

# Altering Dress and Skirt Hems

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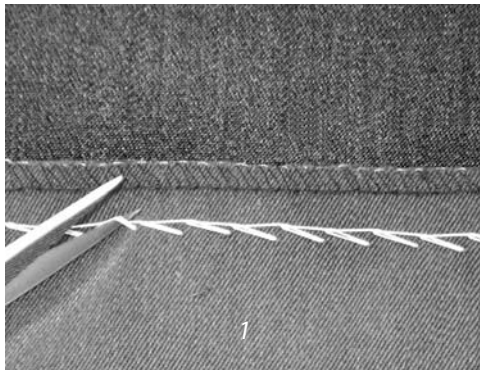


Hemming ready-to-wear is as easy as hemming a garment you sewed yourself. Most ready-to-wear hems are stitched using one of two types of stitches—blind hemming or topstitching, both of which are easily removed.

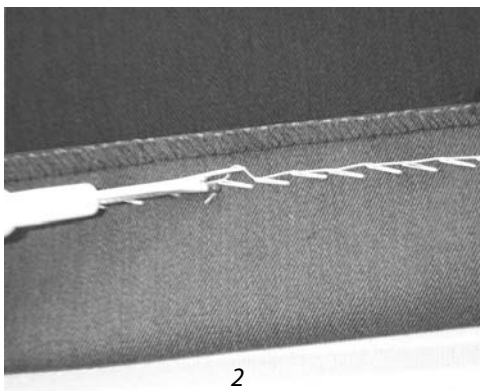
### Releasing Blindhem Stitches

A commercial blind hem uses a chain stitch with one continuous thread. It comes out easily when the last stitch is pulled (sometimes accidentally, if you've caught a heel in it). This stitch feeds right to left when it's sewn, and releases left to right.

Clip the two lower, diagonal stitches (1).



Release the stitch running along the top edge to the right of the diagonal stitch you clipped (2).

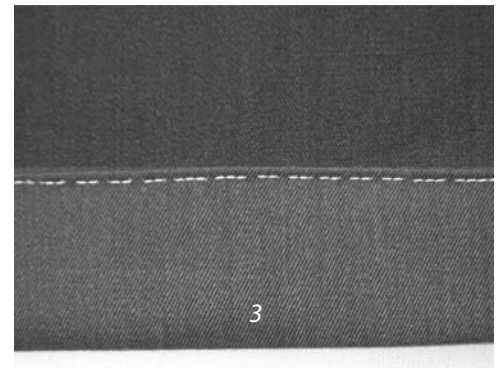


Pull the thread of the chain stitch you just released. By pulling this thread, the chain stitch will release around the entire hem. Sometimes the machine operator may have had to stop and restart the hem, so you may have to repeat the process to remove all of the hem stitches.

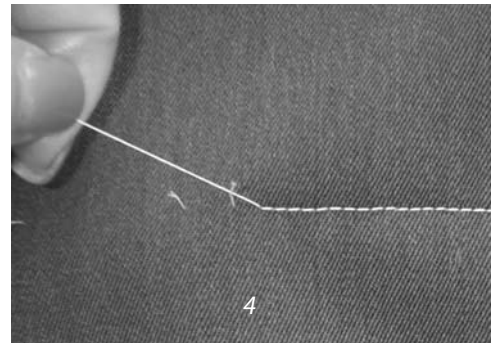
### Removing a Machine Topstitched Hem

Occasionally a casual dress or skirt will be hemmed with machine topstitching. This is the easiest and safest method to remove the stitches:

Clip every third or fourth stitch of the hem on the inside of the garment (3).



From the garment right side, pull the hem stitches free (4).



### Rehemming

After you have removed the hem stitches, press out the original fold line as much as possible.

While wearing the garment, have someone pin the new hemline in place. If the original hem hung level, you only need to pin the new location in a few places, specifically in the front.

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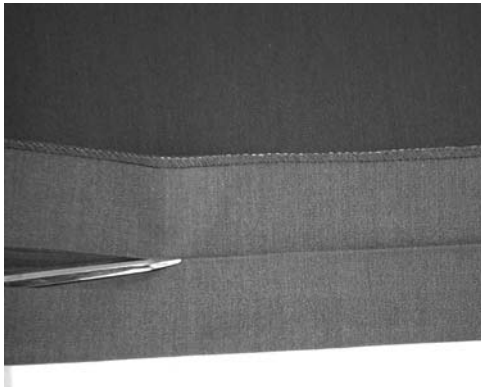
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If the original hem was not level on your body, wear the proper shoes you expect to wear with the garment, and use a hem marker around the entire circumference, marking it evenly from the floor.


At the ironing board, press up the marked hem on the new line all the way around.

Trim the new hem evenly from the fold to the original depth (5). Most dress and skirt hems are 1 1/2" to 2 1/2" wide. A-line or other shaped skirts are easiest to work with 1 1/2" wide.



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To keep the original hemline garment circumference, taper the side seams. This is necessary only if you're shortening it quite a bit (6).

Finish the raw edge of the newly cut hem edge in the appropriate fashion, and hem the garment using a suitable stitch for the garment and fabric. See Guideline 11.130 Simple Hems. 



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