

Short Cuts in

HOME SEWING

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SHORT CUTS IN HOME SEWING

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There will always be a need for home sewing, whether it is making the clothes for the family or doing the mending. To sew well you must have good tools, and give them the right care.

With the many tasks that the homemaker has to do, often time-savers in home sewing will save time. Even in using short cuts a good standard of quality should be maintained.

The advantage of using a short cut by one person may be of no help to another. The skill of the seamstress has much to do with the use of short cuts. The type of material will determine whether short cuts can be used. Slippery material will perhaps need to be basted carefully while material with more body may be pressed or pinned. The type of garment being made will have a lot to do with the use of time savers. A difficult pattern of many small pieces would need more basting than a type of fewer pieces.

The homemaker who does a lot of sewing has perhaps worked on her own shortcuts. Many of the following suggestions for making sewing easier have been found useful:

Don't waste time by having to hunt for all your sewing equipment each time it is needed. Have a special place for it and put it back when finished using it.

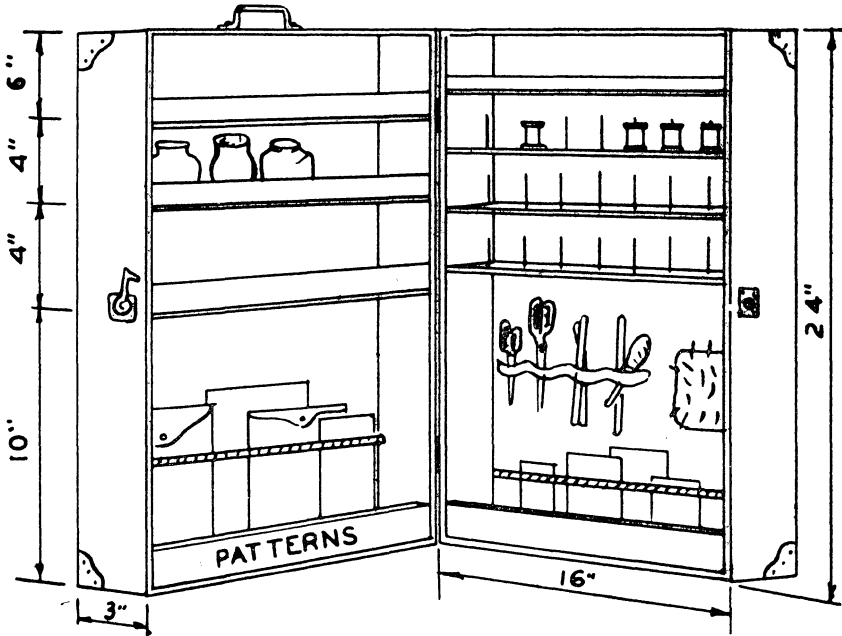
If the home permits, a well arranged sewing room or corner will save much time. Small equipment may be kept together in a box or basket, a folding sewing cabinet has been found convenient in many homes.

Keep the sewing cabinet near the sewing machine and in the part of the house where most of the sewing is done.

PLANNING

Much time is saved by planning the work. Have each step thought out and the work will go along much faster and easier. It is not economy of time to start a garment and find you do not have the right thread, buttons or some of the trimmings. Once you have lost interest or do not have the time, the garment may wait a long time to be finished.

Patterns that fit save time. If fitting is one of the big problems it would be well to alter the pattern before starting. A pattern that fits may be altered to change the style. Use new collar, new method of finishing openings, tucks, darts, gathers, sleeve lengths, pockets, or neck lines to change the appearance. Read the pattern carefully before starting and then follow directions.



PORTABLE SEWING CABINET

DIRECTIONS:

Make the wood frames for each side and fasten the plywood backs to the frames. Hinge the two sections together on one side, and fasten on the other with a catch. Glue or nail in the shelf supports. Nail shelf fronts to shelves, and slide in place, nailing or gluing as desired. Drive 1-inch nails down the center of the 2" shelves, 1½" apart, for spools. Tack elastic and tape in place as shown in the drawing. Enamel or varnish the inside and outside as desired. Metal corners will add to the sturdiness and appearance. A metal carrying handle will complete the sewing cabinet.

MATERIALS NEEDED:

Frames of 3" x ½" wood, 16" wide and 24" long
 2" shelves for spools
 3" shelves with 1½" fronts for both sides of cabinet
 2" depth front for lowest pockets on each side
 1 yd. of 1" wide elastic
 1 ft. of heavy 1" tape
 1 hook for pincushion
 2 hinges, 1" to 1½" long
 1 handle and 1 catch
 8 metal corners

The design is adapted from the portable sewing cabinet described in a bulletin issued by the Washington Agricultural Extension Service

A NEAT JOB

Pick up after yourself as you go. A wastebasket is a helpful piece of equipment to drop ravelings and bastings in as they are removed. Newspapers spread on the floor under machine and around where sewing is being done will catch ravelings and small scraps and will make cleaning up much easier.

NO LOST MOTION

Lay all of the pattern on the cloth and make markings while it is still lying flat on the table.

To mark both parts of each section of a garment at once, place a piece of tailor's chalk under the perforations to be marked, then both the top and under side will be marked at the same time.

Cut all of the garment at one time. Fold and lay carefully in order of sewing. If two garments, such as boy's shirts, pajamas or overalls are cut at the same time they can be made factory style, saving much time and energy. Be careful to have selvages exactly together and material straight.

Finish each sewing task as it progresses. For instance pull bastings after each stitching and the threads that need tying at end of each sewing line instead of waiting until garment is all put to gether to do these tasks.

Handle all work carefully and as little as possible. Overhandling and overfitting wears out the material, pulls it out of shape and causes more pressing.

Arrange to do a lot of stitching at one time without breaking the threads between pieces.

An iron and ironing board in the sewing room or near the sewing center will save as much time as anything. It can be a help in straightening out a wrinkled pattern, pressing materials, hems and seams. Often pressing can take the place of basting.

Keep the large part of the garment on the table when pinning and basting the hem. The sewing goes faster and the hem can be kept flat and is easier to work with.

A GOOD FIT

One of the hardest things in home sewing is fitting one's self and measuring hems in dresses. If one sews a lot, a dress form would be a help. Fit all garments right side out. One side of the figure may be slightly different from the other. Besides it is easier to determine proper fit, if all seams and edges are inside where they belong.

Let garments with long bias seams hang on hangers for several days before marking hemline. This keeps from having to retake the hem again after it is once put in.

To avoid wrinkling, place garments on hangers as soon as they are put together.

Be sure to fit garment over shoulder pads if they are to be worn with it later. This will help the sleeves to be fitted in to the armhole.

If a foundation garment is worn it should be worn when fitting in order to have garment fit when worn later.

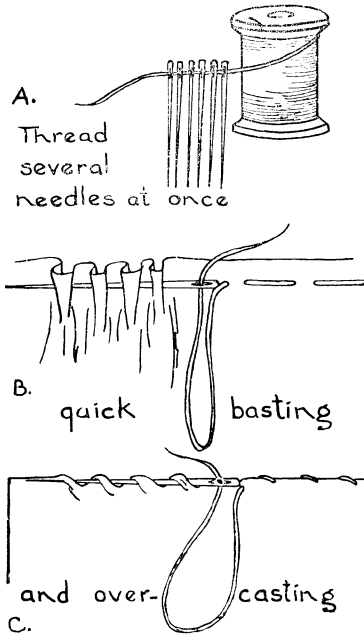


Fig. 1

SPEEDY PRACTICES

Basting can be speeded up if several needles are threaded on one spool of thread (Fig. 1-A). Do not break the thread from the spool, but thread needles on the thread attached to spool and fasten thread end in the spool notch. In this way, a needle full can be wound off with the first needle threaded and the other needles will be left on the thread to be used as needed.

Keep several bobbins wound with colors most commonly used. Always make a practice of using thread to match the material.

For long, straight seams, where fitting is not necessary learn to pin baste. Be sure to use a flexible presser foot if stitching over pins and place the pins at right angles to the seam edge and to the stitching line. Hand basting should be used where fitting is to be done, on slippery material, on bias seams, on curves and on all places where great care is needed.

Do as much of the pinning and hand basting at one time as possible. In this way, more stitching can be done at one time; this saves getting up and down from the machine so often.

Learn to hand baste rapidly and accurately (Fig. 1-B). Unless it is a seam where fitting is a problem use a long uneven basting, taking several stitches on the needle at one time.

Diagonal basting will hold more securely if flat basting is needed.

It is difficult to get a straight stitching line when pin basting, first pin baste and then baste with thread for a short way at the beginning of the seam. Hold the rest of the basting thread along the seam line while stitching. This serves as a guide for a straight stitching line.

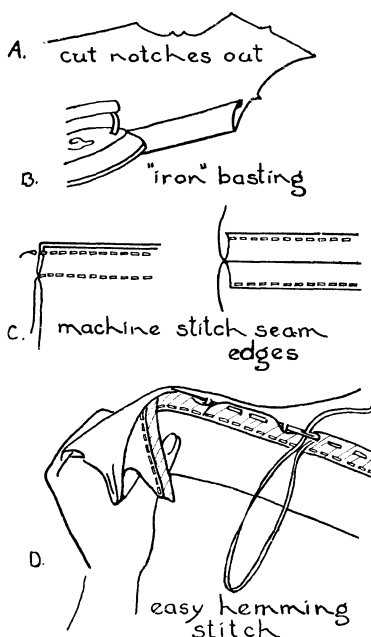


Fig. 2

Time can be saved in gathering if it is done on the sewing machine. Lengthen the stitch to six or eight stitches to the inch. It will be much more even if two rows of stitching are done about $\frac{1}{4}$ inch apart. Pull gathers up by pulling both threads of both rows at once. When gathers fit the required space, tie threads on wrong side. Scatter gathers evenly.

If overcasting is necessary, don't spend a great deal of time by taking one stitch at a time but take six or eight on the needle at once (Fig. 1-C). This will space the stitches about the right distance apart and also about the same depth. Care should be taken not to draw the thread so tightly as to curl the edges of the seam.

When cutting out a garment, cut the notches "out" and not "in" (Fig. 2-A). This permits more let out room in the seams and keeps seams from being weakened by notching "in."

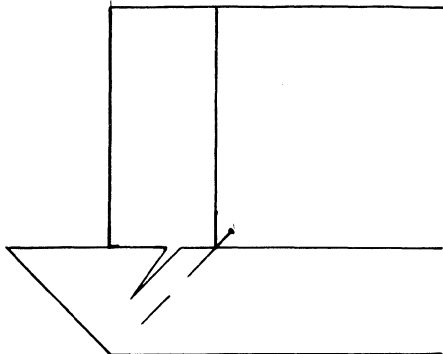
Creasing by hand or with the iron sometimes called iron basting can be done easily on crisp firm cloth (Fig. 2-B). The first turn back on hems, bindings, facings and short hems as on pockets and turns on belts as well as some French seams can be done in this manner.

The stitching line of seams or darts in crisp, firm goods can be marked by pressing.

Back stitch at the end of seams, darts, and tucks to avoid having to tie threads. Always stitch up on bias seams and stitch like seams in the same direction. If the more bias is placed underneath it will be easier to stitch.

In making a rolled hem, it is easier done, if a stitching line is placed along the edge.

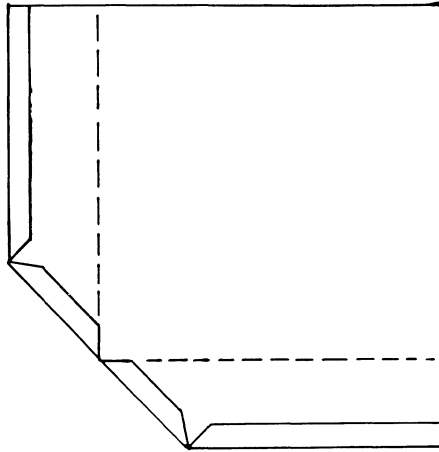
Machine stitching $\frac{1}{8}$ inch from the edge of the seams is a good finish for ravelly fabric (Fig. 2-C). The edges need not be



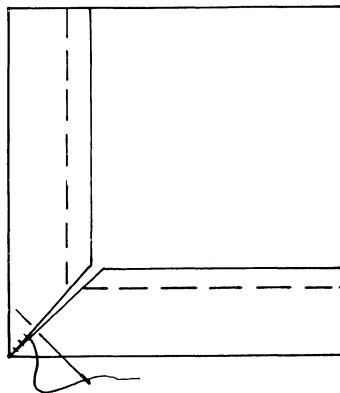
A.

turned under. This is a good finish for work clothes and house dresses, and seams may be left together whenever possible. On better clothes, stitch each edge separately so that the seams may be pressed open (Fig. 2-C).

A quick method, yet almost invisible method of putting in a hem, where a firm hemming stitch is not needed, is by first pinning



B.



G.

MITERED HEM

Fig. 3

and basting the hem in position, whether tape is used or the edge of the hem is stitched down. Fold the hem back on the body of the skirt along the top edge of the hem. Catch the under edge of the hem or the tape to the wrong side of the skirt with running stitches, taking several stitches at the same time and catching merely a thread or two in the skirt. These stitches should not show on the right side of the skirt and not too long stitches should show on the hem. The work is made easier if the hem is held toward you.

An easy miter is made by folding the hems on each side the desired width and creasing firmly. Fold and crease the corner as in Fig. 3-A. Pin on a true diagonal line and trim away surplus, an even seams depth from pin line. Open corner turn raw edges under, clip corners to get rid of bulk. (Fig. 3-B). Turn hem in position and baste. Miter is put in by hand. (Fig. 3-C). Another method of finishing corner is to turn hem to right side and stitch along diagonal pin line, trimming off excess at corners, turn to wrong side and baste.

To roll a hem in soft material, stitch close to the edge, roll the edge over to corner stitching and slip stitch in place. Crisper material may not need the stitching. Use a very fine needle and thread.

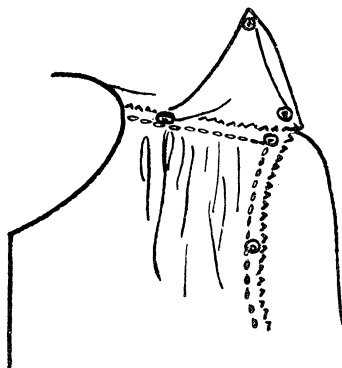
To turn belts or loops easily, fasten a cord on the belt before stitching it. Fold the belt or loop in the center, wrong sides out, and lay a cord inside the fold before seaming the raw edges. Stitch across one end to fasten cord. Stitch the seams and then carefully pull the belt or loop right side out with the cord, and clip the stitching to remove the cord. Safety pins can be used but be careful not to use them in too sheer or open weave goods.

To make side belt loops, crochet a chain stitch an inch or two longer than width of belt. Pull the ends through the seam with a crochet hook and tie a knot in each end, securing the loop in place.

For slipping shoulder straps, a narrow folded strip of material about $1\frac{1}{2}$ " long, with one end sewed fast to the shoulder seam and half a snap sewed to the other end. The other half of snap is sewed to the shoulder seam. This makes a loop for holding shoulder strap.

A threaded needle caught in the exact corner stitching will aid in giving a good point on collars and belts. Clip off diagonally the corner seam and fasten the double thread firmly in the corner. Bring needle and thread through at exact corner and pull gently. A true corner is the result.

Use snaps to save basting on washable collars, vestees, and cuffs to non-washable dresses. One half of the snaps are attached to the collar and the other to the dress. They are so easy to remove and put back on.



snap shoulder
pads in

Fig. 4

Shoulder pads in wash dresses are made easily removable by fastening them with four snaps. Use three snaps to hold the outside edge of the pad to the armhole line, putting one at the center and one at each end of the pad, and the fourth on the shoulder seam at the upper point of pad.

Mending tape is a quick method of mending. It comes in colors and can easily be attached by following the simple directions that come with the tape.

Mend as often as possible using the sewing machine, especially for "everday" and work clothes. Both machine patching and darning can be done (Refer to Family Mending Circular No. 379).

TIME SAVING EQUIPMENT

A spool holder, whether in the sewing machine drawer or a separate rack is a good way to keep colors of thread easily seen and convenient to use. A board with small headed nails driven in to hold spools would serve very well.

A lap board is handy for keeping material straight, from falling off the lap and in laying pieces out flat while sewing. A piece of ply board 18" by 24" or slightly larger is a good size. It may be curved on one side. This helps to hold it on the lap.

Many people do their cutting on the dining room table. This will soon ruin the finish, so a cutting board is a protection to the table. If made of ply board and hinged it may be folded for storing. A piece of oil cloth turned wrong side up will protect the table. Also the rough side up keeps the materials from slipping.

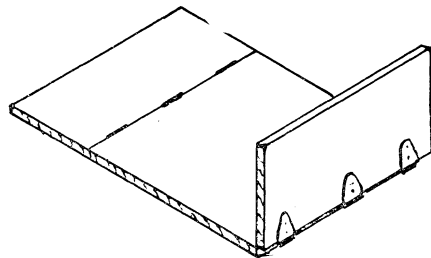
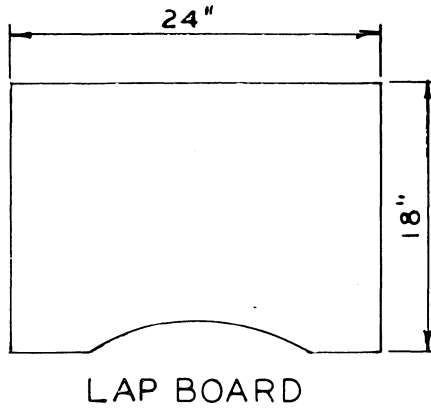


Fig. 5

Fasten a pincushion to the sewing machine head. This makes a suitable place to keep and put pins when working at the sewing machine.

Tweezers are handy for pulling out bastings, holding under ends, pulling threads out that are caught in the bobbin case and for many places where fingers cannot get.

A wrist pin cushion is convenient when one is cutting out or fitting garments. (Fig. 6-B). Any small cushion could be used and attached to a band to be fastened around the wrist. Elastic makes the best band.

Bodkins and bias trim turners make turning loops and belts much easier—also gives them a professional look.

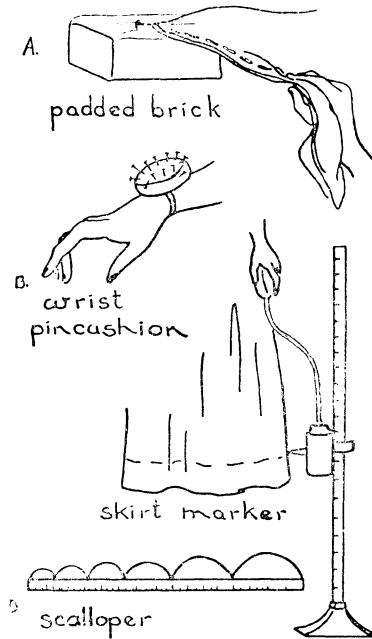


Fig. 6

A small magnet helps pick up the scattered needles and pins.

Use beeswax on thread to keep it from knotting and to make it stronger. This is particularly helpful in sewing on buttons.

Needles with long eyes are easier to thread. "Cotton darners" are long thin needles with long eyes and very good to use in basting or putting in hems.

A padded brick makes both ripping and basting easier. (Fig. 6-A). Pad and cover an ordinary brick. Pin material to it and the weight of the brick holds it fast.

Tailor's chalk, both light and dark colors make markings more simple. Tailor's carbon paper comes in large sheets and light colors. This would be helpful when marking two similar pieces to get them alike.

Keep some Fuller's earth or French chalk on hand to remove spots made by sewing machine oil. If these are not available talcum powder will work very well.

A transparent 6" ruler is most convenient. A commercial ripper or a one sided razor blade should be in every sewing box.

If scallops are desired, a scalloper (a ruler with graduated scallops) makes it easy to trace off the size needed. (Fig. 6-D).

Commercial pressing cloths are available and make pressing much more simple. Follow carefully the directions that come with the cloth.

An automatic skirt marker makes the marking of hemlines an easy process. (Fig. 6-C). Make your own hem gauge from a piece of cardboard, cutting a notch the width you want your hem.

Pinking shears are quite expensive but are certainly a time saver. Several families might purchase a pair together, or even a whole community.

Plain wrapping paper is good for press "cloth" in pressing pleats. The paper will not leave lent.

MAKE USE OF YOUR MACHINE AND ATTACHMENTS

Make a practice of finishing stitching with needle bar up as far as it will go and leave long thread. This prevents needle coming unthreaded.

Make use of the attachments with your machine. They often give a smooth finish and save a great deal of time.

Use the seam gauge on the machine to make seams even in width and the stitching straight. It is also a great aid in keeping the stitching lines straight and spaced evenly when doing several rows of edge stitching.

Learn to use the hemmer and binder in order to save time if long lengths are to be hemmed or bound.

Use the gatherer on the machine for gathering long lengths. Otherwise loosen the top tension and stitch along edge—pull underneath thread.

A buttonhole attachment is one of the greatest helps to the homemaker, especially if the clothes she makes demand many buttons and buttonholes.

The right cording presser foot and left cording presser foot aid in cording and putting in zippers. The adjustable cording foot takes the place of both the others. The zipper foot can be used for sewing either side of zipper.

The flexible presser foot makes it easier to sew over heavy seams and heavy materials and will sew over pins.

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