

# Lapped Zippers

12.250

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## SEW-lutions Guidelines

Your Guide  
to  
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Suitable for the left side of garments or at the center back, a lapped zipper application has a fabric "flap" to cover the zipper tape. When placed on the side, the lap is from front to back; on a center back application, the lap is placed on the left side of the garment.

### Up Top

A lapped zipper application can be open at the top for skirts or pants, or it may be closed, as in the underarm side seam of a dress.

When planning the zipper application, consider the zipper upper finish. If there's a facing at the upper edge, the zipper pull needs to end about 1/2" below the seamline. If it's to be crossed by a waistband seam, the zipper pull should be just below the seamline.

### Foot News (1)

A zipper foot allows the needle to be on the side of the actual foot section so you can stitch closer to the zipper teeth. Without a zipper foot, the presser foot would ride over the zipper teeth causing uneven stitching.



1

Photo courtesy of Husqvarna Viking

Ask your dealer for a zipper foot made specifically for your machine, or purchase a generic version.

### Seams Right

To begin installing a lapped zipper, determine the seam opening based on the zipper teeth length and the necessary clearance needed at the upper edge for seaming (see above).

Stitch the garment seam up to the determined length and anchor the stitching by backtacking. Change the stitch length to basting (6 stitches per inch) and stitch the seam where the zipper will go.

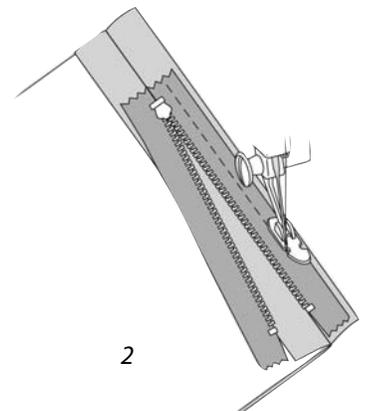
Press the seam open. If it's a curved seam, such as at a hipline, press over a tailor's ham to avoid flattening.

If the seam requires finishing to prevent raveling, do that before inserting the zipper. Options include serging, zigzagging or binding.

### Zipper Application

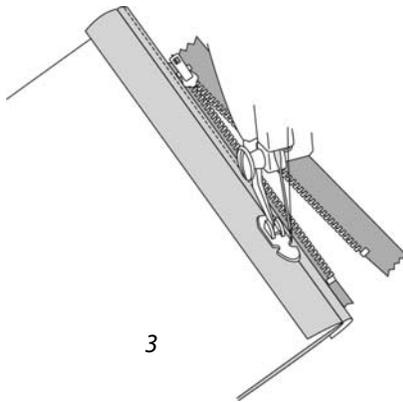
To begin the zipper insertion, fold the right seam allowance out and place the opened zipper face down on the extension (2), keeping in mind the upper edge clearance determined above. The edge of the zipper coil should abut the pressed seamline.

Place the needle on the left side of the zipper foot and stitch on the zipper tape woven guideline.



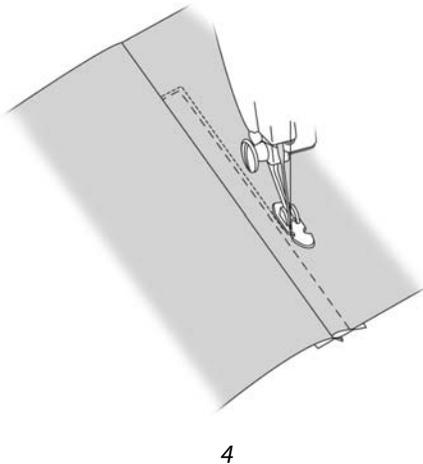
2

Fold back the seam allowance, turn the zipper right side up, shift the needle to the right of the zipper foot and stitch on the fold close to the zipper teeth (3). Note: You're stitching only on the garment seam allowance.



Turn the garment right side out and flatten the seamline. Turn the zipper tab upward to reduce the "bump." Pin and/or baste across the lower zipper and up the unstitched side about 3/8" from the seamline.

Move the needle to the left of the zipper foot and stitch just beside the basting line from the bottom to the top of the zipper, pivoting at the corner (4).



Remove any basting threads used for stitching guidance and those used to hold the seam closed during the zipper insertion.

### Finishing

Finish the top of the garment according to the pattern instructions, adding facing, collar or waistband.

### Closed Zipper Application

Completed in the same manner as the open-top lapped zipper, a closed application simply has the topstitching across both ends of the zipper instead of just one. Be sure to match up any crosswise seams within the zipper opening and trim those horizontal seam allowances within the zipper placket area to reduce bulk.

### Zip Tips

Veteran zipper sewers have discovered some shortcuts to help with lapped zipper insertion final stitching.

1. Use tape to judge the final stitching width instead of basting. Place 1/2"-wide tape over the seamline with one edge at the appropriate stitching distance, then simply follow the tape edge. Remove the tape when stitching is complete. Note: Tape will lap over the seamline about 1/8".

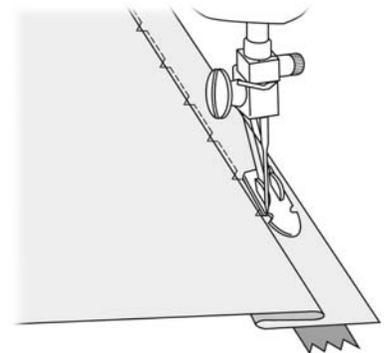
2. Instead of sewing the final stitching line with topstitching, use a hand stitch instead for less visibility. Work from the lower zipper opening to the top using a prickstitch for an inconspicuous look.

#### Prickstitch

Insert the needle through all fabric layers just a few threads behind the previous stitch and bring it to the surface 1/8" to 1/4" from where the previous thread emerged. Stitches should be short and evenly spaced about 1/4" apart.

If additional strength is needed, fold back the garment fabric and machine stitch the zipper tape to the extended front/left seam allowance.

3. Use a machine blindhem stitch to sew the last step of the zipper application (5). Fold back the garment on the topstitching line and set the machine for a narrow blindhem stitch. The stitch should barely catch the folded fabric for an inconspicuous look on the right side.



4. Some sewers like to widen the seam allowances to 1" when inserting a zipper. This adds more stability to the seam and assures that stitching catches all layers, especially on heavier fabrics. 🖱️

For more information on using a blindhem for zipper insertion, see SEW-Lutions Guideline 16.120 Blindhem Stitch.