



All About Silk

Sewing Silk

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Silk is timeless. With proper care, the beautiful qualities of this fabric will last through season after season. The flow and drapeability of lightweight silk are absolutely unbeatable. No other fabric has the hang of pure silk.

Silk is cool for hot weather wear because it is a natural fiber and breathes more readily than manmade fibers. One-hundred percent cotton, however, is cooler because it is made from cellulose or plant fiber. Silk, a protein based fiber made by silkworms, is slightly warmer. For summer, consider silk broadcloth, noil, linen, georgette or crepe de chine.

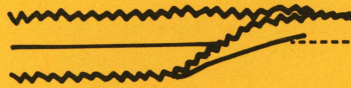
Seams

You can use any seam on medium to heavyweight silks. Consider whether you want a sporty look or a dressy appearance when making seam decisions. Suitable seams for lightweight silks include the plain seam with a seam finish, the narrow seam, the French seam, mock French seam, wrapped seam and the enclosed swiss edge.

Plain Seam — The plain seam can be used on any seam, straight or curved. It is recommended, however, only on



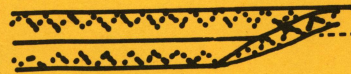
turned and stitched edge



pinked edge



stitched and pinked edge



multi-stitch zigzag edge

dark colored or opaque silk fabrics where the seam allowances do not show through on the right side.

Suitable seam finishes for lightweight silks are the pinked edge, the stitched and pinked edge, the turned and stitched edge and the multistitched, zigzag edge.



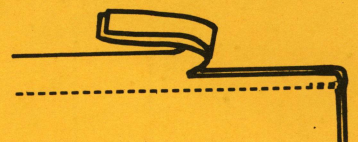
Narrow Seam — The narrow seam can be used anywhere on a garment. To make a narrow seam in lightweight silks, stitch the first row on the seamline using a straight or zigzag stitch. Trim close to the second row of stitching.



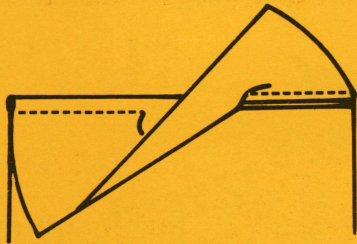
Or, use a stitch on the sewing machine that stitches and overcasts in one operation.

French Seam — The French seam is suitable for straight or slightly curved seams. To make a French seam with 1/4 inch finished width:

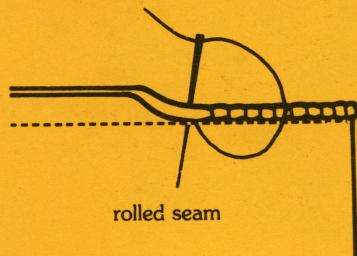
1. Place the fabric **wrong** sides together. Stitch 3/8 inch from the raw edge.
2. Trim seam allowances to 1/8 inch.



3. Press both seam allowances to one side. Fold on the stitching line, right sides together; press.
4. Stitch again $\frac{1}{4}$ inch from the fold encasing the raw edges.
(This stitching will be on the seam-line.)

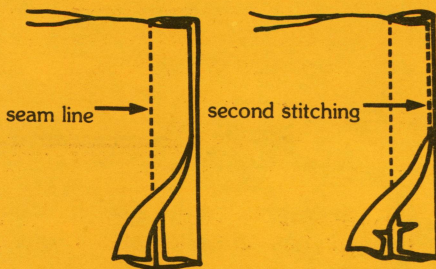


5. Press seam allowances to one side. The rolled seam finish is also suitable, especially for curved seams, to achieve the look of a French seam.

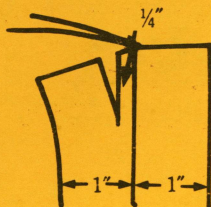


Mock French Seam — This French seam can be used for just about any seam, even armholes. Straight or only slightly curved seams, however, are easiest.

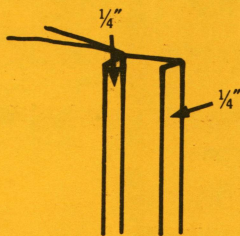
Stitch along the seamline. Press open. Fold in seam edges, and topstitch very close to the folded edges.



Wrapped Seam — The wrapped seam is suitable for straight or slightly curved seams. Allow 1 inch seams when cutting for easier handling. Stitch along the seamline. Press the seam open. Trim the seam allowance to the back of the garment to $\frac{1}{4}$ inch.



Fold under the raw edge of wider seam allowance about $\frac{1}{4}$ inch.



Bring wider seam allowance over the trimmed layer. Stitch along the fold as close to the first seam stitching line as possible.



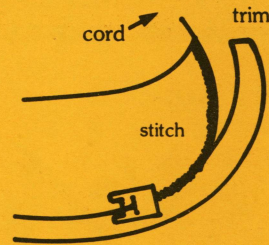
In case you didn't cut wider seams, for standard $\frac{5}{8}$ inch seams, trim one side to $\frac{1}{8}$ inch, and wrap the other side over. The seam will be narrow and a bit more difficult to handle but will look "rolled."

Enclosed Swiss Edge for Sheer Fabrics — This edge is recommended for collars, cuffs, etc. It prevents ravelly, uneven seams from showing through.

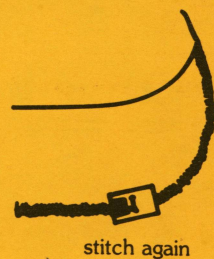
Place right sides together; then follow the following steps:

1. Set your machine on a medium width zigzag, about 12 to 15 stitches per inch.

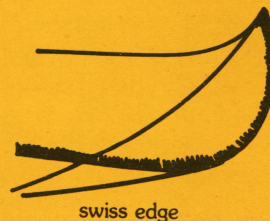
2. Mark the seamline on the fabric. Cut a piece of topstitching thread the length of the seam, and lay it on the seamline.
3. Stitch on the seamline, covering the cording. Stitch slowly and evenly; at corners, pivot with the needle in the fabric on the **inside** of the corner.
4. Trim to the stitching.



5. Zigzag again with the same or slightly wider stitch over the cut edge.



6. Turn right sides out.



Fasteners

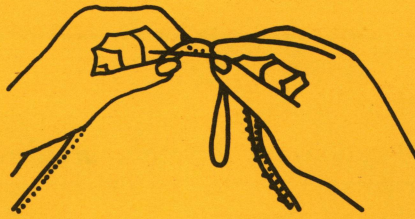
Lapped and centered zipper applications are suitable for silk fabrics. For lightweight silks, do the final topstitching by machine rather than by hand because the pickstitch may cause pulled fabric threads in some fabrics.

Machine buttonholes are recommended for most silk fabrics. If you have trouble with puckering at the ends of the buttonhole, try one or more of the following:

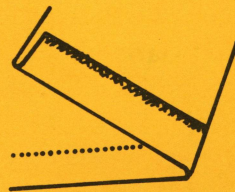
- Use interfacing rather than self-fabric to stabilize the buttonhole area.
- Use tissue paper or a tear-away backing fabric on the wrong side of the buttonhole when stitching. Carefully remove after stitching. If backing cannot be completely removed, it will result in a buttonhole that is too stiff and bulky for some silk fabrics.
- When stitching the bar tack at the ends of the buttonhole, hold the fabric taut with your fingers.



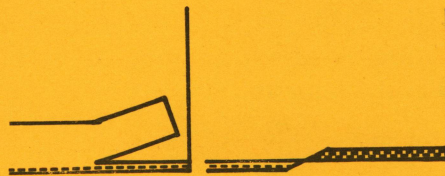
of how far to roll the hem. Sew the hem using the slipstitch with the stitches $\frac{1}{4}$ inch apart.



To do a **topstitched hem** in a skirt or dress, fold the hem allowance to the wrong side along the marked hemline; trim to $\frac{1}{2}$ to 2 inches. Finish the raw edge. From the right side, topstitch close to the top edge. If desired, topstitch again $\frac{1}{8}$ to $\frac{1}{4}$ inch from the first line of stitching.



To do a **very narrow topstitched hem**, fold the hem allowance to the wrong side along the marked hemline; do not press. Stitch close to the fold. Trim the hem allowance close to the stitching, and press. Turn under again along the stitching line, and press. Stitch close to the fold.



To do a **narrow blouse hem**, stitch $\frac{1}{4}$ inch from the raw edge. Press the fabric to wrong side along the stitching. Turn under again $\frac{1}{4}$ inch. Topstitch close to the fold.

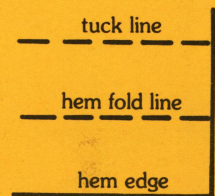


The **tucked hem** gives the appearance of a separately applied band.

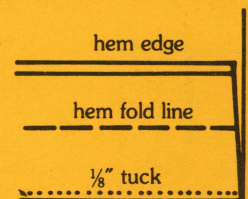


The hem is stitched to the tuck so that no stitching shows on the right side. This hem is suitable for both sheer and lightweight silks. The width can range from $\frac{1}{4}$ to 3 inches depending on the curve of the hem and personal preference.

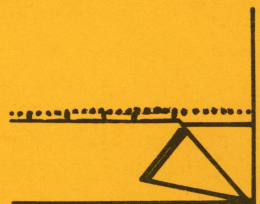
To do the tucked hem, first mark the hemline on the wrong side. Decide on the desired finished width of the band; mark that amount above the hemline for the tuck line and below the hemline for the cutting line. Trim the hem allowance along the cutting line.



Turn under the raw edge $\frac{1}{4}$ inch to the wrong side; press. Fold the garment right sides together along the tuck line. Stitch $\frac{1}{8}$ inch from the fold.



Press the tuck down. Fold the hem wrong sides together so the bottom folded edge is even with the tuck; press. Hand stitch the hem to the tuck.



Hems

The type of hem used on silk fabric depends on the fabric's weight, the curve of the hem, the style of the garment and personal preference. The hem can be stitched by hand, or it can be machine stitched.

For a hand stitched or topstitched hem, finish the raw edge of the hem. Use one of these methods: stitched and pinked, multistitch zigzag or turned and stitched.

If you choose to do a hand stitched hem, use a fine needle. Keep the stitches loose, and catch only a thread of the fabric.

To do a **hand rolled hem**, machine stitch along the marked hemline. Trim the hem allowance to $\frac{1}{8}$ inch from the stitching. Roll the fabric between your fingers two or three times tightly over itself. Use the line of stitching as a guide

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