



Zip, zip, zip

ZIPPERS

Do you like to sew, but hate to put in zippers? Well, help is on the way. Most zippers that come in a package have the directions included, so you will want to follow them carefully. However, you may wish to purchase the less expensive zipper that comes without a package, so directions on how to put in a zipper are given here.

First, some points to consider when selecting a zipper for your garment:

- a regular zipper or an invisible zipper? Do you have the skill and zipper foot for each?
- a metal chain zipper or a synthetic coil zipper? The coil zipper is lighter in weight and will release caught fabric, but cannot be touched with a hot iron.
- zipper color should match or blend with fabric.
- zipper type should fit garment use, such as dress, neckline, skirt, separating, or trousers.
- zipper length required can be found on the pattern envelope, or select another length better suited to your individual figure needs.

Now let's find out what a well made zipper placket should look like:

teeth and tape of zipper are completely covered by overlap.

- width of overlap is in proportion to weight and bulk of fabric (usually a total width of ½ inch).

THE CLOTHES YOU MAKE

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- stitching is straight and ends of stitching are secure.
- fabric lies smooth over the zipper.

The length of the opening for a neck, skirt, or pants placket should be the length of the zipper with the pull tab turned up, plus a 5/8 inch seam allowance. For a side dress placket, the opening is the length of the zipper with tab turned up. An invisible zipper is put in before the seam is stitched.

Zippers are easier to put in when just two pieces of the garment have been seamed together, rather than the whole garment. A zipper should be put in before the waistband or neckline is finished.

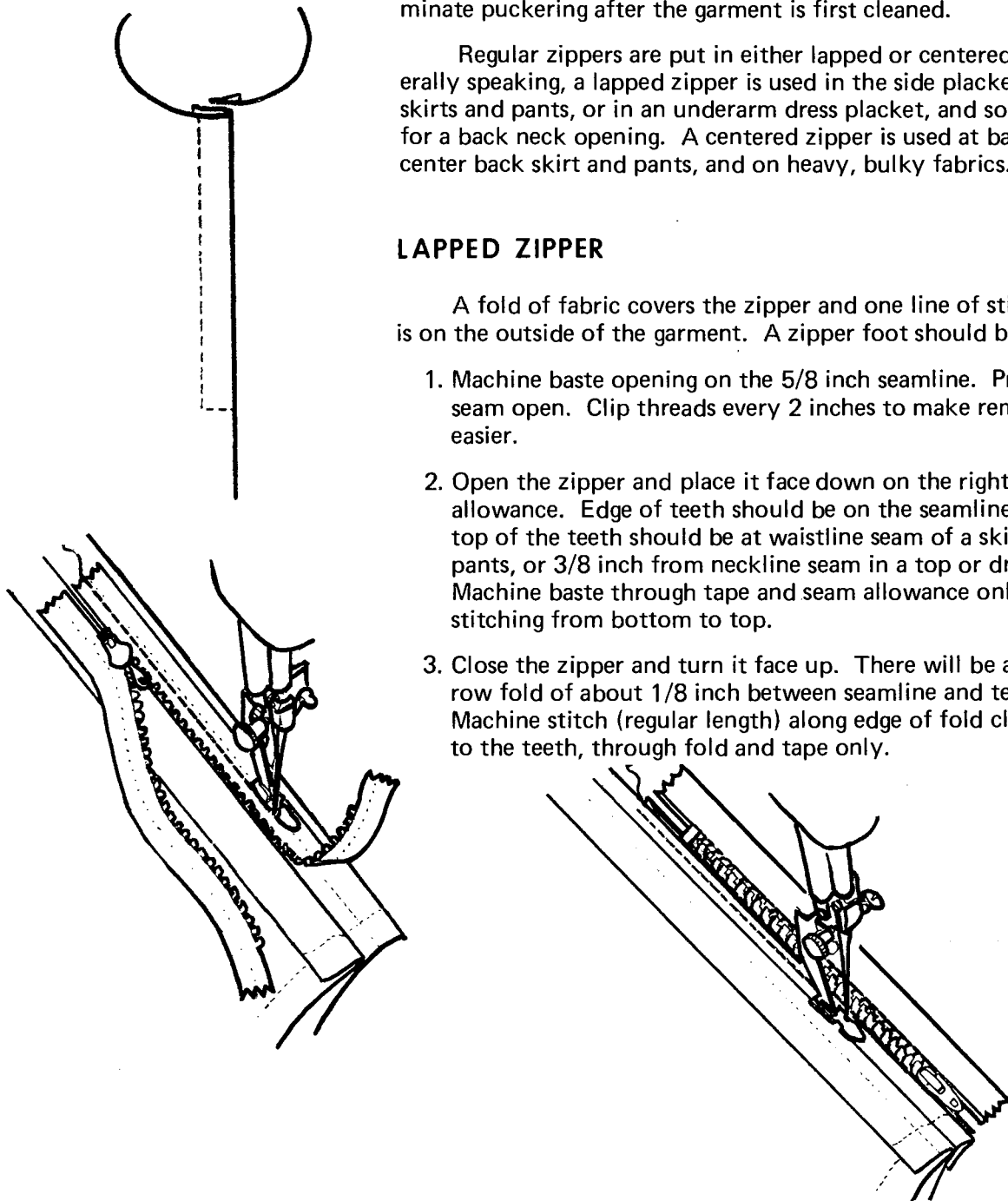
Pre-shrink zippers in hot water and air dry. This will eliminate puckering after the garment is first cleaned.

Regular zippers are put in either lapped or centered. Generally speaking, a lapped zipper is used in the side placket of skirts and pants, or in an underarm dress placket, and sometimes for a back neck opening. A centered zipper is used at back neck, center back skirt and pants, and on heavy, bulky fabrics.

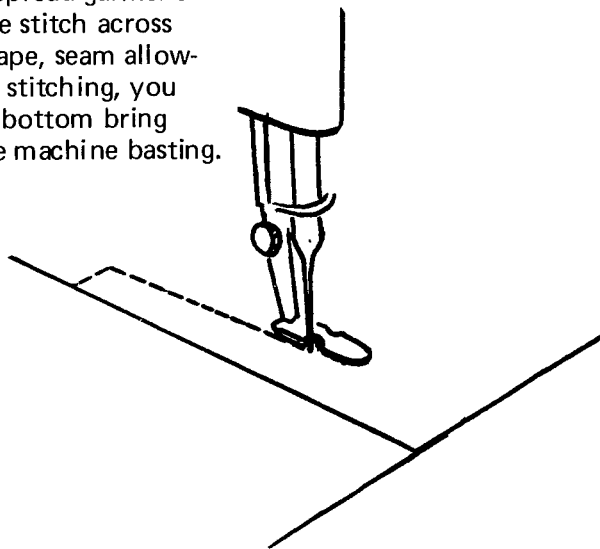
LAPPED ZIPPER

A fold of fabric covers the zipper and one line of stitching is on the outside of the garment. A zipper foot should be used.

1. Machine baste opening on the 5/8 inch seamline. Press seam open. Clip threads every 2 inches to make removal easier.
2. Open the zipper and place it face down on the right seam allowance. Edge of teeth should be on the seamline. The top of the teeth should be at waistline seam of a skirt or pants, or 3/8 inch from neckline seam in a top or dress. Machine baste through tape and seam allowance only, stitching from bottom to top.
3. Close the zipper and turn it face up. There will be a narrow fold of about 1/8 inch between seamline and teeth. Machine stitch (regular length) along edge of fold close to the teeth, through fold and tape only.



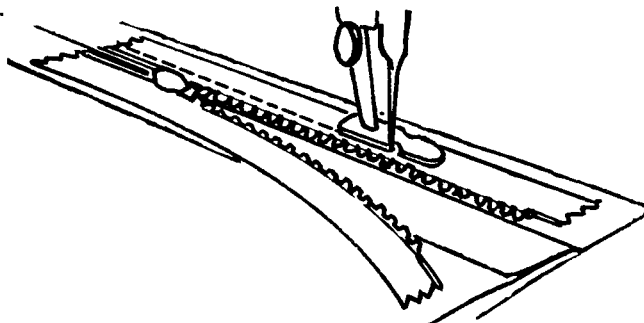
4. Place zipper flat against seam allowance. Spread garment flat, right side out. Pin if needed. Machine stitch across bottom, turn, and stitch up side through tape, seam allowance, and garment. As a guide for straight stitching, you might want to use a topstitching tape. At bottom bring threads to inside and tie securely. Remove machine basting.



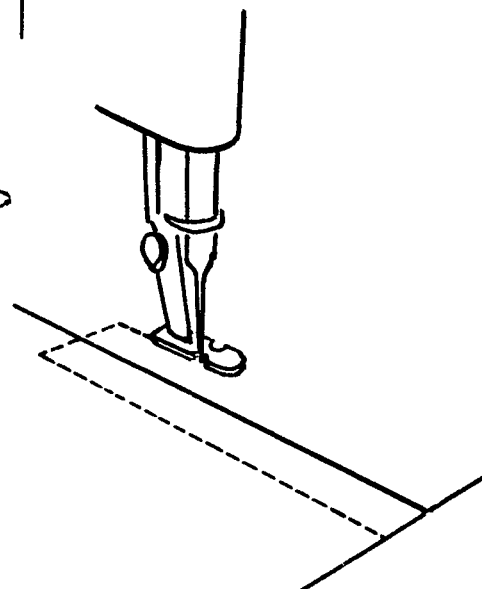
CENTERED ZIPPER

Two folds of fabric cover the zipper, two lines of stitching show on the outside of garment. A zipper foot is used here also.

1. Machine baste opening on seamline. Press seam open. Clip threads every 2 inches to make removal easier.
2. Open the zipper and place it face down on the right seam allowance. Edge of teeth should be on the seamline. The top of the teeth should be at waistline seam of a skirt or pants, or 3/8 inch from neckline in a top or dress. Machine baste through tape and seam allowance only, stitching from bottom to top.



3. Close the zipper and place it flat against seam allowance. Spread garment flat, right side out. Pin if needed. Mark the bottom of zipper with a pin. Beginning at bottom edge, place machine needle in at seamline, stitch across bottom, turn, and stitch up side 1/4 inch from seamline. Stitch other side the same way. At bottom bring threads to inside and tie securely. Remove machine basting.

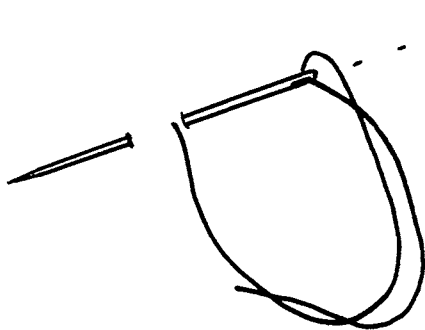




HANDSEWN ZIPPER

Handstitching a zipper is desirable on pile or delicate fabrics such as velveteen, fur, brushed wools, chiffon, crepe, satin, tricot, and hand knits. A lapped or centered zipper can be used. Follow the directions for each, except the stitching on the outside of the garment is done by hand.

1. Sew from the right side, beginning at the bottom.
2. Use a small needle and matching thread. Don't pull the thread tight.



3. Use a small backstitch. To make this stitch, insert the needle into the fabric in back of the thread, taking only a yarn of the fabric to make the stitch. Bring the needle out in front of thread about $\frac{1}{4}$ inch apart. Be sure the needle and thread go all the way through fabric and zipper tape.

INVISIBLE ZIPPER

This type of zipper looks like a seam, only the pull tab shows at the top. The zipper is put in before the garment pieces are seamed, and it is not basted shut as in the other methods.

A special zipper foot is needed that rides on the zipper so the stitching can be done close to the zipper teeth. When purchasing these, be sure to match them to your brand and type of sewing machine, and the brand of zipper you want to use.

Directions for using the zipper foot and how to put in the zipper come with both. Follow these carefully.

To complete the seam below the zipper, close the zipper and bring allowances together. Put the machine needle in close to other stitching and stitch the seam. Pull threads through to wrong side and tie securely.

FLY FRONT ZIPPER

To put in a fly front zipper we suggest you follow the instructions given in "Menswear I Pants" by Coats & Clark Inc. Educational Bureau, the zipper package, or another reference of your choosing.

Developed by Eileen G. Anderson, urban extension agent

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