

WAISTLINE TREATMENTS

There are a number of waistline treatments and sewing techniques. Among these are waistbands, facings, casings, and stays.

Types of Waistline Treatments:

- **Waistband** – cut with the grain. Most patterns suggest using the lengthwise grain since it has less stretch. However, with today's fusible interfacing and waistline stabilizers, this is not necessary. In addition, some fabrics have a design, one-way effect, or nap that requires the waistband be cut in the same direction as the garment.
- **Faced** – shaped to fit the waist and slightly below.
- **Decorative Elastic** – may be used as a finish in place of a waistband or casing.
- **Casing** – an extension of the garment or a separate piece to enclose elastic or a drawstring.

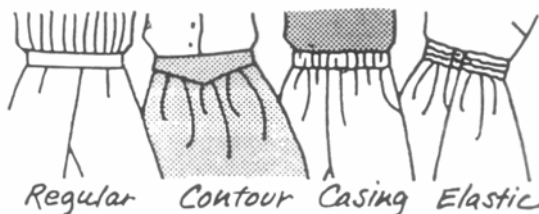


Figure 1

WAISTBANDS

Waistbands play an important part in the fit and the appearance of skirts and pants. They should smoothly encircle your waist with a comfortable, not snug fit.

Standards

A well-constructed waistband should:

- be smooth, flat, and free from bulk and wrinkles.
- be even or consistent in width according to garment style.
- be on grain and reinforced or interfaced to maintain shape.
- have garment eased slightly onto the waistband.
- have square corners at each end of the waistband.
- be securely stitched with smooth, even stitching.
- have an underlap under the waistband and an extension beyond the placket unless the pattern dictates differently. The overlap is even with placket unless the pattern dictates differently.
- have appropriate fasteners that are properly positioned and secured in place.

Fitting

A waistband should be cut to fit the body. Begin by deciding how snug you want the waistline to be by taking a waist measurement over a blouse. Pull the tape secure, but keep it comfortable.

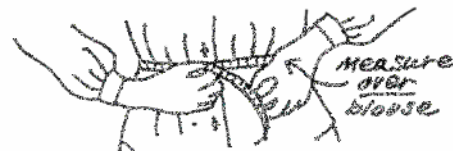


Figure 2

Compare this measurement to the pattern. Make any needed adjustments to the pattern. Be sure to allow some ease--enough to easily slip your thumb under the waistband.

Consideration

Before the waistband is cut from the fabric, answer these questions:

- What finished width do I want the waistband to be? This will impact the garment's appearance and its comfort.
- What is my waist measurement? How much ease do I want or do I need for comfort?
- How much extension do I want on the underlap? This will depend on the type of fastener you plan to use.
- For this fabric and garment design which grain is best – lengthwise or crosswise?
- Do I need to match a plaid, stripe or design? If yes, where should the "center" be? Will I need to add side seams to the waistband in order to match both back and front? Would it look better to cut a bias waistband binding?
- Do I need to lay the waistband pattern in the same direction as the other pattern pieces because of nap or one-way design?

Determining Length & Width

Length - the waistband length is a simple equation:

Waist measurement + ease (for comfort in sitting as well as standing) + underlap extension (at least 1 inch) + seam allowances (one on each end).

Width - *waistband width* is determined by a number of factors:

1. personal preference (comfort, body structure, etc.);
2. the method and type of interfacing or stabilizer to be used; and,

3. the fabric (thickness, comfort next to the body, amount, method of finishing).

Generally speaking, the waistband width is: twice the desired width (front and back side) + two seam allowances.

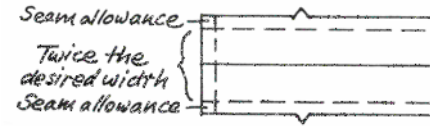


Figure 3

However, there are other factors to be considered such as fabric bulk, the amount of fabric you have, and how comfortable the fabric is next to the skin. Sometimes it is desirable to have the fashion fabric predominately on the right side of the fabric. In other instances, bulk will predetermine how the back of the waistband should be finished.

Consider the alternatives:

- A. When fabric is heavy or thick, it adds bulk to the waistline area when the back side of the waistband is finished by turning the seam allowance under. An alternative is to position the waistband on a selvage (See **CT-MMB.187, Waistbands on the Selvage**), or use an overlock stitch to finish the edge, or bind the back side/edge.

Formula:

Waistband width = twice the desired waistband width + one seam allowance + 1/8 inch.

- B. Grosgrain ribbon or other material can be used as the backside of the waistband when there is a shortage of fabric or when bulk or comfort is an issue.

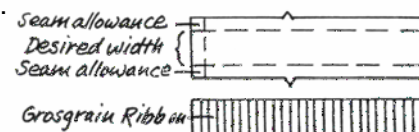


Figure 4

INTERFACING

Interfacing is used in fitted and contoured/faced waistbands to help maintain their shape. Depending on the fabric and the look to be achieved and the fabric, use one of the following:

- fusible interfacing;
- non-woven or woven interfacing;
- pre-cut interfacing or stiffening;
- grosgrain ribbon;
- self-fabric;
- commercial waistband material; or
- belting.

Remember to investigate the need to pre-shrink the interfacing material before using it.

Applying Interfacing or Stabilizer

Listed above are several types of interfacing or stabilizers that can be used to help the waistband maintain its shape and size.

Follow these guidelines for applying:

- Fusible interfacing – use woven, non-woven, or pre-cut. It is usually used on both the front and back of the waistband.

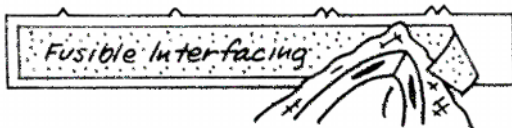


Figure 5

- Non-woven interfacing – machine baste or hand stitch at or along the top fold or right below the fold on the back side to hold in place.
- Grosgrain ribbon – (in the desired waistband width) can be used as the backside of the waistband. Interface front side of waistband before proceeding. A lapped seam is used to attach it to the fabric. Grosgrain ribbon must be pre-shrunk. (Figure 6)

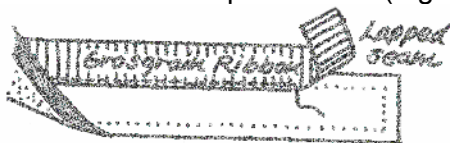


Figure 6

- Self-fabric and additional machine stitching – may be used when sewing with a firmly woven fabric. The back side of the waistband is machine stitched multiple times close together. (Figure 7)

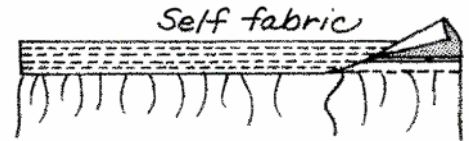


Figure 7

- Commercial waistband material comes in various weights and stiffness. Follow the package or recommended directions for how to apply. Generally, it is stitched to the facing side of the waistband after the waistband has been applied to the garment, but before the back (facing) is secured.
- Belting – is stitched to the back of the waistband close to the top to hold it in place inside.

ATTACHING TO GARMENT

Fitted Waistband

As you apply the waistband to the garment remember:

- The garment is usually eased ($\frac{1}{2}$ to 1 inch) to the waistband.

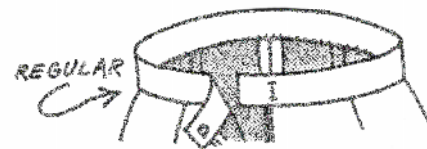


Figure 8

- The overlap (top side) is flush with the placket or edge of garment. (Figure 8)
- The underlap (the underside) or extension should be at least 1 inch.
- All garment seams should be finished and pressed before applying the waistband.

STEPS FOR APPLYING A FITTED WAISTBAND:

1. Determine the center front, center back, and sides of the garment and the waistband. The average female figure's waistline measurement is 1 inch larger in the front than in the back. Mark these divisions with a pin. (Figure 9)

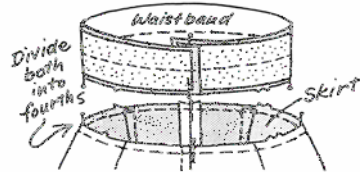


Figure 9

2. Match the waistband to the garment (right side to right side) at these four points.
3. Pin the waistband to the garment between these points, making sure the seams and darts are turned in the correct position/direction. (Figure 10)

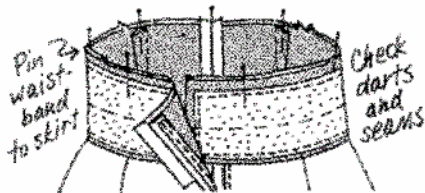


Figure 10

4. Distribute ease or gathers. There should be no tucks. Be sure the placket is the same length on both sides AND that the waistband seam is at the top edge and next to the beginning of the zipper teeth.
5. Machine baste on the seamline.
6. Try the garment on to check the fit. If it is too tight or too loose, make the needed adjustments.
7. Permanently stitch the waistband to the garment by stitching over the basting. [If is very ravelly, stitch again slightly inside the first row of stitching.]
8. Grade the seam (enclosed seam) to reduce the bulk. The longest graded seam should be to the outside of the garment.

9. Finish the ends of the waistband by folding them with right sides together. On the overlap, align so that the seam is a continuation of the edge of the placket. (Figure 11)

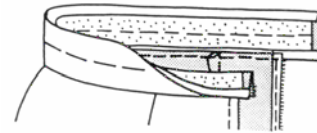


Figure 11

10. Fold, right sides together and seam the underlap/extension side. Grade both of the seams and trim the ends to reduce bulk.
11. Turn the waistband and secure the back side to the garment. (Figure 12)
 - If finishing the edge by hand, pin the edge to just cover the machine stitching. Slip stitch (if there is a fold) or blind stitch in place. Stitches should not show on the right side of the garment.
 - If you are finishing by machine stitching either *stitching-in-the-ditch* or *top-stitching*, pin on the front side of the waistband at the seamline. Stitch in place. Hide thread ends.

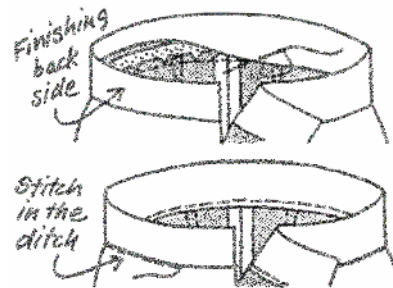


Figure 12

FACED

- **Contoured** waistline treatment has seams at the top of the band (The enclosed seam is graded to reduce bulk).
- **Faced** waistline treatment application is handled like a neckline facing. (The enclosed seam is graded to reduce bulk.)

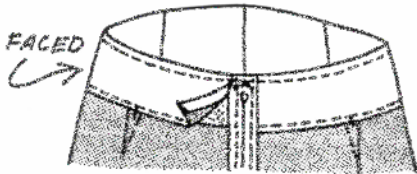


Figure 13

WAISTLINE STAY

Waistlines in some skirts and in dresses frequently need to be stabilized to prevent stretching. The appropriate treatment is a *waistline stay*. For specific information and directions for applying the waistline stay, refer to **CT-LMH.005, Waistline Stays**.

BIAS

This method uses a fabric bias binding to finish the seam and top edge of the waistline. The bias binding is matched and stitched to the wrong side of the garment. When stitched, fold the binding over to the front and topstitch in place. Or the binding can be folded to the back and handstitched or machine stitched (stitch-in-the-ditch or topstitch) in place. (Figure 14)

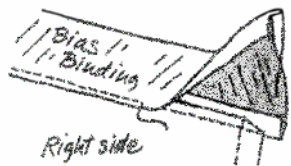


Figure 14

CASING

Waistlines are sometimes finished with elastic or drawstring. These treatments require a casing.

Elastic - Determining the amount of elastic for a waistline can be tricky. The length of the elastic depends on the type of elastic (amount/degree of elasticity) and ones personal preference (comfort degree). Elastic waistlines should be comfortable.

To determine the length of elastic needed:

- Many patterns and sewing guidelines recommend taking a snug waistline measurement and subtract 1 or more inches.
- To be safe, before cutting the elastic, thread it through the casing and pull until the desired tightness is achieved.
- Try the garment on and check for comfort.
- Allow at least a 1-inch overlap of the elastic ends.

All-in-one Casing - When the pattern has included the casing as an extension of the garment, follow the pattern directions and markings. Generally speaking, the casing measurement will be at least twice the width of the elastic plus $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{3}{8}$ inch to allow for the finish of the edge and the elastic thickness. (Figure 15)

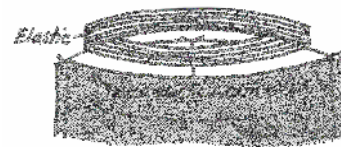


Figure 15

- Finish the raw edge by clean finishing, binding, or machine overcasting.
- Fold the casing down just slightly larger than elastic. Stitch along the edge, leaving an opening of approximately 1 to 2 inches to insert the elastic. (Figure 16)



Figure 16

- Insert the elastic. Adjust length for comfort. Overlap the elastic ends and hand or machine stitch to secure. (Figure 17)
- Stitch the opening closed.



Figure 17

- When the finished casing width measures more than $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{3}{8}$ inch larger than the elastic, a casing header is required. The "header" can be a decorative touch. However, it frequently becomes very functional by taking up excess casing. The elastic should fit snugly in the casing to prevent the elastic from turning/twisting.
- Try on the garment again and adjust the casing gathers. Carefully remove the garment. Machine (or hand) stitch in the "ditch" at all seams to prevent the elastic from rolling. If there are only one or two seams, identify a location, stitching through elastic and all layers of fabric.

Separate (elastic) - When the pattern calls for a separate casing, be sure to follow the pattern instructions carefully including purchasing the size elastic required. The casing should be slightly larger than the elastic.

- Match the wrong sides of the casing together. Match the casing to the garment.



Figure 18

- Stitch the casing to the garment, leaving an area open for the elastic.
- Insert the elastic. Overlap the ends of the elastic and stitch by hand or machine.
- Stitch the opening closed

DECORATIVE OR SPORT ELASTIC

Special decorative elastic may be used as the entire waistband. These are frequently one or more inches wide and come in various colors. Decorative elastic generally does not have the same elasticity as the elastic used in casings. Before making any cuts in the decorative elastic, take some measurements. Decide on waistband length and the desired snugness of the elastic. Stitch a seam in the decorative elastic to make a circle. Open the seam and stitch on each side.

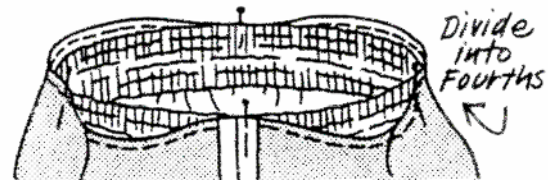


Figure 19

Finish garment waistline edge by turning under or overcasting. Divide the elastic and garment in fourths. Match these points and pin in place. (Figure 19) As you sew, stretch the elastic from point to point. All of your stitching may be top stitching as you secure the garment to the elastic. Generally the elastic is stitched at least one more time to firmly secure and reinforce the area.

Sport elastic is applied to the inside of the garment following the same procedure. Generally, elastic should be cut 2-3 inches shorter than the waist measurement.

DRAWSTRING

Construct the casing according to the directions given in the pattern. The major difference is that the drawstring must have an opening to the outside while the elastic stays encased or firmly attached (decorative) to the garment. The opening

can be inside the garment or on the outside. Drawstrings can be made from cording, fabric tubing, ribbon, or other materials.

The drawstring opening can be at a **seam allowance opening** in the casing center front:

- Measure and determine the amount of the seam allowance to leave open for the drawstring.
- Be sure seam allowances are pressed open. Secure the edges of the seam allowances firmly in place (catch stitch or machine stitching) on the inside of the casing.
- Reinforce the top and bottom of the opening with machine or hand stitching.
- Fold the casing down and stitch it in place all the way around.
- Thread the drawstring through the opening using a bodkin, diaper pin, or large straight pin.

When the drawstring casing does not have a seam allowance opening, an opening must be provided.

- Decide where the drawstring opening should be placed. One or two openings can be provided. When two openings are provided, they should be 1 inch or less apart.
- On the side of the casing the drawstring is to emerge (front/outside OR inside/wrong side), mark the location and the length. The length cannot be more than the width of that side of the casing.
- Reinforce the back side of the area with a small piece of fusible interfacing.
- Work a machine or hand buttonhole or apply a metal eyelet at the marking through the designated side of the casing and the interfacing.
- If a machine buttonhole, cut it open. Use a small amount of seam sealant along the lips to prevent raveling.
- Fold the casing down and stitch it in place all the way around.
- Insert the drawstring through one of the openings and out the other.

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