

Ahem!

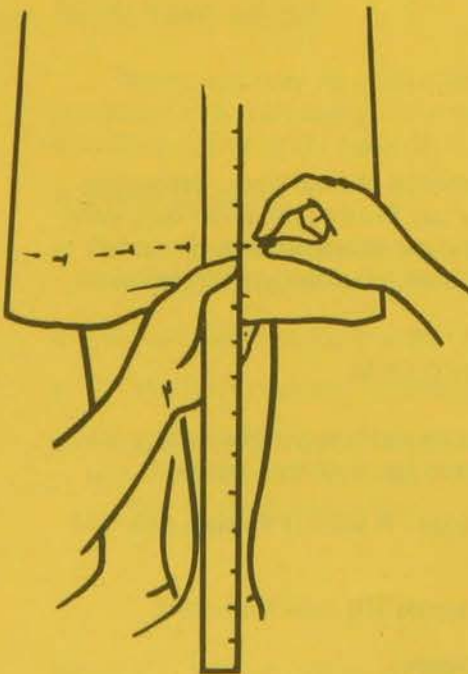
HEMS

Ahem! May we have your attention on hems please?

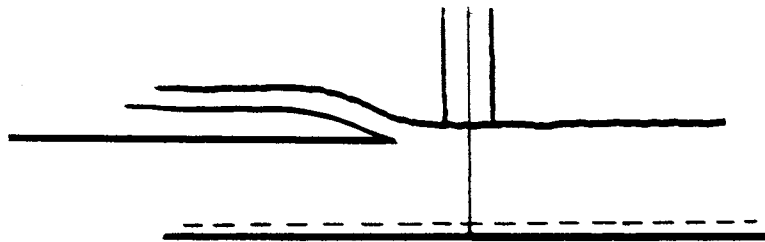
A well constructed hem can make your garment look sharp and attractive. This is what it should look like whether short or long:

- hem should be an equal distance from the floor.
- no stitch or press line should show on the outside.
- width of hem is the same all around.
- width is wide enough to give weight to hang well.
- hand stitches are even and about ½ inch apart.
- seams are matched.
- bottom edge is well pressed or softly rolled, whichever is preferred.

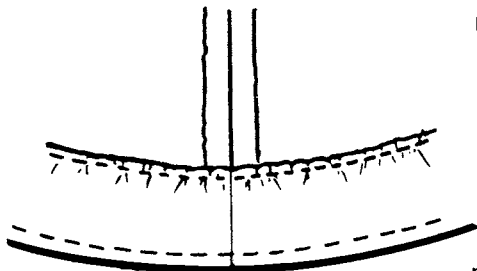
There are several important steps in hemming before the hem finish is applied. Mark the hem length by wearing the garment with the undergarments and shoes you will wear with it. Decide on your most becoming length according to current style. Be sure to try sitting down in the length. The best method for marking is to have someone pin every 4 to 5 inches using a yardstick or hem marker.



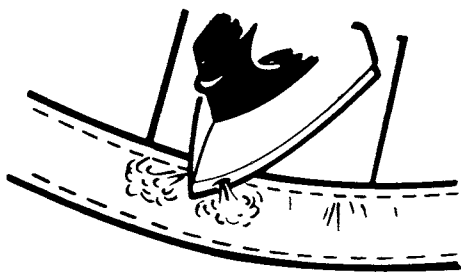
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Turn the hem to the wrong side along pin line. Hand baste along the folded edge through both thicknesses. Press edge lightly. Trim hem to an even width all around. The width of hems ranges from 1 to 3 inches, depending on curve of the hem and ability of the fabric to shrink. The more shape and curve, the narrower the hem must be. Trim seam allowance within hem to 1/8 inch to reduce bulk.



A shaped skirt, such as gored or A-line, must have the fullness eased. Machine baste 1/4 inch from raw edge of the hem. Place garment over the ironing board and pin at each seam. With a pin, pull the under thread to take up the fullness. Distribute it evenly in tiny ripples. If the fabric is wool it will shrink out from steam pressing. Place a paper towel or brown wrapping paper between the hem and the garment to prevent a ridge on the right side. Be careful not to get the hem edge smaller than the garment.



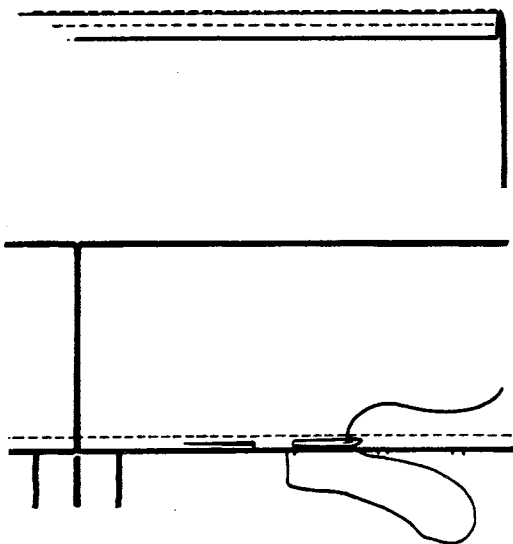
HEM FINISHES

There are several hem finishes to choose from, depending on your fabric characteristics. Four finishes are given here with fabrics suitable for each. Hemming stitches are also discussed. Never pull hem stitches tight. Catch only one yarn in the skirt.

TURNED AND EDGE-STITCHED HEM

This finish is good for light to medium weight fabrics that ravel easily. It is durable and good for washable garments.

- Machine stitch 1/4 inch from edge. If skirt is shaped, ease fullness.
- Turn edge under 1/4 inch and stitch 1/8 inch from fold.
- Pin hem in place, matching seams.
- Slipstitch hem by picking one thread of fabric next to hem edge and then passing needle through the fold.

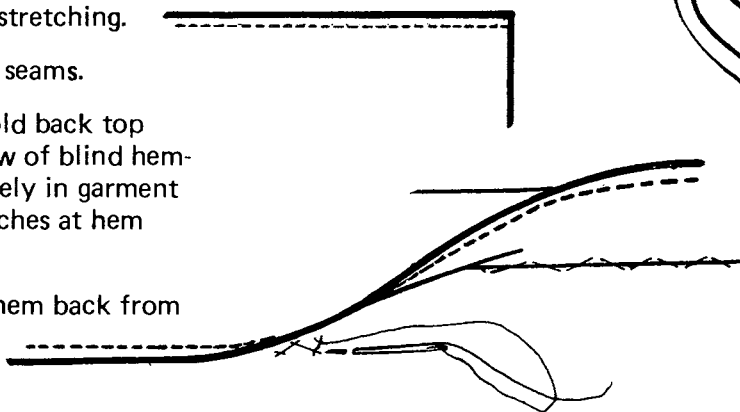


EDGE-STITCHED HEM

This finish is for knit fabrics and heavy woven fabrics that do not ravel. It is sometimes called the tailor's hem.

On knits:

- machine stitch $\frac{1}{8}$ inch from edge to prevent stretching.
- pin hem in place along bottom fold, matching seams.
- hand baste through the center of the hem. Fold back top part of the hem along the basting. Put in a row of blind hemming stitches all around (take stitches alternately in garment and hem). This reduces the weight on the stitches at hem edge.
- pin hem edge and catch-stitch in place. Fold hem back from you and work from left to right.



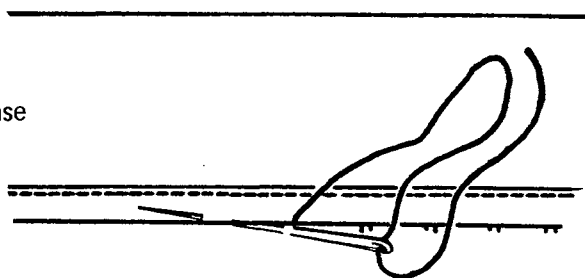
On heavy fabrics:

- machine stitch $\frac{1}{4}$ inch from edge.
- pin hem in place, matching seams.
- fold hem back and blind hem stitch to skirt (sometimes called inside hemming stitch).

SEAM TAPE FINISH

Seam tape may be applied to the hem edge on fabrics that are bulky and ravel easily. It is not suitable for garments that are washed frequently because it lacks durability.

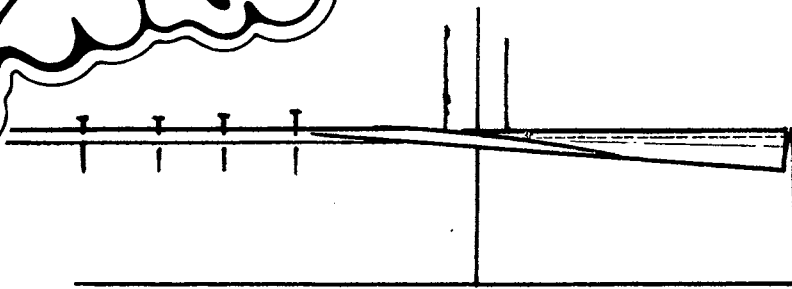
- Preshrink tape.
- Pin seam tape on $\frac{1}{4}$ inch from hem edge. Allow $\frac{1}{2}$ inch ease for every 12 inches on a straight skirt.
- Machine stitch at lower edge of tape.
- Pin the hem in place, matching seams.
- Hand stitch hem using vertical hemming stitch. This is the same as the slipstitch except the thread goes through the tape instead of the folded edge.



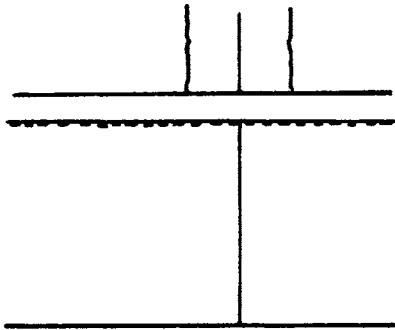
BIAS BOUND OR HONG KONG HEM

This bound finish can also be used on fabrics that are bulky and ravel easily. It is very durable. A bias strip of firm, light-weight fabric, or purchased bias tape is needed.

- Cut a bias strip 1 inch wide and long enough to go around the hem plus 1 inch for joining.



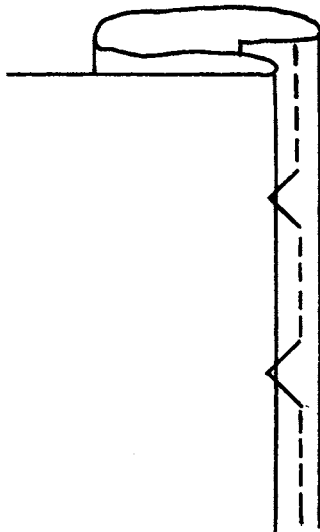
- Machine stitch bias to hem $\frac{1}{4}$ inch from edge, right sides together. Trim to $\frac{1}{8}$ inch.
- Turn bias over to completely enclose raw edge and pin.
- Machine stitch "in the ditch" (the groove made by the seam) on the right side through the hem edge and bias.
- Pin the hem in place, matching seams.
- Fold the hem back and blind stitch to skirt.



OTHER HEMS

A machine stitched finish can be used in hems that need to be sturdy, such as children's clothes, shirts, blouses, pants and aprons. If your machine has the hemming attachment or setting, use it. To use a regular machine stitch:

- press under hem edge $\frac{1}{2}$ inch.
- pin hem in place.
- fold hem against right side of skirt with $\frac{1}{8}$ inch of hem edge showing.
- use a long stitch and take five stitches on hem edge. Turn fabric and take one stitch, catching only a tiny bit of the garment fabric. Turn back again and stitch on hem edge for five stitches. Repeat this around the entire hem. Use a zipper foot instead of presser foot.



To hem a lined coat, use the edge-stitched finish for heavy fabric on the outer coat, or a seam tape finish if the fabric ravel. The bottom of the lining hem should come 1 inch above the finished hem of the coat. Make the lining hem 2 inches wide. Finish the edge by turning under $\frac{1}{4}$ inch and stitching close to the fold. Slipstitch in place.

Hems in pants can be finished with any of the four finishes described for a skirt hem. Your choice will depend again on the fabric's weight and whether it ravel easily.

A fusible web also can be used to hem garments. A variety of products are available. Be sure to follow fusing directions for the product you use so the hem will hold. Try a sample hem in your fabric to be sure it will work all right with your fabric before you hem the garment.

Developed by Eileen G. Anderson, urban extension agent

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