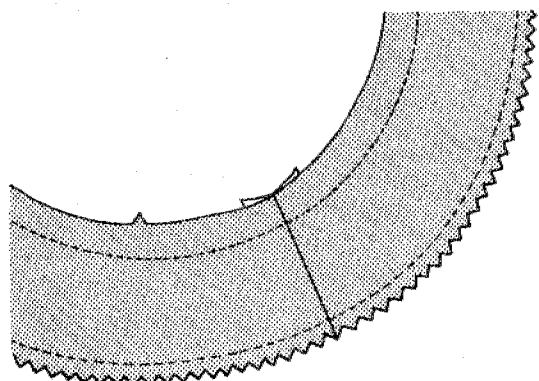
Sew-in interfacing

Preparing the shaped facing

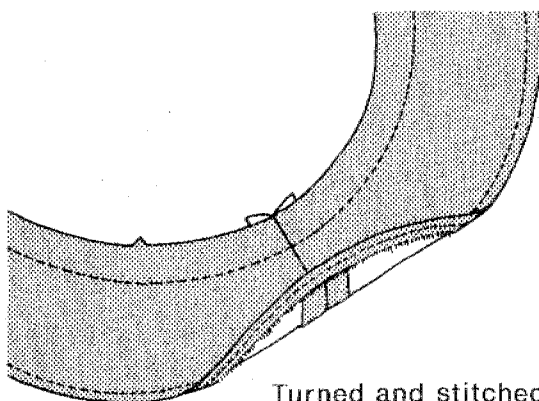
Seam together the facing sections of a unit—for example, the front and back neckline facing pieces or the back neck facing and front extended facing. Trim the seam allowances to half their width and press open.



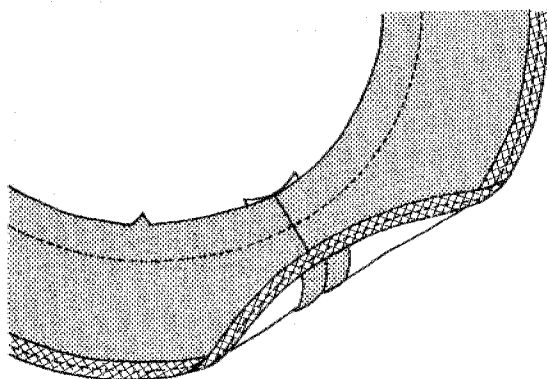
Finish the outer unnotched edge while considering the garment style, fabric weight, and the fabric's amount of ravel. Use a seam finish such as stitched and pinked, turned and stitched, overcast, plain or multistitch zigzag, serging, bias binding, or Hong Kong finish.



Stitched and pinked

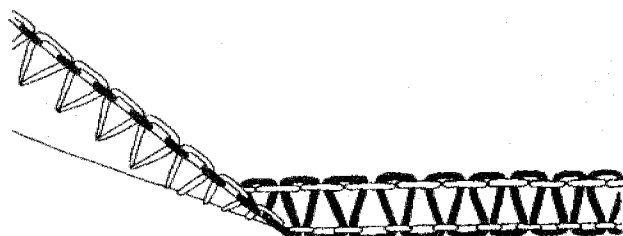


Turned and stitched

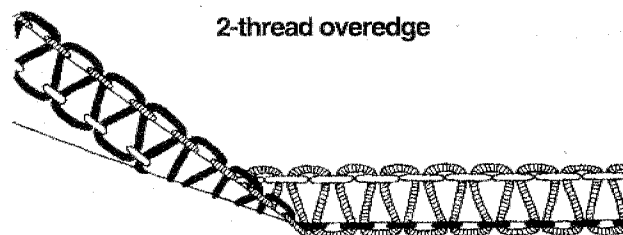


Bias-bound edge

Fabrics that do not ravel or roll (e.g., firm knits and nonwovens such as leather or suede) do not need an edge finish. On sheer and lightweight fabrics that ravel, the turned and stitched finish is suitable. If you use serging, use the 2-thread overedge or 3-thread overlock stitch.



2-thread overedge



3-thread overlock

For medium- to heavy-weight fabrics, the pinked and stitched, overcast, and zigzag stitches are suitable. Serging with a 3-thread overlock stitch is another option.

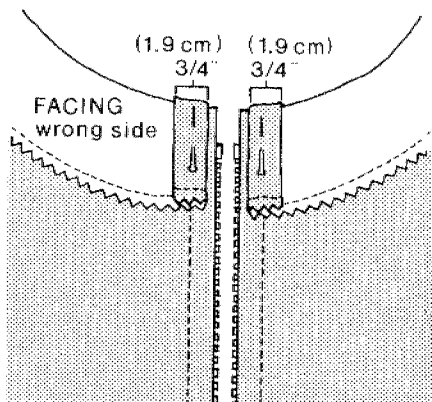
On heavy-weight fabrics, bias binding or the Hong Kong finish are suitable for unlined jackets.

Attaching and stitching the shaped facing

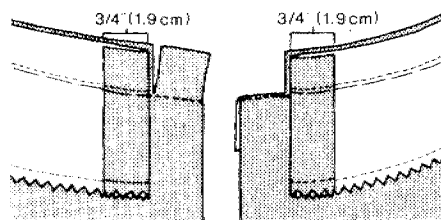
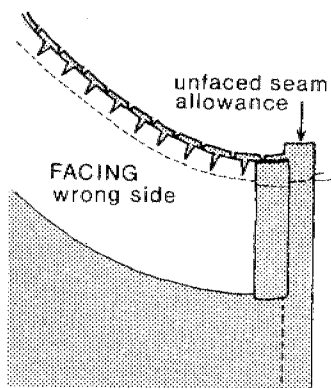
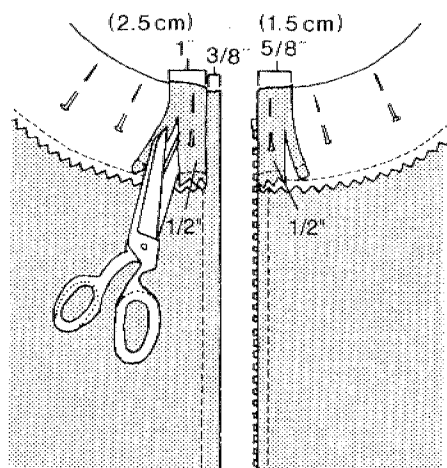
With the facing on top for better control, machine stitch the facing seam in one operation. Keep the seam allowance even and the stitching line smooth. Use a shorter stitch to reinforce corners of square facings, starting and stopping the shorter size stitch $\frac{1}{2}$ inch to 1 inch (1.3 to 2.5 cm) on each side of the corner. You may pivot the stitching at the corner or use one to two stitches across the corner, depending on the sharpness of the angle. You are now ready to finish the enclosed seam (as described in the next section).

Generally, especially if you are an inexperienced sewer, you should insert the zipper before applying the facing. The following method also is recommended for heavier-weight fabrics. Insert the zipper, using instructions for lapped or centered application. Pin the facing to the corresponding garment section, carefully matching edges, construction marks, and seams. After

pinning the facing to the garment, fold back the ends of the facing even with the teeth or coil of the zipper. For a centered zipper, the facing will fold back about $\frac{3}{4}$ inch (1.9 cm) on each side.

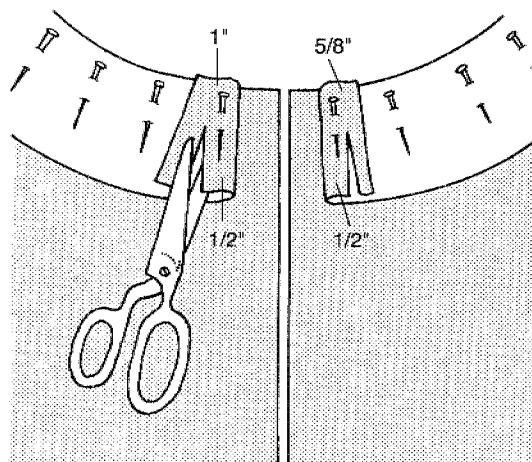


For a lapped zipper, the facing will fold back about 1 inch (2.5 cm) on the left-hand side and $\frac{5}{8}$ inch (1.5 cm) on the right-hand side of the garment.

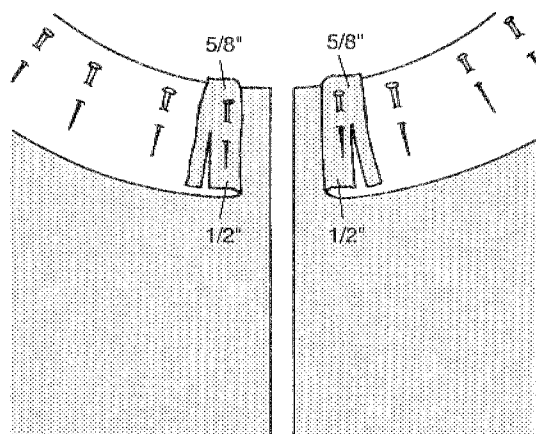


Except for the unfaced portion on the left-hand side of the lapped zipper, the seam allowance will be stitched, graded, pressed, clipped, and understitched. This area will be turned under and hemmed to the top of the zipper tape when the facing is slipstitched along the top of the zipper tape.

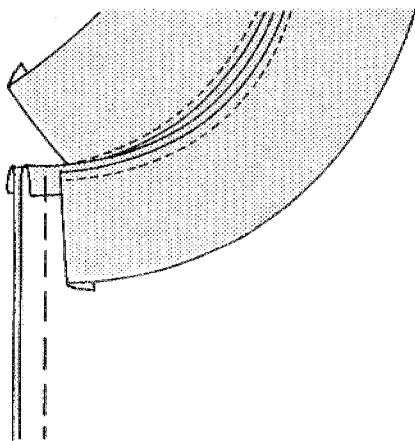
If you are more skilled or you are working with a light- to medium-weight fabric, you may wish to apply the facing before inserting the zipper. To use this procedure, pin the facing to the garment edge, right sides together. If you will use a lapped zipper application, turn the right end of the facing back on itself $\frac{5}{8}$ inch (1.5 cm) and the left end back 1 inch (2.5 cm). Trim folded ends so $\frac{1}{2}$ inch (1.3 cm) remains.



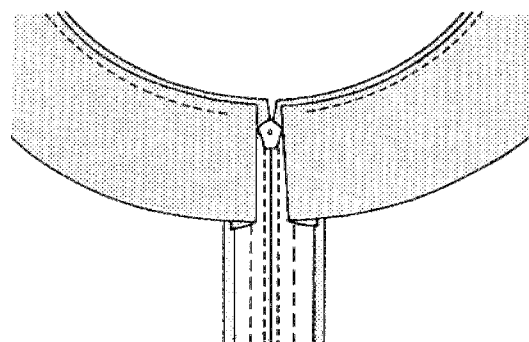
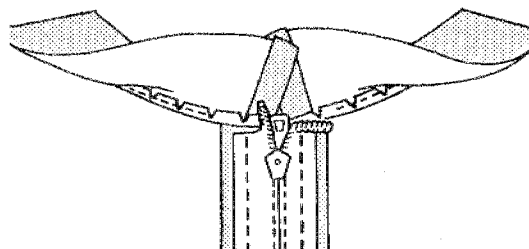
If you will use a centered application, fold back both ends $\frac{3}{8}$ inch (1.5 cm) and trim so $\frac{1}{2}$ inch (1.3 cm) remains.



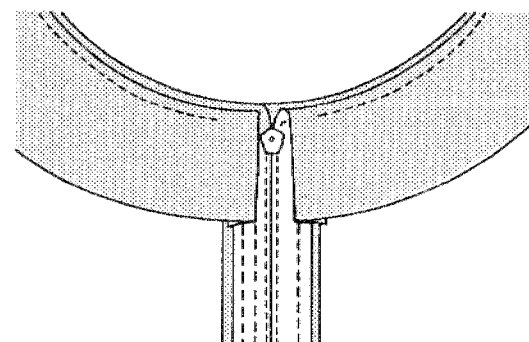
Stitch the facing to the garment. Finish the enclosed seam allowance with grading, clipping, and understitching. Press the facing and unfaced seam allowance to inside. In preparation for the zipper application, baste the seam closed, including stitching across the pressed-in seam allowance.



Insert the zipper using instructions for lapped or centered technique. Be sure facings do not get caught. Zipper stitching lines should not go beyond facing/garment seamline. Just below facing/garment seamline, cut along zipper coil or teeth and trim off upper corner of tape. Bend coil or teeth down.



Centered zipper



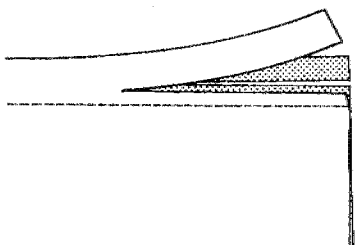
Lapped zipper

Fold facing down and slipstitch in place.

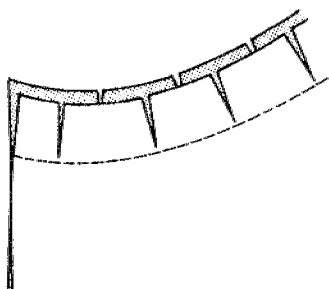
Finishing the enclosed seam allowance

Trim the outside corners, at the outer corner of a lapel, for example. This will reduce the bulk and permit the corner to turn more easily.

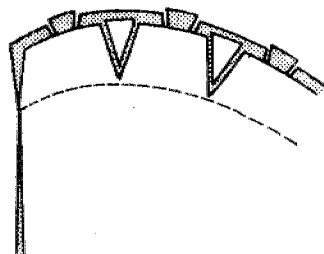
Grade or layer seam allowances to reduce bulk. Grading means to cut each layer of an enclosed seam to a different width. The shortest seam would be the one closest to the body, the longest would be toward the outer surface of the garment. The final width of each seam allowance layer is determined after considering fabric weight, amount of fabric ravel, and the number of layers.



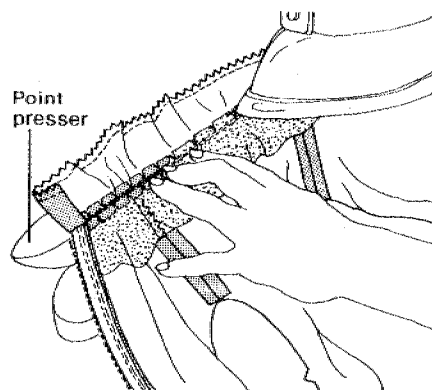
Clip inward curving seam allowances to allow them to spread and to prevent their bunching and rolling within the enclosed seam after the facing is turned. Clipping consists of straight cuts through the seam allowance to, but not through, the staystitching. Clip each layer of seam allowance separately, alternating the placement of the clips. On gentle curves fewer clips may be needed, while on sharp curves more frequent clips are needed.



Notch outward curving seam allowances to reduce the bulk and to allow the edges to squeeze together. Notching consists of cutting out small, triangular wedges of fabric toward the seam but not through the staystitching. When there are two or more layers of fabric, such as on the outer curve on a lapel or faced pocket, alternate the notches on each layer so they leave a smooth edge.

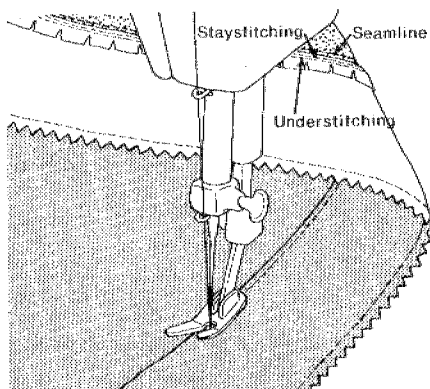


Press the seam flat—as it was sewn. Then place the seam, wrong side up, over a narrow surface such as a tailor's ham, seam roll, or point presser. The seam will be better hidden if the seam allowance is first pressed open with the tip of the iron, then all seam allowances are pressed toward the facing. Press carefully, checking that no creases occur on the right side of the garment or facing.

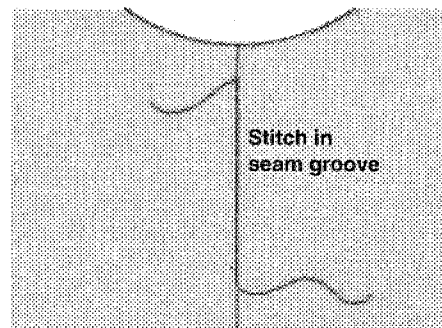
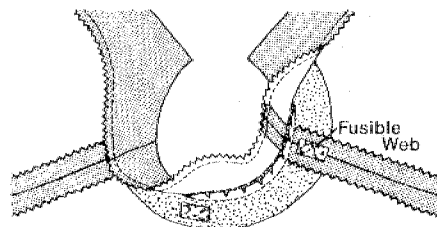
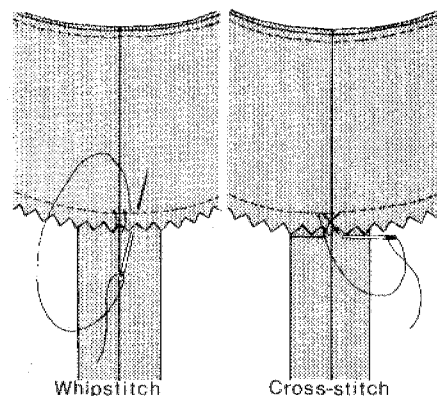


Understitching prevents the seam edge of the facing from rolling to the outside of the garment. All facing seam edges except very short ones, such as the ends of a collar, and where the stitching would show—as on a lapel—should be understitched unless the edges will be topstitched. This step frequently is omitted from instruction guides, yet it is part of quality construction. Most understitching is machine stitched, but it may be pickstitched by hand on difficult-to-handle areas (such as faced scallops or the ends of a collar).

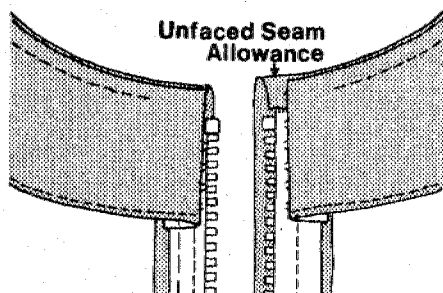
Machine understitch from the right side of the facing, close to the seamline, through the facing and seam allowances with a regular-size machine stitch. For facings with pointed ends like collars, stop about 1 inch (2.5 cm) short of the corner. On lapels, stop about 1 inch (2.5 cm) short of where the lapel will be folded to the outside. The understitching may continue on the garment side of the lapel where the garment becomes the “facing” of the lapel. Press the facing to the inside, allowing the seamline to roll inside and to be hidden. Press, using the tip of the iron, with the facing side up over a tailor’s ham or curved surface, matching the seamlines with the center markings.



Fasten the facing in place where there is more than one thickness of fabric—for example, seams and darts. Never completely hem a facing into place unless it can be hemmed to an underlayer of fabric such as an underlining. Methods of fastening the facing in place include handstitching (whip-stitching or cross-stitching), machine stitching in the seam groove from the right side of the garment, or fusing with small strips of fusible web between the facing and seams of the garment. Be sure to test the fusible web with your garment fabric and follow the fusing instructions regarding heat, moisture, pressure, and time.

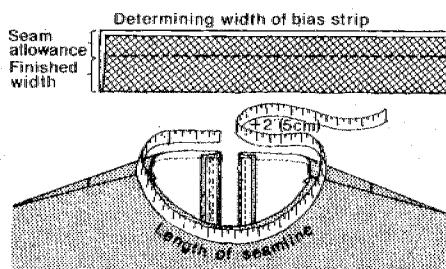


If the facing finishes the end of a seam where there is a zipper, hem the ends of the facing to the zipper tape. On a lapped zipper in light- or medium-weight fabric, the unfaced portion of the seam allowance is turned under and hemmed to the top of the zipper tape.

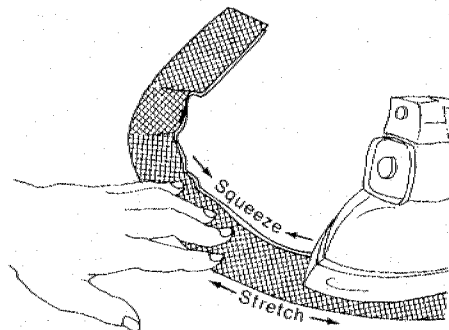


Preparing and applying the bias facing

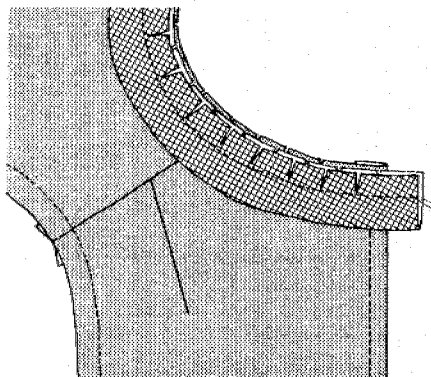
A bias facing is a narrow strip of true bias-cut fabric folded lengthwise to give a finished edge on the inside. (True bias of woven fabrics or the direction of a knit that has the most stretch is used so that it can be shaped to conform to the curved edge.) The sharper the curve to be faced, the narrower the bias facing must be. Generally, the finished width of a bias facing is from $\frac{1}{2}$ inch to 1 inch (1.3 to 2.5 cm). The total width of the bias strip must be cut to equal the finished width plus two seam allowances. The total length must be the length of the seamline (not the cut edge) to be faced plus 2 inches (5 cm), to allow for shaping and finishing.



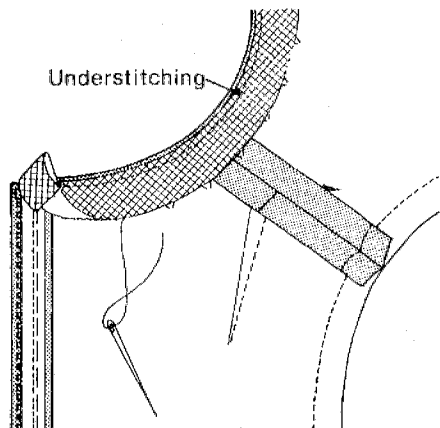
After cutting the bias strip the necessary width and length, fold with the wrong sides together and press flat with a steam iron. Shape by pressing the strip to fit the curve being faced, squeezing the cut edge and stretching the folded edge slightly. If the bias facing will finish an edge with a zipper, insert the zipper into the garment before applying the bias facing.



Pin the bias facing to the right side of the garment, keeping the facing seamline on the garment seamline. Stitch along the seamline.



Grade, clip, press, and understitch, following the instructions given in the earlier section, "Finishing the enclosed seam allowance." Pin the outer edge in place. Slipstitch the edge of the facing to the inside of the garment, or topstitch from the right side. Remove all pins and press.





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