

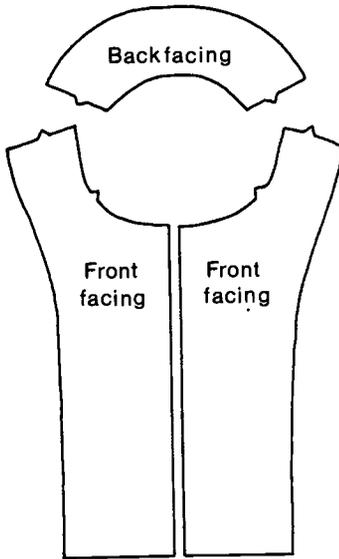
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Facings and Enclosed Seams

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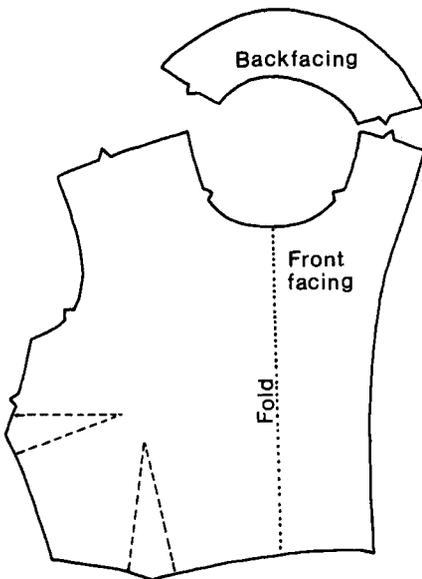
A facing is a piece of fabric used to finish a garment edge, such as the neckline, sleeveless armholes, front and back openings, cuffs, and details such as patch pockets. The facing is usually placed on the inside of the garment edge where it gives body and sharpness to the edge. Sometimes the facing 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 is generally 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, an interfacing should be used between the facing and the garment.

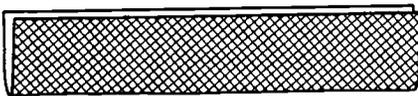


There are three types of facings: ~~DISCARD~~ separate shaped or fitted facings, extended shaped or fitted facings, and bias facings. The *separate shaped or fitted* facings are cut on the same grain, direction or grain and cut to match the edges of the garment section. Shaped facings are used to finish the front and back openings around the neckline, sleeveless, armhole edges and the underside of shaped collars, cuffs, and similar details.

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.



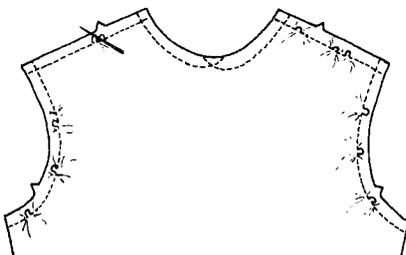
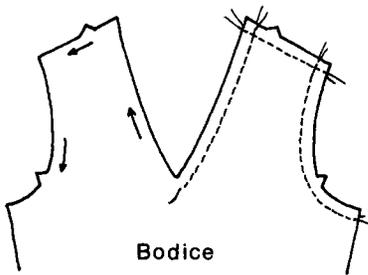
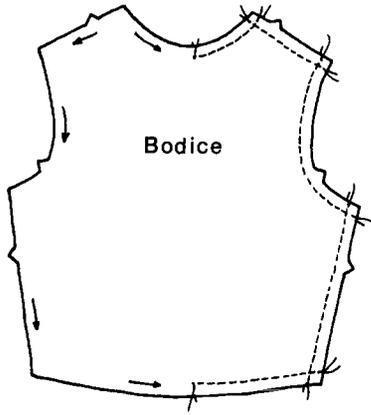
A *bias* facing is a bias strip of fabric that can be shaped to gently curved edges such as hems, open necklines, and sleeveless armholes. A bias facing may be used on garments of sheer or bulky fabrics because this facing is narrower, detracts less, and adds less bulk than a shaped or fitted facing.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



Bias facing

Preparing the garment

Since you may be working with a curved edge, it is important to support the yarn direction and prevent the fabric from stretching or changing shape in the seam area by doing *directional stay-stitching*. Stay-stitching is a row of regular length machine stitching placed just inside the seamline to prevent it from changing shape during construction. Stay-stitch 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 stay-stitching just inside the seam allowance (usually 1/2 inch or 1.3 cm from the cut edge if the seam allowance is 5/8 inch or 1.5 cm). Stay-stitch through a single layer of fabric. If interfacing is used, stay-stitch both fabrics at once. Stitch with the yarn direction and change direction of stitching whenever necessary.



Stay-stitching is just as important to prevent knits from stretching. After stay-stitching, 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 stay-stitching gently with a pin at 1 to 2 inch (2.5 to 5 cm) intervals until the fabric matches the pattern.

Interfacing supports and reinforces the shape of the edge, giving a sharp and smooth surface. Interfacing is applied to the garment edge before stay-stitching 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 a fusible interfacing is used, 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.

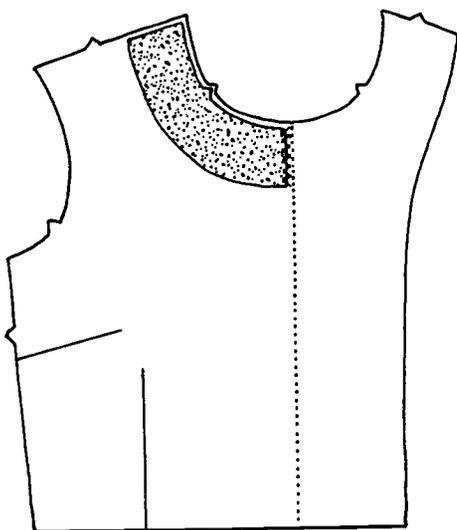
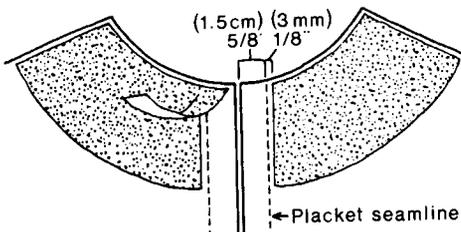
- Apply the fusible interfacing to the outer garment fabric *only* if the interfacing does not change the texture or the look, or cause a ridge.

- Apply the fusible interfacing to the facing fabric to give a firm edge but maintain a soft look for the garment and conceal the seam around the edge. Use this application when the facing becomes the outer layer, as in lapels. The top collar must also be interfaced with fusible to give the lapel and collar the same amount of firmness.

- Apply the fusible interfacing to the entire garment section to give body and a crisp, tailored look.

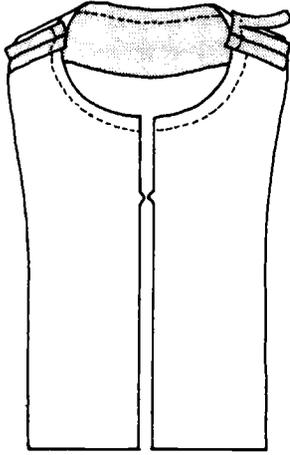
- Apply the fusible interfacing to the entire garment section and the facings if the interfacing is very lightweight and more body is needed.

Cut the fusible interfacing from the facing pattern piece, but trim 1/2 inch (1.3 cm) from the outer edge so that the interfacing does not extend beyond the completed facing. A pinking shears may be used to trim the interfacing for a softened edge. If a zipper will be inserted, trim away the interfacing at the seamline to reduce bulk.



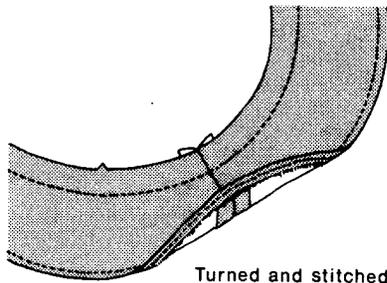
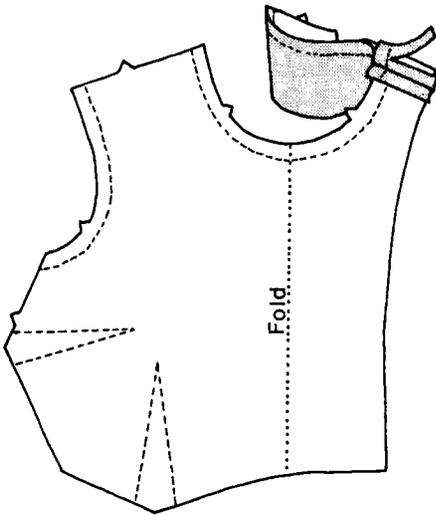
Apply a sew-in interfacing by pinning it to the wrong side of the garment, matching the shaped edges. Do directional stay-stitching including both the interfacing and garment. If the facing is the extended type, match the straight edge to the fold line. Attach the interfacing edge to the fold line with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

Apply fusible interfacing as determined from the testing procedure. Be sure to lift and lower the iron, do not slide it across the fabric.



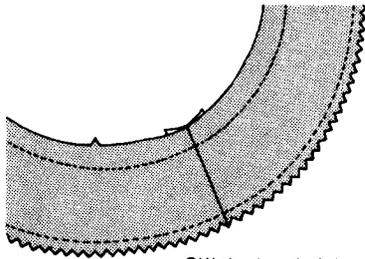
Preparing the shaped facing

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 considering the garment style, weight of fabric, and amount of ravel of the fabric. Use a seam finish such as turned and stitched, pinked and stitched, overcast, plain or multistitch zigzag, bias binding, or Hong Kong finish.



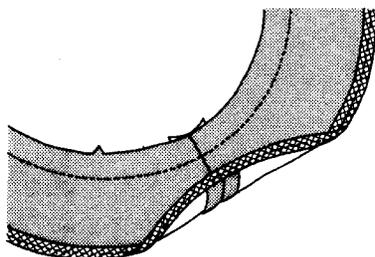
Turned and stitched

Fabrics that do not ravel or roll (i.e., firm knits and non-wovens 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.



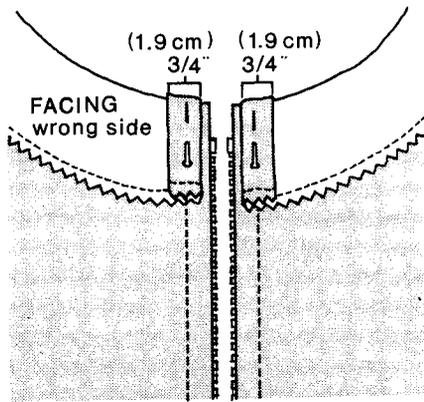
Stitched and pinked

For medium to heavy weight fabrics the pinked and stitched, overcast, and zigzag stitches are suitable.

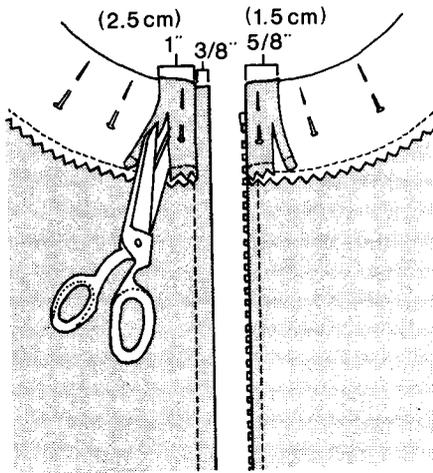


Bias-bound edge

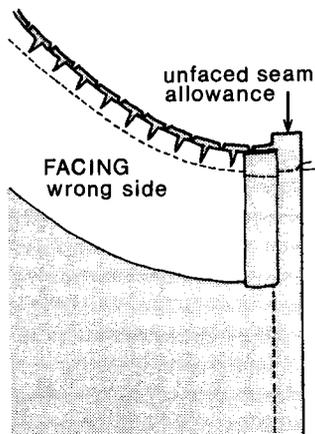
On heavy weight fabrics bias binding or the Hong Kong finish are suitable for jackets that will not be lined.



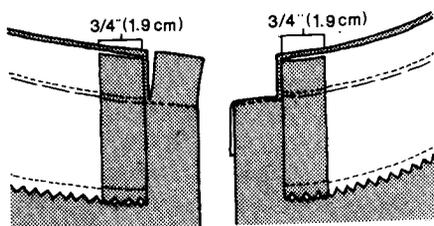
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Attaching and stitching the shaped facing

Generally, especially if you are an inexperienced sewer, the zipper should be inserted before the facing is applied. The following method is recommended for beginning sewers with light to medium weight fabrics. 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 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 5/8 inch (1.5 cm) on the right-hand side of the garment.

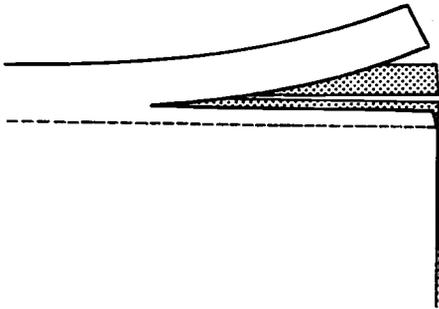
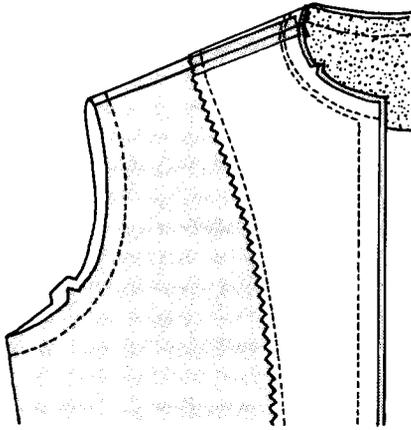
The seam allowance will be stitched, graded, clipped or notched, pressed, and understitched except for the unfaced portion on left-hand side of the lapped zipper. This area will be turned under and hemmed to the top of the zipper tape when the facing is fastened in place.

Machine stitch the facing seam in one operation with the facing on top for better control. Keep the seam allowance even and the stitching line smooth. Use a shorter size stitch to reinforce corners in square facings, starting and stopping the shorter size stitch 1/2 to 1 inch (1.3 to 2.5 cm) each side of the corner. You may pivot the stitching at the corner or use 1 to 2 stitches across the corner depending on the sharpness of the angle.

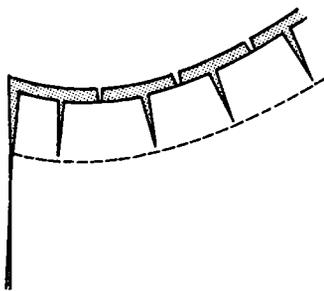
If you are more skilled or you are working with medium or heavy fabric, you may wish to apply the facing before inserting the zipper. To use this procedure, reinforce the neck seamline for 1/2 inch (1.3 cm) each side of the center back seam. Clip neckline seam allowance along center seamline to line of reinforcement stitching. Fold clipped ends down to inside of garment. Fold facing seam allowances back along center back seam. Apply facing, then insert zipper in the unfaced center back seam allowance.

Finishing the enclosed seam allowance

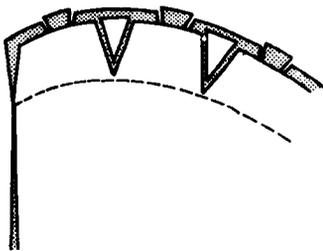
Trim outside corners such as at the top of a front or back neck opening. This will reduce the bulk and permit the corner to turn more easily.



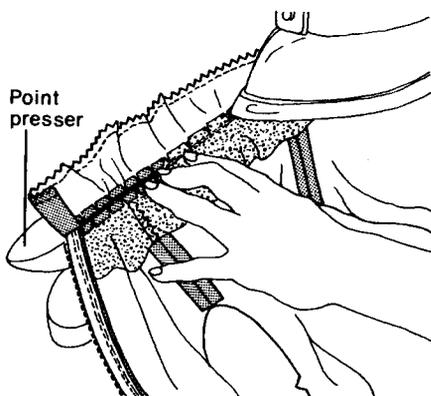
Grade or layer seam allowances to reduce bulk. Grading means to cut each layer of an enclosed seam to a different width. The shortest seam would be the one closest to the body, the longest would be toward the outer surface of the garment. The final width of each seam allowance layer is determined after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



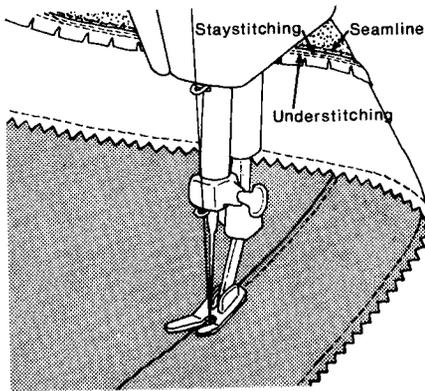
Clip inward seam allowances to allow them to spread rather than bunch and roll within the enclosed seam after the facing is turned. Clipping consists of straight cuts through the seam allowance to but not through the stay-stitching. Clip each layer of seam allowance separately, alternating the clips so they are not at the same location. On gentle curves fewer clips may be needed, while on sharp curves more frequent clips are needed.



Notch outward seam allowances to reduce bulk and allow the edges to squeeze together. Notching consists of cutting out small triangular wedges of fabric toward the seam, but not through the stay-stitching. 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 do not leave a sharp double edge.



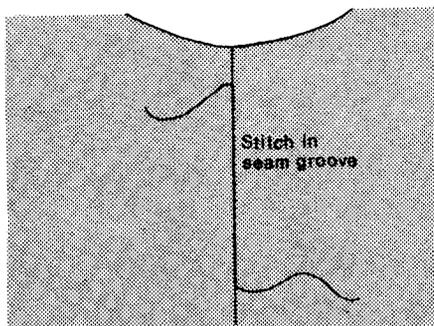
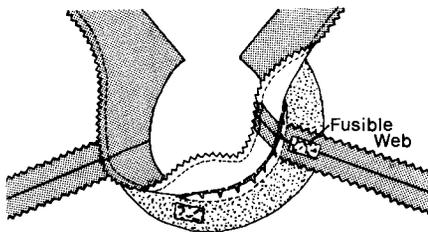
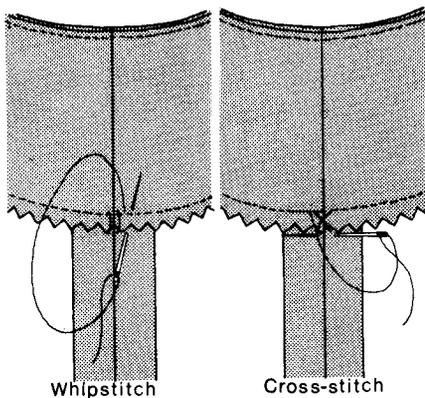
Press the seam flat as it was sewn. Then place the seam, wrong side up over a narrow surface such as a tailor's ham, seam roll, or point presser. The seam will be better hidden if the seam allowance is first pressed open with the tip of the iron, and all seam allowances pressed toward the facing. Press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



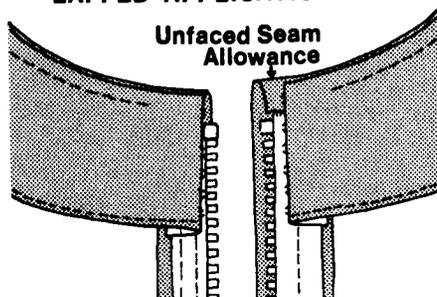
Understitching prevents the edge of the facing from rolling to the outside of the garment. All facing seam edges except very short ones, as the ends of a collar, and where the stitching would show, as on a lapel, should be understitched, unless the edges will be topstitched. This step is frequently not given on instruction guides, but 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 ends of a collar).

Machine understitch from the right side of the facing, close to the seam line, through the facing and seam allowances with a regular size machine stitch. For facings with pointed ends such as 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 be hidden. Press, using the tip of the iron, with the facing side up over a tailor's ham or curved surface matching up seam lines and center markings.

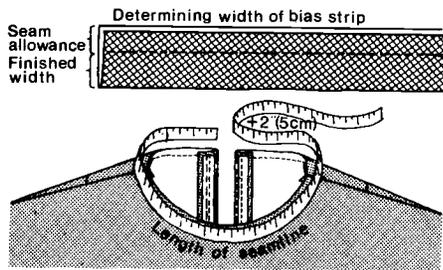
Fasten the facing in place at places where there is more than one thickness of fabric, such as at seams and darts. Never completely hem a facing into place unless it can be hemmed to an underlayer of fabric such as an underlining. Methods of fastening the facing in place include handstitching (whip-stitching 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 for heat, moisture, pressure, and time.



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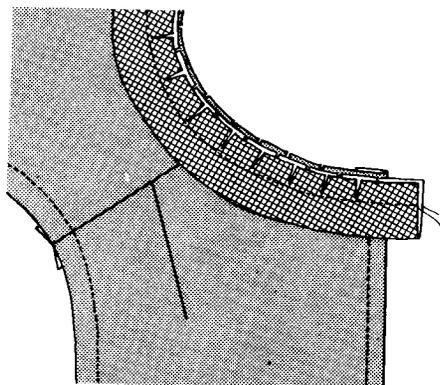
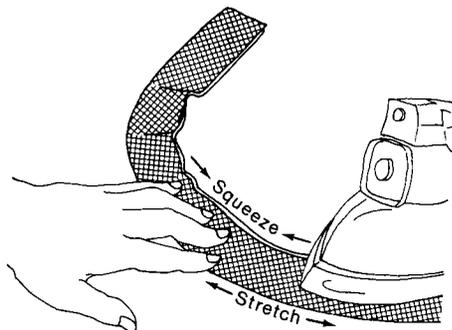
If the facing finishes the end of a seam where there is a zipper, hem the ends of the facing to the zipper tape. On a lapped zipper in light or medium weight fabric, the unfaced portion of the seam allowance is turned under and hemmed to the top of the zipper tape.



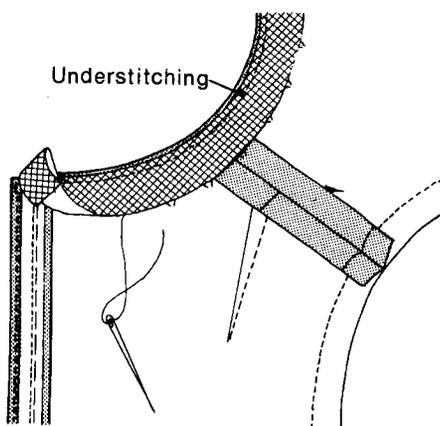
Preparing and applying the bias facing

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 1/2 to 1 inch (1.3 to 2.5 cm). The total width of the bias strip must be cut 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 width and length needed, fold the seam allowances to the wrong side and press flat with a steam iron. Shape by pressing the strip to fit the curve being faced, stretching the outer edge and squeezing the inner edge. If the bias facing will finish an edge with a zipper, insert the zipper into the garment before applying the bias facing.



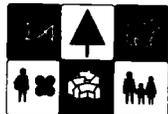
Pin the bias facing to the right side of the garment, keeping the pressed seam line on the garment seam line. Stitch along the seamline. Grade, clip, press, and understitch, following the instructions under "Finishing the enclosed seam allowance." Pin the outer edge in place. Slipstitch the edge of the facing to the inside of the garment. Remove pins and press.



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Selected References

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- Reader's Digest. *Complete Guide to Sewing*. The Reader's Digest Association, Inc., 1976.
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