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How to Sew Facings and Enclosed Seams

4-H Clothing, Skill Level 2

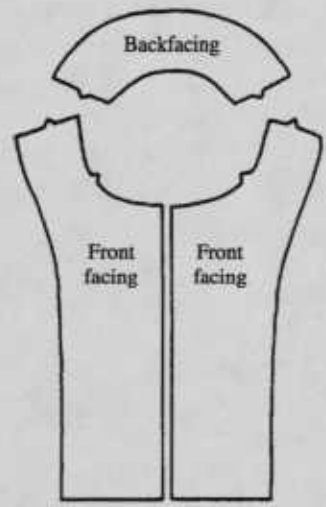


Figure 1

A facing is the fabric used to finish a garment edge. Facings may finish collarless necklines, sleeveless armholes, front and back openings, cuffs, and some details such as patch pockets. Facings are usually on the inside of the garment edge. Sometimes they are partly folded to the outside as in a lapel.

The seam edge that results from applying a facing is called an enclosed seam. A well-finished facing has a sharp, clean, even edge enclosing the seam, and a smooth flat surface on the right side of the garment.

There are two types of fitted facings:

- Separate shaped facings that are attached to the garment (Figure 1)
- Extended shaped facings that are cut as part of the garment section and folded back along an edge (Figure 2).

Shaped separate facings may be used to finish front and back openings, necklines, and sleeveless armhole edges. Extended shaped facings are used to finish front and back openings and part of the neck edge.

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Figure 2

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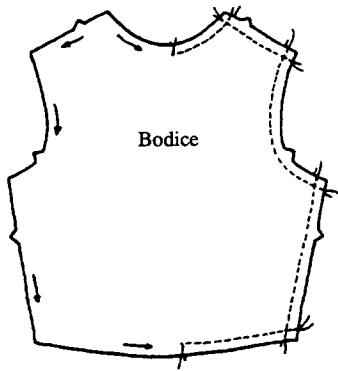


Figure 3

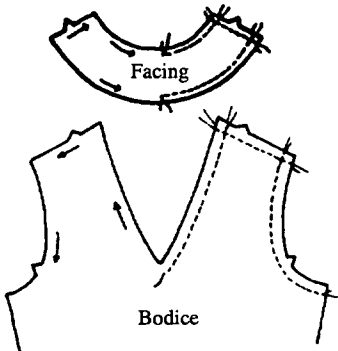


Figure 4

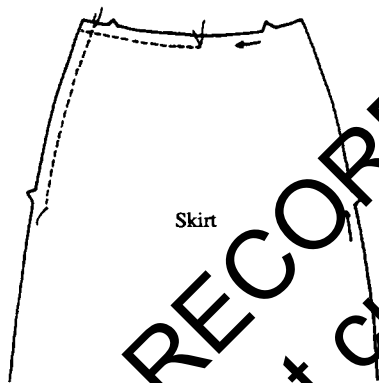


Figure 5

Preparing the garment

Since shaped facings are applied to a curved edge, it is important to do directional staystitching to prevent the fabric from changing shape in the seam area.

Staystitching is a row of regular-length machine stitching placed just inside the seamline. It is done immediately after the garment has been cut out and the pattern pieces removed from the fabric pieces. Stitch through a single layer of fabric. Stitch with the yarn direction and change the direction of the stitching whenever necessary (Figures 3, 4, and 5).

Preparing the shaped facing

Sew together the fabric pieces that make up a facing unit—for example, the front and back pieces that make up the neckline facing. Trim the seam allowances to half their width and press them open (Figures 6, 7, and 8).

Use a seam finish on the outer unnotched edge. You'll probably use the same finish you're using on the rest of the garment. When choosing a finish, think about the:

- Garment style
- Weight of the fabric
- Raveliness of the fabric
- Care the garment will receive
- Equipment you have to work with (pinking shears, sewing machines, serger)

Examples of seam finishes include:

- Straight machine stitching
- Straight machine stitching and pinking
- Turned and stitched (Figure 9)
- Zigzag stitched (Figure 10) or multiple stitch zigzag
- Serged: 3-thread overlock (Figure 11) or 2-thread overedge
- Bias-bound edge, from lining fabric or commercially prepared tricot knit (Figure 12)

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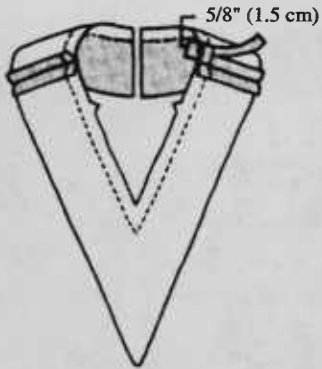


Figure 6

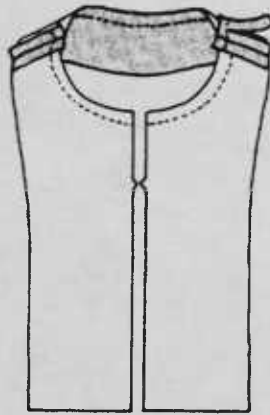


Figure 7



Figure 8

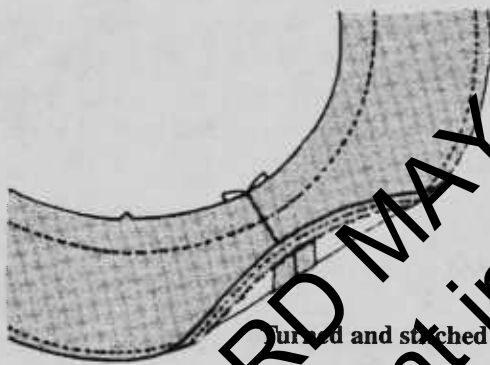


Figure 9

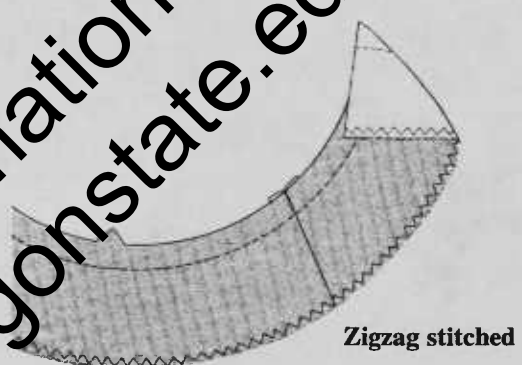


Figure 10

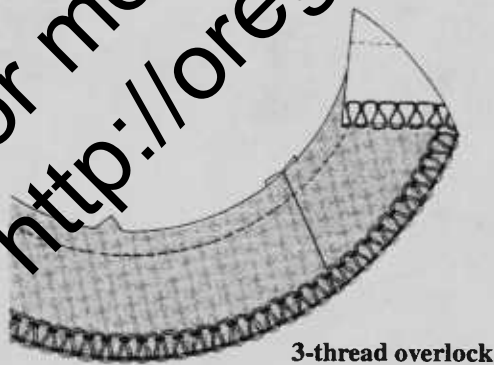


Figure 11

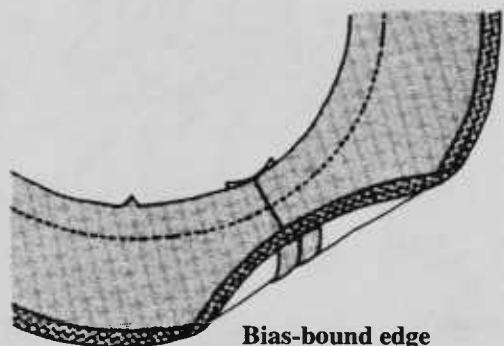


Figure 12

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Attaching and stitching the shaped facing

For beginning sewers working with lightweight fabrics, the zipper should be sewn in before the facing is applied. After the zipper has been sewn in place, pin the facing to the matching garment area, right sides together. Carefully match edges, construction marks, and seams. After pinning the facing to the garment, fold the ends of the facing back, even with the teeth or coil of the zipper (Figures 13 and 14).

Centered zipper: Fold back *both* ends $\frac{3}{4}$ inch (1.9 cm)

Lapped zipper: Fold back end on *left* side 1 inch (2.5 cm). Fold back end on *right* side $\frac{5}{8}$ inch (1.5 cm)

The facing and garment seam allowance should be stitched, graded, clipped, pressed, and understitched except for the part where there is no facing. Trim the folded back part of the facing to remove bulk (leave about $\frac{1}{4}$ inch or 6 mm). The unfaced part of the seam allowance will be turned inside and hemmed over the top of the zipper later (Figure 15).

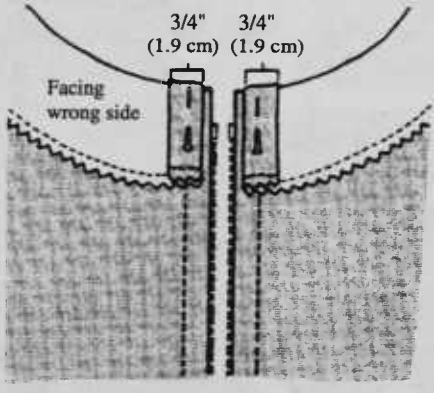
Finishing the enclosed seam allowance

Trim outside corners such as those at the top of a front or back neck opening where there is no zipper. Trimming will reduce the bulk and make the corner easier to turn to the right side.

Grade or layer the seam allowances to reduce bulk. Grading means to cut each layer of an enclosed seam allowance a different width. The shortest seam will be the one closest to the body. The longest should be toward the outside of the garment. How wide you trim each seam allowance layer is determined by the weight of the fabric, its raveliness, and the number of layers (Figure 16).

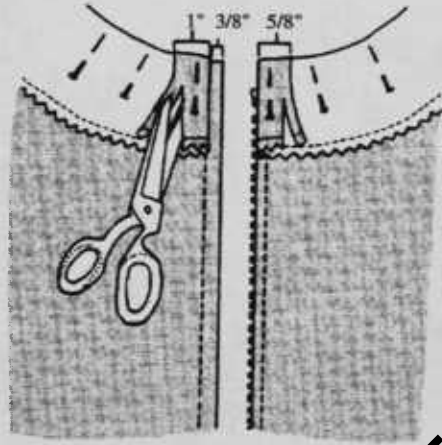
Clip the inward seam allowances to let them spread rather than bunch and roll after the facing is turned. To clip, make a number of straight cuts through the seam allowance but not through the staystitching. Clip each layer of the seam allowance separately. Alternate the clips on each seam allowance so they do not occur at the same location. On gentle curves few clips may be needed, while on sharp curves more frequent clips are needed (Figure 17).

Notch the outward seam allowances to reduce bulk and allow the edges to squeeze together. Notching is cutting out small triangular wedges of fabric toward the seam but not through the staystitching. Alternate the notches on each layer of seam allowance so they do not leave a sharp edge on the right side (Figure 18).



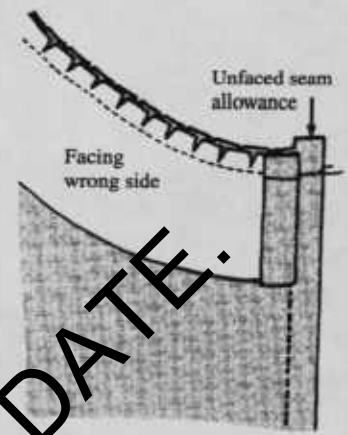
Centered application

Figure 13



Lapped application

Figure 14



Lapped application

Figure 15

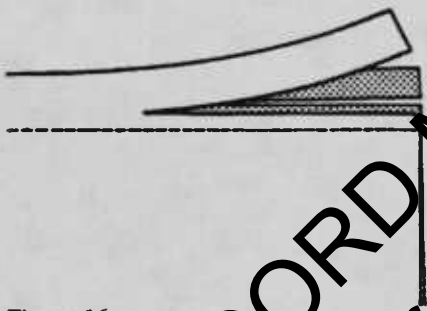


Figure 16



Figure 17

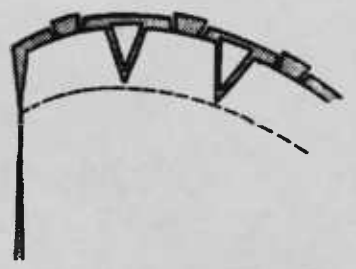


Figure 18

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Press the seam flat the way it was sewn. Then place the garment wrong side up over a narrow surface, such as a seam roll (a rolling pin or rolled up magazine). The seam will be hidden better on the inside if the seam allowance is first pressed open with the tip of the iron. Next press all seam allowances toward the facing. Press carefully, checking the right side so that no creases occur on the garment or facing.

Understitching prevents the edge of the facing from rolling to the outside where it can be seen along the edge of the garment. All facing seam edges, except very short ones, or ones that will be topstitched, should be understitched. This step is often not given on pattern instruction guides, but is a part of quality construction (Figure 19).

Machine understitching is done from the right side of the facing close to the seam line. Stitch through the facing and the seam allowances with a regular-size machine stitch. For facings with pointed ends, start and stop about 1 inch (2.5 cm) short of the corner.

Press the facing to the inside along the seamline. Be sure that the seamline is hidden on the inside. Press using the tip of the iron with the facing side up.

Fasten the facing in places where there is more than one thickness of fabric, such as at seams and darts. Never completely hem a facing into place. Fastening methods include:

- Whipstitch or cross stitch between the facing and the garment seam (Figures 20 and 21).
- Machine stitch in the seam groove from the right side of the garment, then bring the ends of the thread to the inside and knot (Figure 22).

If the facing finishes the top of a lapped zipper, hem the unfaced seam allowance down to the zipper tape (Figure 23). For both lapped and centered zippers, the ends of the facing should be hemmed to the zipper tape (Figures 23 and 24).

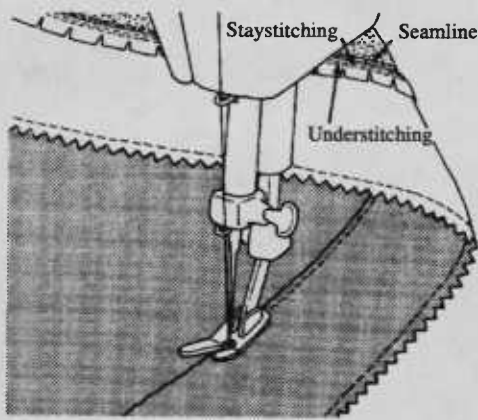
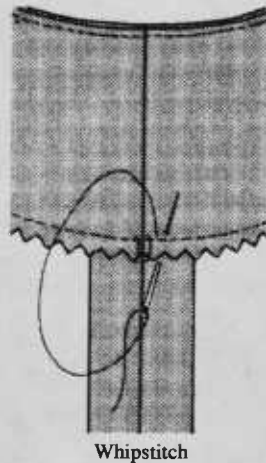
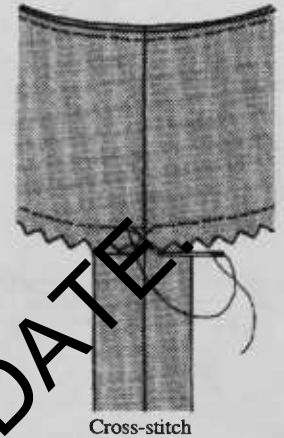


Figure 19



Whipstitch

Figure 20



Cross-stitch

Figure 21

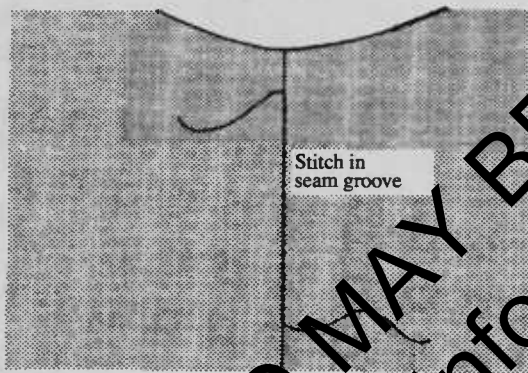


Figure 22

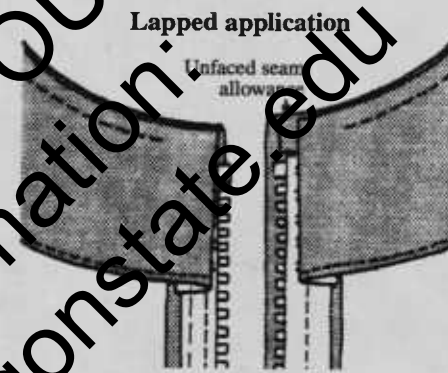
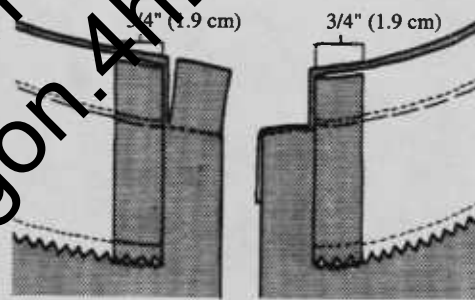


Figure 23



Centered application

Figure 24

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