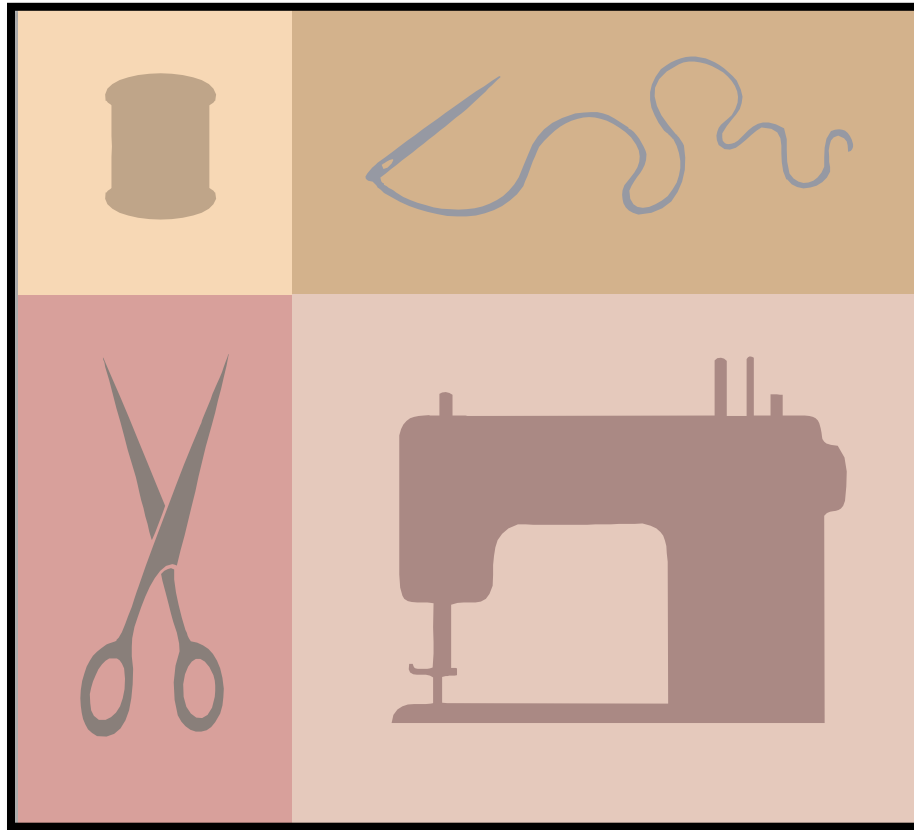


Swatch Book



A Hands-On Approach to Developing an Understanding
Of Basic Sewing Techniques & Procedures

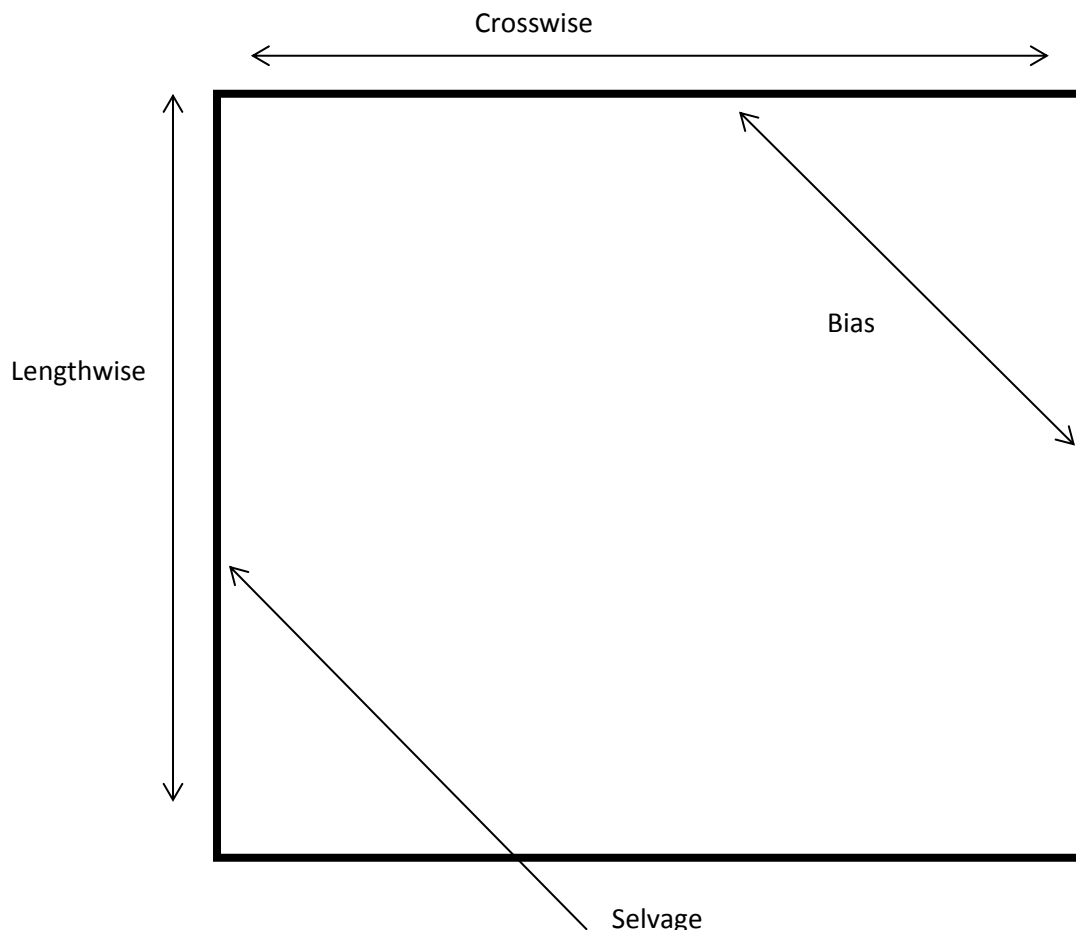
This Swatch Book Belongs to:

Identify Grain Lines and Bias—Swatch #1

Fabric is woven with two finished edges running the length of the piece. These edges are called the SELVAGE. The selvage will not unravel. The threads that run parallel to the selvage are called the LENGTHWISE GRAIN (also known as the WARP THREADS or STRAIGHT OF THE GRAIN). The threads that run at a right angle, or perpendicular, to the selvage are called the CROSSWISE GRAIN (also known as the WEFT THREADS).

Fabric has two BIAS directions running diagonally across the grain lines. A 45-degree to either the lengthwise or the crosswise grain is called the TRUE BIAS and has a good deal of stretch. The lengthwise grain usually has no stretch and the crosswise grain has a slight stretch. Usually, costume pieces are cut with the lengthwise grain running up and down the body for stability. The shape of the garment will not change, after it is assembled, when cut on the straight of the grain. Some costumes are cut “ON THE BIAS” so that the stretchy character of the fabric is part of the design. Body-hugging gowns of the 1930s utilize bias-cut pieces.

Use a straight edge to mark the CROSSWISE AND LENGTHWISE grain lines and the TRUE BIAS. Label these and the selvage with a pencil as shown below. Test the stretch of both grain lines and the bias.

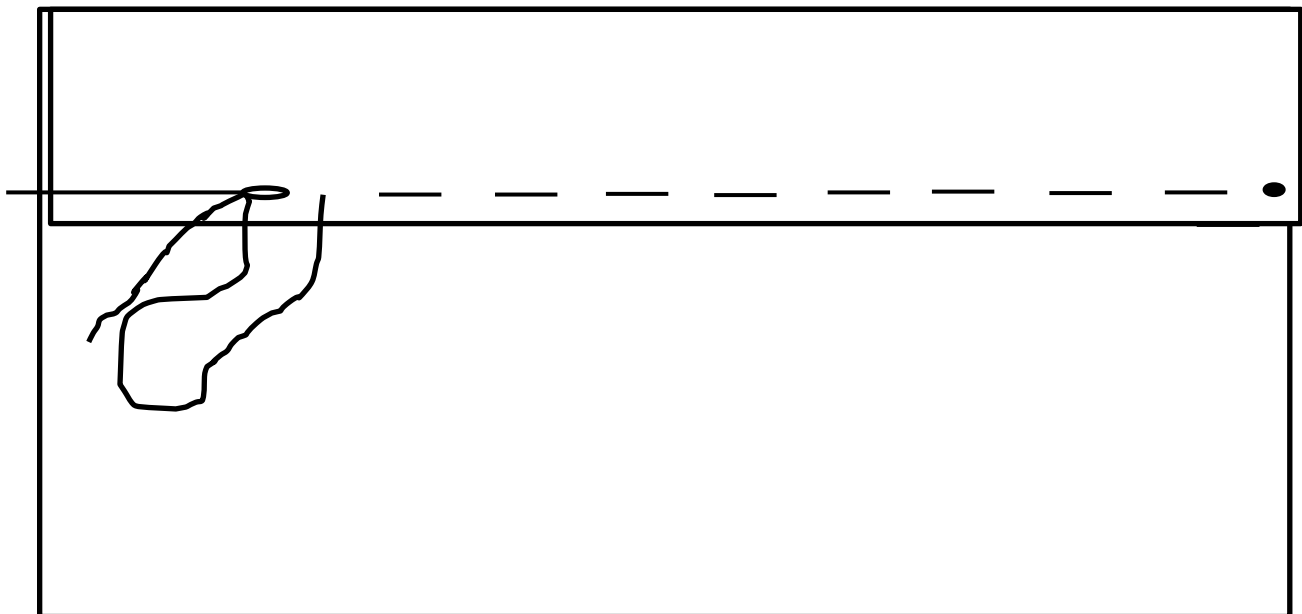


Running or Basting Hand Stitch—Swatch #2

The RUNNING or BASTING STITCH is used to hold layers of fabric together before permanent sewing is done. It is composed of simple in-and-out stitches evenly spaced about $\frac{1}{4}$ " apart. The basting stitch is used to temporarily hold together two or more fabric layers during fitting and construction. This stitch can also be used to insert gathering threads by hand.

To demonstrate the running stitch, fold one long edge of the fabric swatch toward the center, turning up about 1". The fold represents fabric turned to the inside of the garment. Pin the two layers together before stitching. Thread a needle with a single strand of thread; knot the long end of the thread. Begin stitching at the same edge of the fabric as your dominant hand. Insert the needle from the front, turn the needle away from the starting point, and bring the needle up about $\frac{1}{4}$ " away. Continue this process across the length of the swatch, keeping the line of stitches straight and even. At the end of stitching, tie off your thread: take a tiny stitch perpendicular to the stitching line; pull the thread up, but before pulling it tight pass the needle through the thread loop; then pull tight and trim thread off.

NOTE: For this exercise, use thread that contrasts with the fabric. To keep regular sewing thread from tangling, run it across a round of beeswax. You may encounter other hand sewing thread options: Hymark or Silamide. These are extra sturdy threads that resist tangling and are preferred for attaching hardware such as buttons, hooks, eyes and snaps.

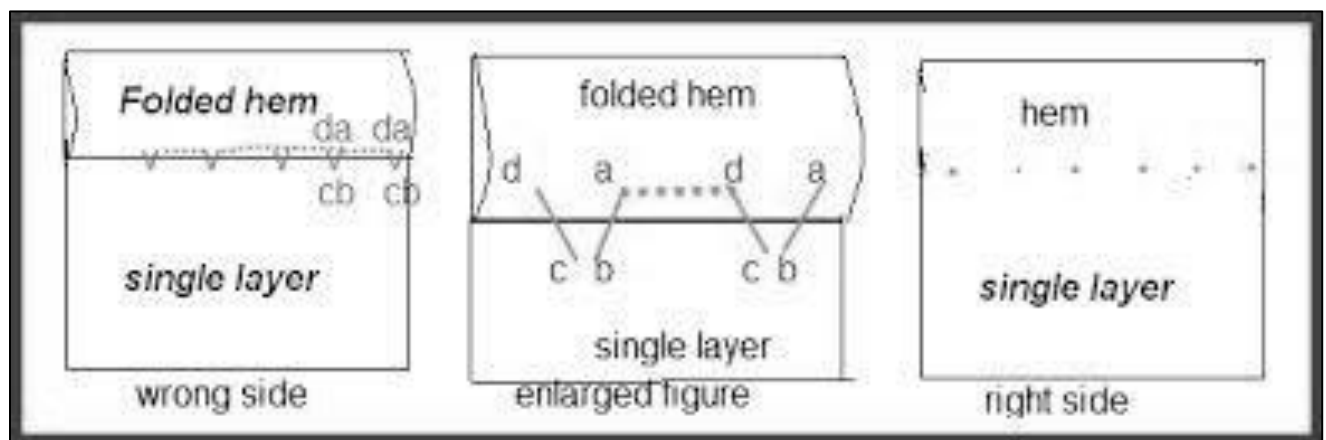


Slipstitch—Swatch #3

The SLIPSTITCH is a hemming stitch that is useful for hems and attaching linings. The tiny stitches on the outside of the garment should be almost invisible. The stitching on the inside of the garment should be small, so as not to catch on the heel of a shoe.

One the long edge of a fabric swatch, press under $\frac{1}{2}$ " on the raw edge, then fold up approximately $1\frac{1}{2}$ " and press again. The slipstitch is sewn across the fabric, starting at the side of your dominant hand and keeping the needle pointing at the opposite side. Thread a needle with a single piece of thread, knotting the long end. Begin by burying the knot between two layers of fabric and bring the needle out through the fold. Directly above where the thread is coming out of the fold, take a tiny stitch in the garment fabric, picking up just one or two threads from the weave of the fabric. Insert the needle back into the folded edge and slip through the fold for about $\frac{1}{4}$ ". Bring the needle out through the fold and repeat the previous step. Continue this process across the whole sample. When complete, take a tiny stitch perpendicular to the stitching line and, before pulling the thread completely tight, pass the needle through the loop. Pull the loop tight and trim the thread.

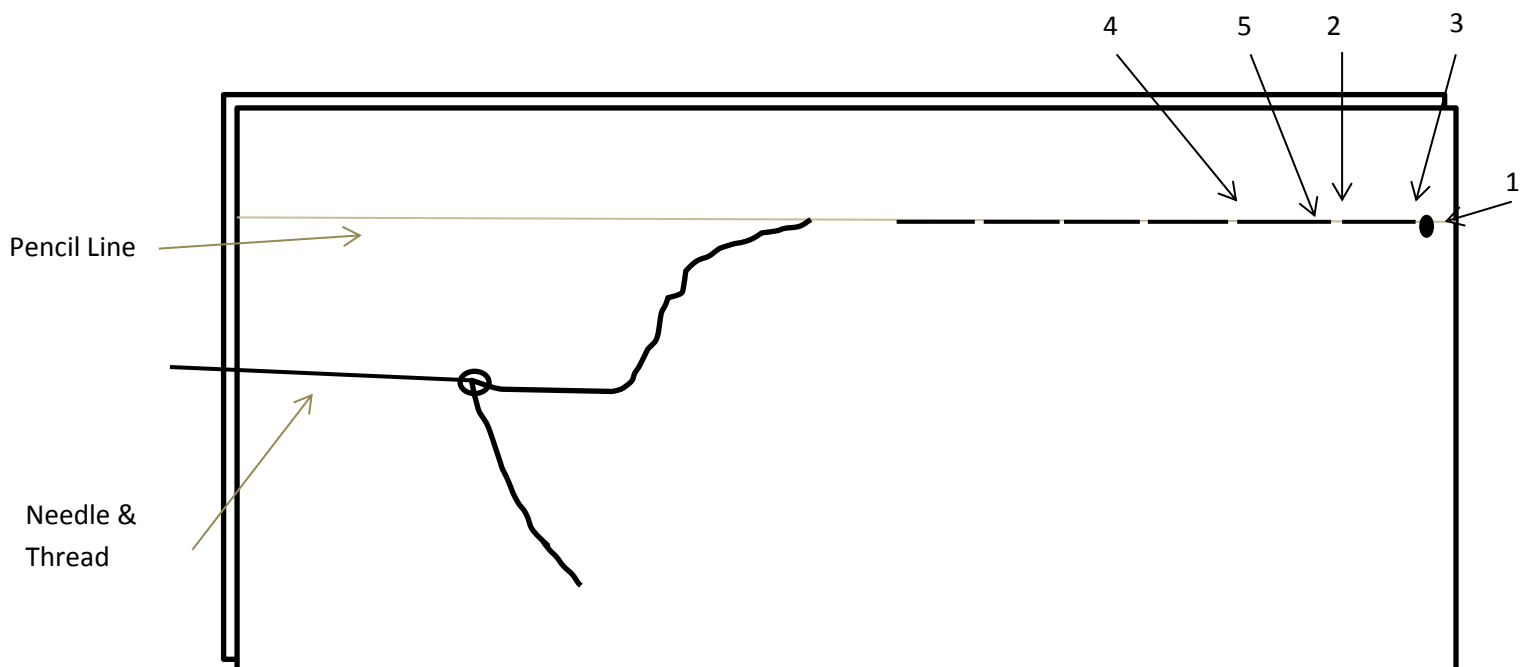
In the figure below, the dotted lines represent the thread that is hidden in the fold. "Wrong side" indicates the inside of the garment and "right side" indicates the outside of the garment.



Backstitch—Swatch #4

The BACKSTITCH is the strongest hand sewing stitch; in fact, before the invention of the sewing machine, garments were sewn together by hand using the backstitch or a similar technique. When viewed from the top side, the completed backstitch resembles a line of machine stitches. When viewed from the underside, the completed backstitch looks like overlapping or feathered stitches.

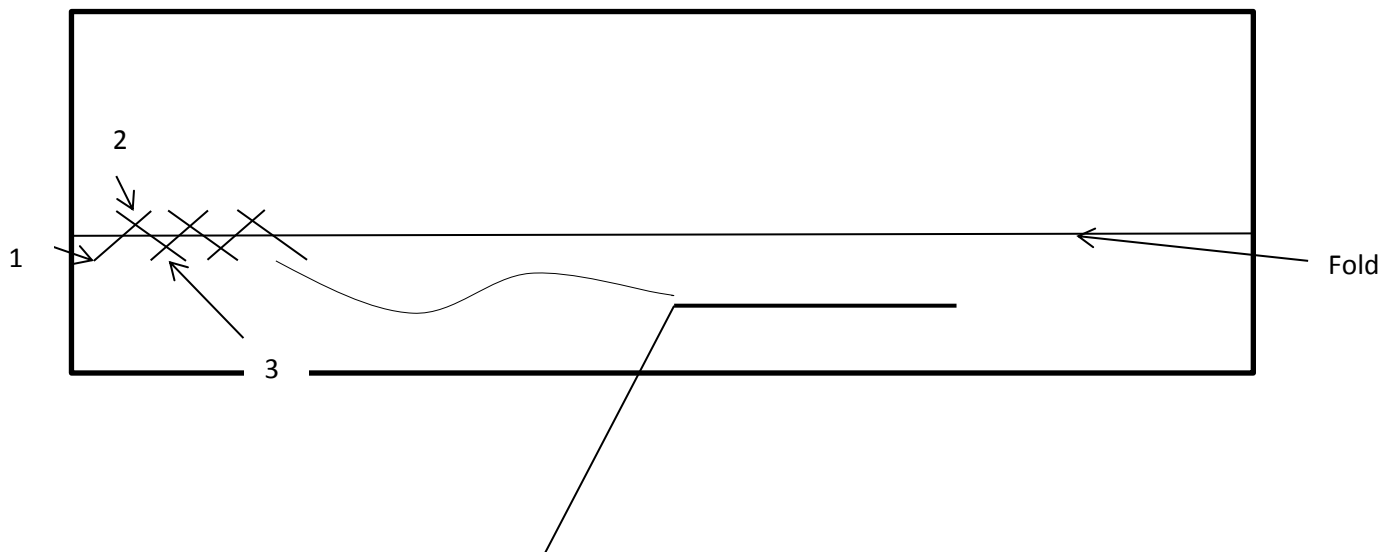
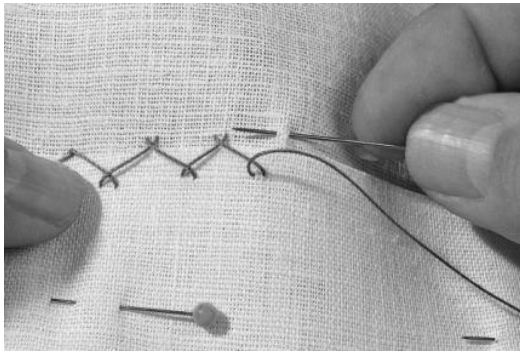
Divide a fabric swatch in half lengthwise, and then place the two pieces together with right sides touching and raw edges aligned. Using a straight edge and pencil, mark a seam line $\frac{1}{2}$ " from the raw edges. Thread your needle with single thread and knot the long end. Working from the edge of the fabric at your dominant hand, take a small stitch on the seam line, keeping the needle pointed at the opposite edge of the fabric sample. Pull the thread up; the knot should now be resting on the face of the fabric sample (#1) and the thread should be coming out about $\frac{1}{4}$ " away (#2). Move the needle back to the knot (#3), insert the needle and take a stitch, bringing the needle out about $\frac{1}{4}$ " past the previous stitch (#4). Pull the thread up. Repeat the process, moving the needle back to the previous stitch (#5, rather than the knot) each time. When the seam line is complete, tie the thread off.



Catch Stitch—Swatch #5

The CATCH STITCH is a flexible hand sewing stitch useful for hems on circular skirts or attaching facings to the inside of garments. When completed properly, it is practically invisible on the outside of the garment. Unlike the other techniques completed so far, this stitch is worked in the opposite direction. For a right-handed person, work the stitch from left to right (opposite for lefties). Always keep the needle aimed toward the starting point of the stitch. Again, for right-handed folks, aim the needle to the left. This technique can also be completed in a “blind” fashion, meaning it hides between the layers of fabric being stitched together. For this exercise, work the stitch so that it is visible on the inside of the garment.

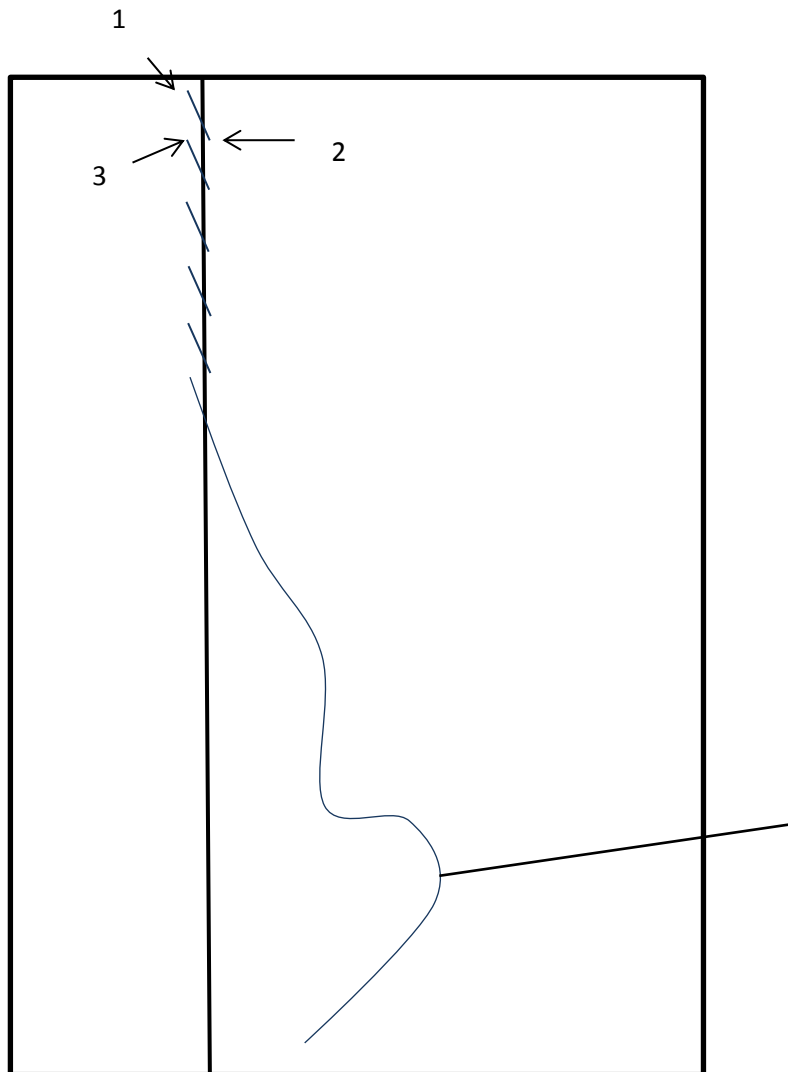
To prepare your fabric, press up $\frac{1}{2}$ " on one long edge of the sample. Now turn up another $1\frac{1}{2}$ " hem and pin in place. Thread the needle with a single thread and knot the long end. Insert the needle and pull up the thread so that the knot lives under the fold (#1). Move the needle $\frac{1}{4}$ " to $\frac{3}{8}$ " to the right and take a tiny stitch in the fabric just above the fold (#2). Remember to always keep the needle pointing to the left. Pull thread so that it lies smoothly against the fabric. Move the needle the same distance to the right; this time take the tiny stitch in the fabric of the fold (#3). Pull thread so that it lies smoothly against the fabric. Repeat these steps, alternating stitches above the fold and on the fold, making sure you are only sewing through one layer of fabric at a time. Continue across the sample; knot off at the end.



Whip Stitch (aka Hemming Stitch)—Swatch #6

The whip stitch is a multi-purpose hand technique which is used to put in flat hems as well as attach trims or do repairs to costumes. The finished stitch creates a row of neat, angled stitches that lie across the seam line or hem edge.

To prepare your fabric, press up $\frac{1}{2}$ " on one long edge of the sample. Now turn up another $1\frac{1}{2}$ " hem and pin in place. Thread the needle with a single thread and knot the long end. I like to hold the sample (garment) so that the fold of the hem is vertical in my hands, working the stitches toward myself. Thread your needle with a single thread and knot the long end. Insert the needle under the fold and pull up the thread so the knot lives under the fold (#1). Move the needle about $\frac{1}{4}$ " down (toward yourself) and take a tiny stitch of the garment layer (#2), bringing the needle under and through the fold (#3). Pull the thread up smoothly; move the needle down another stitch length and repeat until the sample is complete. Tie off and trim your thread.



Fasteners: Swatches #7-10

Fasteners are always sewn on areas of costumes with multiple layers, using a double threaded needle. Hardware sewn to a single layer of fabric will pull out very quickly.

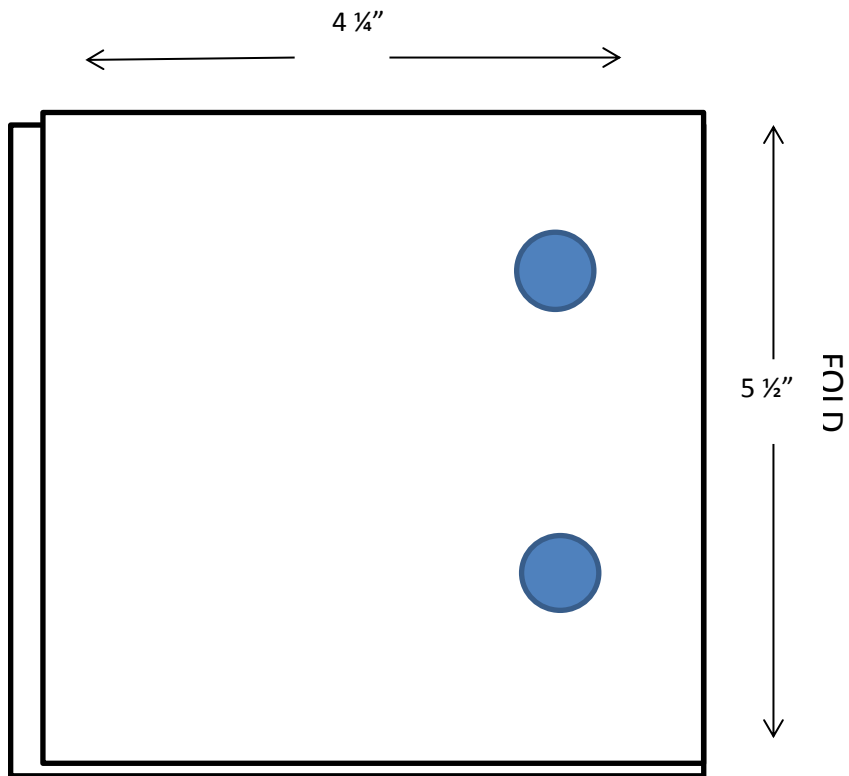
Buttons--Swatch #7

For the buttons, press a swatch in half. Arrange the swatch so that the fold is at the right side of the rectangle as you look at it. Mark the placement for two buttons, each one inch from the folded edge, spacing the markings two inches apart. (See below)

You will attach the **shank** button first. Fold the swatch so that your top button mark is exactly on the fold. Place the button shank on the mark, holding in place with your non-dominant hand. Insert the needle from underneath the fold, bringing it through the hole in the shank of the button. Pull the thread up smoothly, but not too tightly. Repeat this process 4-6 times, keeping the stitches close to the fold. Knot off and clip threads.

The process for attaching the **4-hole button** is similar, but you will need to create a thread shank to lift the button off the garment, which allows room for the button-hole layer to lay smooth when fastened. Fold the swatch so that your lower button mark is exactly on the fold. Place the 4-hole button over the mark so that half of the button is on the fabric and half is off the fabric. Insert the needle from underneath the fold, bringing the needle through the lower right hole in the button. Pull up the thread smoothly, but not too tightly. Pass the needle through the hole directly above; now insert a toothpick or heavy pin under the thread. Take three more stitches through the fold and same set of holes, going over the toothpick. When your needle is under the button, simply move over to the second set of holes and complete four stitches in the same manner. After your final stitch, the needle should be between the button and the fabric. Remove the toothpick and lift up on the button; wrap your thread around the stitches between the button and the fabric 4-6 times. Pass the needle through the thread shank and knot off.

Swatch #7 Set-up



Snap—Swatch #8

Snap are useful in costuming to aide in quick changes, but should be used in areas where there is no strain on the closure.

Divide a swatch into two equal size pieces, approximately 5 ½" by 8 ¼". Fold each piece in half and press, creating two double thick rectangles, approximately 5 ½" by 4". Work with the left folded edge overlapping the right folded edge. Imagine these are the two sides of a skirt waistband. Use two sets of snaps and sew with doubled contrasting thread. Sew the **female** half of the snap to the front of the right piece of fabric, ½" from the top and ½" from the left (folded and pressed) edge. Take a small stitch at the snap placement mark and bring the needle up through one of the snap holes; the thread knot now lies between the snap and the fabric. Place the needle in the fabric just outside the snap, take a stitch, and bring the needle back up through the hole. Repeat this until you have three-four stitches securing this first hole. To move to the next hole, insert the needle as if you are taking another stitch, but pass the needle through the layers of fabric to the next hole and bring the needle up through it. Secure this hole with three-four stitches. Make sure at least one of your stitches goes through all layers of fabric when sewing the female snap. When all four holes have been sewn, take a tiny final stitch and knot off as close to the snap as possible.

To mark the placement of the **male** portion of the snap, overlap the left piece of fabric so that the female snap is completely covered. Mark the center of the snap with a pin and place the male half on the mark. Attach this half of the snap in the same manner as the female, but be careful that you only allow one tiny stitch per hole to go through all layers of fabric. Since the male snap is on the outside or top layer of the garment, the stitches will show so take great care.

Repeat this process with the second snap placing it ¾" below the first snap. Make sure the snaps are equally spaced from the edge of the fabric.

Male Snap



Female Snap

Hooks & Bars/Eyes—Swatches #9-10

Hooks are helpful fasteners to use in areas of high stress on the body. A hook fastens to a **BAR** when the fabric laps over the closure (think button or snap set-up). A hook fastens to an **EYE** when the fabric edges just meet or butt up to one another.

As with all fasteners, use a double threaded needle. Divide the swatch into four even pieces. Press under 1" on each long edge. Work with folded edges facing each other. Sew a hook $\frac{1}{4}$ " from the fold on the "underside" of the fold of one of the swatches. Use the same technique as the male snap, being careful that the stitches that go through all layers are tiny and neat. In addition to stitching around the holes of the hook, you will also secure the neck of the hook with a few discreet stitches; this will keep the hook from lifting off the fabric. Knot your thread off. Align the hook swatch with another swatch. Line up a bar with the hook for placement. Stitch the bar about $\frac{3}{4}$ " from the folded edge through both layers. The hook section will overlap the bar section. Label this swatch #26.



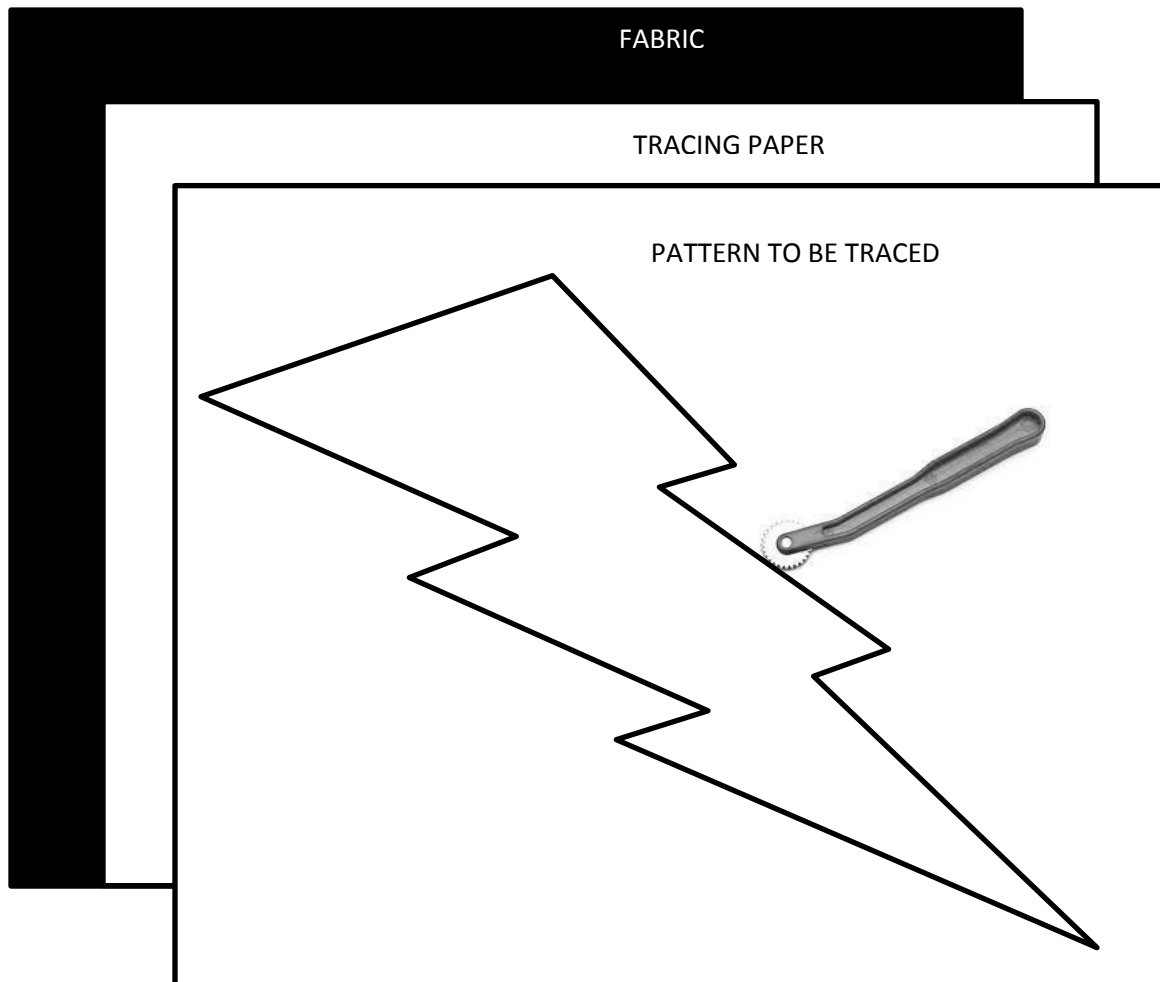
The folded edges of the next two swatches will butt up against each other. This means both sections will be visible; therefore placement is essential and both hook and eye must be sewn to the bottom layer only and then attached to the top layer with only one tiny stitch per hole and neck. Sew another hook on the third swatch, positioning the hook so it is even with the edge of the fold. Opposite this hook, sew an eye on the final swatch. Keep this eye at the edge of the fold. The edges of the fabric should butt when the hook is fastened to the eye. Label this swatch #27.

Transferring Patterns to Fabric

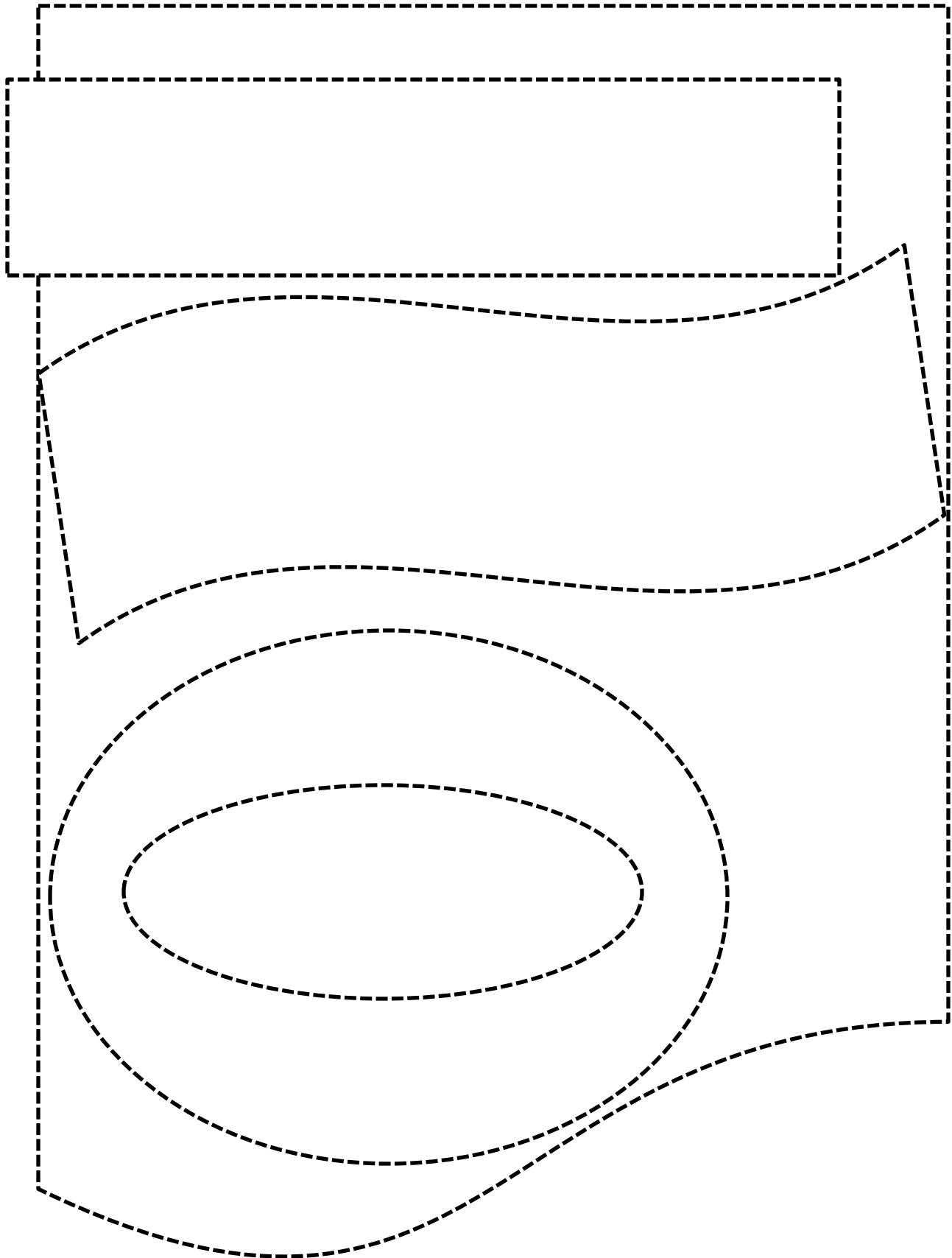
There is a RIGHT SIDE (outside) and a WRONG SIDE (inside) to all fabrics. Sometimes a design will choose which side of the fabric is to show, regardless of the weave. When fabric is marked for sewing, it is marked on the wrong side or the side which will not be showing to the audience.

Tracing paper for fabric is like carbon paper; it has a marking side and a clean or non-marking side. Before transferring marks, choose a color of tracing paper close to that of the fabric. This is done so that you can see the markings accurately without having the color bleed through onto the right side of the fabric. However, do not pick a color that is so close to the fabric color that it cannot be seen. For the samples in your swatch book, use a color of great contrast so that you can clearly see the patterns.

For Swatch #2, place the waxy colored side of the tracing paper against the muslin. Place the pattern on top, face up. Holding the fabric with your free hand, run the tracing wheel along the pattern lines, pressing firmly. Make sure the pattern doesn't shift. Check to be sure the lines transfer completely and consistently, especially in the corners. Typically, these marked lines indicate where the stitching will occur. The lines must be clear, clean and accurate.



Tracing Control—Swatch #11



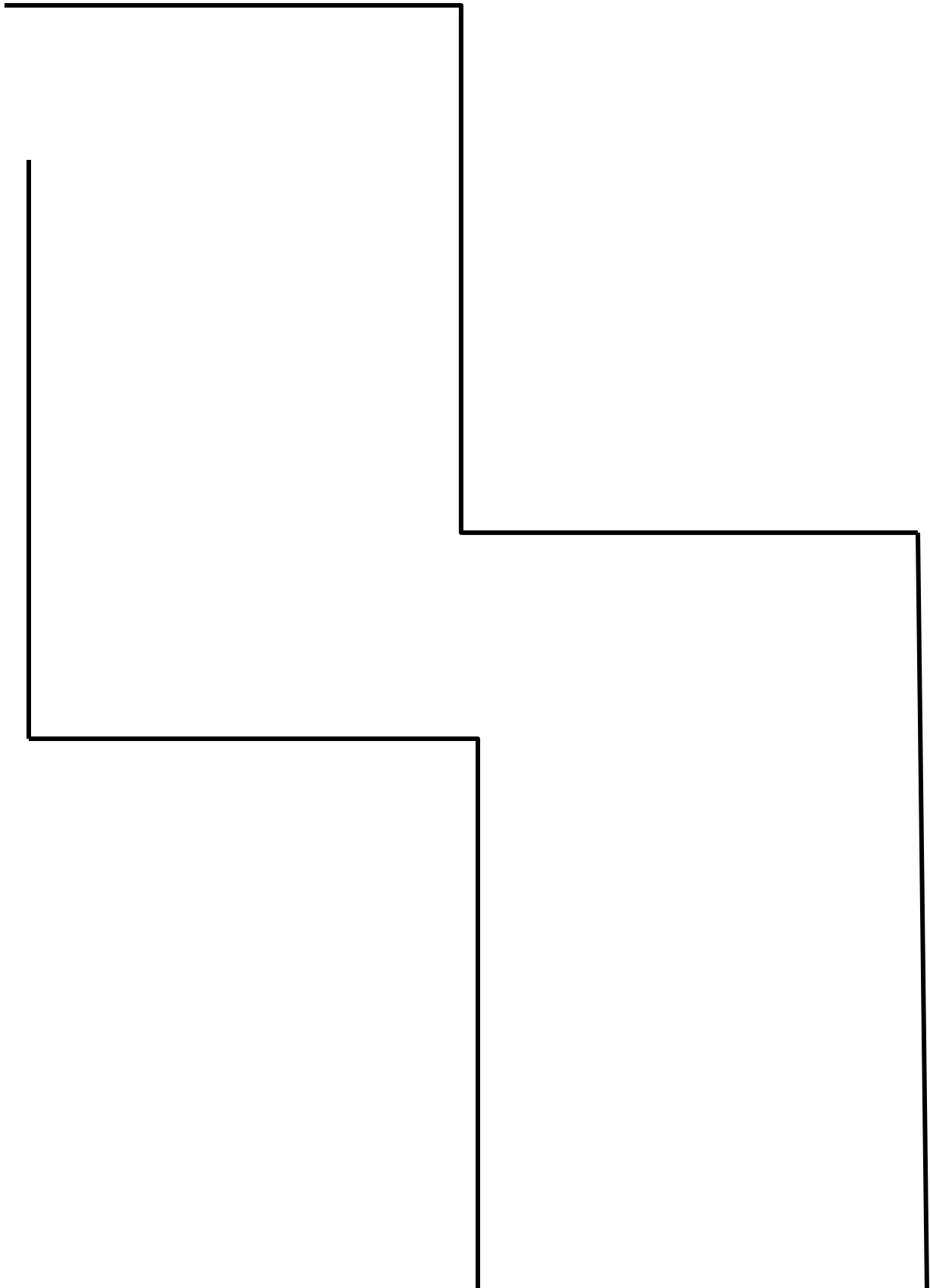
Sewing Machine Control—Stitching Patterns

Using the tracing method learned on swatch #11, prepare swatches #12 and #13 by transferring the patterns provided. Using a sewing machine, sew along the tracing line. You may begin anywhere you prefer. Sew directly over the transferred lines, remembering to **LOCK** the stitch with a reverse stitch at both the beginning and end of the stitching line. This is called a **BACKSTITCH**. If there is too much puckering, do not backstitch at the end. The puckering can be slowly massaged out with your hands and then the threads can be tied together on the wrong side of the fabric. This will make a neater swatch.

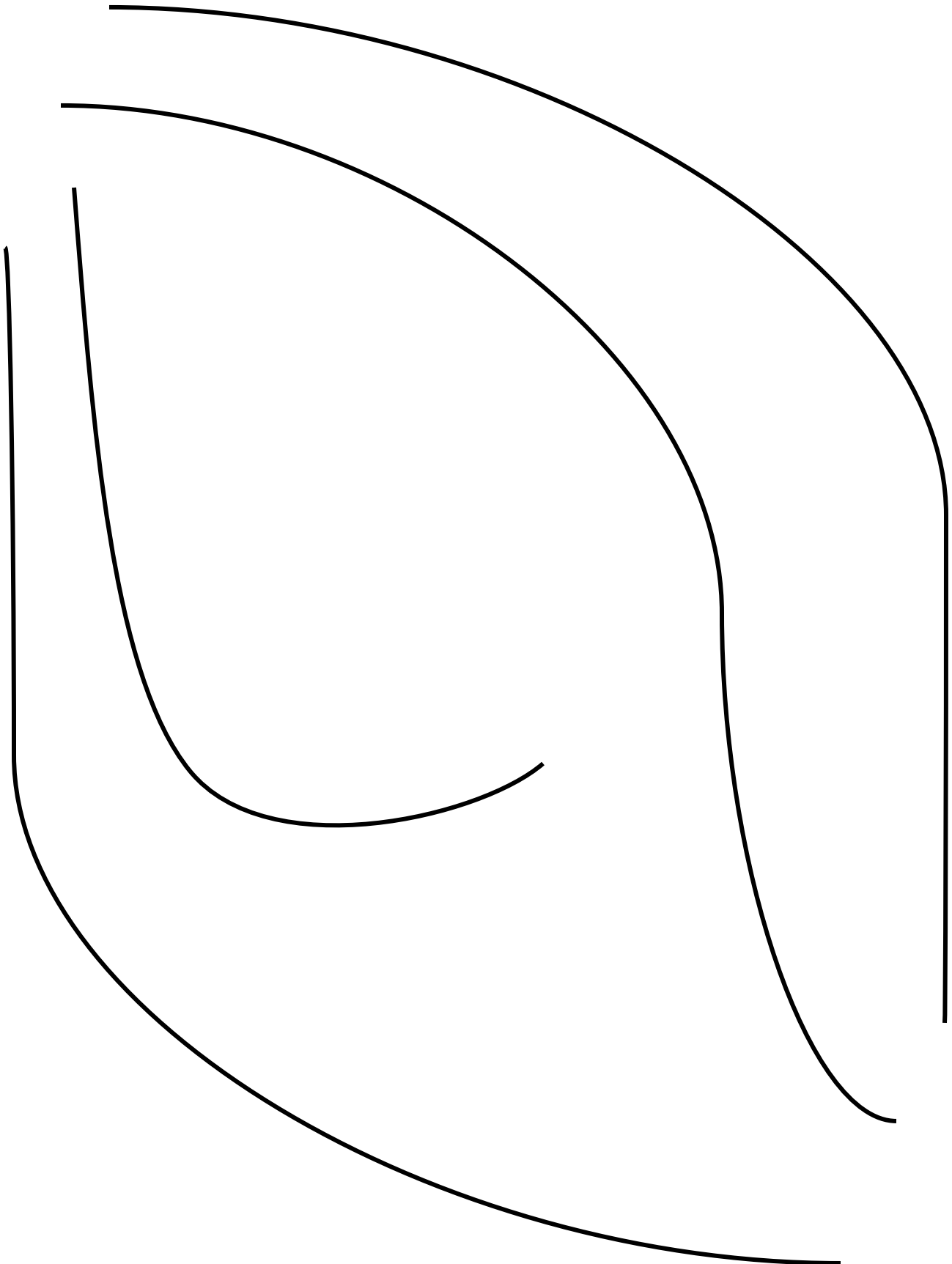
Sewing in a continuous line will make your stitching look cleaner and smoother. Before you begin each swatch visualize how you might be able to stitch the pattern line in as few starts and stops as possible. HINT: starting in the center of a pattern and working to the outside will cause less puckering.

Always BACKSTITCH whenever beginning or ending a seam, unless otherwise instructed. When sewing a corner or a seam with a sharp angle, stitch up to the corner and position the needle into the fabric at the corner, by hand using the flywheel. Always turn the flywheel towards you (counter clockwise). Lift the presser foot, and pivot the fabric using the needle as the pivot point. The needle should be exactly at the corner. Line up the new stitching line with the center of the presser foot, lower the presser foot and continue sewing. For the swatch project, use a thread color that contrasts with the muslin. Press each sample with an iron after stitching. **SPEED IS NOT IMPORTANT AT THIS TIME, BUT ACCURACY IS.** Speed comes with practice.

Tracing & Sewing Lines and Corners—Swatch #12



Tracing & Sewing Curves—Swatch #13



Straight, Unmarked Seams—Swatch #14

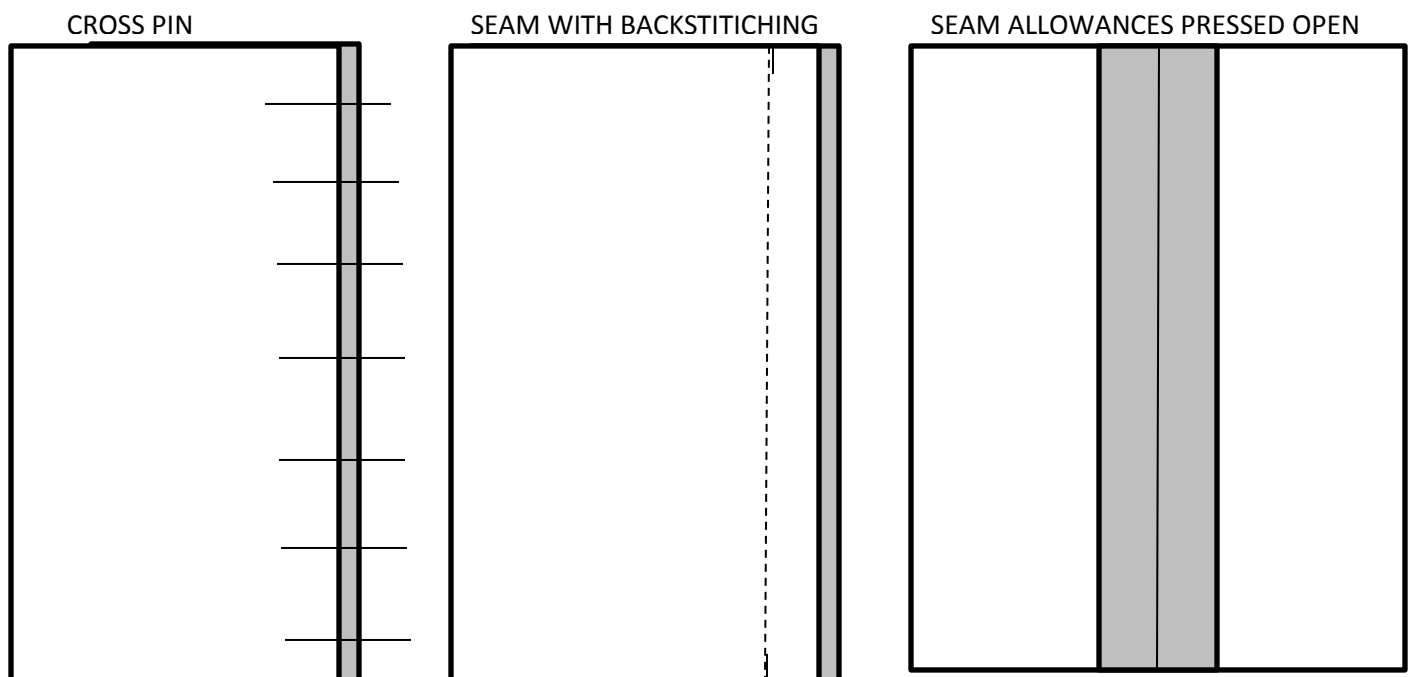
To sew a **SEAM** (a line of stitching that joins fabric pieces), place the right sides of the fabric together, facing each other. Sew on the wrong side, typically 5/8" from the edge. The fabric beyond the stitching line is called the **SEAM ALLOWANCE** and will be on the inside of the garment. Be sure to backstitch at the beginning and the end of the stitching line.

Divide a Swatch in half lengthwise (2 pieces 4"x11"). Place the two pieces of fabric together, aligning the edges, having the right sides of the fabric facing each other. Hold the fabric layers firmly in place and **CROSS PIN** (pin at right angles to the stitching line, every inch or so) the layers together. You can sew over pins placed at right angles to the stitching line; however you will get a better seam if you pull the pins out as the machine presser foot nears them.

Using approximately 10-12 stitches per inch (typically 2 ½ - 3 ½ setting on the stitch length dial), sew the two pieces together in a straight line 5/8" from the raw edge, backstitching at both ends. This is a 5/8-inch SEAM ALLOWANCE. (Always double check the required seam allowance, as it can vary by technique.) Remove pins (if not already done) and press the seam open with an iron.

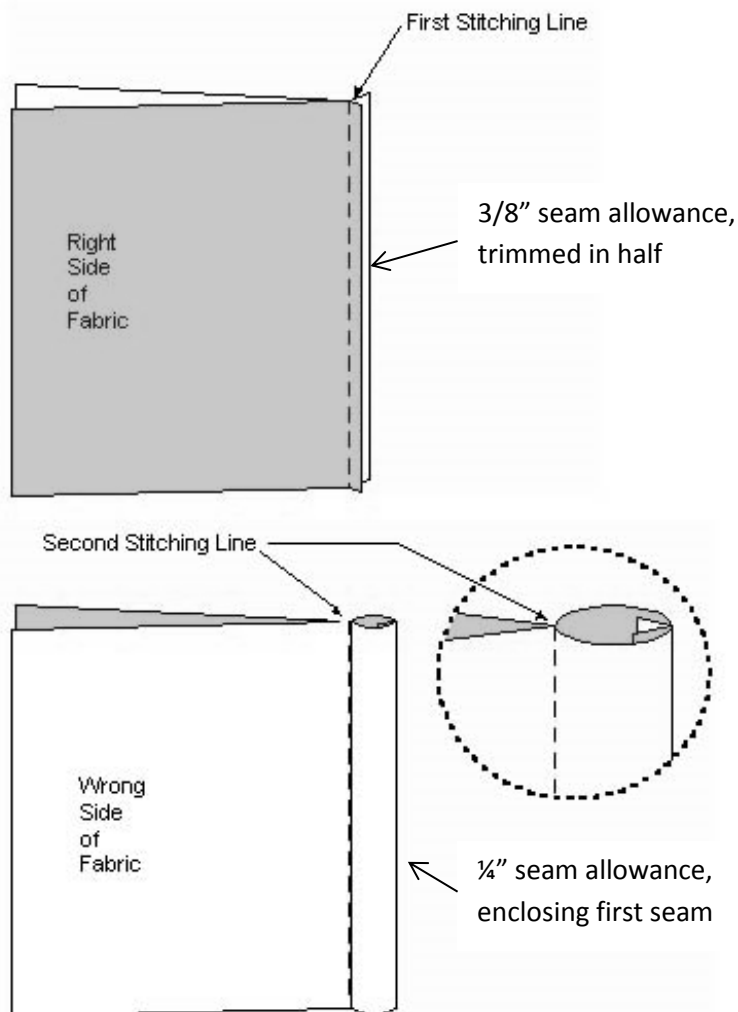
NOTE: Most sewing machines have markings on the needle plate that indicate how far the needle is from the edge of the fabric. If your machine doesn't indicate 5/8", you can make your own guide with a piece of masking tape. With the needle in the down position, measure from the right edge of the needle and place the tape at the desired measurement.

When sewing costumes, always use a stitch that can be ripped out fairly easily, yet is sturdy. This means a stitch that is not too tight (which are hard to remove) or too loose (which may rip out on stage). Remember: As you sew, so shall you rip!



French Seam—Swatch #15

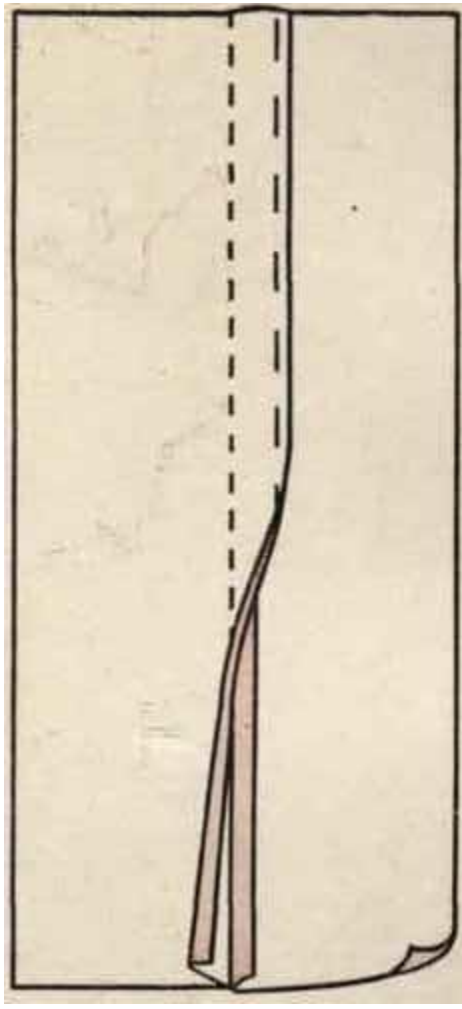
The French seam is stitched twice, once from the right side and once from the wrong side. It is an excellent choice for sheer (see-through) fabrics and looks best if the finished seam is $\frac{1}{4}$ " wide. Cut one swatch in half lengthwise. Place wrong sides of the fabrics together so that raw edges are even. Stitch the layers together using a $\frac{3}{8}$ " seam allowance (you will want to double check this measurement on the throat plate of your machine), backstitching briefly at each end. Trim this seam allowance to half its width. Press the seam open. Fold the fabric along the seam, so that right sides of the fabrics are now together and seam allowances are sandwiched inside. Make sure that the seam you just sewed is exactly on the fold. Now stitch the seam using a $\frac{1}{4}$ " seam allowance, backstitching at each end. Press the seam to one side.



Flat-felled Seam—Swatch #16

The flat-felled seam is both very sturdy and decorative at the same time. When constructing a garment, take care to create even seams, pressing pairs of seams in the same direction (for example, both shoulder seams pressed to the front of the garment).

Cut one swatch in half lengthwise and place wrong sides of the fabric together, having raw edges even. Pin and stitch a $\frac{5}{8}$ " seam allowance, backstitching at both ends. At this point, you will have a seam on the outside of your sample. Press the seam allowance open and then to one side. Trim the inner seam allowance to $\frac{1}{8}$ ". Press under the outer seam allowance $\frac{1}{4}$ " so that it encloses the smaller seam allowance and lies flat against the sample. Stitch the folded edge to the sample as pictured below, backstitching briefly at each end.



Straight, Marked Seams, Trimming & Grading—Swatches #17 & 18

When using commercial sewing patterns to make garments, the seam allowances are included in the pattern. The seam lines are, therefore, unmarked when you cut the pattern out. When using costume shop made patterns, the seam allowance is usually NOT included on the pattern pieces. The pattern is pinned on the fabric and drawn around, therefore, the seam lines are marked on the wrong side of the fabric.

Divide Swatch #17 in half lengthwise. Draw stitching lines on the wrong side of both halves, 5/8" from the lengthwise edge. These lines may be drawn with a pencil or traced, using tracing paper and a wheel. Pin the two pieces of fabric together with the right sides (unmarked) facing each other, making sure the seam lines match exactly. Pin on the lines, matching the lines as the pin goes through the layers and as you push it back out. Make sure that you are positioning the pins with the sharp ends pointing at the starting point. Stitch on the seam line, removing the pins as you sew. Backstitch at both ends. Repeat the process for Swatch #18.

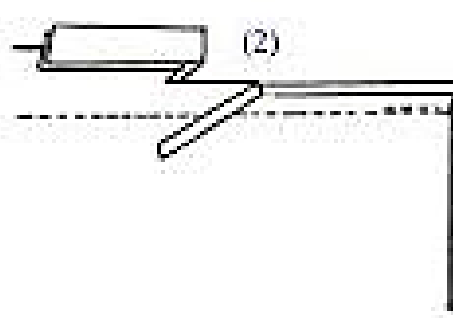
TRIMMING a seam helps remove excess bulk from the seam. To do this, trim the seam allowance to about 1/4" and press the seam allowances to one side. Trim the seam allowances of Swatch #17.

GRADING a seam is used whenever the fabrics making up the seam are heavy; grading allows seams to lie flat. To do this, trim each layer of seam allowance a different distance from the seam line. Press the seam allowances to one side, with the longer on top. Grade the seam allowances of Swatch #18.

Trimming a Seam



Grading a Seam



Curved Seams—Swatch #19

Clipping the seam allowance is necessary when you are constructing a curved seam. If the curve is concave, you will need to NOTCH the seam in order for it to turn right side out and lie flat. If the curve is convex, CLIPPING the seam allowance is enough. Typically, you will first trim the seam allowance to about 3/8", then clip or notch it to the seam allowance. Remember: cut to, but not through, the seam!

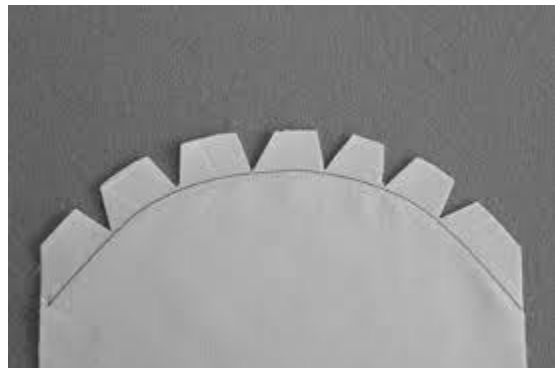
Trace both cutting lines onto Swatch #19, using the pattern on the following page. Divide the swatch lengthwise by cutting on the solid, curved lines. You should end up with two matching pieces and a scrap piece that resembles a vase or champagne flute. Put the two larger pieces together, right sides facing, aligning the edges exactly. Pin in place. Stitch 1" from the curved edge of the fabric, following the line of the curve, removing pins as you sew. Trim the seam allowance to 3/8" and NOTCH and/or CLIP the curves. Press the seam allowances to one side, working from each edge to the center. Turn the swatch right side out and press again; making sure the curve is flat and even.

NOTE: As a general rule of construction, press a flat seam on a flat surface and a curved seam over a curved surface, such as a TAILOR'S HAM. For stage costumes, clip curves only when necessary and never too close to the stitching line as this can make alterations impossible.

Clipping a Convex Curved Seam

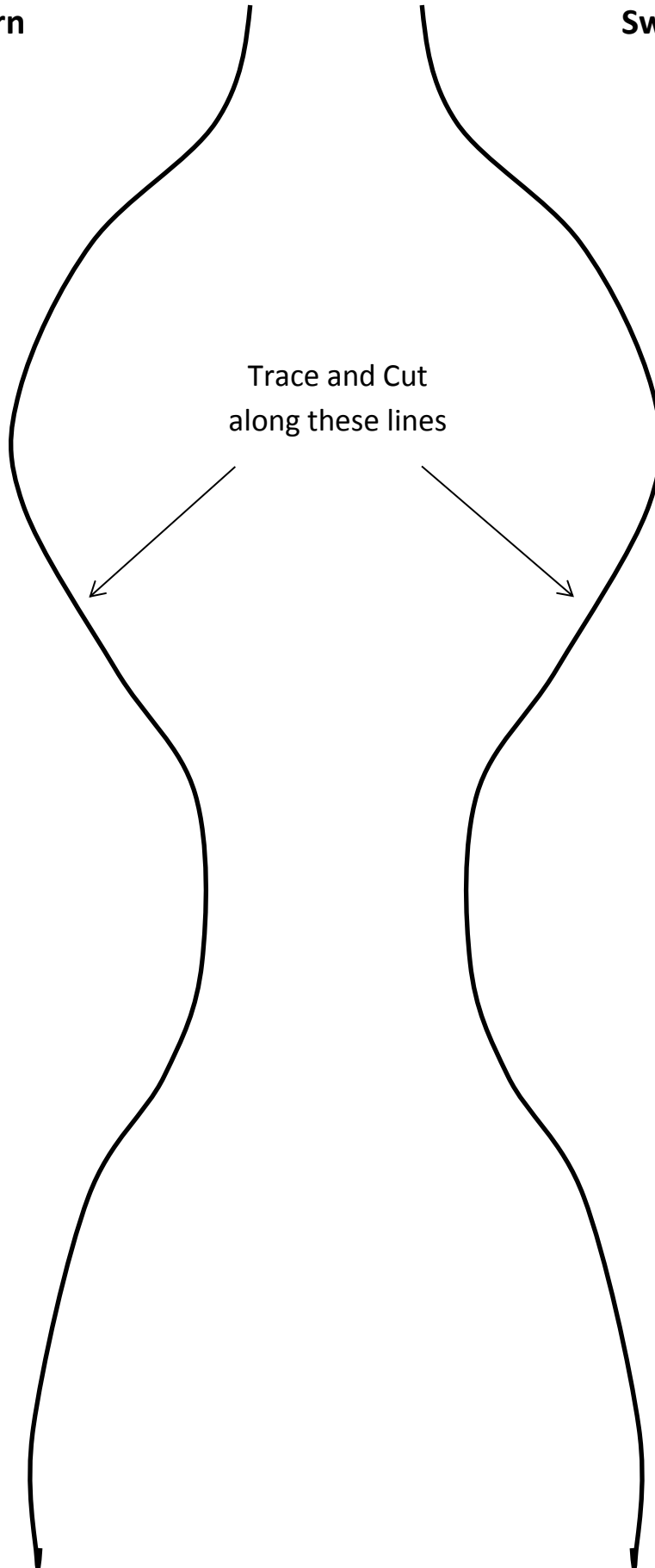


Notching a Concave Curved Seam



Curved Pattern

Swatch #19

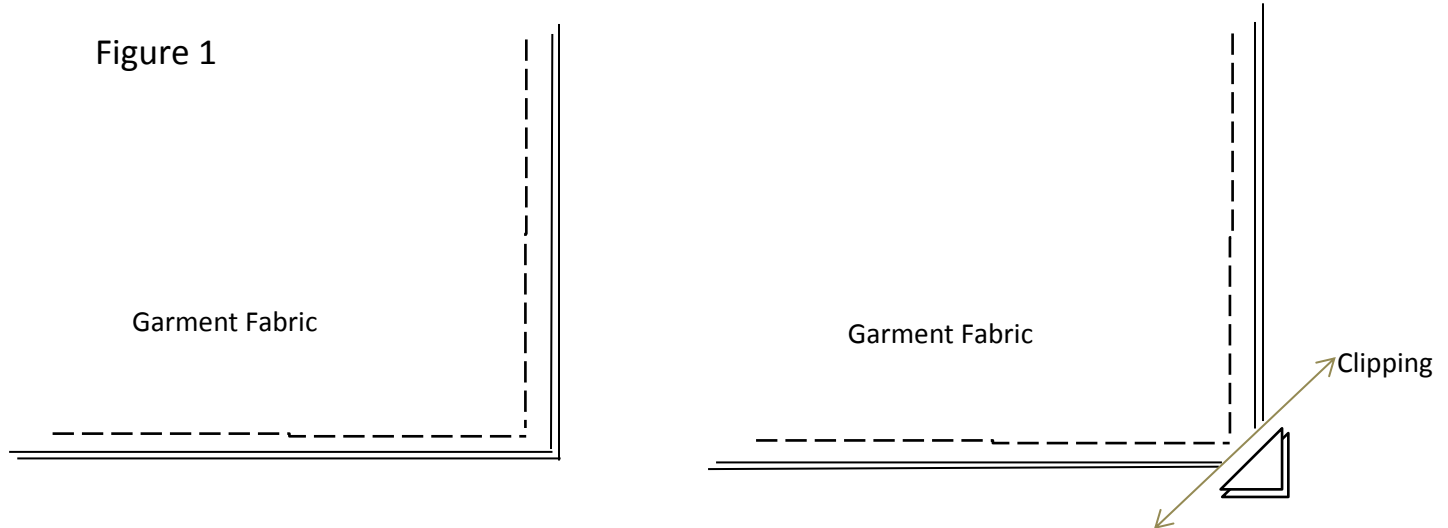


Clipping Outer and Inner Corners—Swatches #20 & 21

When constructing costumes, it is sometimes necessary to create corners or points. Making the best corner or point involves accurate stitching, clipping and trimming.

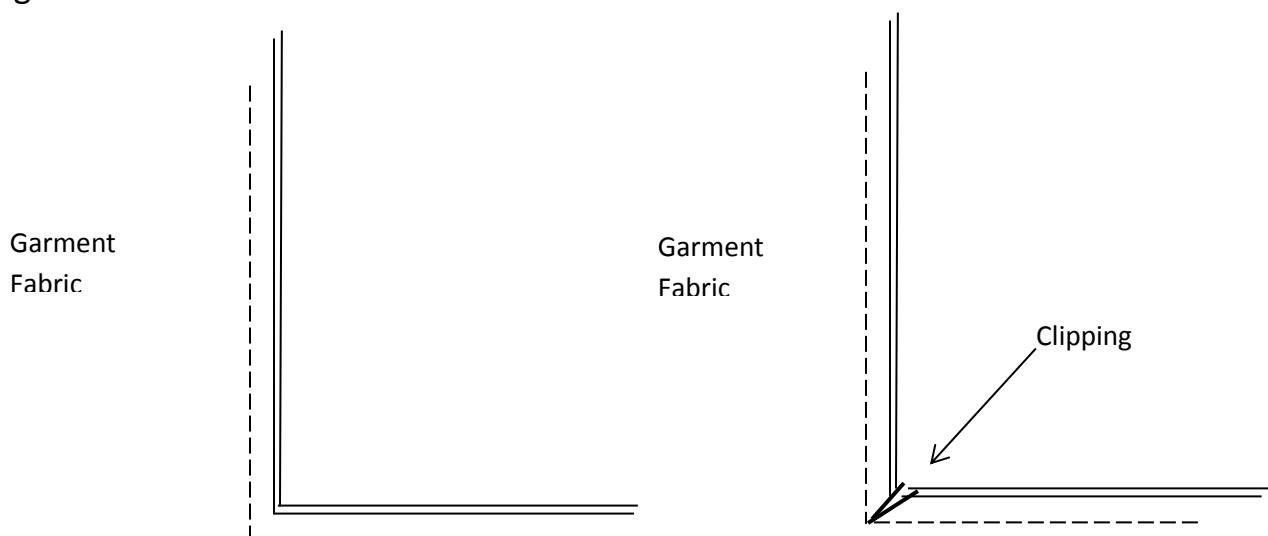
An outer corner gives the finished fabric seam the look of a box. A shirt collar is a good example of this type of corner. To remove the excess fabric from the inside of the garment, clip diagonally across the corner, being careful not to cut the seam stitching. See Figure 1.

Figure 1



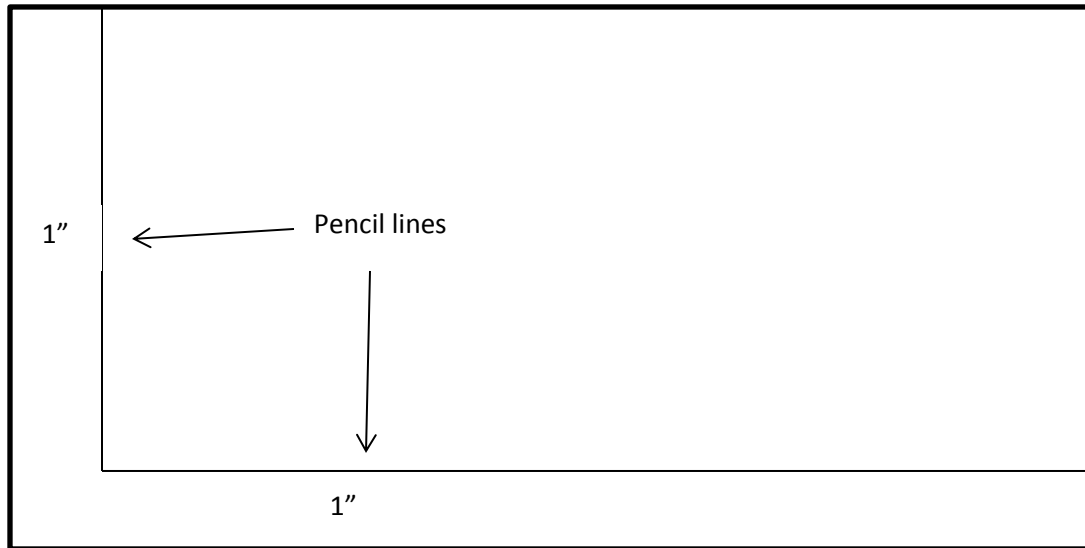
An inner corner creates an “L” shape on the finished garment. This is often seen on a square neckline on a dress. In this instance, it is necessary to clip straight into the corner of the seam, again without cutting the stitching line. See figure 2.

Figure 2



Swatch #20

Divide a piece of fabric into two equal size pieces approximately 5 ½" by 8". On the wrong side of one of the pieces draw a line with pencil, 1" from the left edge and another 1" from the bottom.



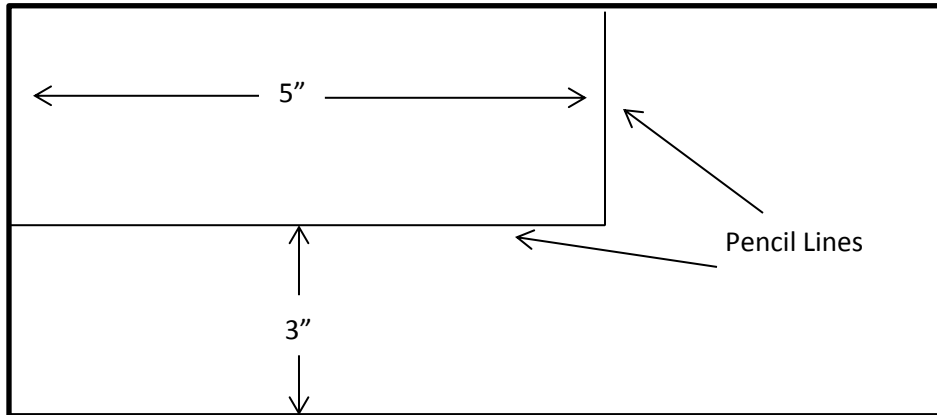
With right sides together, match the edges of the two pieces of fabric and CROSS PIN them securely into place. Stitch along the pencil lines. Be sure to BACKSTITCH at the beginning and the end of stitching line.

Reminder: when sewing a corner or a seam with a sharp angle, stitch up to the corner and position the needle into the fabric at the corner, by hand, using the flywheel. Always turn the flywheel towards you (counter clockwise). Lift the presser foot and pivot the fabric using the needle as the pivot point. The needle should be exactly at the corner. Line up the new stitching line with the center of the presser foot, lower the presser foot and continue sewing.

Clip diagonally across the corner as shown in Figure 1 on the previous page. Turn seams to the inside and press with an iron.

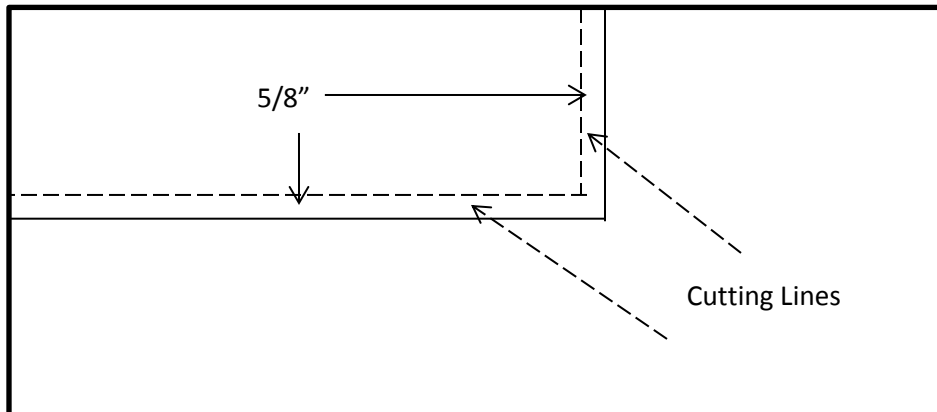
Swatch #21

Divide a piece of fabric into two equal size pieces approximately 5 ½ "by 8". On the wrong side of one of the pieces draw a line with pencil, 5" from the left edge and 3" from the bottom.



With right sides together, match the edges of the two pieces of fabric and CROSS PIN them securely into place. Stitch along the pencil lines. Be sure to BACKSTITCH at the beginning and the end of the stitching line.

Trim to a 5/8" seam from the stitching line.



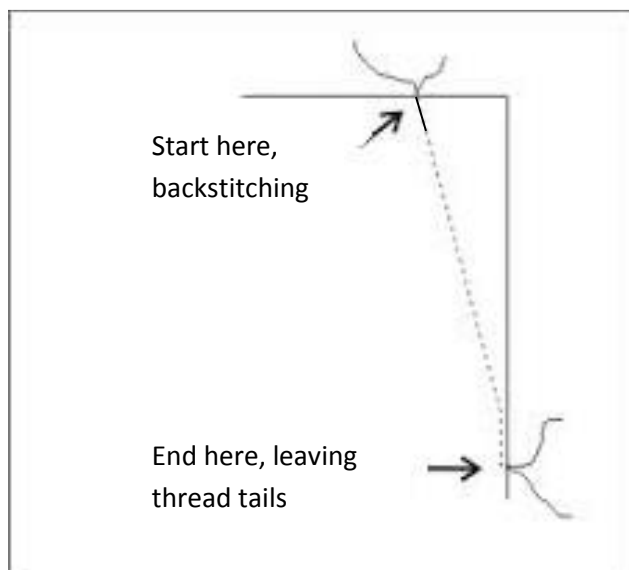
Clip into the point of the corner as shown in Figure 2 on page 15, taking care not to cut through the stitching line. Turn seams to the inside and press with an iron.

Open-Ended and Contour Darts--Swatches #22 & 23

Molding fabric to curves of the body, or to any rounded shape, requires the removal of fabric wherever the body (or the shape) narrows. A **DART** is used to make a flat piece of fabric curve around a three-dimensional shape. To create a DART, excess fabric is moved to the inside of the garment, like a seam allowance. DARTS are always marked on the pattern and transferred to the fabric.

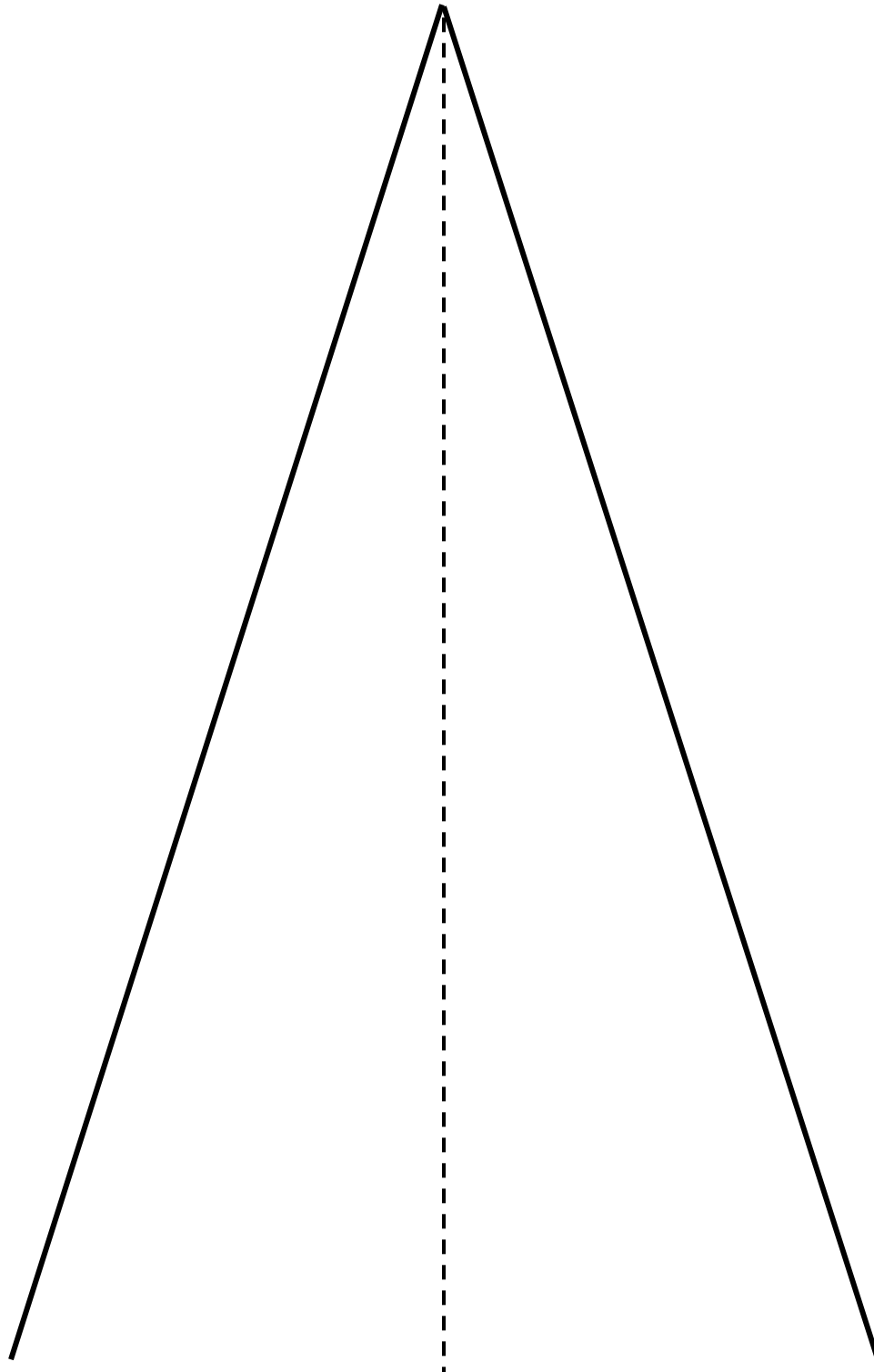
SWATCH #22

Trace the dart on a piece of fabric, using the pattern provided. Fold the dart in half, right sides together matching the stitching lines and pin. Pin on the seam lines, making sure that the seams match exactly, and making sure that the points of the pins are aimed at the wide end of the dart. When constructing an open DART, you always begin stitching at the wide end. Backstitch at the beginning of the seam, and then stitch along the seam line. **DO NOT BACKSTITCH** at the point. Leave a long tail of threads at the point. Hand-tie the two threads in a double or triple knot to secure. Do not pull the knot too tightly. It should just rest at the point of the dart. Press the dart to one side with an iron. Turn the fabric and press again on the right side, making sure the dart lies flat.



Open-Ended Dart Pattern

Swatch #22



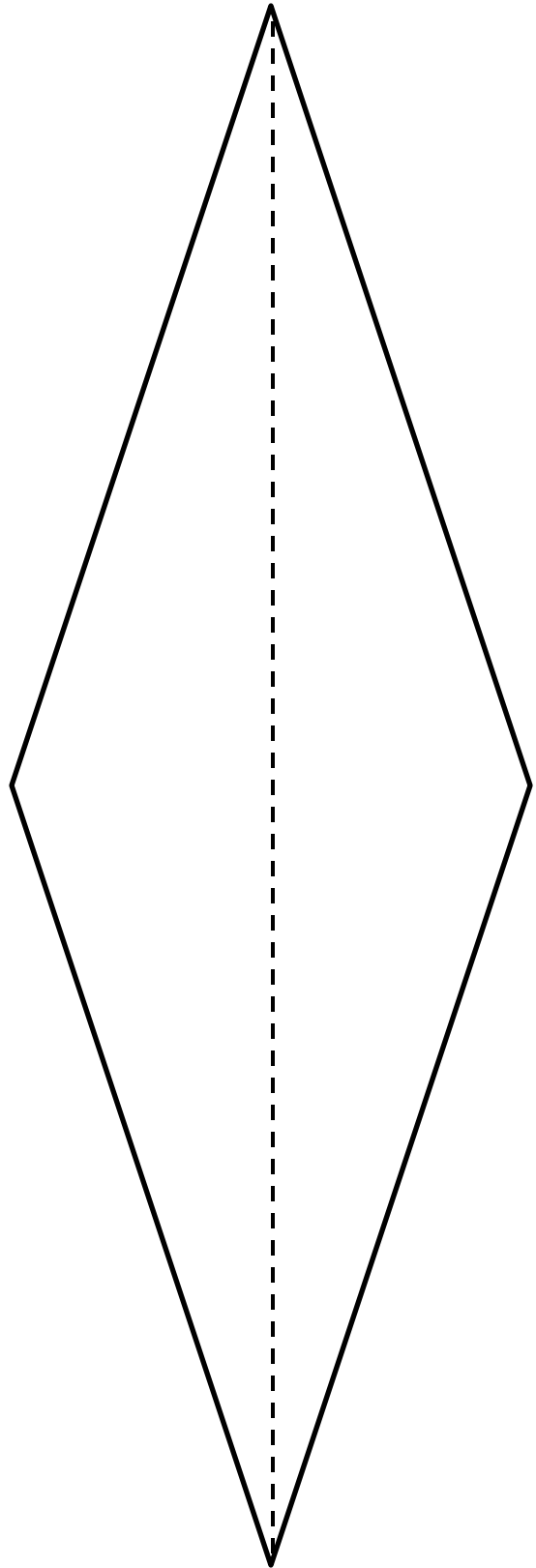
Place along edge of fabric

Contour Dart Pattern

Swatch #23

Using the pattern provided, trace the dart onto a piece of fabric. Fold dart in half, along center line. Pin one half of the dart, as you did the plain dart, and stitch from the center to one of the points, backstitching at the start. Leave thread tails at the point. Turn your sample around and pin the other half of the dart. Stitch in the same manner as the first half. Tie off the thread tails securely, with two or three hand knots. There is a bend at the center of a contour dart, making it tricky to press with an iron. If available, press over a tailor's ham.

Note: vertical darts are pressed toward the center front or center back of the garment piece; horizontal darts are pressed down.



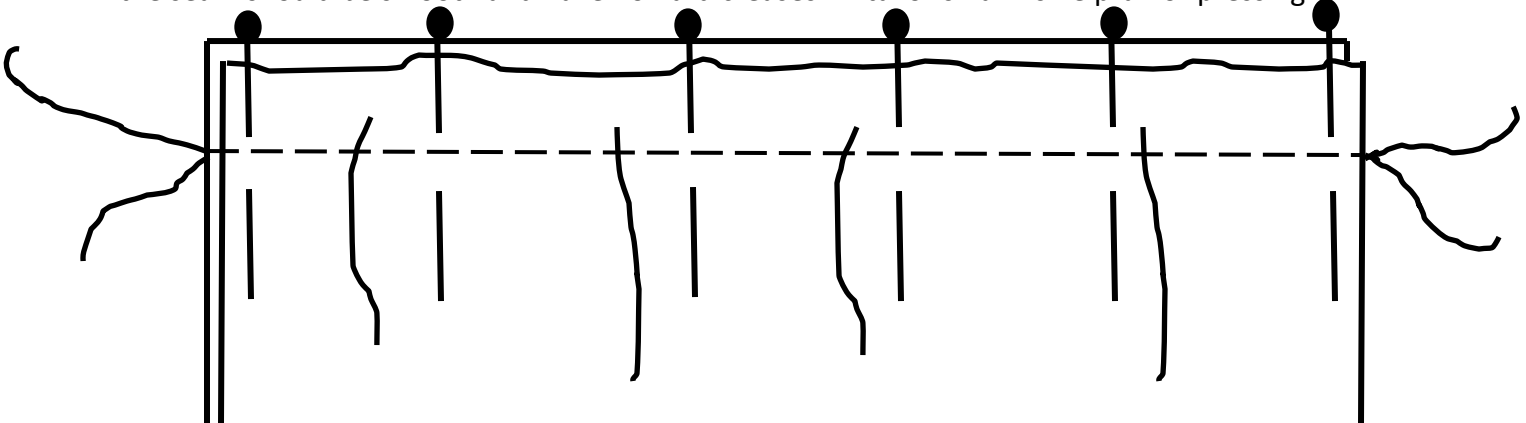
Easing Fabric—Swatch #24

Costumes need to fit the actor's body and allow for movement on stage. It is often necessary to EASE a bit of extra fabric into a garment at stress points. Ease stitching is used to help this extra fabric become inconspicuous. Fitted sleeves usually have ease stitching at the armhole and sometimes at the elbow.

Using the pattern provided on the next page, trace lines onto a piece of fabric including the NOTCHES or BALANCE MARKS. Divide the swatch in half by cutting on the solid line. One half will have notches farther apart than the other half. On this piece, sew a long machine stitch (BASTING STITCH) on the seam line, between the notches. DO NOT BACKSTITCH. Leave about a 3" thread tail on each end.

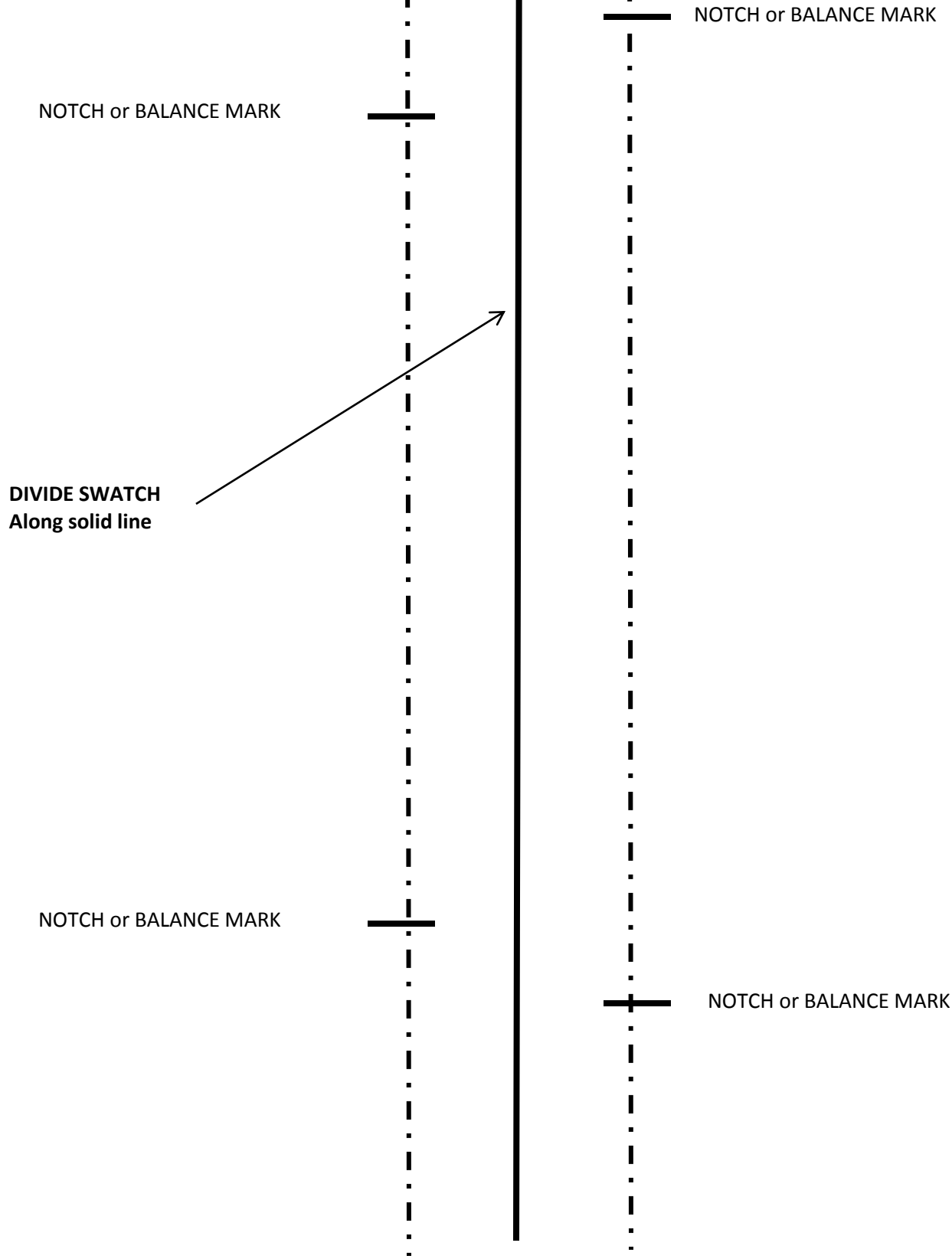
Pin the two pieces of fabric together, right sides together, matching the notches first. Hold the sample so that the piece with the ease stitching is facing you. Wrap one of the 3" thread tails, in a figure-eight, around the pin that is securing one notch (this could be the top or the bobbin thread). This procedure prevents the thread from slipping while you are easing. Pull the other end of the ease stitching, drawing up the fabric until it lies smoothly over the bottom layer of fabric. (Make sure you pull the same thread, top or bobbin, that you wrapped figure-eight, only you are pulling from the loose end) Once the two pieces of fabric are smoothly aligned, wrap the thread end you just pulled around the second pin, placed on the opposite notch. This will hold the easing until it has been stitched. Smooth out the fullness evenly until there are no puckers.

Pin on the seam line, making sure seam lines match exactly. Don't be afraid to over pin. Before stitching, be sure to reset the stitch length on the sewing machine to a normal length. Sew on top of the ease stitching from one end of the swatch to the other, backstitching at the beginning and end of the seam. If the ease stitching shows on the right side of the fabric, it should be removed. If it does not show, leave the ease stitching in. The goal is to NOT have it show. Press both seam allowances toward the non-eased half of the sample. The eased part of the seam should be smooth and have no hard creases. A tailor's ham is helpful for pressing.



Easing Pattern

Swatch #24



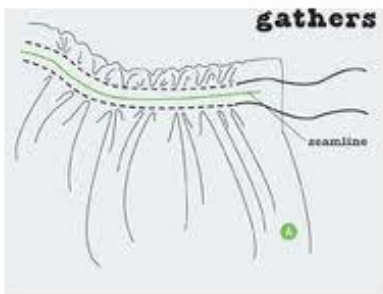
Gathering—Swatch #25

Seams with GATHERS occur when one or both sides of the seam have excess amounts of fabric that must fit in a specific amount of space. There are numerous ways to create gathers in fabric. Running a double row of basting stitches is commonly used for light weight fabrics. Zig-zagging over a heavy thread or dental floss and then securing one end while pulling on the other is a very simple and effective method, especially for heavier or bulkier fabrics. Some machines have a ruffle attachment or may be adjusted by tightening the tension button to automatically create a gathering stitch.

Trace the pattern provided onto your fabric swatch and divide the fabric on the solid line. On the fabric with the notches farther apart, sew two rows of GATHERING STITCHES or BASTING STITCHES. (This is the longest machine stitch possible.) Sew one row of stitches $\frac{1}{2}$ " away from the cut edge. DO NOT BACKSTITCH. Sew another row of stitches the width of the presser foot inside the first row of stitches. DO NOT BACKSTITCH. These rows of stitches should surround the seam line. Pin the two pieces of fabric together at the notches with the right sides together and the fabric with the gathering stitches facing you. Wrap one set of loose threads around one pin in a figure-8 to prevent it from slipping.

Pull the remaining threads (either top or bobbin threads) of both gathering rows simultaneously, drawing the fabric up into evenly spaces gathers. When the two layers of fabric are equal, firmly hold both layers of the seam allowance in one hand and tug the gathered layer of fabric down and away from the seam line. This helps to straighten out the gathers between the rows of stitching. Now pin the layers together to hold the fullness in place. Wrap the long thread tails around the pin at the second notch. Before sewing, make sure to reset the machine stitch length back to regular length. Sew the entire seam on the seam line with the gathers facing you. Backstitch at the beginning and end of the seam. There will be no gathers beyond the notches. Press both seam allowances away from the gathers.

NOTE: Even when dealing with lightweight fabrics, it is often necessary to stop and restart the gathering threads if you are working with a large amount of fabric. The added weight or bulk puts a lot of stress on the pull threads and can cause them to break or shred.



Gathering Pattern

Swatch #25

NOTCH or BALANCE MARK

NOTCH or BALANCE MARK

DIVIDE SWATCH
Along solid line

NOTCH or BALANCE MARK

NOTCH or BALANCE MARK

Binding an Edge—Swatch #26

Bias binding material can be used to finish seams on the inside of a garment or to add decorative edging to the outside of a garment. Cut one swatch in half lengthwise; set one half aside for use in the hand-sewing techniques. Cut bias binding tape (get this from Mrs. Sone) the same length as one long edge of your swatch fabric. Press the bias tape open. Lay the tape along the edge of your swatch, matching edges. Attach the bias tape using a $\frac{1}{4}$ " seam allowance. (Trimming the seam allowance, as shown below, is only necessary if you want a very narrow bit of binding to show.) Press the bias tape away from the fabric, covering the seam allowance. Wrap the bias tape around to the underside and press again. From the right side, stitch in the "ditch" of the first stitching, backstitching briefly at each end.



Overlocked/Serged Seam Finish—Swatch #27

Costumes must be durable because they undergo a great deal of wear and tear while in use. One way to increase durability in costume garments is to build them with multiple layers of fabric; this is especially suited to garments that fit close to the body. Another way to strengthen costume construction is to use an overlock/serging machine to finish the edges of all the seam allowances. This seam finish prevents the seam allowance from fraying and weakening.

Using a single swatch, serge around all four sides with the machine, as demonstrated by Mrs. Sone.



Zipper—Swatch #28

Zippers create a secure closing on areas of a garment that allow a person to put on and take off the piece of clothing. Although there are several different types of zippers and application methods, this simple process works well for most costuming needs.

Divide the final swatch lengthwise into two equal pieces. With right sides together, pin the pieces as if you were preparing to sew a seam. Lay the zipper along the edge of the swatch with the fabric tabs at the top of the zipper even with the top edge of the swatch. Place a mark on the wrong side of the fabric where the teeth of the zipper stop at the bottom. Using a basting (extra-long) stitch length and a 5/8" seam allowance, sew from the top of the swatch down to the mark. At the mark, change the stitch length to a regular length and backstitch for two or three stitches then finish the seam, where you backstitch as well.

Press the seam open. Lay the zipper face down (the side with the zipper pull) on the seam, centered over the stitching line. The zipper stop should match up with your backstitching at the mark you drew. Cross pin the zipper into place. Using a running stitch, hand sew the zipper into the pinned position. Remove the pins. Using a regular stitch length, machine sew the zipper into place from the outside of the garment. You will likely need a zipper foot on the sewing machine. Begin at the top on one side of the zipper and sew down to the zipper stop, backstitch three stitches, pivot the corner, stitch across the base of the zipper, pivot the corner again, backstitch and sew up the other side of the zipper to the top. Be sure to backstitch at the beginning and end of the stitching line as well as at the square corners.

Remove the hand-stitches. Using a seam ripper, carefully open up the seam from the bottom of the zipper to the top of the swatch. Pick out and remove all loose threads.

See the image of a zipper as viewed from the outside of a garment on the next page.



Portion of a centered zipper;
please see Mrs. Sone's step
by step example for details.

Congratulations!! You have completed all the samples required for your Swatch Book. Keep Calm and Sew On!!