



NOV 3 1978

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# Guide to Standards of Quality In Clothing Construction

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One of the basic tasks in comparison shopping and in evaluating garment construction is to be able to recognize and identify the standards that give a garment a finished, professional look. Many different techniques can be used to accomplish the same end result.

The technique selected should be compatible with the garment style, the character of the fabric, the equipment available, the individual's skills and personal preference. In an objective evaluation it is essential to play down personal preferences and to build up identified and accepted standards.

In general there are some standards that apply to almost

all techniques. Almost all construction techniques should result in an area, finish or detail that is:

Inconspicuous

- flat and smooth
- free from bulk
- stitching a uniform distance from an edge or fold

Functional

Durable — stitching uniform and secure

Specific standards that can be expected in good construction of home sewn garments and ready-to-wear are given here. They are organized by techniques and/or areas, and the techniques are presented in alphabetical order.

## APPEARANCE, OVERALL

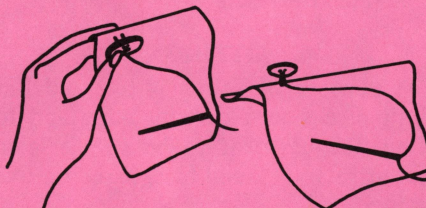
- Overall neatness
- Plaids, stripes, checks, and other designs matched at seams
- Fabric with a direction in design or nap is used in garment in one direction unless garment design requires variation
- Notions compatible to fabric and garment design
  - color
  - fiber
  - weight
  - design
- Basting threads removed

## BELTS

- Flat, smooth, free from bulk
- Straight belt, uniform in width
- Contour belt, smooth, gradual curves
- Interfaced
- Corners are square
- Shape at end of belt, a sharp point, gradual curve
- Closure is appropriate, attractive, and durable

## BUTTONS

- Functional
- Securely fastened
- Neat
- Have a shank — to allow room for fabric layers that lie under them
- Reinforced on the wrong side — with interfacing, reinforcement button
- Have well proportioned space between button and edge of garment
- Placed in relation to buttonholes — when buttoned, layers are completely flat and smooth



## BOUND BUTTONHOLES

- Flat
- Secure
- Even in length and width
- Uniform in appearance
- With grain or yarn direction of fabric

- Placed in direction of pull
- Equally distant apart
- Correct length — allows button to pass through easily and yet small enough to hold garment closed
- Correct placement
  - on right front of women's garments
  - on left front of men's garments
  - overlapping occurs where it was designed — i.e., center front, center back, side seams at neck, fullest part of bust, waist, and cuff overlap
- Rectangle has perfectly square corners
- Rectangle is no wider than 1/4 inch (6 mm) except for bulky fabrics
- Lips are even width
- Lips meet exactly at center of rectangular opening
- Facing securely fastened — back of buttonhole finished

## WORKED BUTTONHOLES

- Flat
- Secure — all stitching intact
- Even in length and width



## Uniform in appearance

- length of stitch
- regularity of stitch
- color of thread

## Stitched in thread that matches fabric

With grain or yarn direction of fabric

Cut in direction of pull — eliminates gapping

Equally distant apart

Correct length — allows button to pass through easily and yet small enough to hold garment closed

Correct placement

- on right front of women's garments
- on left front of men's garments
- to hold garment securely closed
- overlapping occurs where it was designed — center front, center back, side seams and cuff

## COLLARS

Free from bulk

- curved seams clipped, notched or wedged
- seams trimmed, graded

Only the top collar is visible

- seamline on edge of collar hidden
- built-in roll prevents under collar from showing
- understitching holds the under collar in place
- stays inconspicuous if used

Interfaced to maintain shape

Enclosed seam is invisible on outside

- interfacing gives cushion between upper collar and seam allowance
- collar carefully pressed

Same shape left to right

- curve of collar
- angle of collar points
- location in relation to center front or center back

## CUFFS

Flat, smooth, free from bulk

- enclosed seams trimmed and graded
- interfacing cushions seam allowance

Interfaced to maintain shape

Even in width

Only top cuff is visible

- seamline of edge of cuff hidden
- built-in roll prevents cuff facing from showing

## DARTS

Tapered and smooth

- come to a tapered point
- free of puckers or bubble

Securely fastened at end

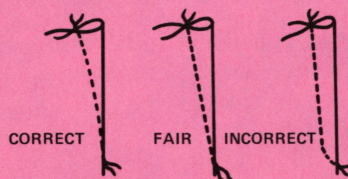
Appear as straight lines from outside of garment

Evenly spaced, if in groups

Matched from left or right side of body in shape and length

Well pressed

- pressed smoothly on stitching line, fabric
- does not have fold over stitching line or look bubbled
- over rounded ham if intended for curved section of body
- vertical darts pressed toward center
- horizontal darts pressed down
- darts in bulky fabric slashed and pressed open



## FACINGS

Flat, smooth, free from bulk

- no pulling
- no hand tacking visible on outside

Not visible from outside

- turned on seamline
- no visible hand stitches
- no construction imprints pressed on outside

Securely held in place

- by understitching
- by tacking only at seams and darts

Enclosed seam

- no wider than ¼ inch (6 mm)
- graded, clipped, notched or wedged

Edge is secure, stable and free from ravelling

- may or may not require a finish
- if finished, finish is flat, smooth, free from bulk

## FITTING

The purpose of fitting is to mold flat cloth pieces to a curving body and to allow the garment to be comfortable and attractive. Good fit is based on five factors:

### Grain or Yarn Direction

Length-wise grain or yarn direction is perpendicular to the floor

Cross-wise grain or yarn direction is parallel to the floor

Grain or yarn direction on right half of garment matches that on left half of garment

## Line

Silhouette lines on garment follow silhouette lines on the body

—shoulder seams are on top of shoulders

—vertical seams fall perpendicular to the floor

—vertical side seams cut body in half

Circumference lines follow body circumference

—neckline, waistline, armhole

Darts point toward and stop short of fullest part of the area they shape

Hem is parallel to the floor

## Ease

Adequate ease for comfort

Correct amount of ease for smoothness

—neither too loose nor too tight

—wrinkles which pull and draw indicate too little ease

—wrinkles that lie in folds indicate too much ease

**Balance** - on body, wearer; space around body

From right to left

From top to bottom

From front to back

## Overall Smoothness

### And Freedom from Wrinkles

Smooth on the body

Free from wrinkles

Enhances appearance of wearer

Good design on wearer

—line

—color

—texture



## Sleeves — An Example

### Grain

Cross-wise grain or yarn direction parallel to the floor above elbow

Length-wise grain or yarn direction perpendicular to the floor at the elbow

### Line

Sleeve cap rests at end of shoulder

Curve of armhole is smooth gradual

### Ease

Sleeve has adequate room for upper arm



## GATHERS

Uniform, evenly distributed — none are stitched so as to form pleats

Full and attractive

—not pressed flat

—adequate fullness so not to appear skimpy

## HEMS

Free from bulk

—appropriate width for weight of fabric and style

—fullness reduced or controlled by easing or shrinking — free from pleating

—seams pressed open and graded

—seams clipped at edge of pleats

Flat and smooth

—if required, finished to prevent ravelling — not all fabrics require a finish

—if finished, finish does not add bulk or create a ridge

—free from pleats

—is only slightly larger than the area on which it rests

—seams are matched

Inconspicuous — unless meant to be decorative

Uniform in width

If top stitched, stitching is uniform and corresponds with other top stitching on the garment

Hand stitches are evenly spaced, secure, free from drawing, and invisible on outside, hidden in fabric

Fused hems are acceptable if they do not change the hand or appearance of the fabric

Carefully pressed — to avoid ridges

Width appropriate for fabric and style of garment

Garment hangs evenly and gracefully

—uniform distance from the floor

—adequate width to suit present styles and to provide weight to hang well

## INTERFACING

Adds shape, body, and support

—without bulk

—without changing the character of the fabric

Enhances the hand of the fabric

Color blends with color of fabric or enhances it

Cushions garment and prevents seam allowance from showing on right side

Not visible — covered by the facing

Free from ravelling

Interfacing seams and darts are treated to eliminate bulk

## LINING

Conceals the inner construction

Color coordinated with fashion fabric

Care coordinated with fashion fabric

Fits smoothly inside the garment

Has a neat, clean finish

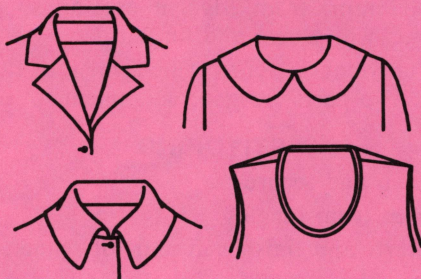
Lining and garment seamlines are aligned

Allowance for body movement

—vertical pleat in back lining

—folds at bottom of sleeve and at garment hem

A free hanging lining is attached to garment at hemline at seams with French tacks



## NECKLINES

Smooth, gradual curves — if called for in design

Flat and free from bulk

Interfaced, if needed

—to prevent stretching

—to provide stability

—to maintain shape

Staystitched — to prevent stretching

—to maintain shape

## NEEDLEWORK

*General standards to consider when needlework is used as design on a garment:*

Secure

Uniform

Flat and smooth — free from unwanted pulling

Correct technique used

Attractive

Enhances the garment

Care coordinates with fashion fabric

## PLACKETS

Flat and neat

Free from bulk

Secure and durable

—no pulling at corners

—no raw or ravelling edges

Functional

Made in matching fabric and thread

## PLEATS, TUCKS

Uniform in width — unless design requires variation in width

On straight of grain or yarn direction

Flat and pressed in one direction — except released tucks and unpressed pleats

Free from pressed in ridges

Free from marks from basting, pins

## POCKETS

### Patch Pocket

Flat and smooth

Decorative and attractive

Even stitching

Stitching suitable to fabric and garment design

Hem in proportion to shape and size of pocket

Upper corners are reinforced with 1 or 2 stitches

Square corners are mitered

In pairs, the pockets are balanced and are uniform or coordinated in size and shape

### In-seam Pocket

Not visible — unless meant to be decorative

Lies flat — does not gap

Seam is reinforced — to prevent stretching

## PRESSING

Garment surface is smooth and free from wrinkles

Sleeve is smooth and free from wrinkles

—diagonal wrinkles pointing to the cap indicate needed length in cap

—cross-wise folds at the under arm indicate needed width in sleeve

Length adequate for style of sleeve and for individual

## Balance

Port sleeve is balanced on the arm

—pokes neither forward nor back

—doesn't hug the arm

Fullness is smooth and even

—not puffy or puckered

—fullness is even front and back

## General Smoothness, Freedom from Wrinkles

Sleeve is eased into blouse, not the blouse eased into the sleeve



Original appearance of the fabric has been maintained

- no overpressing
- no sheen
- no flattened nap or pile
- no imprints of construction details on outside of garment
- no stretching or shrinking
- no water spots
- no scorching, melting or iron imprints

Seams and darts are pressed smoothly on the stitching line — fabric does not fold over stitching line or look bubbled

Garment areas pressed over curves where garment will fit over curves — shaping pressed in

### SEAMS

Good stitching

- balanced tension
- even stitch length
- uniform pressure
- thread appropriate
  - color matches or blends
  - type of thread
  - fiber content
- free from runs or pulling
- reinforced at ends with back stitching or knotting

Seam allowances are flat and smooth

- even in width
- free from bulk
  - crossed seams are trimmed
  - enclosed seams are trimmed and graded
- lie flat — curved seams are clipped or wedged
- free from puckering
- pressed open — or in correct direction for purpose
- free from ravelling
  - finished, if needed
  - finish is flat, smooth, free from bulk
  - finish prevents ravelling

Fullness eased and smooth

Crossed seams meet

Design patterns and plaids meet

Crotch seams

- curve smooth, gradual
- reinforced by stretch stitches, multiple rows of stitching or tape
- free from bulk

### SLEEVES

Smooth

- curve of armhole is smooth and gradual
- nicely rounded cap

Kimono sleeve

- free from drawing or pulling
- seam allowance clipped in underarm evenly eased in shoulder and upperarm

Free from bulk — underarm seam allowance trimmed or clipped

Fullness evenly distributed

- ease not puckered or puffy
- evenly distributed front and back
  - ease
  - gathers

Reinforced

- reinforced stitching in armhole in area of strain

Kimono sleeve

- reinforced with stay at underarm curve
- gusset used

Free from ravelling — soft finish on seam allowance if needed to prevent ravelling

### FASTENERS

Neat

- small even stitches
- buttonhole stitch nice, but not necessary
- finishing stitches do not show on right side of garment

Secure

- are reinforced on wrong side — usually with interfacing

Proper location

- hooks are usually placed  $\frac{1}{8}$  inch (3 mm) from edge of overlap so it will secure and lie flat

Functional — correct placement of the two parts for good alignment

### STITCHING

Even and secure

Free from tangles

Starts and finishes at ends of seams

Length of stitch is appropriate for the fabric

Stitches equal in length — except where shortened for reinforcement

Balanced tension

Free from skipped or broken spots

Thread ends are clipped or knotted

### TOP STITCHING

Provides an attractive decorative effect

### UNDERSTITCHING

Holds facing in place — neckline, collar, cuff

Not visible on outside of garment

Thread blends with fabric

Done from right side through all fabric layers and seam allowances after seam allowances were trimmed, graded, clipped, or notched

### WAISTBANDS

Smooth, free from bulk

Uniform in width

On grain or yarn direction

Interfaced to maintain shape

Overlap flush with placket — underlap extends beyond the placket and under the band

Turned completely

- corners are square
- tab comes to a point

Skirt or pants eased onto band

### WAISTLINE SEAMS

Inconspicuous, smooth, and flat

All seams and details finished and pressed before waistline was stitched

Secured with a waistline stay

- adds reinforcement
- prevents stretching
- stay can be woven seam binding, twill tape, or grosgrain ribbon

### ZIPPERS

Placket, when closed, is flat and smooth

- free from puckering
- zipper does not buckle or poke

Zipper tape does not show, unless part of design

Stitching is straight and even

Placket is open to end of zipper teeth — unless zipper has been shortened; then chain or coil is securely held with several stitches

Correct length to be useful

Slides easily and does not catch

Compatible weight with fabric

Horizontal seams meet across the placket opening

Space has been allowed at back zipper for hook and eye, snap, or other fastener — to relieve strain on zipper

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