

FACINGS

Facings are used to finish edges on a garment such as a neckline, sleeves, waist, or hem. They can give a homemade or professional look, depending on how they are handled. It is important that you carefully decide how to face and/or finish the edges of your garment.

A facing may be a separate piece or an extension of a pattern piece. The facing is cut on the same grain as the garment section it will “face” so it will wear, hang, and drape in the same manner.

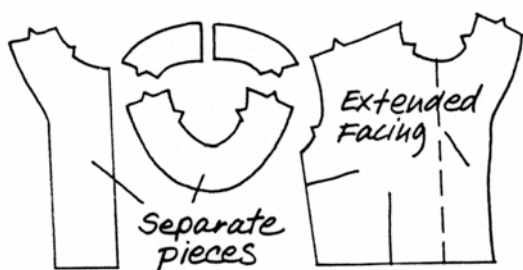


Figure 1

STANDARDS

A well-constructed fitted facing should:

- fit smoothly. Neither the seam nor facing should show from the outside of the finished garment (unless designed to be stitched to the outside as a decorative facing).

- be the same shape and grain as the edge to be faced. (It is usually 2½ to 3 inches wide and even in width throughout.)
- be flat and smooth; free from bulk.
- have the outside edges appropriately finished (according to fabric type/weight) to prevent raveling or curling.
- be understitched ⅛ inch from the seam “ditch” (seam indentation) on the right side of the facing to hold the seam allowance in place.
- be tacked securely at the seams. A professional-looking facing will rarely, if ever, be hand stitched all the way around the outside edges to the garment. This is a “tale-tell” sign of the “homemade” garment.
- be interfaced with appropriate type, color, and weight material.

INTERFACING

As indicated above, facing should be interfaced, although pattern guide sheets may not always remind sewers of this procedure. The purpose of interfacing is to:

- prevent stretching and sagging,
- cushion the enclosed seam,
- reinforce the area,
- support the facing and the garment,
- give a smooth, firm body,
- provide shape.

An interfacing fabric lies between the facing and the wrong side of the fashion fabric. Interfacing fabrics may be woven or non-woven, sew-in, or fusible. It can be a commercially designed material, self-fabric, or other suitable fabric. A few pointers to remember when selecting an interfacing:

- Choose one that is the same weight or slightly lighter in weight than the fashion fabric.
- Select one that is similar in color—light in color for light-colored fabrics, dark in color for dark-colored fabrics.
- Materials used for interfacing purposes should require the same care as the fashion fabric.
- Interfacing should be preshrunk or prewashed prior to using.

Interfacing is placed on the back side of the facing or to the inside of the garment section. (Figure 2) Generally speaking, place the interfacing to the garment section on bulky fabrics (to cushion the seam) and “see-through” fabrics (to hide seam). Depending on the fabric, interfacing may be placed to the facing before or after it is seamed.

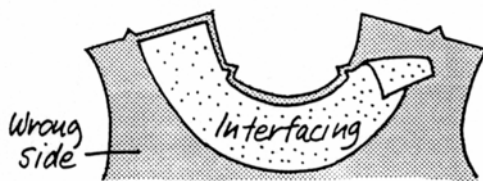


Figure 2

To apply fusible interfacing, always follow the manufacturer’s instructions. For additional information on interfacing refer to the publication **CT-MMB.183, Interfacing**.

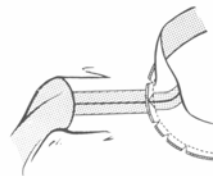
HANDLING BULK

Bulk must be considered throughout the construction process. When handling

facings, there are several steps where bulk can become a problem if not handled properly. Consider the following situations.

Seams on top of seams – Facing seams are frequently seamed together and matched to the adjoining garment piece. To reduce bulk, the facing seam allowances should both be trimmed to at approximately $\frac{1}{4}$ inch. When the facing is in place on the garment (Figure 3) with the seam pressed open, the area will be layered or graded which reduces bulk.

Figure 3



Trim seam allowances of facing before attaching to garment and before applying finish to outer edge of facing.

Seams within seams – The ends of seam allowances are to be **notched**, or cut to a point. This reduces the bulk when the seams are joined and crossed by another seam. It is customary to do this step **AFTER** the seam is stitched and **BEFORE** it is joined to another piece. Once joined to the next garment/item piece and the seams are pressed open, the area will be layered or graded. (Figure 4)

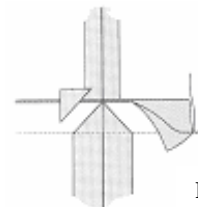


Figure 4

Enclosed seams –

An enclosed seam is created when a facing is attached to the garment piece. To reduce bulk, the seam must be *graded* or *layered*. In the case of a

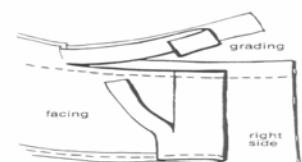


Figure 5

facing, the seam must also be clipped. Refer to fact sheet **CT-MMB.031, Handling Bulk**, for additional information.

EDGE FINISHES

The outer edge of the facing will require a finish if it is made from a woven fabric. Here are six edge finishes to consider:

Plain (no finish along outer edge) – used only when the fabric **does not** ravel or curl. This is suggested when working with a knit fabric or a garment that will be lined.

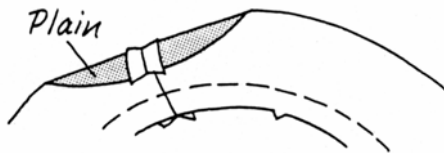


Figure 6

Clean-finish – used on light- to medium-weight fabrics. It creates a smooth, turned-under outer edge. To create:

- Machine stitch $\frac{1}{4}$ inch from the outer edge.
- Working from the right side, fold the edge under on the row of stitching.
- Topstitch close to the folded edge.
- Press.

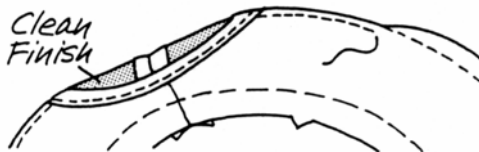


Figure 7

Bound – used to encase the outer edge of medium- to heavy-weight fabrics. Bind with bias tape, sheer knit, self-binding, or use a Hong Kong finish. Refer to **FCS 2-304, Seams & Seam Finishes**, for additional information.

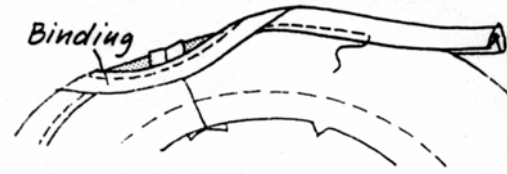


Figure 8

When using seam binding, the binding must be shaped to fit the curve before applying it to the garment.

Note: Some seam bindings cannot be shaped easily. Follow this technique:

- Dampen the seam binding.
- As the binding is pressed, stretch the outer edge and shrink the inner edge to the shape of the facing.

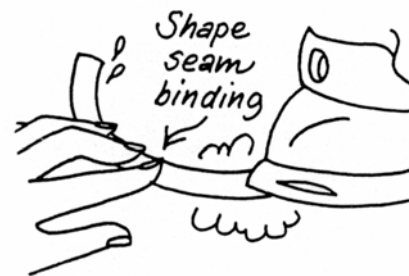


Figure 9

- Sandwich the facing between the binding edges. Pin or hand baste in place.
- Stitch the binding to the facing close to the open edge of the binding.

Zigzag or Overlock – is a sewing machine finish to be used on medium- to medium/heavy-weight fabrics. When using zigzag, the fabric must be cut back to the stitching. The overlock stitch actually encases or sews over the raw edge of the fabric. Some sewing machines may not have an overlock stitch. (Figure 10)

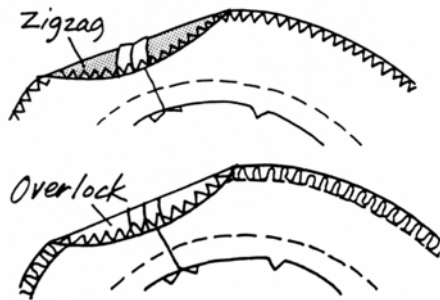


Figure 10

Serged – edge finish can be used on medium- to medium/heavy-weight fabrics. A three-thread stitch is recommended.

Couturier – is sometimes selected for lightweight, sheer, or “special” fabrics.

- Cut the facing as usual.
- Cut a second facing from lining, underlining or self-fabric (if the fabric is a solid color and very lightweight).
- Construct both sets of pieces as separate facings.
- Place the pieces together, right side to right side.
- Using a short (close) machine stitch, sew a ¼-inch seam along the outer facing edge attaching the two segments together. (Figure 11)
- Trim seam to ⅛-inch. Turn.
- Understitch seam approximately ⅛ inch from the seam “ditch.”
- Baste the notched edges together before applying it to the garment.

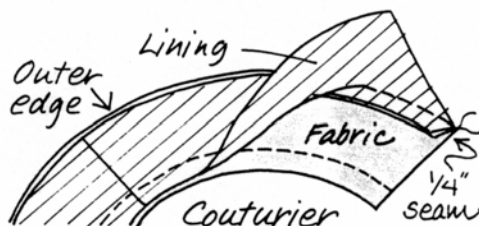


Figure 11

- Match the facing piece to the garment piece, treating the facing as a single piece.

- Grade/layer, clip, and understitch the neckline area as necessary.

FACING APPLICATION

When possible, follow the guidelines recommended by the pattern guide sheet. When a guide sheet is not available or does not give sufficient information, the following steps may be helpful.

Round

After the necessary seams have been stitched in the garment and the facing, the facing is ready to be applied to the garment. Follow these steps:

1. Cut each shoulder facing seam to ¼ inch. Notch the ends of each seam to a point. Press seam open.
2. Match the facing to the garment right sides

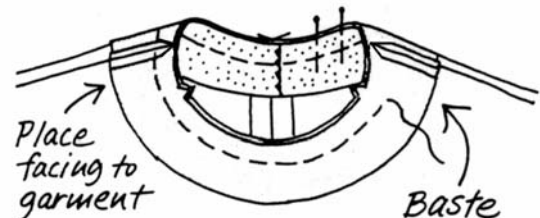


Figure 12

together, matching seams and markings (notches and/or circles).

3. Baste (pin or hand).
4. Machine stitch seam—usually ⅝ inch from neckline edge. (Figure 12)
5. Grade/layer the seam to reduce the bulk. Cut the interfacing (if applied to the facing) or facing piece the shortest. The garment piece or the seam allowance uppermost to the outside is left the longest width. (Figure 13)
6. Clip along the curved area, cutting one seam allowance and then the other. Clips will alternate between the seam allowances. *Cut to, but not through, the line of stitching.* (Figure 13)

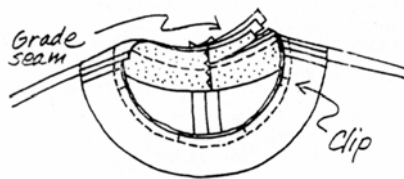


Figure 13

7. Flip the facing up. Pin the seam allowance to the facing, and *understitch* to prevent the seam from rolling to the outside of the garment. To understitch:
 - Working from the right side of the facing, turn the seam toward the facing.
 - Stitch close (approximately $\frac{1}{8}$ inch away) to the original seamline through the facing, attaching the seam allowance to the facing. (Figure 14)

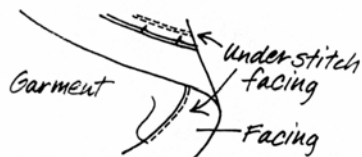


Figure 14

- Press the facing in place allowing the edge of the garment to roll slightly to the inside.
- Secure the facing by tacking, hand overcasting, or catch stitching it loosely to all seams. Leave at least $\frac{1}{8}$ inch give, which prevents

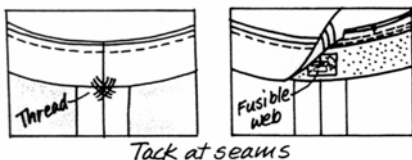


Figure 15

“dimpling” on the seams. Some fabrics may be “tacked” by using a small piece of fusible web at the seams. (Figure 15)

Square – Follow the same method of construction as for the **Round** facing. When sewing the facing to the garment, use a smaller (tighter) machine stitch going into and out of the corner areas to reinforce (approximately 1 inch on either side). After grading/layering the seam allowances, carefully *clip to, but not through*, the stitching at each corner. (Figure 16) Continue with understitching and pressing.

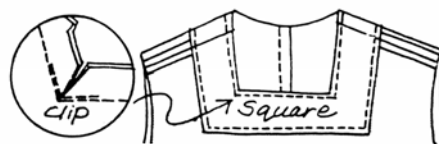


Figure 16

V-Shaped – Follow the construction method suggested under the **Round** facing application. Reinforce the area going into the point(s) by using a shorter, tighter machine stitch approximately 1 inch on either side of the point(s). To navigate the point, take two very small stitches across the point. *Clip the seam allowance at the point to, but not through, the stitching.* (Figure 17) Grade seam allowance, clip, and understitch. Press.

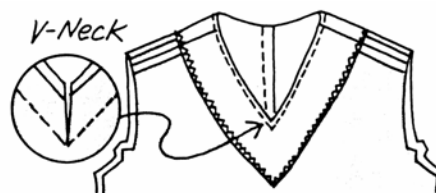
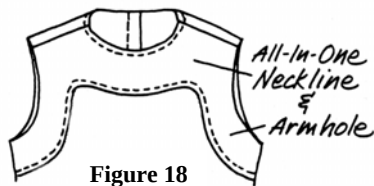


Figure 17

All-in-one – facings usually consist of the neckline and armhole being cut as one piece. Front and back pieces are seamed together at the shoulder and underarm areas. The facing

must be slightly smaller than the garment in order to fit without showing on the right side of the garment. Trim $\frac{1}{4}$ inch off the armhole edge from shoulder tapering down to the notch. All enclosed seams should be graded/layered, clipped or notched, and understitched. To enable turning right side out, this type of facing must be sewn to the garment before the center back seam is sewn.



Bias – must be carefully shaped to fit the garment section before pinning and stitching.

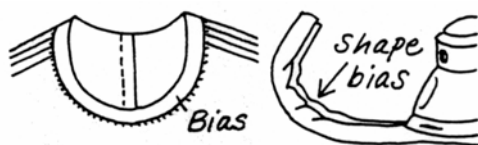


Figure 19

FACING FINISH WITH A ZIPPER

When a neckline opening has a zipper, plan to use one of the following methods to get a custom facing fit around the zipper.

Method A

1. For a lapped zipper application, prepare the facing as usual except trim off the interfacing $\frac{5}{8}$ inch on the underlap and $1\frac{1}{8}$ inch on the overlap. (Figure 20)

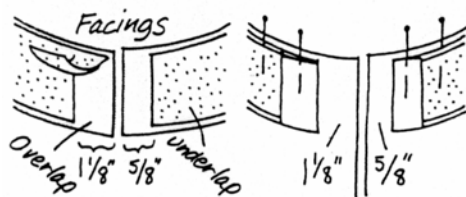


Figure 20

2. With right sides of the facing and the garment together, pin the facing to the neckline. On the underlap, fold back the facing $\frac{5}{8}$ inch. On the overlap, fold back the facing $1\frac{1}{8}$ inch.
3. Trim both facing seam allowances to $\frac{1}{2}$ inch. (Figure 21). Stitch the facing to the garment along the neckline seam. (A centered zipper application would have both sides of the seam allowance folded back $\frac{5}{8}$ inch.)

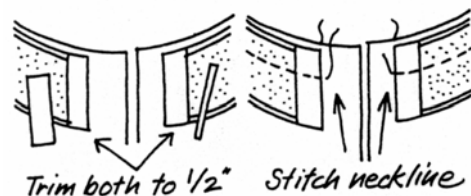


Figure 21

4. Grade/layer the seam. (Figure 22) Clip $\frac{1}{2}$ inch from each end of the facings and other places, as necessary. Understitch, stopping $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch from the end of the facing. Press.

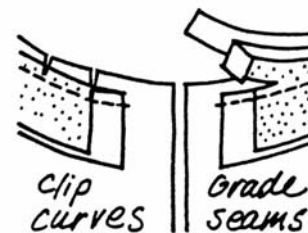


Figure 22

5. Position and apply the zipper, leaving $\frac{1}{4}$ inch at the top for a hook and eye or hanging snap.
6. Fold the facing edge over the zipper tape. Hand stitch the facing to the zipper tape using slip or blind stitch. (Figure 23)

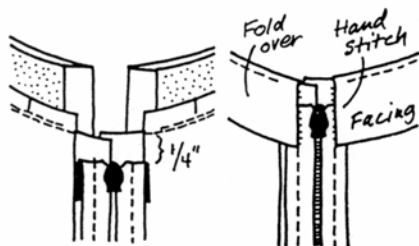


Figure 23

Method B (light- to medium-weight fabrics)

1. For lapped and centered zipper applications, prepare the facing as usual. With right sides of the garment and the facing together, pin the facing to the neckline. (Figure 24)

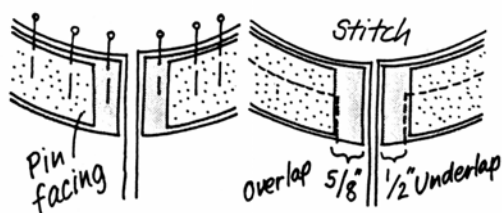


Figure 24

2. Stitch facing to neckline. At the zipper opening, *for the lapped zipper application*:
 - On the underlap side, stitch facing $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch from the edge.
 - On the overlap side, stitch facing $\frac{5}{8}$ inch from the edge. (Figure 24)
 - *Centered application* would have a $\frac{5}{8}$ inch seam allowance on each side.
3. Grade/layer seam allowances. Clip as needed. Trim corners. Trim corners. (Figure 25) Understitch neckline.

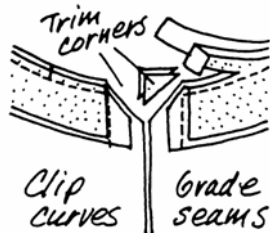


Figure 25

4. Position and apply the zipper, leaving $\frac{1}{4}$ inch at the top for a fastener (hook and eye). (Figure 26)

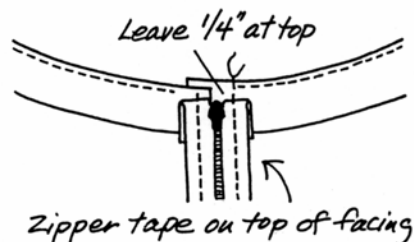


Figure 26

5. The zipper tape will be on top of the facing at the opening.

FACING ALTERNATIVES

There are methods of finishing garment openings other than fitted facings. They are:

- lining the garment and eliminating the facing. (Figure 27)

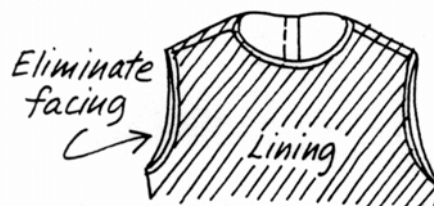


Figure 27

- binding the edges with the same or contrasting fabric.
- using ribbing.
- using a trim.
- turning and stitching if using a very firmly woven or knit fabric. (Figure 28)

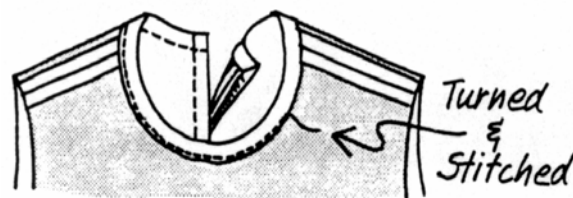


Figure 28

When fitted facings are required, other alternatives include:

- adding cording, piping, lace or other trim inside the seam.
- bringing the facing to the outside for a decorative finish.

MAKING OR DESIGNING A FACING

Facings are generally small pattern pieces that can be easily lost or misplaced. When this happens, they can be easily redesigned to accommodate situations that may occur.

To make or cut a facing if you do not have a pattern:

1. Take a pattern piece that needs a facing and trace around the outside edge of the pattern area to be faced, such as armhole or neckline.
2. Remove the pattern and measure approximately 2½ inches from the outer line rounding out any corners. (Figure 29)
3. Draw grainline(s) on the new piece(s) parallel to the pattern grainline(s) for which the new pattern is to face.

4. Figure 29 also illustrates how to make a combined or all-in-one facing. Remember to trim ¼ inch off of armhole starting at shoulder tapering to the edge at the notch.

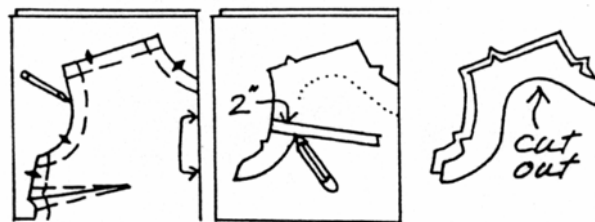


Figure 29

SUMMARY

Facings serve as a means of finishing garment edges. They must fit the edge being faced while providing a smooth, neat appearance to the inside and outside of the garment. Handling bulk properly is important to a professional look.

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