

Staystitching

11.135

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What is it?

Staystitching is a row of directional stitching sewn just inside a seamline to help keep the area from stretching during construction, fitting and general handling. Normally, staystitching is done only on curved or angular seams, though it may be done in other areas on unstable fabrics like loosely woven or very stretchy fabrics.

Staystitching uses a regular length stitch and it's done through a single fabric layer using thread that matches the project. This stabilizing stitching remains in the garment or project after the construction stitching is complete.

When is it done?

Staystitch immediately after removing the paper pattern piece from the cut fabric. On unstable fabrics, any handling and/or pressing can distort the cut section causing it not to match corresponding pieces or the original pattern.

Where is it done?

Common locations are curved and V-necklines, armholes, angled seamlines like bodice side seams, curved waistlines and all facings that fit these areas.

On garments with traditional 5/8" seamlines, staystitching is done 1/2" from the garment cut edge. On placket seamlines (often on bias grain), like zippers or snap openings, staystitching is done 1/4" from the cut edge for added stability.

Staystitch pockets and yokes on the 5/8" seamline and use the stitching line as a guide for pressing under sharp, even seamline edges.

Never staystitch long bias-cut edges, as they will distort beyond correction.

How is it done?

Staystitching is traditionally sewn on woven fabrics and the general rule is to stitch from wide to narrow. For example, when stitching side seams, sew from the underarm seam to the waistline; on necklines, stitch from the shoulder point to

Taking direction

The stitching direction is key to successfully maintaining a project's shape during construction and fitting. Follow these hints for going the right way.

Necklines: from shoulder to center

V-necklines: from point to shoulder line

Neckline facings: from shoulder seam to neckline center on both inner and outer edges; from outer edge to neckline on shoulder seams

Round collars: from front/back opening to neckline center

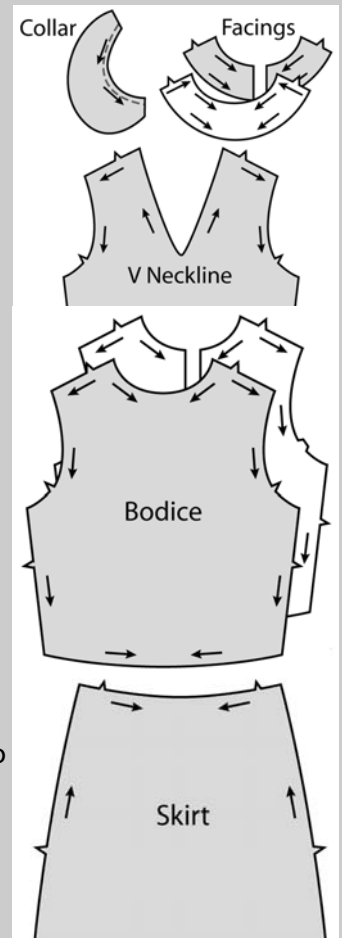
Shoulders: from neckline to armhole

Armholes: from shoulder to side seam

Side seams (bodice): from armhole to waistline

Waistlines (bodice and skirt): from side seams to center

Hiplines (skirt): from hip notch up to waistline (1/4" from the edge at zipper openings)



the center, breaking the stitching at the center and sewing the opposite side from shoulder point to center as well. Continually stitching a neckline edge would defeat the purpose of sewing with the fabric grain.

Staystitching lines cross at adjacent edges as stitching goes all the way from cut edge to cut edge, without regard to seamline width.

Why isn't staystitching done on all seamlines?

Staystitching can be done on all seamlines (except long bias edges) if desired, but unless the fabric is very loosely constructed, it isn't necessary. Seamlines cut on a straight or nearly straight fabric grain don't tend to stretch during handling.

Tip: If you're traveling with a partially constructed project, or don't expect to finish it in a reasonable amount of time after cutting, staystitching will help it maintain its shape for the duration.

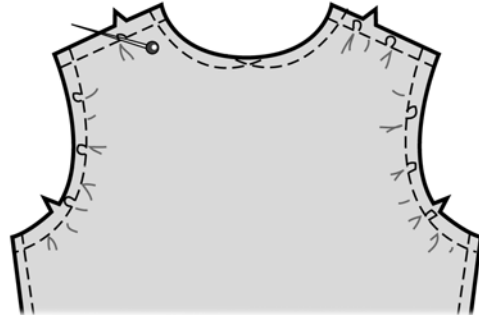
Is staystitching only for woven garment fabrics?

Though most commonly used on unstable woven fabrics, staystitching can also be used on knit fabrics to help them maintain their shape. It's done in the same locations on the knit as on a woven fabric.

Staystitching can be helpful on some home decorating projects as well, especially when using loosely woven or otherwise unstable fabrics, and layering multiple fabrics together.

Checking size and shape

Once staystitching is complete, lay the paper pattern over the stitched pieces to be sure they match for the correct size and shape. If not, gently pull on the stitches with a pin every 2" to 3" to return the distorted piece to the proper size, and lightly press it into shape.



Use a pin to draw up staystitching, shaping a garment section to its original size.

If the staystitching pulled the stitched piece smaller than the original pattern, clip the stitching every 2 to 3" and gently pull it to the matching shape. ■

Clip Tricks

When constructing a garment, use staystitching as a guideline for the depth of clipping and notching needed on curved seams. For example, when clipping a neckline opening, clip only to the staystitching, not through it.