



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.

<p>SECTION II</p> <p>INTERMEDIATE LEVEL</p>



Hand Stiches

Sample

Stitch Application

Cross (catch) Stitch Hem	Int	HS	SA 1
Slip Stitch Hem	Int	HS	SA2
Taped Hem with Vertical Hem Stitch	Int	HS/MS	SA3

Attachments

Chained Belt Loops and Strap Keepers	Int	HS	A 1
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Basic Techniques

Fabrics

Interfacing (sew in)	Int	BT	F 1
Lining	Int	BT	F 2
Underlining	Int	BT	F 3

Cut and Fold

Matching Plaids	Int	BT	CF 1
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Machine Stitches and Techniques

Seams

Flat Felled Seam	Int	MS	S 1
French Seam	Int	MS	S 2

Seam finishes

Mock French Seam	Int	MS	SF 1
Welt Seam	Int	MS	SF 2

Machine Stitches and Techniques Cont.



Techniques	Sample #		
Lined Patch Pocket (curved)	Int	MS	Tech 1
Pleats	Int	MS	Tech 2
Stitch in Ditch	Int	MS	Tech 3
Waistband	Int	MS	Tech 4
Tension			
Tension (decorative stitching)	Int	MS	T 1
Attachments			
Zipper (Fly)	Int	MS	A 1



Skill Samples

Section II

Intermediate Level



Cross (or Catch) Stitch Hem

Hand Stitch

Quality Standards

- Hair canvas interfacing is 1/2" wider than hem allowance of garment and could be cut on the bias.
- Hair canvas is inserted to fold of hem allowance.
- Hair canvas is cross stitched or fused to garment front.
- Hem allowance is cross stitched to hair canvas.
- No stitching should show on right side.
- **Matching** thread should be used.
- Pressing should not reveal any ridges on right side.
- Hem edge is usually stitched and pinked - no folds or extra bulk.

Helpful Hints

Used with wool or other heavy fabrics.

Usually used on garments that are lined.

Stitches should not be too tight, and should be about 1/4" apart.

References:

RD ppg 143, 323
SE ppg 56-57



Cross (catch) Stitch Hem

Skill Sample



Slip Stitch Hem

Hand Stitch

Quality Standards

Width:

- Appropriate for weight of fabric, garment, size of individual.
- Adequate to suit style.
- Provide weight to hang well.
- Uniform in width.

Use single strand of **matching** thread.

Thread is not exposed to abrasion.

Hem edge is finished with a folded clean finish or turned and stitched.

Free from bulk:

- Fullness reduced or controlled by easing or shrinking.
- Free from tucks or pleats.
- Seams pressed and graded.
- Seams clipped at edge of pleats.

Flat and smooth.

Inconspicuous: (unless designed to be decorative)

- If topstitched it is uniform.
- Hemming stitches are evenly spaced, secure, free from drawing and not noticeable on outside.
- Pressed to avoid ridges.

Hangs evenly, uniform distance from floor.

Thread is inside the fold of edge finish on hem allowance.

Helpful Hints

Stitches should be about 1/4" to 1/2" apart.

Needles designated "sharps" are recommended.

References:

RD ppg 146, 304
 SE ppg 56-57



Slip Stitch Hem

Skill Sample



Taped Hem with Vertical Hem Stitch

Hand Stitch/Machine Stitch

Quality Standards

- Appropriate for weight of fabric, garment, size of individual.
- Adequate to suit style and provide weight to hang well.
- Uniform in width -- usually 2-3".
- Free from bulk -- flat and smooth.
- Fullness reduced or controlled by easing or shrinking.
- Free from tucks or pleats.
- Seams pressed and graded.
- Seams clipped at edge of pleats.
- Tape should be a coordinating color.
- Hem tape should be machine sewn evenly around edge of hem, about 1/4" over edge.
- Hem should be handstitched with one strand of matching thread.
- Hemming stitches are evenly spaced, secure, free from drawing and not noticeable on outside.
- Pressed to avoid ridges.
- Hangs evenly, uniform distance from floor.
- Correct thread tension.

Helpful Hints

Use firmly woven seam tape for woven fabrics, and stretch lace or other stretch fabric for knit fabrics.

Flared hems should be eased to fit before being sewn to hem tape.

References:

RD ppg 142, 303, 305
SE ppg 107



Taped Hem with Vertical Hem Stitch

Skill Sample



Chained Belt Loops and Strap Keepers

Hand Stitch

Quality Standards

- **Matching** thread in regular or button-hole weight.
- Chain should be well secured.
- Loops should be uniform in size.
- Belt loops -- attach both ends.
- Strap keeper -- use snap.

Tips from the Masters

Belt loops could also be made using the buttonhole stitch over several strands of thread.

Strap keepers could also be made using ribbon and snaps.

References:

RD ppg 139-140, 365, 367
SE pg 109



Chained Belt Loops and Strap Keepers

Skill Sample



Interfacing (sew in)

Basic Techniques

Quality Standards

- Should be same or lighter weight than garment fabric.
- When woven, cut on the same grain as garment fabric.
- Attach securely.
- Does not show on right side.

Helpful Hints

Pre-shrink interfacing.

Care requirements of interfacing and fabric should be similar.

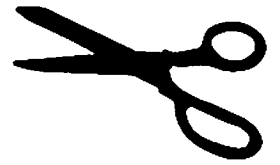
Seams in interfacing should be either lapped or abutted.

Sew in and then trim excess interfacing from seam allowances.

References:

RD pg 89

SE pg 99



Interfacing (sew in)

Skill Sample



Lining

Basic Techniques

Quality Standards

- Separately constructed inner garment that conceals inside of garment.
- Lining seams are concealed between garment and lining.
- Seam allowances should be finished so as not to add bulk.
- Lining color or pattern should not show through to right side of garment.
- Color and weight are coordinated with garment fabric.
- Care requirements are compatible with garment fabric.
- Fits smoothly inside garment.
- Has a neat, finished appearance.
- Lining and garment seamlines are aligned.
- Lining should be 1/2" to 1" shorter than garment.
- Allowance for body movement.
- Free hanging lining linked to skirt hemline with thread tacks.
- Should be smooth, opaque and durable.

Helpful Hints

An anti-static finish is desirable.

References:

RD ppg 84-85, 92-94, 147



Lining

Skill Sample



Underlining

Basic Techniques

Quality Standards

- Fabric placed under garment fabric to provide stability, opaqueness, or to enhance design of outer fabric.
- Color and weight are coordinated with garment fabric.
- Care requirements are compatible with garment fabric.
- Underlining should not detract from garment shape.
- Seams are visible inside garment.
- Seams and hem edges, etc., should be finished.
- Finish (e.g., soft, crisp) should be appropriate for desired effect.
- Should be relatively stable and light weight.

Helpful Hints

Use fabrics sold as underlinings -- can be light to medium in weight with a soft, medium or crisp finish.

Other fabrics, such as china silk, organdy, organza, muslin, batiste, lightweight tricot for knits.

Pre-shrink each layer of fabric before attaching to each other. Use the care method you will use for completed garment.

References:

RD ppg 84-87



Underlining

Skill Sample



Matching Plaids

Basic Techniques

Quality Standards

- Straight seams should be matched horizontally and vertically.
- Diagonal seams should match and form a chevron.
- Uneven plaids should be all same direction - both vertically and horizontally.
- Patch pockets should match perfectly.
- Center front/center back should have dominant stripe of plaid.
- Be aware of bold horizontal stripe placement.

Matching is **expected** at the following locations:

- Center front and center back.
- Side seams.
- Collar at center back (for collars that open in front).
- Armhole at bust/chest level.
- Shaped facings.
- Sleeve plackets.
- Pockets and pocket flaps.
- 2 piece outfits where they overlap so pattern appears continuous from top to bottom.

Where matching **cannot** be expected:
Seams with darts.

- Any area with ease or gathers.
- Yokes.
- Armhole backs.
- Armhole fronts above bust/chest level.
- Raglan sleeves.
- Cuffs.
- Waistline seams and waistbands.

Helpful Hints

When cutting, match stitching lines not cutting lines.

Select pattern suitable to use with plaid fabric. Fewer pieces are better.

References:

- RD ppg 102-103
- SE ppg 36, 46-48



Matching Plaids

Skill Sample



Flat Felled Seam

Machine Stitch

Quality Standards

- Seam appears as two rows of stitching on right side - one is the seamline and the other about 1/4" from first row.
- Stitches should be straight, even in length, and equal distance from each other.
- **Matching** thread or coordinating contrast color.
- Back of seam (inside garment) should show one row of stitching - equal distance from seamline.

Helpful Hints

Often used in sports clothing and children's wear because of its durability.

Seam is sewn wrong sides together.

One seam allowance is trimmed to 1/4" width.

Wider seam allowance is folded over narrower one and stitched flat in place 1/8" from folded edge.

References:

RD pg 162
SE ppg 37, 70-71



Flat Felled Seam

Skill Sample



French Seam

Machine Stitch

Quality Standards

- Finished width of seam should be 1/4" or less.
- Used on sheer or lightweight fabrics.
- Used on fairly straight seams.
- No seam allowance or threads should poke through seamline to right side.
- Seamline appears normal on right side of garment.
- **Matching thread.**
- **Balanced tension stitching.**
- Seam is pressed to one side in the same direction for entire length of seam (no twists).
- Even width seam allowance along length of seam.

Helpful Hints

1. With wrong sides together stitch 3/8" seam.
2. Trim seam allowances to 1/8". Press open.
3. Fold right sides together and press again along edge of fold.
4. Stitch 1/4" from fold. Press to one side.

References:

RD pg 162
SE ppg 37, 68-69



French Seam

Skill Sample



Mock French Seam

Machine Stitch

Quality Standards

- Finished width of seam should be 1/4" or less.
- Use on sheer or light weight fabrics.
- Use on curved seams.
- Seamline appears normal on right side of garment.
- **Matching** thread used.
- Balanced tension.
- Seam allowance is pressed to one side (press to the same side along entire width of seam no twists.)
- Even width seam allowance along length of seam.

Helpful Hints

1. Stitch with right sides together.
2. Trim seam allowances to 1/2".
3. Turn seam edges in 1/4" and press.
4. Stitch folded edges together.

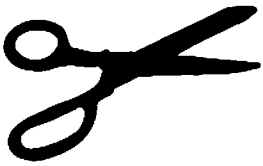
References:

RD pg 162
SE ppg 37, 68-69



Mock French Seam

Skill Sample



Welt Seam

Machine Stitch

Quality Standards

- Topstitching is straight and even distance from seamline.

Helpful Hints

Seam is sewn with right sides together, 5/8" seam allowance.

One seam allowance is trimmed to just under 1/4" width.

Finish other seam allowance to prevent fraying and not add bulk.

Seam pressed to one side, smaller seam allowance hidden by wider one.

Topstitched 1/4" from original seamline.

References:

RD pg 164

SE ppg 37, 70



Welt Seam

Skill Sample



Lined Patch Pocket (curved)

Machine Stitch

Quality Standards

- Corners or curves symmetrical.
- No lining shows on top.
- Lining is matching color or coordinating contrast.
- Even thread tension.
- **Matching** thread.
- Attached with edgestitching and perhaps topstitching.
- Stitching is even distance from edge of pocket.
- Top corners are reinforced.

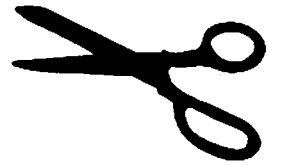
Helpful Hints

Lining should be cut 1/8" smaller. This will help pull right side of pocket towards back, hiding the lining.

This technique can also be used with square pockets.

References:

RD ppg 288-289



Lined Patch Pocket (curved)

Skill Sample



Pleats

Machine Stitch

Quality Standards

- Correct stitch tension.
- Even, deep folds.
- Should hang straight - inside of pleat should not poke out.
- Edgestitched should be 1/8" from the edge, straight, and the same length on each pleat.

Helpful Hints

Edge stitch on underside of pleat in hem allowances to help hold pleats.

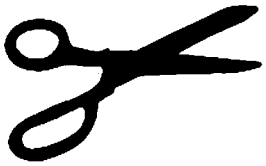
References:

RD ppg 178-189
SE ppg 88-91



Pleats

Skill Sample



Stitch in Ditch

Machine Stitch

Quality Standards

- Stitches are inconspicuous.
- **Matching thread.**

Helpful Hints

Used to finish bands, cuffs, etc. in place of hand blind stitch.

References:

RD ppg 161 (Hong Kong), 281
SE pg 67



Stitch In Ditch

Skill Sample



Waistband

Machine Stitch

Quality Standards

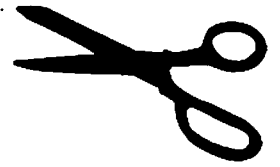
- Corners are sharply turned.
 - Seam allowances graded.
 - Interfaced.
 - Even width all around.
 - Overlap stop at edge (left side as seen.)
 - Underlap extends underneath (right side as seen.)
 - **Matching** thread.
 - Finished with stitch in ditch (should not show on front)
- OR
- Hand tacked with close even stitches that do not show on front.
 - Topstitching is 6 to 8 stitches per inch with regular or heavy thread and placed 1/4" to 3/8" from edge, depending on width of waistband.

Helpful Hints

Could cut on selvedge edge to assure straightness and to reduce bulk (as selvege edge needs no other finish.)

References:

LS ppg 69-70
RD ppg 251-257, 380-383
SE ppg 102-103



Waistband

Skill Sample



Tension (decorative stitching)

Machine Stitch

Quality Standards

- Fabric does not pucker or gather.
- Top and bobbin threads link below center of fabric layer(s).
- Stitch length is set appropriately (especially on satin type stitches).

Helpful Hints

Note: In zig zag decorative stitches (especially satin stitches) the top tension can be loosened slightly so that the link falls toward the bottom layer. This give the stitch pattern a more rounded appearance.

References:

LS pg 14
RD ppg 29, 32-33
SE pg 13



Tension (decorative stitching)

Skill Sample



Zipper (fly)

Machine Stitch

Quality Standards

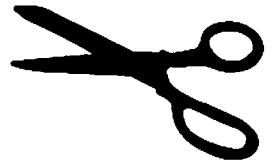
- Even stitch length and tension.
- **Matching thread or coordinating color.**
- **Stitching should be straight and equal distance from seamline (1-1/4" to 1-1/2")**
- **Reinforced at bottom of zipper with a bartack.**
- **Zipper should be completely covered by lap.**
- **May or may not have a fly facing.**
- **Top edges should be even.**
- **Waistband should be long enough to adequately cover fly overlap and underlap.**
- **Should not pull or gap when fastened and placed under stress.**

Helpful Hints

References:

RD ppg 329, 336-337,
378-379

SE ppg 118, 119, 124



Zipper (fly)

Skill Sample