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Bound Buttonholes

Ernestine Porter
Extension Textiles and Clothing Specialist



A bound buttonhole is usually rectangular in shape. Buttonhole lips are of an even width, meet in the center and appear to be $\frac{1}{8}$ inch wide. In a heavy fabric, the actual width will be slightly wider than $\frac{1}{8}$ inch and will be slightly narrower in a thin fabric. A bound buttonhole less than $\frac{1}{8}$ inch long is not recommended for the beginning or average clothing construction person.

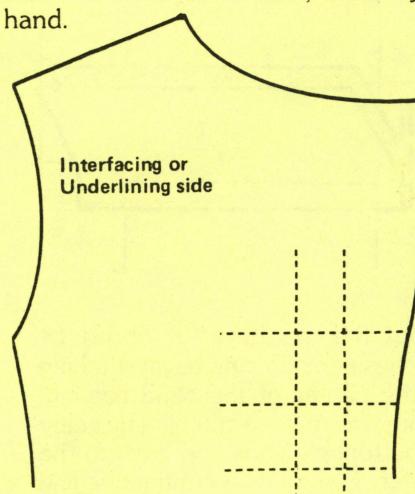
A professional looking bound buttonhole has a sunken appearance. The single patch method maintains this appearance better than the two patch (window pane) method.

Marking

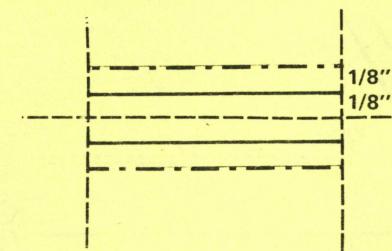
Mark the position and length of the buttonholes on the underlining or interfacing. The interfacing's weight will determine the marking placement. If the interfacing is heavy and will add bulk, then make the markings on the underlining or wrong side of the fashion fabric. On medium and lightweight interfacings, mark and construct buttonholes through the interfacing.

- Mark with a pencil for a sharp definite line. Make sure pencil marks will not show through to the right side.
- Mark buttonhole ends with two parallel lines.
- Mark the crosswise position between the parallel lines.

Machine baste on the lengthwise and crosswise markings. Test the machine stitching on the fashion fabric. If it leaves a mark, baste by hand.



- Mark $\frac{1}{8}$ inch on either side of the crosswise placement line. This is the actual width of the buttonhole lips.
- Mark another line $\frac{1}{8}$ inch above and below this marking. These are the basting lines.



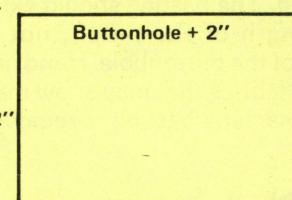
- Be sure that markings meet the vertical length lines at either end.

Always do a test buttonhole first. On the garment, it is easier to complete one step on all the buttonholes. Then do the next step on all buttonholes, and proceed in this fashion until you've completed all the steps. Work will progress faster than making each buttonhole separately.

Patches

Buttonhole lips are made from patches of fashion fabrics.

- Cut patches 2 inches longer than the finished length of the buttonhole.
- Always cut patches 2 inches wide.
- If fabric ravel easily, cut a square of Shape Flex or Pelomite and fuse to the wrong side of the patch.



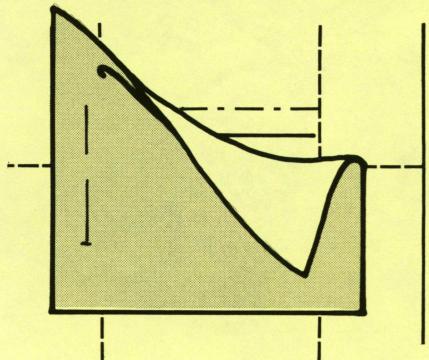
Patches for making bound buttonholes can be cut on the straight of grain or on the bias. This depends on the type of fabric.

- Plaids and stripes may accent the buttonhole area when cut on the bias. In some fabrics, the buttonholes may look more attractive with plaids and stripes matched in this area.

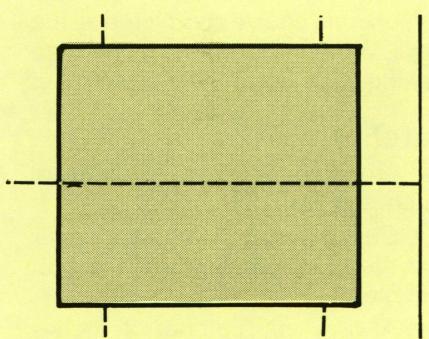
- For napped fabric such as corduroy, cut patches on the bias.

- When making bound buttonholes in fur or fur-like fabrics, cut patches in the crosswise direction. In the lengthwise direction, the fur will separate, making an unattractive buttonhole.

Press the patches in half lengthwise. Place this fold in the center line of the buttonhole right sides together.

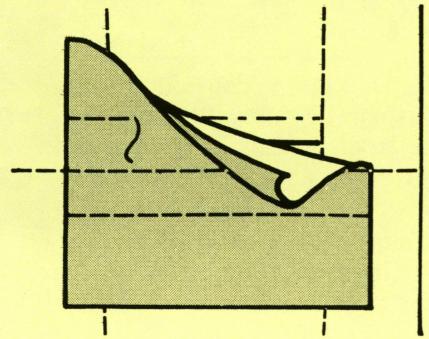


Machine baste the patch to the garment along the fold line. Baste the entire patch. Extend the basting beyond the buttonhole length markings.

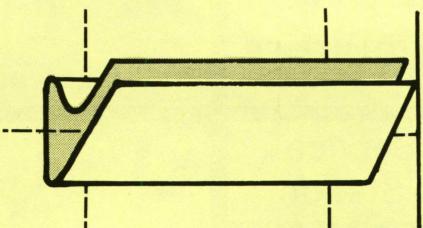


Basting and Stitching

With wrong side up, machine baste through the second $\frac{1}{8}$ inch marking. The basting should extend the length of the patch, not the length of the buttonhole. Hand baste on any fabrics that may show marks when machine basting is removed.

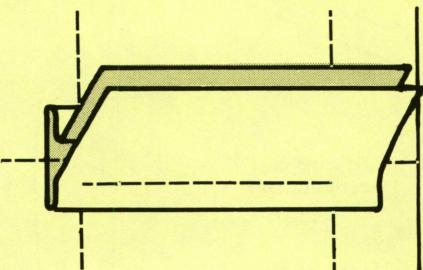


On the right side of the garment, press the loose edges of the patch toward the center of the buttonhole.

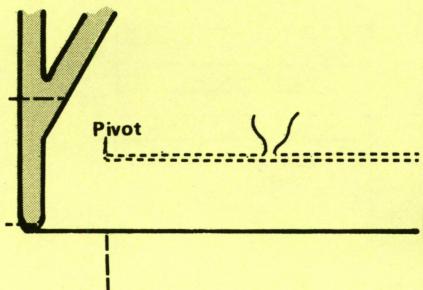


Hand baste along the first $\frac{1}{8}$ inch markings from the wrong side through garment and patch. These markings indicate the actual width of the buttonhole lips. Baste exactly on the lines. Both sides should be identical in width because the way they look now is the way they will look when cut and turned.

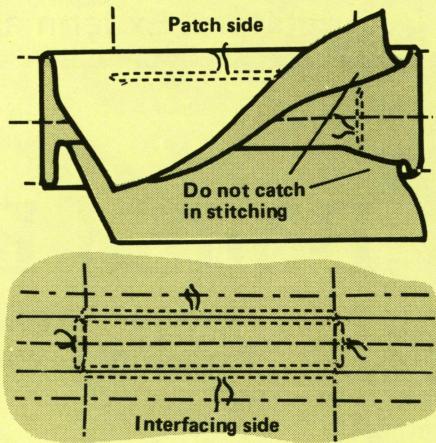
Hand basting may be skipped, but this basting is a good indication of straightness and accuracy. If you skip the basting, the fabric must be light to mediumweight so the machine can stitch from the wrong side.



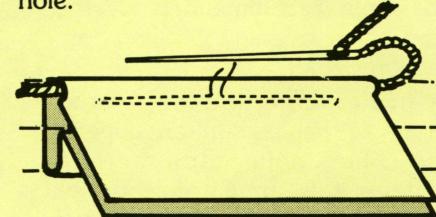
Set the machine for about 18 stitches per inch, and begin stitching in the center of the hand basting. Make two rows of stitching by going to buttonhole ends and back to the center. Make this a continuous line of stitching — no breaking or cutting of thread. By beginning and ending stitching in the middle, you eliminate loose ends at the buttonhole corners that may weaken the stitching at this point of strain.



Again using 18 stitches per inch, stitch across the ends of the buttonhole in the same way. Start stitching in the center and pivot at the corners. End the stitching in the middle. As before, the stitching should be continuous. Stitch from the patch side. Take care not to catch edges of the patch in the stitching.

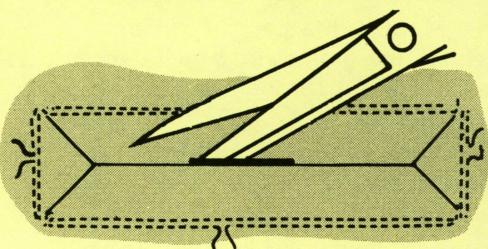


To prevent the lips from flattening and to help maintain the professional look of the sunken appearance, core the lips of the buttonhole. Use a soft yarn of a suitable thickness. Three-ply is usually appropriate for suiting weight fabrics. You can use a tube turner or a large needle to draw the yarn through the lips of the buttonhole.

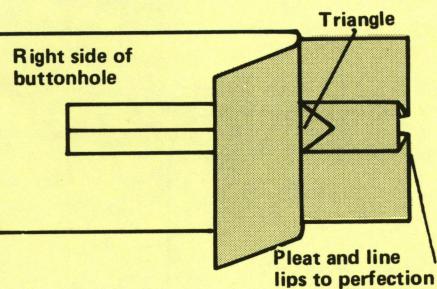


Cutting and Finishing

To cut the buttonhole, start at the midpoint of the center line and stop $\frac{3}{8}$ inch from the ends. From here, cut diagonally into the corners of the buttonhole. This results in a small triangle at each end of the buttonhole. Cut to — but not through — the stitching. Be sure to cut the same closeness in each corner, or the buttonhole will not be a true rectangle. This shape is important for a professional looking buttonhole.

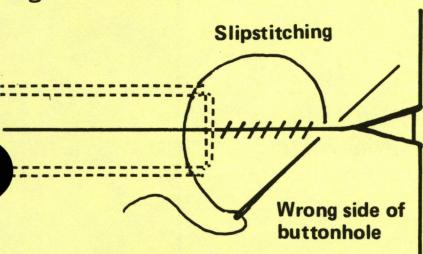


Remove the basting on the second $\frac{1}{8}$ inch lines. You must do this for the buttonhole to turn. Turn the patch to the wrong side, making sure a pleat forms at the ends.

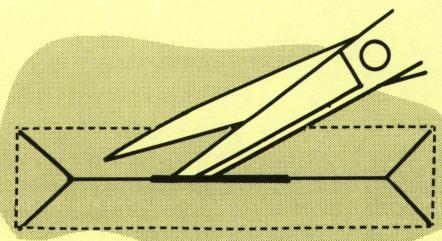
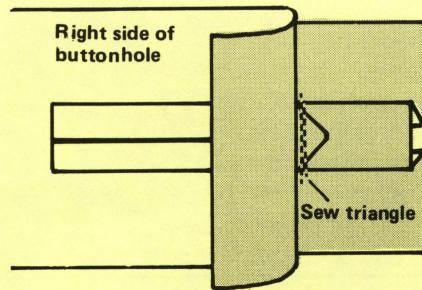


Line up the lips so they form a perfect rectangle on the right side. Lightly press the buttonhole. Remember the sunken effect gives a professional look — **do not overpress**.

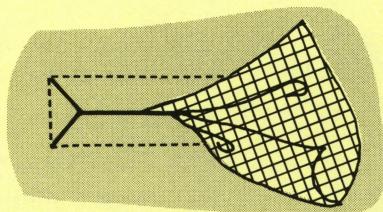
Slipstitch the folded edges of the pleat at both ends of the buttonhole. This will prevent the presser foot from separating the lips when stitching the ends.



Stitch across the widest part of the triangle (18 stitches per inch). This closes the ends of the buttonhole.

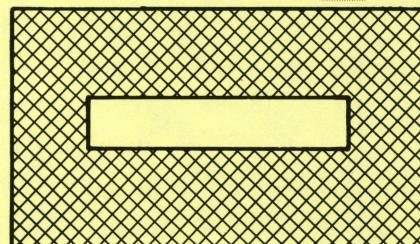
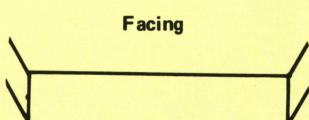
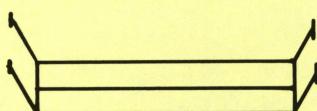


Turn the patch through this opening to the wrong side of the facing.

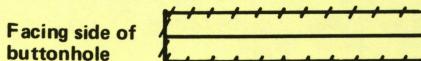


Facing

Mark the facing by placing pins through the corners of the buttonhole. Draw a rectangle around the four pins on the facing side.



Match the rectangle opening in the facing to the wrong side of the buttonhole and slipstitch together.



Cut a piece of tulle or other sheer fabric about 2 by 3 inches. Stitch this to the right side of the facing along the rectangle markings (18 stitches per inch). Cut the patch and the facing the same as the buttonhole.

Material in this publication was adapted from Virginia Stolpe Lewis's *Comparative Clothing Construction Techniques*, Minneapolis, MN, Burgess Publishing Co., 1976.

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