

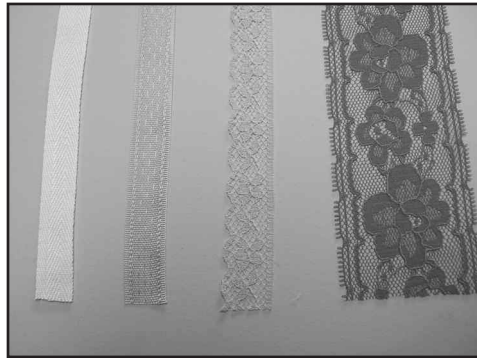
Bindings and Tapes

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Page 1

Bindings and tapes are used to stabilize a stretchy seam, reinforce a weak spot or cover the cut fabric edge. They're also used decoratively to add fashion interest to sewing projects. Look for them pre-packaged or by the yard, and in a variety of fiber contents, solid colors and seasonal prints.

Utility Tapes



Twill tape, seam binding and two widths of lace seam bindings.

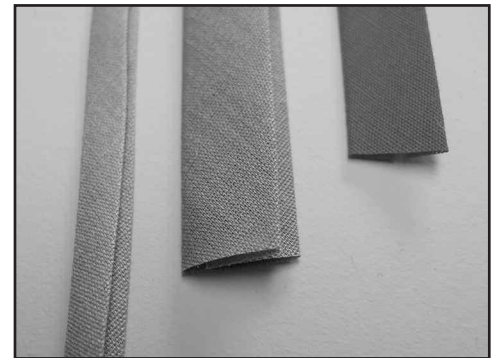
Twill tape is available from 1/4" to 2" wide. It's a very stable, flat tape with little stretch and is a good choice for stabilizing seams or using as a narrow tie or drawstring. Traditionally available in black, white and ecru, fashion colors can also be found, sometimes in the scrapbook section of the store.

Seam binding, also called hem tape, is most often used as a hem edge finish on a ravelly fabric. It's a stable, woven-edge tape, 1/2" wide, available in several solid fashion colors. Use seam binding on medium- to heavy-weight woven fabrics when no stretch is needed. Because of its sheen, seam binding can also be used decoratively as a lightweight ribbon.

Lace seam binding is used as a hem finish on knit fabrics and light weight fabrics where stretch is needed. The 3/4"- and 1 3/4"-wide laces can also be used decoratively. Use the wider tape on straight flat hems and the narrower version on curved areas. As a decorative trim, topstitch the lace in place or use it as a transparent insertion.

Tip: Look for fusible bindings and tapes or make your own using paper-back fusible web. Fusible web simplifies the trim application, but it also reduces its flexibility.

Bias Tapes



Narrow and wide double-fold bias tape and single-fold bias tape.

Bias tapes are actually fabric strips cut diagonally. Woven fabric has give when cut on the bias so it can easily be eased around curves depending upon the width. Purchase bias tapes in the varieties listed below or make your own by cutting, folding and pressing bias cut strips. Careful measurement and a bias tape maker will help to keep widths accurate and folds in place.

Single-fold bias tape is folded under once along both long cut edges. The 1/2"-wide version is usually stitched flat, close to both folds as a decorative accent. A 1"-wide bias tape is commonly used as a waistline casing for elastic or drawstrings. Both widths can also be used as facings to reduce bulk or increase comfort in heavy or scratchy



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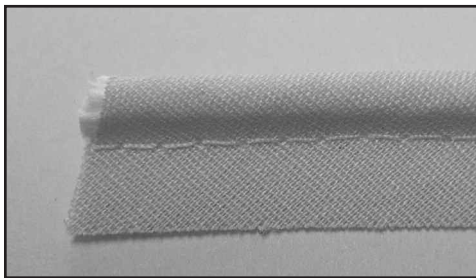
fabrics. A 2"-wide version can also be used as a casing and/or facing on straight edges and as a false hem when length needs to be added to the garment.

Double-fold bias tape is folded under along both long cut edges and down the center creating a pocket to encase fabric. Available in widths from 1/4" to 1", the narrowest version is commonly used to encase seam allowance edges for a clean finish or for a decorative edge on necklines, cuffs and hems. Use the slightly wider version when encasing a heavier fabric or multiple layers, and the widest one to bind quilts.

Tip: Encourage bias tape to smoothly fit a corner or curve by steam pressing into shape before stitching to the project.

Piping

Piping is also made from bias cut fabric, allowing it to easily shape a curve while keeping a smooth, unwrinkled



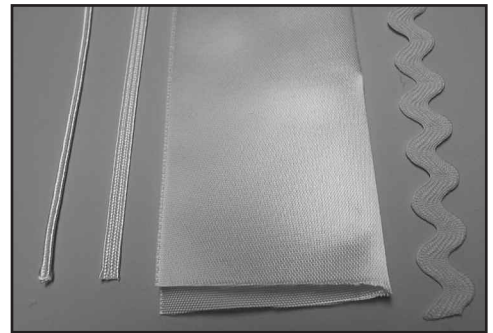
Piping

line. Piping is bias stitched snugly around a filler cord. The exposed piping fabric edges are hidden within the seam and the cord shows on the right side of the project. Use piping between two layers of fabric to highlight or accent the seamlines. Narrow piping is used for garment construction and wide piping, sometimes referred to as welting, is for home décor projects. Ready-made piping is usually found in solid colors, but occasionally in patterns. Make your own piping by cutting narrow, bias fabric strips and wrapping it around filler cord. Use a zipper foot to stitch close to the cord.

Decorative Trims

Soutache braid is 1/8" wide and has an indentation down the center, making it a natural track for stitching. Use this shiny decorative trim to trace around and define an intricate design drawn on the fabric. Hand

baste or pin it in place using fine silk pins and then stitch by hand or machine depending upon the design. Also consider use it to make button loops, Chinese ball buttons or frog closures.



Soutache, middy braid, blanket binding and rickrack.

Middy braid is most often seen in nautical-inspired clothing. At 1/4" wide, it's used as a top trim, often in multiple rows and an edge trim to accent appliqués. The braid is available in solid-colors, and in silver and gold metallic.

Blanket binding is a 2"-wide woven fabric, folded in half and designed to encase the edge of a blanket. Resembling a very wide satin ribbon it has a stable weave with no stretch and should only be used on straight edges. Making mitered corners and pressing folds is easy with the clean finished edge of this binding. It's often available in juvenile prints as well as solid colors.

Rickrack is a flat zigzag shape trimming. Usually made in polyester in widths from 1/4" to 3/4", it's used on everything from baby clothes to home decorating items. This whimsical trim can be used singly or in multiple rows, stitched on the edge of a garment making use of the points as a scallop, or stitched within the seam, exposing only the points. The zigzag shape keeps it very flexible and a natural for trimming curved areas. For sharp corners, plan ahead when pinning to position an outside point where it might fall comfortably in the most visible area of the project. Straight stitch down the center of the trim or tack each corner individually by hand or machine. A braided, three dimensional effect can be achieved by interlocking two contrasting colors of rickrack then stitching it as a single trim. Rickrack is often available in holiday prints as well as solid colors. ■