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# Put it all together

## DARTS AND SEAMS

Darts and seams are usually the first construction methods on a garment. Don't overlook the importance of accuracy in stitching and pressing them.

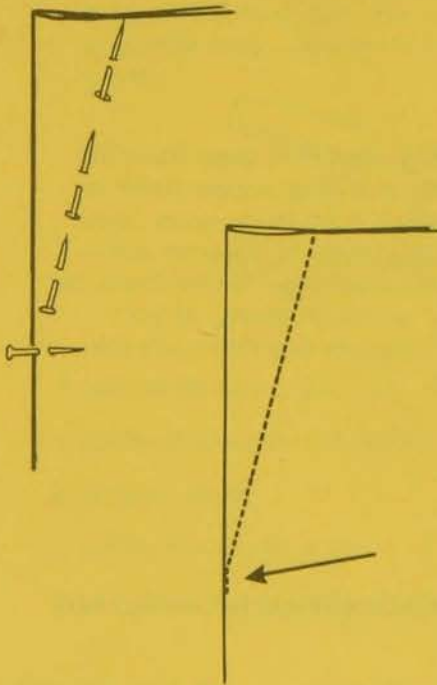
### DARTS

Darts are used in almost every garment to give shaping. Well made darts should:

- look like a smooth, well shaped seam.
- taper gradually to a point.
- end 1 inch from the fullest part of the body and be in line with the body.

### TO MAKE DARTS:

1. fold dart in center, matching marked lines. (See helps in Help Yourself to Sew for how to transfer pattern markings.) Pin at each end and in between to hold marks together exactly.
2. stitch, starting at wider, outer edge. At the point, make the last three stitches only one yarn from the fold.
3. secure thread ends by tying, or backstitching for  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch on the same stitching line.



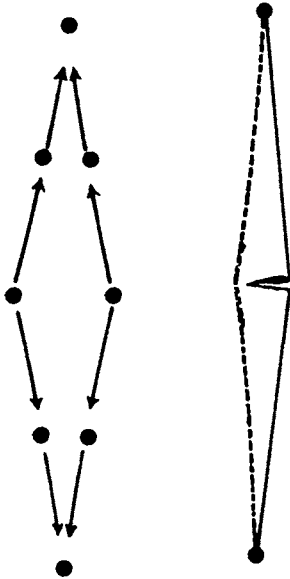
THE CLOTHES YOU MAKE

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## TO PRESS DARTS:

1. press line of stitching on wrong side.
2. place dart in correct position on pressing cushion. Press bodice, skirt, and pants darts toward center. Press bust-line and elbow darts down.
3. to prevent dart imprint on right side, press under edge of dart, or place heavy paper under edge while pressing.



## MORE ON DARTS

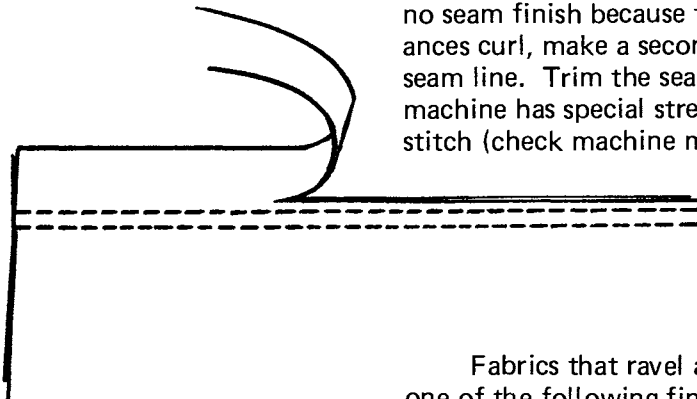
Stitch double-pointed darts from center to point, and then from center to other point. Stitch again to reinforce center area. Before pressing, clip widest part of dart to  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch of stitching line.

On bulky fabrics, slash to within  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch of the point and press open darts to reduce bulk. Be sure darts are in the right place before slashing.

Eliminate bulk by pressing darts in lining in the opposite direction from those in garment.

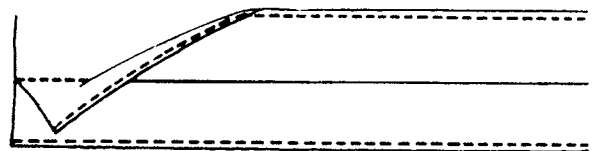
## SEAMS

Most seams are stitched  $\frac{5}{8}$  of an inch away from the edge of the fabric, pressed open, and given a seam finish if one is needed. Many fabrics today, such as the knits, need no seam finish because they don't ravel. If the seam allowances curl, make a second row of stitching  $\frac{1}{8}$  inch from the seam line. Trim the seam close to this stitching. If your machine has special stretch stitches, use one that locks the stitch (check machine manual).

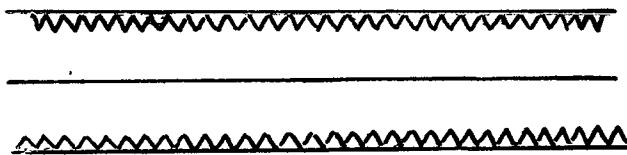


Fabrics that ravel and are washable can be finished with one of the following finishes:

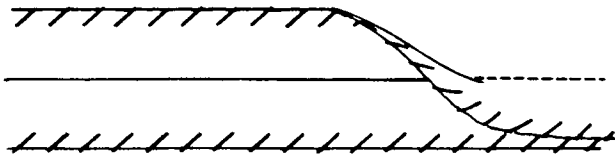
1. edge stitch  $\frac{1}{8}$  inch from raw edge.



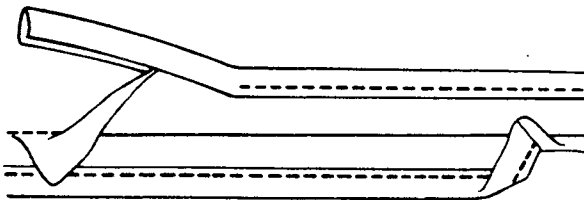
2. zig-zag edge using correct machine attachment or setting.



3. hand overcast on delicate fabrics that ravel very easily. Use a single thread, working from right to left. Make stitches 1/8 inch deep and 1/4 inch apart.



4. bound edge for unlined jackets and coats. Enclose the raw edge with folded bias tape, and stitch on edge. Be sure to preshrink tape. Straight seam tape can be used on straight seams.

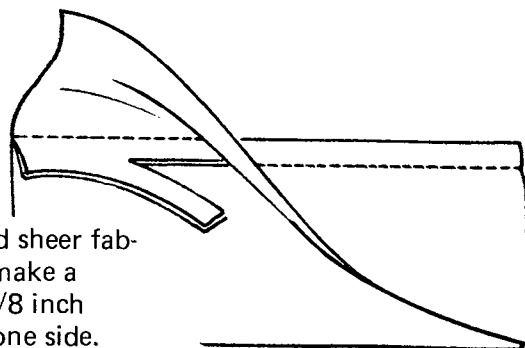


A well made seam should be:

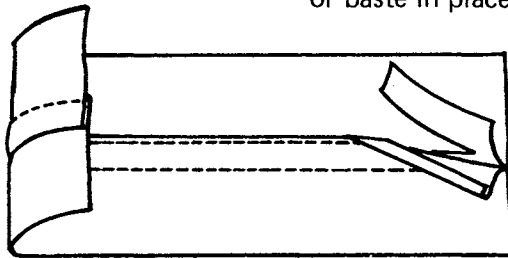
1. stitched straight with matching thread,
2. an even width,
3. without puckers, and
4. pressed flat, but without press marks.

## OTHER SEAMS

A French seam is good to use on lightweight and sheer fabrics where seams show through to the right side. To make a French seam, place wrong sides together and stitch 3/8 inch from raw edge. Trim to 1/8 inch and press edges to one side. Turn and fold exactly on seam line. Stitch on the wrong side just deep enough to enclose the seam, about 1/4 inch.



A flat fell seam will add strength to shirts, pants, and pajamas. Place wrong sides together and stitch a 5/8 inch seam. Press both seam allowances in the direction the seam is to be turned. Trim lower seam allowance to 1/8 inch and upper seam allowance to 3/8 inch. Turn upper edge under 1/8 inch and pin or baste in place. Topstitch close to the edge.



## PREVENTING PUCKERED SEAMS

Puckered seams can be a problem on easy-care woven fabrics. They cannot be pressed out; you have to make some changes in your stitching. Here are some things to check if your seams are puckering:

- stitch with a loose tension.
- use light pressure on the presser foot.
- try different kinds of thread to find the one that stitches best on your fabric. Synthetic fabrics or those with an easy-care finish may need synthetic or core-spun thread.
- try a narrow zig-zag stitch if you have this on your machine.
- use less stitches per inch.
- sew at a moderate, even speed.
- keep your sewing machine clean, especially the stitch-forming mechanism and between the tension discs.



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