

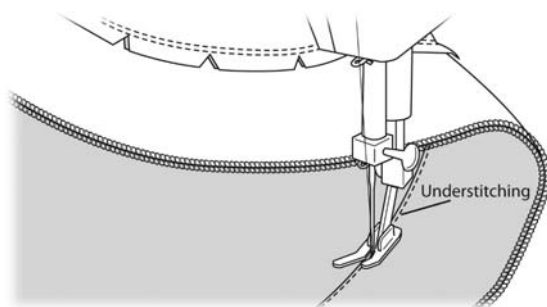


Understitching

12.211

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If you've ever looked at a garment edge and thought you saw a portion of the facing rolling out for all to see, chances are that the creator didn't understitch.



What is it?

Understitching is a construction technique using a line of straight stitching (usually) that helps to keep facings lying flat and hidden from view. It goes through the facing itself and the seam allowances of the facing and the garment to hold everything in place. Understitching doesn't show on the outside of the project, only on the inside. Coupled with good pressing techniques, understitching gives a professional look to a custom-made garment.

Where is it used?

Understitching can be used on any garment opening where there's a facing—most commonly the neckline or armhole, but often a front or back opening or waistline. It can be used when the garment is lined to the edge without a facing, and it is used with or without a collar application. The more layers there are, the more important understitching becomes to keep edges flat.

Understitching can also be used to control an undercollar and keep it from rolling out as it worn on the body. It's done in the same manner as when it's used for a facing.

How do you understitch?

Following the pattern instructions, apply the facing to the garment. After sewing, trim the seam allowances to graduated widths, keeping the longest length to the garment outside as it's worn.

Clip into a curved seam at regular intervals, staggering the clips from layer to layer of the seam allowance width.

Press all the seam allowances toward the facing (or lining). Remember, this can include the garment, facing, interfacing and any collar seam allowances as well, so there can be many layers.

Set the machine for a straight stitch at 12 stitches per inch and use thread to match the garment facing.

Place the project under the presser foot right side up so that the seam joining the facing to the garment is just to the left of the needle.

The understitching is positioned about 1/8" to the right of the actual seamline. If your machine has an adjustable needle position, use it to correctly position the stitching line.

Because it's important that the stitching go through all the seam allowance layers to properly function, keep checking underneath as you sew to be sure the seam allowances stay pressed in the proper direction to be caught by the understitching.

If you're working with a facing that goes around a corner, such as a combined neckline/front opening, understitch only as far as you can comfortably get into the corners, then stop and start again on the adjacent seams.

When understitching is complete, press the facing into position on the garment wrong side, and tack it at the seamlines (shoulder, side, etc.) to keep it in place.

Other options

On fabrics like fleece or heavy wools, sometimes a single line of straight stitching doesn't do the trick to keep facings in control. In these instances, understitch with a three-step zigzag stitch to make a wider anchoring for the enclosed seam allowances. Position the stitching so the left swing of the needle is 1/8" from the seamline on the facing side.

Understitching can also be done by hand if you prefer.

For some inside embellishment, choose a decorative stitch for understitching. 🖍