

Selecting Snaps

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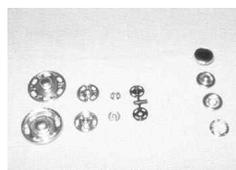
Page 1

Snaps are serious business in the world of closures and are often chosen when security and strength are needed. Originally snaps were strictly utilitarian and served as strong closures for mailbags, saddlebags and spats made from heavy-duty fabrics like canvas and leather. Today they are seen in everything from home dec items to baby clothes.

Snaps are made from metal (usually brass), plastic or nylon. Metal snaps can be found in nickel-plated, for a silver shine, or in black, white or ivory. Nylon snaps are usually transparent and chosen for their light weight and to blend with the fabric's color or print. Plastic snaps and ring caps are found in novelty dressing and baby clothing and are available in many colors.

Sew-In or No-Sew Styles

Two-part snaps consist of a ball and socket that are sewn in place on the opposite edges of the garment or project opening. With careful sewing, they are invisible from the right side. The snap doesn't damage the fabric, and the snap can easily be removed or replaced if necessary.



Two-Part, Sew-In Snaps (left) and Four-Part Snaps (right)

Four-part snaps require no sewing. The sets come as pairs with an outer and inner piece for each half of the snap. These snaps have a post or prongs that pierce the fabric when they're "set" in place. This damages the fabric under the snap, so you have to be sure you place the snap correctly the first time. In most cases the cap of the snap is visible on the right side of the project.

Varieties of Four-Part Snaps

Post Snaps: Instead of prongs, these snap pieces have a center post that pierces the fabric. Post snaps are stronger than pronged snaps and are intended for heavy-weight or thick fabrics or for going through multiple fabric layers. For example, they're used on coats and skiwear.

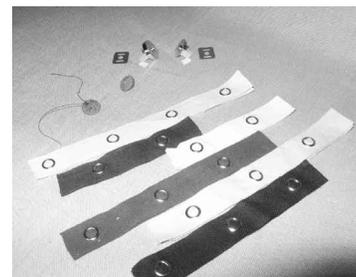
Prong Snaps: These snaps feature small, knife-like prongs on the two outer snap pieces. The two inner pieces, the socket and the post, actually "receive" the prongs when the snap is set. The prongs do minimal damage to the fabric. Choose pronged snaps for use on lightweight fabrics and knits.

If the snap's cap will show on the completed project, be sure to choose a cap style that complements the fabric. Some caps have gem-like stones or are embossed with trendy designs. Choose ring-cap snaps if you want the snaps to be less visible and blend into the fabric.

Specialty Snaps

Magnetic Snaps:

These snaps have strong magnets inside that draw the two snap halves together. This four-part snap works on the same principle as a prong snap (penetrating the fabric), but the cap and clasp are not decorative. The prongs are attached to utilitarian metal washers that must be hidden within a lining or facing, and, therefore, the snaps must be set during the construction of the project. Magnetic snaps are bulkier and substantially heavier. They are designed for keeping handbags and flaps closed.



Magnetic Snaps (top), Covered Snaps (upper left) and Snap Tape



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Snap Tape: Usually made with ring-cap snaps, snap tape features preset snaps on lengths of twill tape. Instead of setting the snaps into the fabric, the tape is stitched to each side of a garment opening so that the snaps line up. Snap tape makes multiple-snap openings much faster and does not damage the garment fabric. The tape is available in many colors, but it's usually hidden under the opening's edges, as seen in baby's snap-crotch clothing.

Covered Snaps: These larger sew-in style snaps are designed to be covered with a tightly woven lightweight fabric, often silk, to conceal the closure; they're used in high-fashion garments, most often in fur coats. They can be purchased ready-made, or you can cover your own. Cut a circle of fabric two and a half times larger than the diameter of the snap. Hand-sew a running stitch around the perimeter of the circle, leaving long thread tails. Place the snap piece socket- or ball-side down in the center of the fabric and pull the thread tails, drawing fabric up around the snap; stitch to secure. The fabric raw edges are hidden behind the snap when the snap is stitched in place, and the light weight of the fabric still allows the ball and socket to function.

Fastening Tools

TIP: Use the tool recommended for the chosen snap type and, for best results, don't use one manufacturer's tool on another's snaps.



*Clamp Fastener (left),
Pliers (top),
Anvil (center)*

Anvil and Hammer: A small, metal anvil that looks like a bolt without the threadings can be used to set snaps. The anvil is often sold with the snaps, and it's designed to fit a specific snap size and style. Working on a hard surface, align the snap pairs on either side of the fabric creating a sandwich; hold the anvil on top and strike with the hammer to force the post or prongs through the fabric. This tool allows the user to apply

snaps at the edge of a garment or deep within the body of the fabric.

Pliers: Rubber or plastic settings at the tip of the pliers are designed to fit a specific snap size and type. Align the snap pieces on either side of the fabric edge then set by firmly squeezing into place with the pliers.

Clamp Fastener: Place this clamp style fastener flat on a table. Align the snap pieces on either side of the fabric, and then set the snap pieces into the fittings at the tips of the jaws. Push down on the top jaw to force the post or prongs through the fabric and set the snap.

Because the jaws of both the pliers and clamp tools are short, you can only use these tools to set snaps near the garment opening or the fabric edge.

Application Tips

Use a straight pin to align and position the halves of sew-in snaps. Poke the pin through the fabric and through the snap's center hole, then through the remaining snap half and fabric layer.

Before applying snaps to your project, always test the snap type you wish to use on a scrap of the project fabric; use the correct setting tool.

For best results, support lightweight fabrics where snaps will be added. On the wrong side of the fabric add a circle of interfacing or stabilizer at each snap location. 🖨️