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Topstitching

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Topstitching can serve either or both of two purposes. Topstitching can serve as an attractive trim or accent. You can also use topstitching to flatten the edges of bulky fabrics.

Topstitching may be recommended in various locations of the garment.

- Lapels
- Major seams
- Pockets and pocket flaps
- Hems

Topstitching should always look professional. Careful choice of thread is very important to achieve the desired look.

Buttonhole twist, a silk thread, is recommended for use on a wool garment. (Dry-clean only since this thread is not washable.) Use it only on the top of the machine with regular thread on the bobbin.

Polyester cord (Gutermann and Metrosene) works best for polyesters and other synthetic fibers. Buttonhole twist usually will not sew smoothly on polyesters.

Two spools of regular matching thread will also give the desired look to topstitching. Both strands are threaded through the eye of the needle.

A larger needle is usually necessary to accommodate the heavier topstitching thread. This will eliminate skipped stitches and the tendency of thread to knot.

The special topstitching needles on the market have a larger eye.

Topstitching has a professional look when the machine is set for a stitch longer than regulation. Six stitches per inch is a good guideline. Stitches should take on the appearance of being separated. Test the stitch on a scrap of fabric with the same weight of interfacing to discover the ideal size.

Testing will also provide an opportunity to see how the thread selection looks with the fiber content of the fashion fabric. The top tension may have to be loosened slightly depending on the weight of the thread.

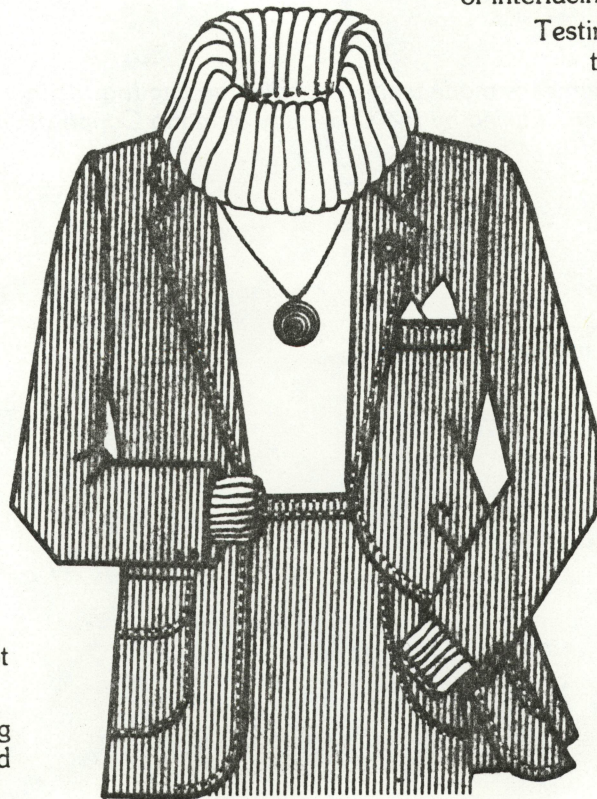
You can create an interesting effect by using a contrasting thread in the bobbin. This gives a more definite break between the stitches. You can also use a contrasting thread on top to accent the topstitching detail. This necessitates perfection in the line of topstitching.

Be careful to avoid mistakes in stitching. Some fabrics are marred by unpicking and redoing.

Topstitching tape has various widths marked that may serve as a guideline for perfection.

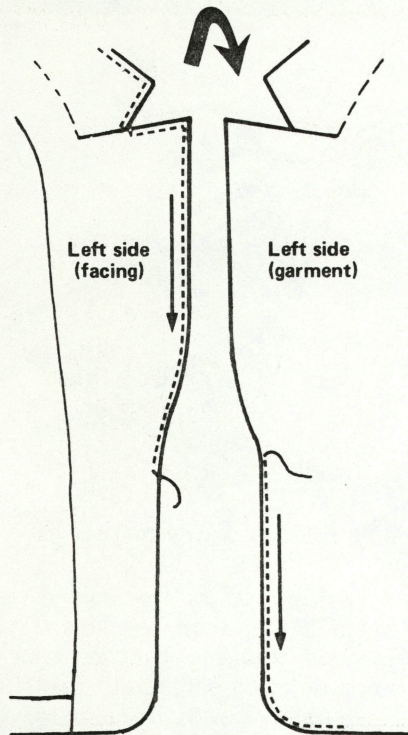
You can also mark the garment with chalk for a guideline.

When the distance from the edge is appropriate, the presser foot may serve as an accurate guide.

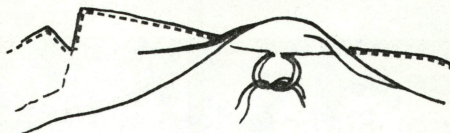


Topstitching Guidelines

Stitch only from the right side. As a result, stitching must be reversed at the end of the lapels. For the appearance of a continuous line, overlap one or two stitches.

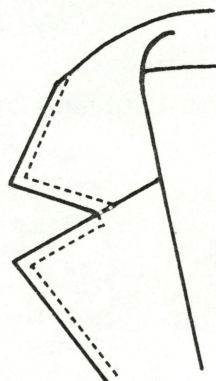


The thread should be pulled to the inside with a hand-stitching needle. Thread ends may be knotted between the facing and the garment. Never tie a knot on the outside.

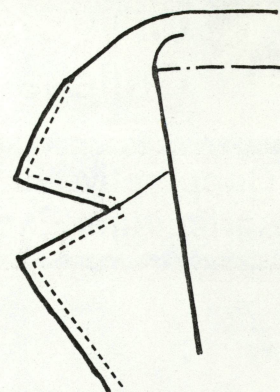


Pattern guidelines will usually indicate topstitching distance from the seam.

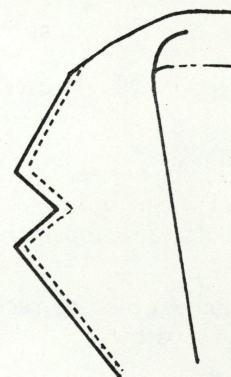
On a tailored collar, stitching goes into the seam ditch between the lapel and the collar. It comes out again in the notched area.



A tailored collar can also be squared off at the lapel notch.



Topstitching takes on a continuous look on a shawl collar (no seam between lapel and collar).



Reference to trade names is made with the understanding that neither discrimination is intended nor endorsement implied by the University of Idaho Cooperative Extension Service.