

Finishing Touches

By Martyn Smith



Some special finishing touches can make a garment more comfortable. In past years when making trousers Martyn has used trouser banding with the rubber through the centre of it to stop shirts from untucking and it also anchored the trouser to the waist. It has become harder to get over the years and even the commercial manufacturers have moved away from using it; with the exception of in a man's tailored suit. The demise of formal attire and the vast increase of a more casual approach to dressing require a simpler and faster method of manufacture. Applying banding on a man's trouser can be tricky and contrived as there are major bulk issues that domestic sewing machines (and some industrials) find hard to deal with.



The trousers seen here are from a very fine polyester/wool fabric so it's important that the band is firm and doesn't roll when being worn. The back seat seam takes a lot of stress in a trouser so it's important to stitch it with a double row of stitching or, in some cases, tape the back seam (especially for fabrics that have elastaine as this will prevent sagging after a few wears). The overlocking thread used is an opaque monofilament thread (Güttermann Skala) that seems to fall off bias/curved seams so bind the centre back seam with a traditional 'Hong Kong' finish. See photo 1.

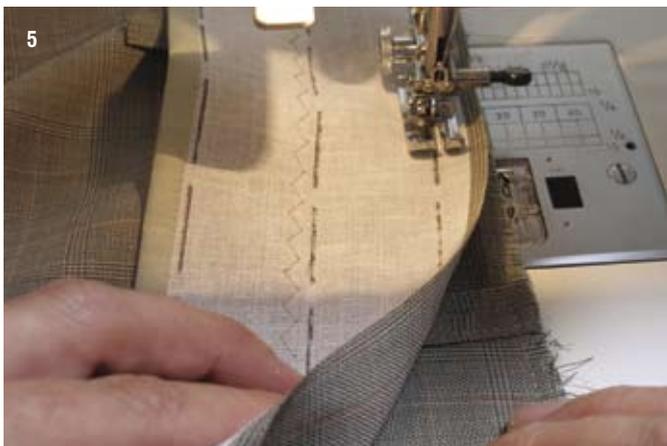
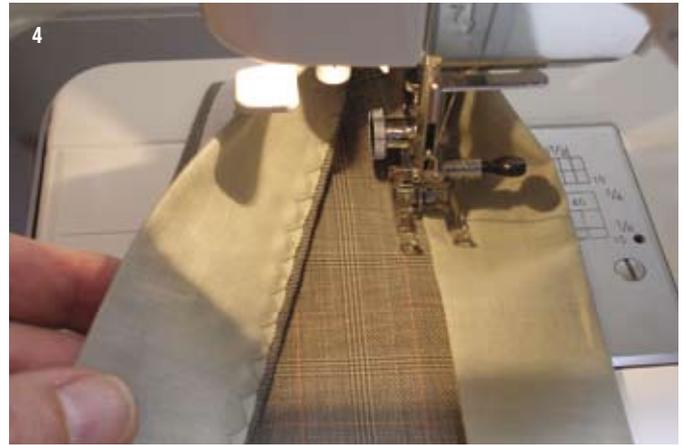
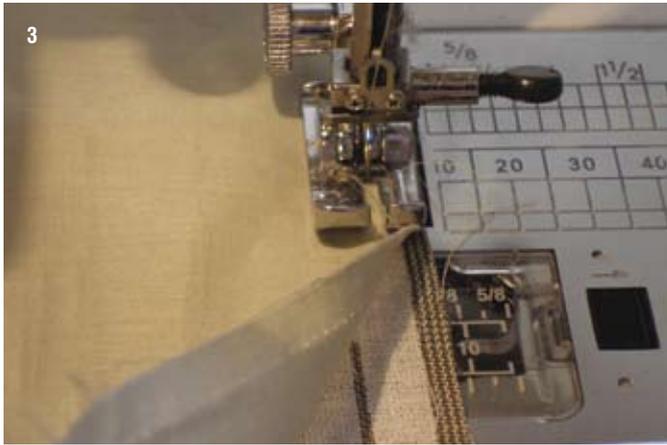
When using a commercial pattern only use the belt loop and waistband pattern pieces for the length measurement and

notches. Use an iron-on slotted banding (as an interfacing). This banding folds easily into place and is far less bulky, but only comes in a set width, hence only using the waistband pattern for length and markings.

Making up the belt loop (belt carriers) tube is simple ... cut a belt loop strip at 3.5cm (1¼ in) x 10cm (4in) and calculate



how many you need (usually 7 or 8 are sufficient). Sew a 6mm (¼in) seam down the length of the strip, press the seam open (the flat area of a chop stick works well) and then turn through and press so the seam is in the middle of the underside of the belt loop. Edgestitch each side and then press again. Cut the strip to form the individual loops (approximately 9cm [3½ in] lengths to ensure they are not so fiddly to handle). Attach the loops to the suggested points along the top of the waist, trying to avoid any bulk areas created by the pockets or seams. See photo 2.



To create a mock banding finish on the inside of the waistband, stitch a length of cotton to the inside of the folded waistband (wrapping from the underside like a binding). Cut a duplicate of the waistband in the same cotton that has been used in both the pocket bags and the back seam binding. The slotted banding doesn't come all the way to the edge of the waistband; this is because slotted banding usually provides a 1cm (3/8in) seam allowance not a 1.5cm (5/8in) as is generally suggested in commercial patterns. See photo 3. Fold the cotton back on itself and then zigzag into position close to the fold line of the band (a shallow zigzag, not wide). Zigzag allows the cotton to move slightly when the trouser is on the waist and is much easier to apply. See photo 4.

Attach the band to the top of the trouser waist area, as

shown, and sandwich the belt loops into position. See photo 5. Turning out the corners needs to be done in 'bag out' style. The enveloping fold allows stitching (without catching) from the fold of the waistband, sinking the needle at the waist stitching line and then pivoting and stitching along the original waistband stitching for 3 – 4 cm (1¼ – 1¾ in). See photo 6 (insert). Turn through after clipping the corner bulk away and press the corner. See photo 6.

Stitching in the ditch to secure the band into its final position is very important. See photo 7.

TIP: On an errant fabric, rather than pinning, hand-baste the waistband in place before stitching.

Once satisfied with the completion of the waistband, reinforce the belt loops into position by again stitching them

6mm (¼ in) below the band seam and then finally at the top of the folded belt loop. See photo 8. The underside of the band shows the belt loop stitching sitting at either edge of the cotton banding to ensure that the loops are attached to something firm and won't pull away when running a belt through the loops (carriers). Clip away the excess loop as close as possible to the upper loop stitching. See photo 9.

Pressing as you sew allows the final 'press off' of the garment to be easy. When pressing the legs of a trouser ensure the inside and outside seams are sitting on top of each other before final pressing. See photo 10. The crease lines in a flat front (plain front) trouser usually finish at the crotch seam area both front and back, but make sure they are at identical heights when the garment is on the body. See photo 11. Pleated trousers have the front crease and pleat pressed all the way to the top band and the back crease only to the crotch seam level (the ironing system used in the photo is a Laura Star Magic S4, and magic it truly is!)

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