



SEWING SKILLS HANDBOOK



Summit County



EXTENSION 

UtahStateUniversity

Introduction



PURPOSE

This handbook has been put together to help you visually define basic quality standards. This handbook is not intended to serve as an instruction manual. It is assumed that you will have a good reference book in your sewing library. **There are many right ways to do each skill but the end quality should be the same.**

REFERENCES

To help you with construction procedures, frequently used sewing books have been used to reference the skill samples:

1. Nancy Zieman, 1991. *Let's sew! A Beginner's Sewing Guide*. Nancy's Notions, Ltd., Beaver Dam, Wis., in association with the National 4-H Council. **(LS)**
2. *Reader's Digest Complete Guide to Sewing*. Revised Edition, 1995. The Reader's Digest Association, Inc., Canada. **(RD)**
3. *Sewing Essentials*. The Singer Sewing Reference Library, 1984. Cy DeCosse, Inc., Minnetonka, Minn. **(SE)**

They will be listed by the initials shown above in the reference section of each skill.

NUMBERING

The Numbering system on the bottom left corner of each skill page is set up as follows

Level: Beginning (Beg); Intermediate (Int) and Advanced (Adv). **Category:** Hand Stitches (HS); Basic Techniques (BT); Machine Stitches (MS); and Serging Stitches (SS). **Subcategory and Sample Number.**

For example, **Beg HS SA 1**, translates to: Beginning (Level), Hand Stitches (Category), Stitch Application (Subcategory), and Sample #1.

This numbering system will enable us to add new samples and skills as the need arises without disrupting the numbering of the entire handbook.

Section III
Advanced Level



Hand Stitches

Sample #

Stitch Application

Back Stitch	Adv	HS	SA 1
Blind Catch Stitch	Adv	HS	SA 2
Buttonhole or Blanket Stitch	Adv	HS	SA 3
Buttonhole (hand worked)	Adv	HS	SA 4
Cross Stitch Basting	Adv	HS	SA 5
Pick (prick) Stitch	Adv	HS	SA 6

Basic Techniques

Fabrics

Interfacing (pad stitch-hair canvas)	Adv	BT/HS	F 1
Interfacing (fusible-weft insertion)	Adv	BT	F 2

Machine Stitches and Techniques

Seams

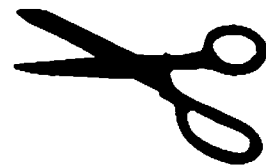
Corded or Piped Seam	Adv	MS	S 1
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Seam Finishes

Bias Bound and Hong Kong Finish	Adv	MS	SF 1
Self Bound Seam	Adv	MS	SF 2

Techniques

Bound/Welt Pocket	Adv	MS	Tech 1
Buttonhole (bound)	Adv	MS	Tech 2



Skill Samples

Section III

Advanced Level



Back Stitch

Hand Stitch

Quality Standards

- Stitches look like machine stitching on right side.
- Stitches should be even in size and straight.
- **Matching** thread used.
- Stitches should touch each other end to end.
- Stitch length depends on purpose.

Helpful Hints

Used for hand sewn seams and mending.

References:

RD pg 135
SE ppg 56-57



Back Stitch

Skill Sample



Blind Catch Stitch

Hand Stitch

Quality Standards

- More stable and secure than blind stitch.
- Thread is hidden between front of garment and hem allowance.
- Stitches do not show on right or wrong side.
- Stitches are very tiny, only a few threads are caught in the stitch.
- **Matching**, single strand of thread.
- Stitches are about 1/4" apart and alternate from garment to hem.

Helpful Hints

Used for heavier fabrics instead of a blind stitch.

Can use two rows in heavier fabrics to distribute the weight of the hem.

Usually used in garments that are unlined to prevent thread wear.

References:

RD pg 143



Blind Catch Stitch

Skill Sample



Buttonhole or Blanket Stitch

Hand Stitch

Quality Standards

- **Matching** or coordinating contrast thread used.
- Solid stitches around openings.
- When used for attaching snaps, hooks or eyes, stitches should not show through to right side of garment when sewn on underside.
- When used for tailored edging use a heavy thread in matching color or coordinating contrast. Stitches should be evenly spaced and the same depth to form an even row unless done in a specific pattern for variation.

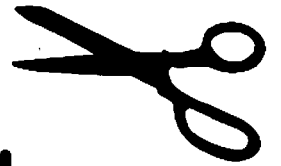
Helpful Hints

Used to sew snaps, hooks & eyes for a professional finish.

Can use perforated edge from computer printout as a gauge for spacing decorative stitches.

References:

RD pg 139



Buttonhole or Blanket Stitch

Skill Sample



Buttonhole (hand-worked)

Hand Stitch

Quality Standards

- **Matching** thread used.
- Regular or buttonhole weight thread.
- Stitches should be about 1/8" deep.
- No space between stitches - solid coverage around hole.
- Length of opening same as button length + button width.
- Vertical buttonholes placed on center front or center back.
- Horizontal buttonholes placed 1/8" into overlap from center front or center back.
- Generally used in tailored garments, but are acceptable on all garments when well done.

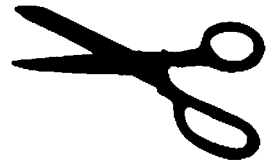
Helpful Hints

For handworked buttonholes - make stitches 1/8" deep with no space between.

Needle should be vertical as it passes through fabric so that stitches are 1/8" on both the top and bottom of the buttonhole.

References:

RD pg 139, 357-358



Buttonhole (hand worked)

Skill Sample



Cross Stitch Basting

Hand Stitch

Quality Standards

- **Matching** single thread.
- Stitches should be even width and even length to form even crosses.

Helpful Hints

Used to hold pleats of lining in place.

References:

RD pg 139



Cross Stitch Basting

Skill Sample



Pick (prick) Stitch

Hand Stitch

Quality Standards

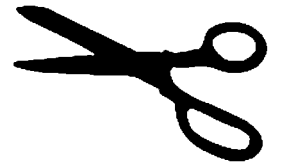
- Tiny even stitches in a straight line on right side of garment.
- **Matching** thread or coordinating contrast thread used depending on desired look and purpose.
- Finished stitches should have 1/4" to 3/8" space between them.

Helpful Hints

Used for hand picked zippers and tailored top stitching.

References:

RD pg 136
SE ppg 56-57



Pick (prick) Stitch

Skill Sample



Interfacing (pad stitch-hair canvas)

Basic Techniques

Quality Standards

- **Matching, single thread.**
- Stitches should be even and parallel.
- Stitches should not show on right side.
- Should be on grain.

Helpful Hints

Used to join hair canvas to thicker or wool fabrics.

Pinked edges reduce bulk.

When fabrics are curved around hand while stitches are completed, shape is added to the garment. Fold around hand in such a way that the resulting shape will conform to body underneath garment.

References:

RD pg 145



Interfacing (pad stitch-hair canvas)

Skill Sample



Interfacing (fusible-weft insertion)

Basic Techniques

Quality Standards

- Should be on grain.
- Fusing should be complete and secure with no bubbles or tucks.

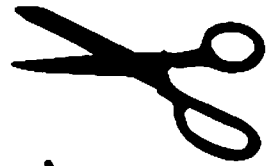
Helpful Hints

Pre-shrink according to manufacturer's instructions.

Pinked edges reduce bulk -- help reduce definite line formation on right side.

References:

RD pg 91
SE ppg 96-98, 100



Interfacing (fusible-weft insertion)

Skill Sample



Corded or Piped Seam

Machine Stitch

Quality Standards

- Cording or piping should extend evenly from seamline on right side of garment.
- No stitching should show on right side.
- Corners should be sharp and square.
- Seam allowance bulk should be reduced by grading, clipping, or notching as appropriate.
- Pressing should not flatten piping or cording.
- Pressing should not reveal underneath construction.

Helpful Hints

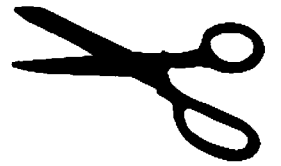
Use the cording presser foot or zipper presser foot when stitching cording.

To reduce bulk when joining piping, trim inner cording about 1/2".

Cords should just meet. Bias tape or other cover will overlap.

References:

RD ppg 165, 212-213, 312



Corded or Piped Seam

Skill Sample



Bias Bound and Hong Kong Finish

Machine Stitch

Quality Standards

- Binding is a matching or coordinating contrast color.
- Binding of even width on seam allowances of even width.
- Match thread to binding or fabric.
- Binding should lay smooth and flat.
- Binding should be straight along edge and not wavy.
- Complete seam allowance should be even width.
- Seam appears normal from right side.
- Pressed so no ridges from seam allowance show through to right side.

Helpful Hints

Double fold bias tape is placed over edge of fabric and stitched close to folded edge of bias.

For Hong Kong finish, inner bias is flat rather than folded. This reduces bulk.

Ease bias strip over curves (such as curve over side seam) to prevent puckering (pulling).

References:

RD pg 161
SE ppg 66-67



Bias Bound and Hong Kong Finish

Skill Sample



Self Bound Seam

Machine Stitch

Quality Standards

- Seam appears normal on right side of garment.
- **Matching** thread used.
- **Balanced** tension.
- **Pressed** to one side - same side for entire seam length.
- **Finished seam allowance** should be of even width the entire length of seam.
- **No raw edges** should be exposed.

Helpful Hints

Works best on lightweight fabrics that do not fray easily.

Seam is sewn right sides together.

One seam allowance trimmed to about 3/16".

Other seam allowance is folded over twice and stitched in place over narrower seam allowance.

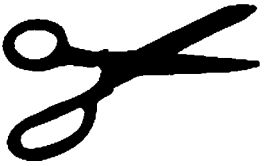
References:

RD pg 162
SE ppg 37, 68



Self Bound Seam

Skill Sample



Bound/Welt Pocket

Machine Stitch

Quality Standards

- Welt/lips should be straight and of equal, even width.
- Corners should be square.
- Pocket should not show through to right side or poke outside the opening.
- **Matching** thread used.
- Edges (ends of opening) should be reinforced with stitching.
- Pocket is on grain.

Helpful Hints

References:

RD pg 296-300



Bound/Welt Pocket

Skill Sample



Buttonhole (bound)

Machine Stitch

Quality Standards

- Buttonhole corners are square.
- Lips are even in length and width.
- Back edge is finished neatly and securely.
- Length of opening is same as button width plus button depth.
- Horizontal buttonholes placed 1/8" into overlap from center front or back.
- Buttons should not extend over front edge of garment.
- Buttonhole lips should be cut on grain of fabric.
- Pressed so no ridges from seam allowance show through to right side.

Helpful Hints

Baste button lips together to prevent pulling.

References:

RD ppg 342, 344-354



Buttonhole (bound)

Skill Sample