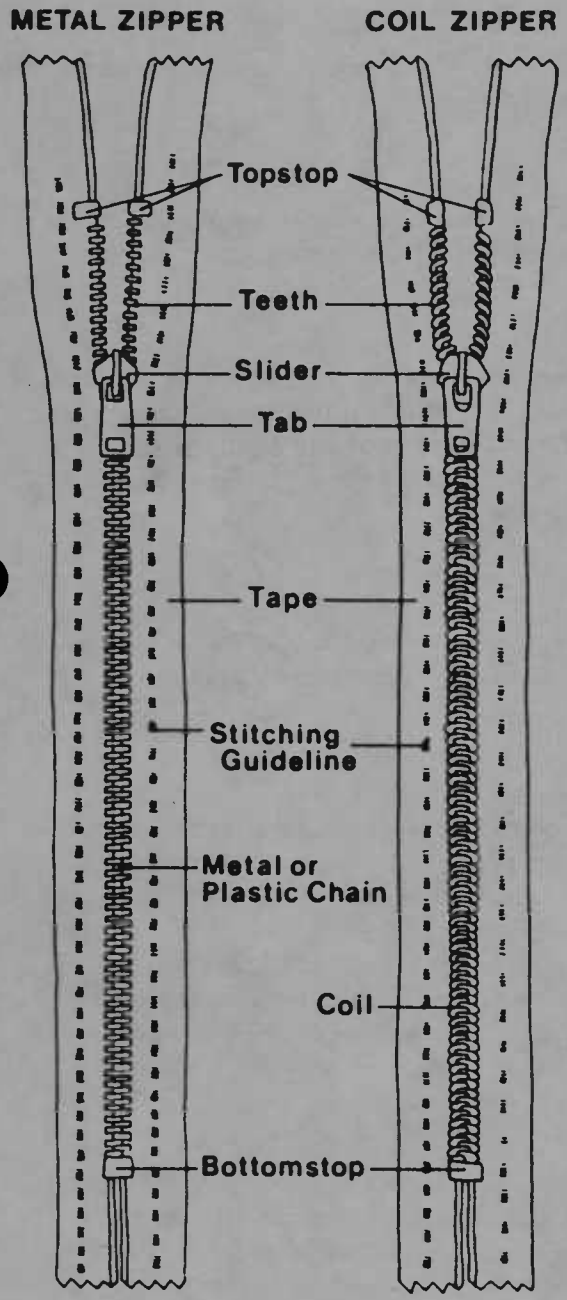




# Centered and Lapped Zippers

4-H Clothing, Skill Level 2-3

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A.W. Koester and B.J. Sawyer



A zipper is a fastener that closes a seam. It is made up of teeth or interlocking coils attached to woven or knit tape, and opens and closes by a slide and pull tab (figure 1).

Select a zipper according to the type and length needed, its location on the garment, and the weight and color of the fabric. When the zipper is attached it should slide easily and be hidden when closed. The topstitching of the zipper should be straight, even, and neat.

The centered application is used at the center front or center back of pants, skirts, and dresses. It is suitable for light, medium, or heavy weight fabrics (figure 2). The lapped application may be used in the same places as the centered application but is most often used at side seams, pants fronts, or skirt openings where more coverage of the zipper is needed. It is suitable for light and medium weight fabrics (figure 2).

Ardis W. Koester, Extension textiles and clothing specialist, and Barbara J. Sawyer, Extension specialist, 4-H and Youth Development.

Centered

Lapped

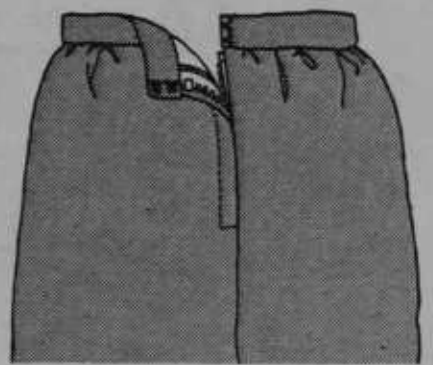
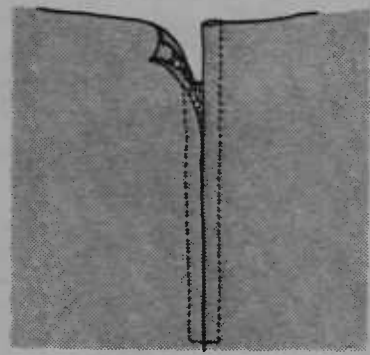


Figure 1

Figure 2



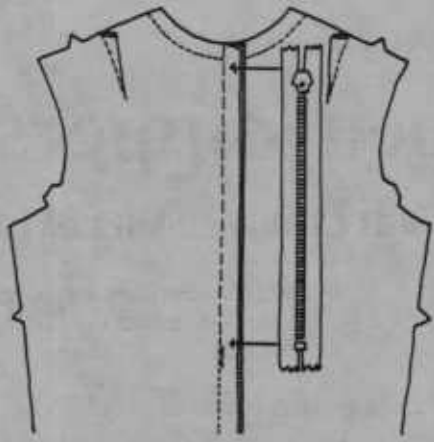


Figure 4

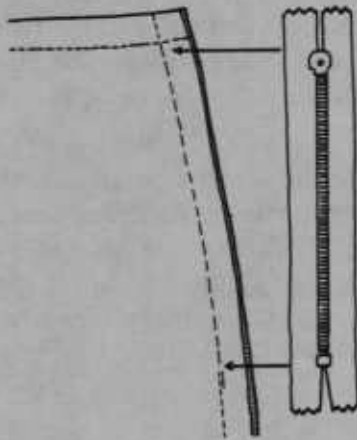


Figure 5

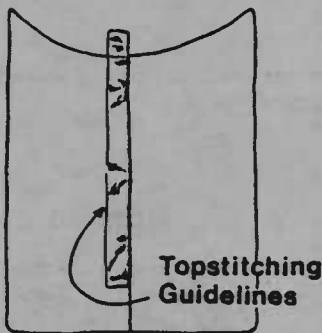


Figure 6

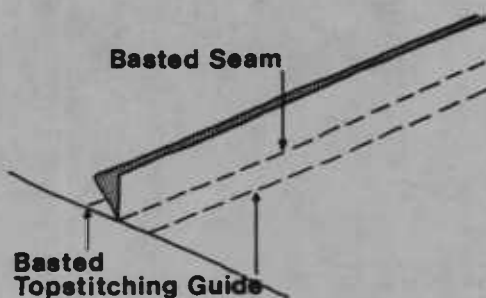


Figure 7

## Preparing the zipper and zipper opening

Prepare the zipper by preshrinking it in hot tap water and allowing it to air dry. Zippers with a polyester coil and 100 percent polyester tape do not need preshrinking.

Determine the length of the zipper opening by measuring the closed zipper from the lower edge of the bottom stop to the top of the slide. Add an additional amount of seam opening to finish the facing or waistband as indicated below (figures 4 and 5).

**Neckline.** Add  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch (1.3 cm) plus  $\frac{5}{8}$  inch seam allowance for facing, a total of  $1\frac{1}{8}$  inch (4.0 cm).

**Pants or skirt.** Add  $\frac{3}{8}$  inch (1 cm) plus  $\frac{5}{8}$  inch seam allowance for waistband or facing, a total of 1 inch (2.5 cm).

Sew and finish the seam beyond where the zipper will be inserted. Staystitch the zipper opening, especially if the seam is curved or the fabric is stretchy. Use matching thread and regular size machine stitch  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch (6 mm) from the cut edge. Press the seam open.

Prepare for topstitching before beginning to apply the zipper. There are two easy methods to use—adhesive sewing tape or machine basting.

Apply adhesive sewing tape to form a guideline after the seam has been pressed open. Place one edge of the tape along the desired topstitching line, usually  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch to  $\frac{3}{8}$  inch (6 mm to 1 cm) from the basted seam for a centered application or  $\frac{3}{8}$  to  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch (9 mm to 1.3 cm) for a lapped application. Plan to stitch next to, but not through, the tape so it will not be difficult to remove. Apply the zipper, following the lapped or centered application procedure (figure 6).

To machine baste the topstitching guideline, first press the seam open. Spread the garment flat, wrong side up, and lift up each seam allowance. Machine baste through the outer fabric along the desired topstitching line, stitching from the bottom to the top. The topstitching line is usually  $\frac{1}{4}$  to  $\frac{3}{8}$  inch (6 mm to 1 cm) for a centered application or  $\frac{3}{8}$  to  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch (9 mm to 1.3 cm) for a lapped application. Apply the zipper, following the lapped or centered method. When topstitching, stitch next to the basting line through all thicknesses of the fabric so that basting stitches can be removed easily (figure 7).

## Centered application

Prepare the seam by determining the length of the opening plus an allowance for finishing the facing or waistband. Machine baste the seam closed. Press the seam open, then clip both of the basting threads at the bottom of the opening. Clip just the bobbin thread at one inch (2.5 cm) intervals so basting can be easily removed later (figure 8).

With the bottom of the zipper opening away from you, extend the right seam allowance. Open the zipper and place it face down on the extended seam allowance. Put the zipper bottomstop at the intersection of the seam and the basting. Position the coil or teeth next to the seam, then pin in place. Using a zipper foot (to the right of the machine needle), start at the bottom of the zipper tape and machine baste the right zipper tape along the stitching guideline (figure 9).

Close the zipper, then extend the left seam allowance. Place the zipper foot to the left of the machine needle, then machine baste the left zipper tape along the guideline, starting at the bottom of the zipper tape (figure 10).

Turn the garment right side up and spread it flat. Adjust the machine to regular stitch length. Starting at the center seam at the bottom of the zipper, topstitch across the zipper bottom. Turn and topstitch along the topstitching guideline to the top of the zipper opening. Repeat the procedure for the other side, beginning again at the center seam. At the bottom of the zipper, bring the top threads to the inside and tie. Remove the topstitching guideline and press (figure 11).

## Lapped application

Prepare the seam as described on page 2. Machine baste the seam closed, then press open. Clip the basting threads at the bottom of the placket so they can be removed easily later.

Working on the inside of the garment, extend the right seam allowance. Open the zipper and put it face down on the extended seam allowance with the bottom of the zipper away from you and even with the seam and basting intersection. The teeth or coil of the open zipper should be next to, but not on, the seam. Position the zipper foot to the right of the needle. With a basting size stitch, start at the bottom of the zipper and machine baste evenly about  $\frac{1}{8}$  inch (3 mm) from the zipper teeth or coil, stitching only through the tape and seam allowance. Stitching may curve out slightly around the slide and pull tab (see figure 9 again).

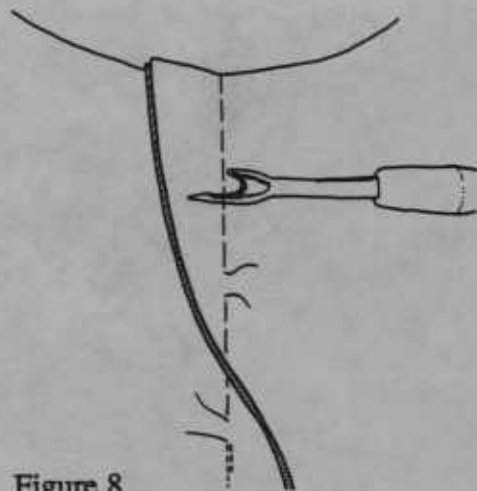


Figure 8

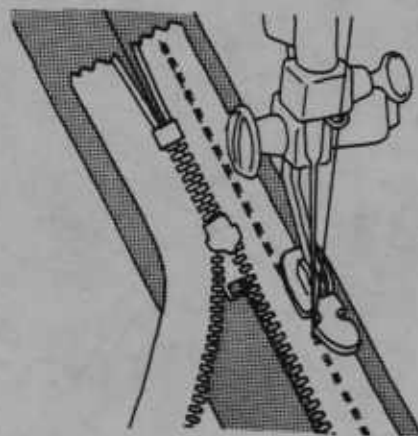


Figure 9

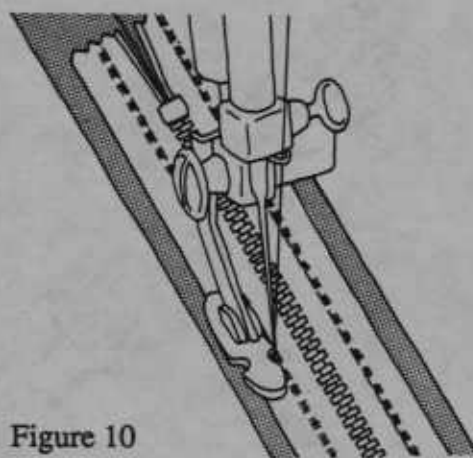


Figure 10

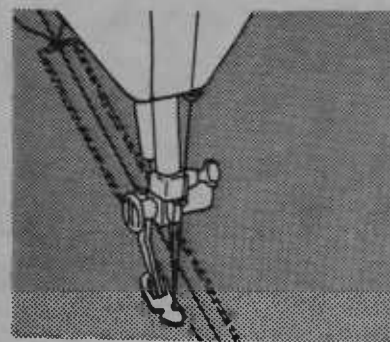


Figure 11

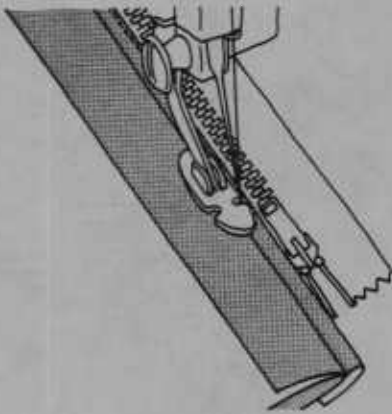


Figure 12

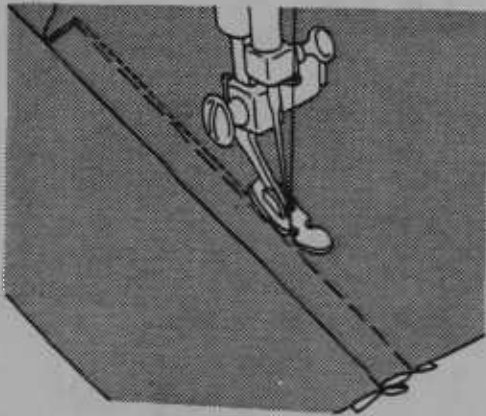


Figure 13

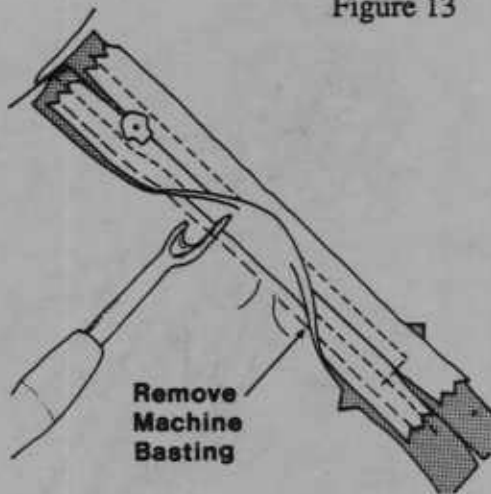


Figure 14

Position the zipper foot to the left of the needle, adjust the machine to regular stitch length, and close the zipper. Turn the zipper face up, folding the seam allowance on the basting and keeping the zipper flat. Starting at the bottom of the zipper tape, stitch through the fold and tape (figure 12).

Turn the garment right side up and spread flat. Check that the zipper is flat beneath the basted seam allowance and that there is a small pleat formed by the stitching through the fold at the zipper bottom. Hold the pleat in place and mark the zipper bottom with a pin. Begin topstitching at the seam and stitch across the zipper bottom to the topstitching guideline. Pivot and continue stitching along the guideline. If the fabric is a waistband or standup collar, stitch to the edge of the fabric. If there is a faced edge, stitch to 2 inches (5 cm) from the edge, cut off the end of the zipper tape at the facing seam line, and continue stitching to the edge (figure 13).

Bring thread ends to the inside and tie. Also on the inside, lift the right seam allowance that was first basted. Clip and remove the machine basting that closes the seam. Remove the topstitching guideline and press (figure 14).

### Finishing

Once the zipper is inserted you are ready to apply the facing, waistband, or standup collar. If you apply a facing, fold under the edge and hand stitch along the zipper tape. Add a hook and eye or snap at the top of the zipper. If you apply a waistband or standup collar, the top of the zipper tape will be included in the waistline or neckline seam.



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