That Professional Look in Sewing: Clothing Leaflet 7

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A dress often is becoming in line, color, and fabric, and is well designed, yet not pleasing to you. Why? Because it does not have those qualities which give it snap and style. It lacks that smooth, clean-cut appearance - that professional look.

Today style is receiving more emphasis than construction. But suitable construction finishes are important and add to the style of the garment. Attention to many details is essential to good dressmaking and to satisfactory buying of ready madies. Some common sewing irregularities or construction defects that can be altered or overcome are:

- Uneven hem lines - poor width hem - tight stitches.
- Collar corners not shaped enough or pulled out of shape.
- Bulky facings - too tightly sewed or showing on the right side.
- Bulky corners - edge finishes.
- Buttonholes uneven in width and length - buttons tightly sewed.
- Irregular stitching - wavy seams.
- Blind stitching that shows.
- Darts tapered too abruptly - bulgy at end.
- Gathers or ease in sleeve not well distributed.
- Faulty pressing or lack of pressing.

GRAINLINE

Of prime importance is the correct handling of fabric in relation to grain. (Clothing Leaflet 2)

SEAMS

Seams are the structural lines in dress design and give it style or character. Basic seam lines lie and hang straight, thus keeping the garment in proper position. The shoulder, underarm and side seams of a dress appear continuous. The seams at the armhole make a smooth curve underneath the arm and over the top of the shoulder. They make a straight line in front and back of the arm except when special style features require otherwise.

A garment cannot have a smart finished appearance if seams are wavy or puckered. The first step is straight stitching in direction with the grain. A simple seam finish that requires little time and handling helps to retain the fresh new look.

The plain seam is a good choice for most dresses. It is quick, inconspicuous, and pliable. Edges may be stitched, pinked, overcast or turned and stitched. On thick bulky fabrics the seams are always pressed open, and most dress seams are pressed open.

Grading seams. Bulky seams that cannot be pressed open are graded or blended by trimming half or more the width of one side of the seam away. The side of the seam that lies next to the outside of the garment is left the wider. Common examples are the seams along the lapel and front edge of a tailored dress, coat or jacket.
Finishing enclosed seams. Enclosed seams as those on the inside of a double collar or those joining a facing to a garment need special treatment to prevent bulkiness. Whenever possible press such a seam open before turning it.

Bulky corners are avoided by cutting diagonally across each corner or point about 1/16" from the machine stitching. When stitching around points, making one stitch across the corner instead of keeping the stitching sharply pointed will help make a smoother, sharper corner finish.

Cutting small triangles from outward curving enclosed seams makes them lie flat. An inside facing (as a collar facing or lining) should be made slightly smaller than the garment piece itself. The facing is cut just like the collar, then before pinning them together about 1/8" is cut from the outer edge. As the two thicknesses are pinned together the outer collar is held a little full. When the collar is stitched, pressed, trimmed and turned the underside will be just far enough under the outer collar edge so it does not push out and show.

Seams and darts on the wrong side in the front of the garment are turned toward the center front, those in the back toward the center back. Horizontal darts are turned down on the wrong side.

Well made darts from the right side look like straight seams. The ends taper gradually to a smooth point because the last inch or so of stitching is almost parallel with the fold. The thread ends are securely fastened so the stitching does not rip.

**Hems**

Hems are of uniform width, smoothly finished and harmonious with the style of the skirt. The width and finish of the hem is determined by the style of the skirt and by the kind and weight of the fabric. The hem finish is not obvious and the stitches are loose enough that the hem does not have a "sewed" appearance.

**PRESSING**

Good pressing retains the original texture and finish of the fabric. It may be used to shrink or mold flat cloth to conform to body lines. In the well made garment seams and details are pressed as made. A final over-all pressing is necessary to give a professional look. There are no seams partially pressed, no shiny spots on double thickness, no flattened gathers.

**OTHER DETAILS**

Interfacings. Collars, dress front openings, belts, pockets and peplums that are designed to stay smooth and perky are kept that way by the use of interfacings. Some of the fabrics that may be used for this purpose are permanent finish organdy, nylon marquisette, sheer light-weight hair canvas, light-weight muslin, lawn, cambric. The choice depends on suitability to fabric in the garment. The material used for interfacing should be shrunk before using.

All stitching is done with a suitable stitch and thread. Balanced tension is a requirement in machine stitching. There is no bunchy stitching at seam ends. Stitching lines follow edges with precision.

Wastelines are not too high or low and are kept from stretching by the use of a stay tape stitched along the edge of the seam joining waist and skirt.