

Quitting Clipping!

By Martyn Smith

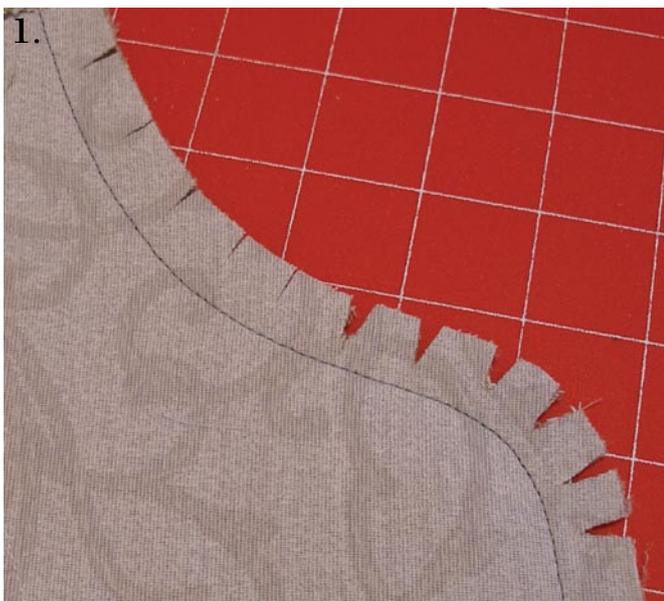
Clipping, trimming and removing excess fabric to allow the edges of a garment to sit firmly flat is all part and parcel of stitching. We follow the instructions within a pattern and clip where suggested without even a thought of what we are actually doing to the garment. The fabrication of a style also needs to be considered when removing bulk and turning out corners, necklines and armholes.

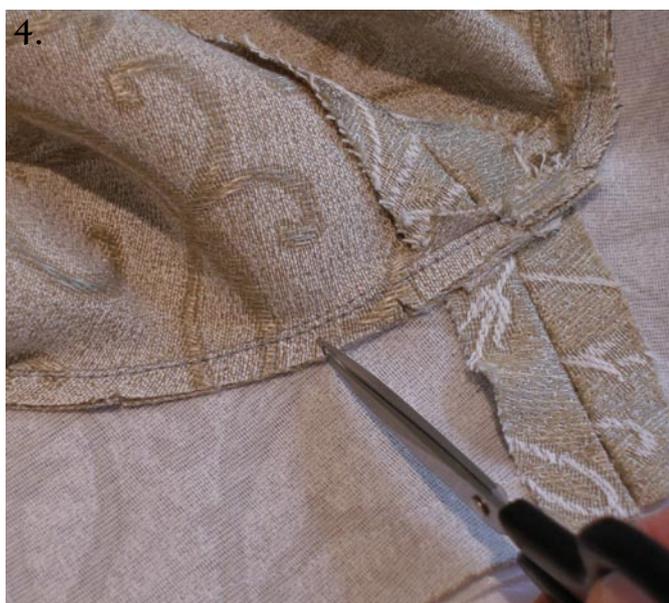
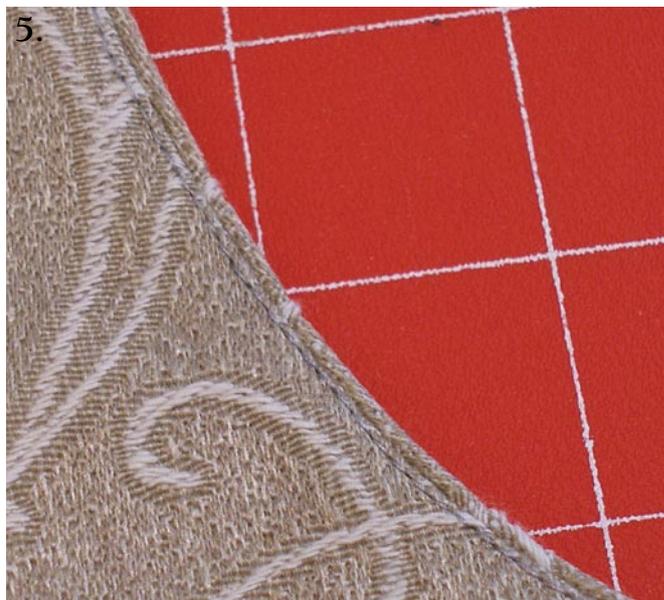
The method that we know so well is of a hill (rounded edge) and valley (like an armhole or neckline) which would need to be clipped in one area and dove-tail notched (V clipping) in the other before turning through and pressing. See photo 1. Before doing this next time, consider what this may be doing to the particular area of the garment you are working on. The two best examples are necklines and armholes as having them slightly stretched or bagging is not a good look. When a curved seam is sewn, the raw edge of the seam is smaller



in length than the stitching line itself; therefore, if this seam is to be turned through or opened up, the raw edge needs some release to sit flat. When clipping to the stitching line it releases the tension or tightness in the seam allowance but it also allows the stitching line to grow when being pressed. Hence this is where some garments don't sit well on the body, with gaping armholes and fluting necklines and excess fabric needing to be pinched out on the finished garment.

The fashion industry uses a more commercial method.





See photo 2. Trim back all the seams that need turning to half their value, i.e. 1.5cm ($\frac{3}{8}$ in) would become .75cm ($\frac{3}{16}$ in), perhaps coming a little closer to very curved corners to allow the seams to turn back a little better. Wherever possible it's important to understitch the bulk of the seam to the inside of the garment. See Photo 3. When understitching a curved area gently pull the fabric out from each side of the presser foot to compact the seam (the bias grain around a curve will compress under the foot and shorten the seam thus tightening it slightly). Around severely curved seam areas it's still necessary to clip lightly. See Photo 4. The understitching should be even and sitting close to the seam edge and controls the 'roll' of the outer fabric so there is no chance of seeing the underside of the work from the front of the garment. See photo 5.

Definitions

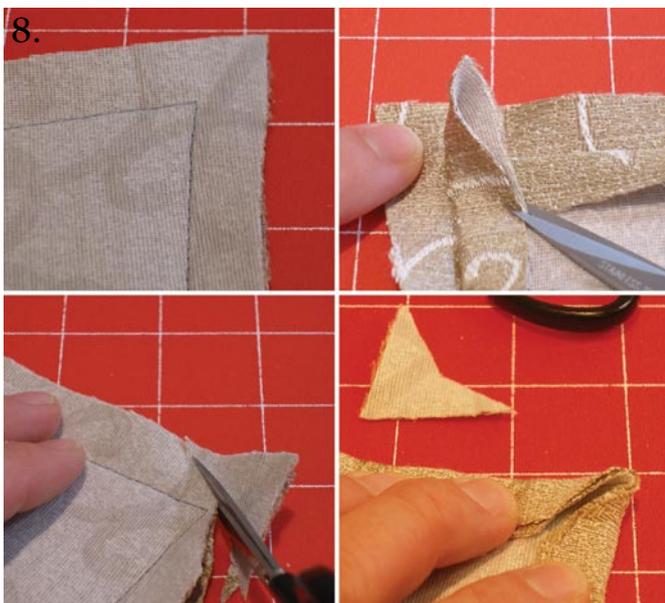
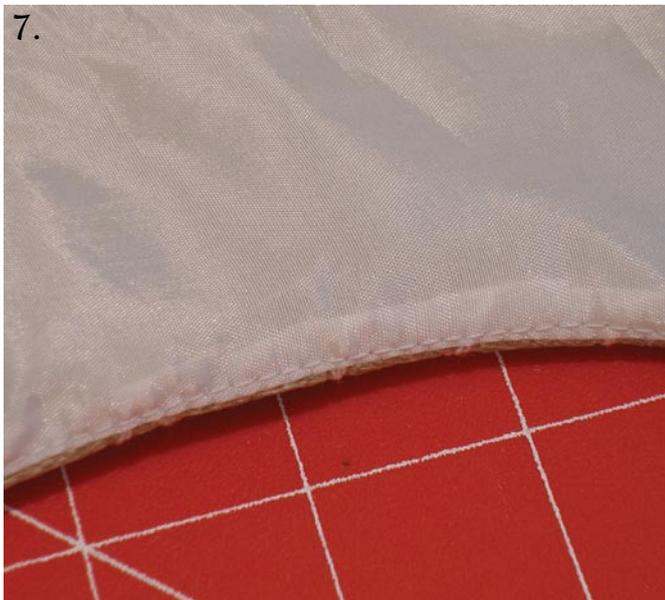
Understitching is when all the seams are pushed to the inside of the garment and stitched from the topside on the

seam edge to hold all seam layers together. The main reason for understitching is to prevent the inside of the garment being visible from the front. Particular examples would be a faced waistline, armhole and neckline facings and faced hems.

Topstitching is a line of stitching set in from the finished edge of a garment and is of a consistent distance from the edge all around. This can be either a practical finish or a decorative finish and its main aim is to hold all finished edges firm and flat.

Edgestitching is topstitching which is stitched on the edge.

Trim back the seam allowances of the lower curved edge of a vest to 5mm ($\frac{1}{4}$ in), heat with steam and roll under the fingers before setting in place with a final shot of steam and heat. This edge is not overworked and lies a lot flatter than if it was traditionally 'dove-tailed'. See photo 6.



HINT: Rolling a curved turn out is easy. Imagine rolling a pencil to and fro with just your finger tips. This is the same technique that is used when rolling out a curved corner. The rolling effect breaks down the bias grain and allows the seam allowance inside to become a little more pliable.

An armhole that has been bagged out with lining rather than a fabric facing is understitched and slightly shortened by gently pulling the fabric either side of the foot when approaching the curve of the armhole. This armhole will now sit close to the body and prevent any undergarment from being visible, as well as looking like the garment was made for the wearer.

See photo 7.

Any part of a garment that needs releasing to make a seam sit flat or turn out needs careful consideration. It is too late when the snipping is done! Remember that our bodies are



curved and our garments need to be, too. Pressing a garment so it is totally flat will almost guarantee that it will not fit the body once finished. Edges need to be slightly 'drawn in' parallel to the curved edges they are sitting against. The only real straight or flat area on the body is in the forehead area, so other than making a hat we must work with curves. The fashion industry does work with a variety of seam allowances while manufacturing and the use of 1.5cm (3/8in) is not ever used. They use either 1cm (3/8in) or 6mm (1/4in) seams and the patterns are generally made for quick manufacture and the less clipping and handling the better. Over-handled garments take a lot more pressing and this is where the cost savings are made.

Clipping corners is another mine field when it comes to know how close to cut. A rule of thumb is to remain the distance of the chosen stitch length away from the corner, but loosely woven fabrics have to be treated with utmost respect as they sometimes fray by just looking at them! By folding the corner in and pinching the seams it is possible to make a slanted snip as a guideline for angling the corner trim. The idea is to make the clipped edges butt together inside the corner once pressed, so they lay flat and even. This then acts as a template to get the correct shaping once pressed. See photo 8.

Kwik•Sew 3128, view B is a great little vest that takes very little time to make and is suitable for all sorts of fabrics. Ideal for both summer and winter with pants or jeans, casual but chic! The collared style in this pattern looks neatly tailored and is great under a suit, or worn with just a skirt in place of a jacket in warmer climates. Understitching has been applied to the armholes, neck area and fronts from as close to the curve as the machine foot can comfortably get. See photo 9.

Martyn is always interested in feedback and comments in regards to his articles. Please feel free to make contact with him at martyn.smith@kwiksew.com