

SEAM FINISHES

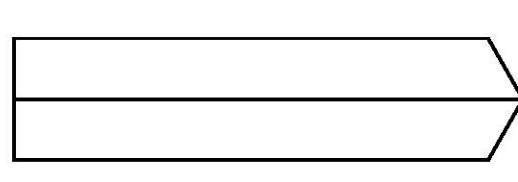


A seam finish is something that is done to the cut edge of the seam to prevent it from raveling. The method you choose is determined by the fabric's characteristics. It is foolish not to do a seam finish on a fabric that ravel since the time and effort put into making the garment will be wasted if it comes apart due to unraveling. Sometimes a seam finish is added for decorative purposes, though this is not the primary reason for doing it.

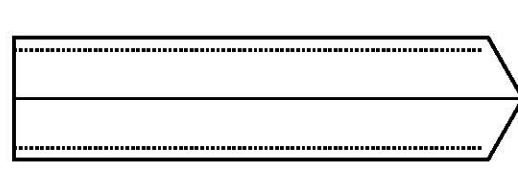
There are numerous ways in which seams can be finished. Because fabrics and garment styles differ so much, it is not possible to say what should be done in all circumstances. Experiment each time. Choose the method you think will be most appropriate and test it on a piece of garment fabric before doing the finish on the garment itself. A seam finish should not add bulk nor show on the face of the garment.

Some suggested seam finishes are as follows:

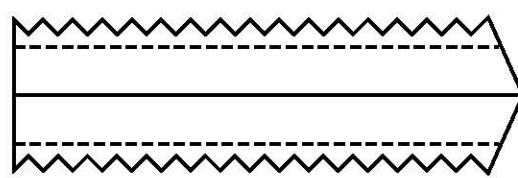
Unfinished or Plain: This method is appropriate for fabrics that do not ravel- usually only stable knits and bonded fabrics. This would include fleece fabrics. Note: While seam finishes are not necessary with fleece, you may choose to serge or zigzag seams or topstitch to reduce bulk.



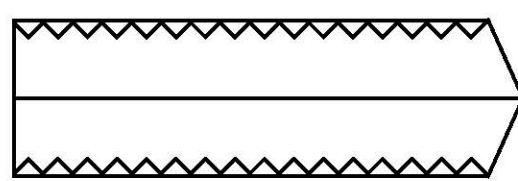
Edge Stitched or Straight-Stitched: This method is good for fabrics that only ravel to a slight degree. It is also effective in preventing the seam allowances in knits from curling. Straight stitch along the seam allowance at 1/8" to 1/4" (3 to 6 mm) from the edge. It is easy to do this finish before seams are stitched together, while the fabric is flat.



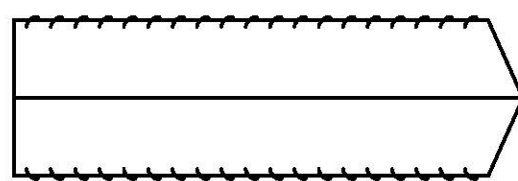
Stitched and Pinked: Suitable for knits and other fabrics, which do not ravel. Press seam open. Machine-stitch 1/4" (6mm) from the raw edge of each seam allowance. Pink raw edge, being careful not to cut through stitching.



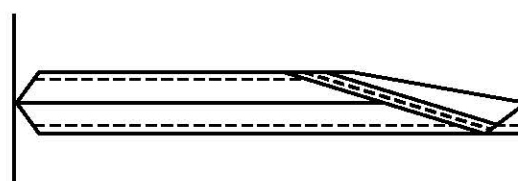
Zigzag: This method may be used on most fabrics. It is very quick and easy. On plain seams overcast the edge of the seam allowance using a stitch size appropriate to the weight and/or weave of the fabric. The zigzag stitching should not pull in the fabric. An attractive and less visible seam finish on sheer and open fabrics is to stitch both seam allowances together with a small stitch close to the seam line and trim close to the zigzag stitching.



Hand Overcast: Like the zigzag finish, this method can be used on most fabrics and is recommended for seams that are awkward to finish by machine. Use a single thread. The stitches should be even in length and width, and the thread should not be drawn tight; otherwise the seam edge will curl.



Clean-Finish: This method is appropriate for light to medium weight fabrics that ravel, but should not be used on fabrics that are heavy or bulky as it adds bulk. Stitch along the seam allowance at 1/4" (6mm) from the raw edge. Turn the fabric to the wrong side along the stitching line and stitch again close to the fold.



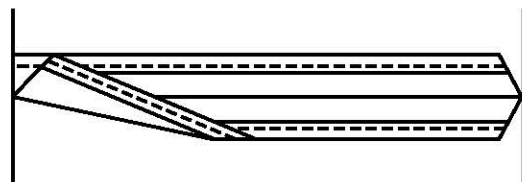
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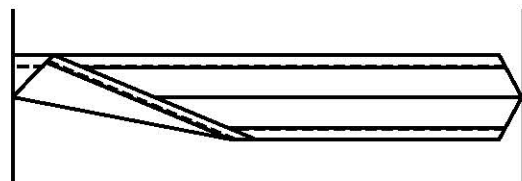
Double-Stitched: This method is appropriate for sheer fabrics. First make a plain seam then add a second row of stitching $\frac{1}{8}$ " (3mm) from the seam line through both layers of the seam allowance. Trim close to this row or stitching. Press to one side.



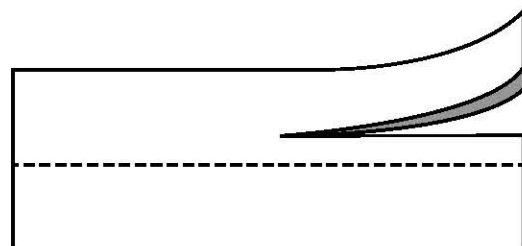
Bound: This method is suitable for most fabrics and is especially recommended for unlined jackets and coats. It is often used with heavy, bulky fabrics, especially those that ravel easily. Use a binding such as prefolded bias tape or seam binding that is appropriate to the outer fabric. It should be durable and require the same care as garment. The binding is used to encase the cut seam edge. The machine stitching should be straight and even and catch both edges of the binding in the single row of stitching.



Hong Kong: This method is appropriate as a special technique for a custom-look in garments. Use a binding that is appropriate to the outer fabric, durable and can be cared for in the same way as the garment. Match the right side of the binding to the right side of the seam allowance and stitch along the fold of the binding or $\frac{1}{4}$ " (6mm) from the edge. Wrap the binding around the seam edge and stitch from the right side of the ditch formed by the binding to catch the underneath edge of the binding. This method differs from a bound finish in that it is a two-step process and therefore more time consuming.



French: A French seam is a double-stitched seam that looks like a plain seam on the right side and a neat tuck on the wrong side. It is bulkier than a plain seam, but gives a neat, attractive seam on lightweight woven, sheer, and other delicate fabrics and controls raveling where this is a problem. Place the wrong sides of the fabric together, matching the stitching lines. Stitch $\frac{3}{8}$ " from the fabric edge. Press. Trim to within $\frac{1}{8}$ " to $\frac{1}{4}$ " of the stitching. Press seam to one side. Turn remaining fabric over the seam, enclosing it. Crease and press on stitching line. Stitch on seam line, approximately $\frac{1}{4}$ " from the turned edge, to enclose the raw edges. Press to one side.



Serged: The serger/overlock machine can be used to finish seam allowances and as an edge finishing method. Since knits do not ravel, the serger seam/edge finish is usually used on woven fabric only, however if knit fabric edges tend to curl or roll, it can also be used. With right sides of the seam allowances together, prepare a plain seam. Press. Stitch, cutting away approximately $\frac{1}{8}$ " edge of seam allowance. (Edges may be finished separately if they are to be pressed open). Note: A complete serged seam is only $\frac{1}{4}$ " to $\frac{3}{8}$ " wide. If your pattern allows a $\frac{5}{8}$ " seam, you must determine where to position the fabric so the seam is sewn at the correct place.

