

1984

## EC84-410 How to Make Slipcovers

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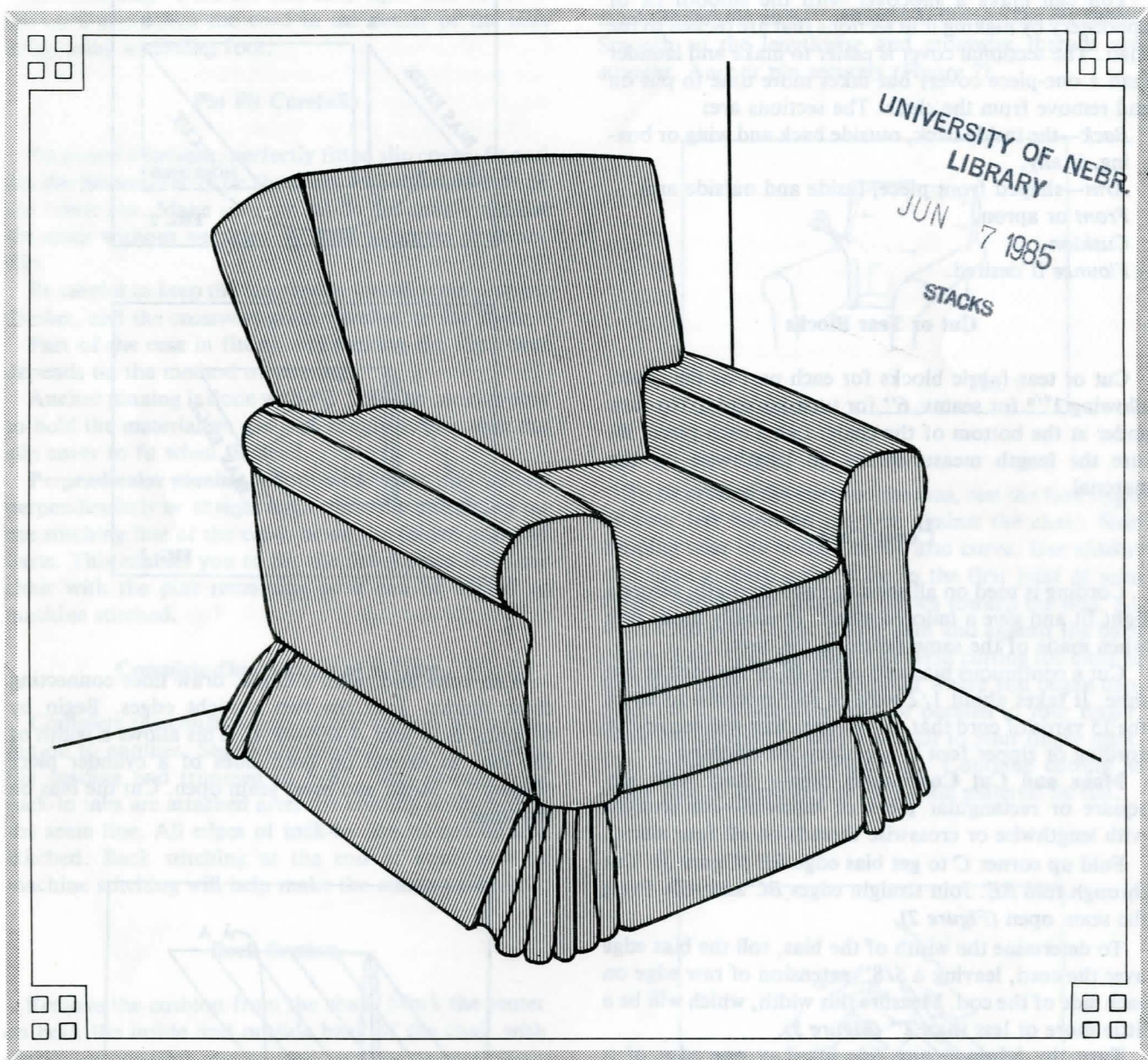
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University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension Service

EC84-410

(Replaces EC65-1125)

# How to Make SLIPCOVERS



Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Leo E. Lucas, Director of Cooperative Extension Service, University of Nebraska, Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources.



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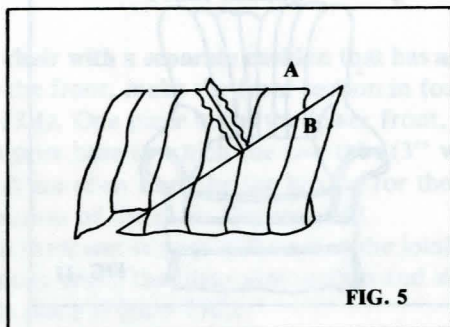


FIG. 5

**Sew Cording**—Fold the bias strip right side out over the cord and stitch the cord in the center of the bias strip, using a cording foot.

#### Pin Fit Carefully

To assure a smooth, perfectly fitted slip cover, fit and pin the pieces directly on the chair with the right side of the fabric out. Make sure the fabric lies snugly against the chair without wrinkles. A good slipcover does not slip.

Be careful to keep the lengthwise thread grain perpendicular, and the crosswise grain parallel, to the floor.

Part of the ease in fitting and making the slip cover depends on the method of pinning.

**Anchor pinning** is done with "T" pins or corsage pins to hold the material on grain as snugly as you wish the slip cover to fit when finished.

**Perpendicular pinning** is done with heavy pins jabbed perpendicularly or at right angles into the upholstery on the stitching line of the cord, or on the folded edges of darts. This enables you to lift the fitted piece from the chair with the pins remaining so it can be basted or machine stitched.

#### Complete One Section at a Time

Complete the construction of one section before going on to another. Seams are stitched securely close to the cording and trimmed to  $5/8$ ". Bias extension or tuck-in tabs are attached after the cording is stitched to the seam line. All edges of tuck-ins are turned up and stitched. Back stitching at the end of every row of machine stitching will help make the seams rip-proof.

#### Back Section

Remove the cushion from the chair. Mark the center on both the inside and outside back of the chair with chalk.

**Fit Inside Back.** Fold the rectangle of fabric for the inside back piece lengthwise to locate the center. Cut a notch at the top and bottom to mark the center (Figure 6).

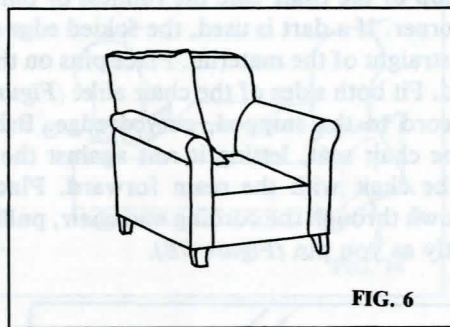


FIG. 6

Place the piece on the chair, right side out with center marks matching and 1" allowed at the top for the seam. Smooth so the lengthwise and crosswise threads are straight. Anchor pin securely (Figure 7).

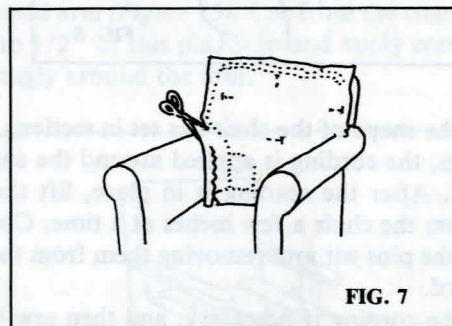


FIG. 7

**To fit around the curve** of the arm, rest the first finger of your left hand on the arm against the chair. Start clipping near the middle of the arm curve. Use scissors that have a sharp point. Clip to the first joint of your finger. Move your finger 1" down toward the seat. Always keep your finger on the arm and against the back of the chair when clipping to prevent cutting too close to the chair body. Now at the point where you began clipping, cut 1" toward the seat, or parallel to your finger. Then cut another 1" perpendicular to your finger joint. This forms a 1" tab (Figure 8). Continue cutting as many tabs as necessary to make the material lie flat.

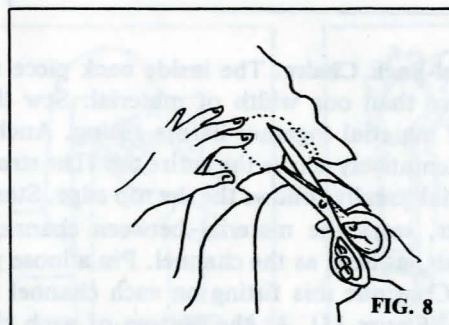


FIG. 8



At the top of the chair ease the fullness or pin a dart on each corner. If a dart is used, the folded edge should be on the straight of the material. Place pins on the edge of the fold. Fit both sides of the chair alike (Figure 9A).

Apply cord to the snapped, curved edge. Bring the cord to the chair seat, letting it rest against the inside back of the chair with the seam forward. Place pins straight down through the cording and chair, pulling the tabs slightly as you pin (Figure 9B).

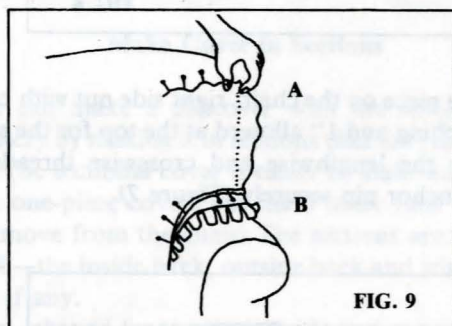


FIG. 9

When the shape of the chair has set in sections, wings or boxings, the cording is applied around the entire inside back. After the cording is in place, lift the piece gently from the chair a few inches at a time. Complete inserting the pins without removing them from the seam of the cord.

Baste the cording if necessary, and then sew by machine. Trim the seams to 5/8".

Make two bias tabs (3" x 8") and sew them to the curved sections. Make 2 rectangular tuck-in flanges (6" x 8"), hemmed on three sides. Sew these flanges to the corded seams starting at the lower edge of the bias pieces (Figure 10).

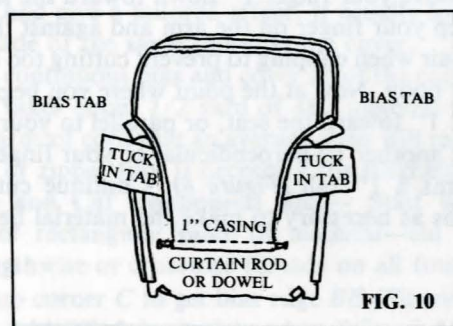


FIG. 10

**Channel-Back Chairs.** The inside back piece usually takes more than one width of material. Sew the two widths of material together before fitting. Anchor the material tentatively across the entire top. The straight of the material usually follows the the top edge. Starting at the center, work the material between channels with your hands, as deep as the channel. Pin a loose pleat at the top. Continue this fitting on each channel around the chair (Figure 11). At the bottom of each channel, sew a tuck if necessary to hold the channel in place.

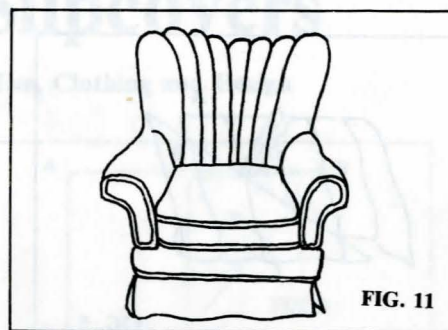


FIG. 11

Complete the inside back as for other chairs. If the tuck-in between the channels is shallow, pin out a dart from top to bottom along each channel and stitch; or tack material in each channel in place with a curved needle after the slipcover is finished.

**Add Boxing or Wing**—Return the inside back piece to the chair and pin in position. Tuck in the tabs to assure a smooth fit. Fit and add boxing, side back or wing sections.

Anchor cord at the bottom of the chair, extending 1". Bring the cord up to the top corner, across the top, and down to the bottom of the chair on the other side. Cut the cord. The cord should rest on the very edge of the chair back, and be pinned about 1" apart on the seam line. Gently lift the material with the pinned cord in place from the chair. Stitch and trim the seam.

**Apply Outside Back**—Return the inside back to the chair and pin in position. Anchor the outside back piece in place by pinning down the center of the chair.

Starting at the center top of the outside back piece, turn under the seam allowance. Bring the folded edge to the stitching line on the cord. Working from the center and keeping the material straight with the grain, fit the back to the cording. Pin closely (Figure 12).

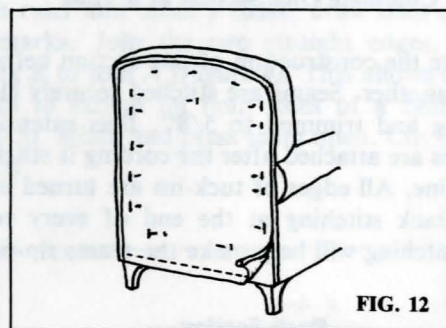


FIG. 12

If the chair is *irregular*, very curved, or has wings, sew the back and front together 2" below the shoulder curve, leaving the opening for putting the slipcover on from the shoulders, full length. The cord can then be sewed to the outside back, and when the slip cover is put on, it is blind-stitched or tacked from the shoulder to the base.



## Front Section

For a **chair with a separate cushion** that has arms that come to the front, make the front section in four pieces (Figure 13A). One piece is for the lower front, another for the upper base to which the two tabs (3" wide and 10" long) are sewn to make the boxing for the flexible spring section of the chair (Figure 13B).

Attach the lower section with cord at the joining. This part extends under the front arm section and should be tacked in place (Figure 13C).

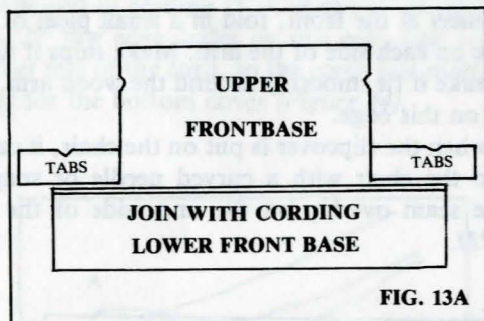


FIG. 13A

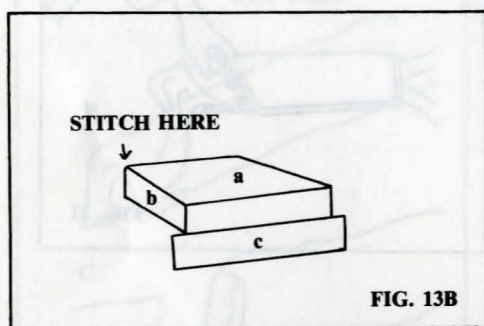


FIG. 13B

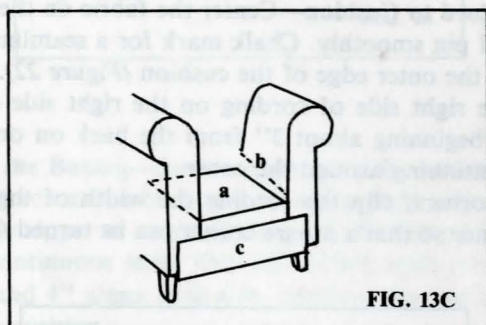


FIG. 13C

For a **chair with a "T" cushion**, anchor the seat base piece to the chair carefully. Miter the front corners (Figure 14, A). Stitch. Anchor to the chair again. Do the 1" tab cutting around the curve of the arm where the seat base joins the arm front (Figure 14, B). Cut the tabs to the point where the tuck-in begins. Sew a 3" bias around this curve (Figure 14, C).

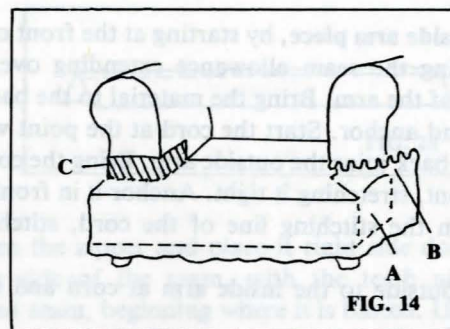


FIG. 14

For a **chair without a cushion**. When there is no cushion, the seat cover should extend over the entire area, allowing a 6" tuck-in on the sides and back. Hem the back edge and insert a rod to hold it in place.

For a **chair with open arms**, lay the material on the seat of the chair, wrong side up. Smooth it to the arms on each side. Insert a pin on the fold, marking the center of the wood arm (Figure 15). Cut from the edge perpendicular to 1/2" of this pin. Snip and apply cord so that it fits snugly around the arm.

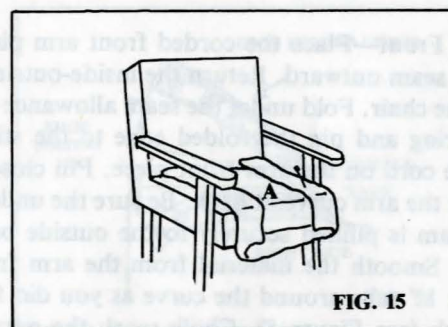


FIG. 15

## Arm Section

**Front of the arm** piece is pinned in position on the chair. Chalk-mark the shape using the upholstery cording on the chair as guides. A pattern can be made the same way with paper, and then cut and tested to be sure it fits perfectly (Figure 16).

Allow 5/8" seams beyond the marked line. Cut one piece at a time—a right and a left.

Sew cord on the edge of each arm front piece, easing the cord slightly around the curve. Snip to make the seam lie flat around the curve (Figure 17).

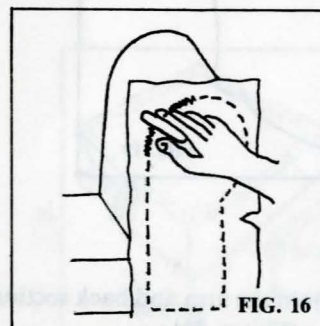


FIG. 16

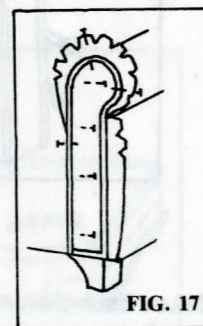
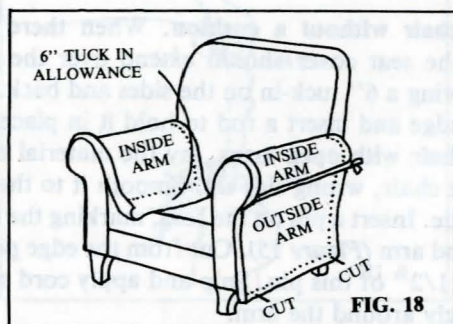


FIG. 17



Fit the **inside arm piece**, by starting at the front of the chair, leaving the seam allowance extending over the front edge of the arm. Bring the material to the back of the chair and anchor. Start the cord at the point where the outside back joins the outside arm. Bring the cord to the arm front, stretching it tight. Anchor it in front. Insert pins on the stitching line of the cord, stitch and trim.

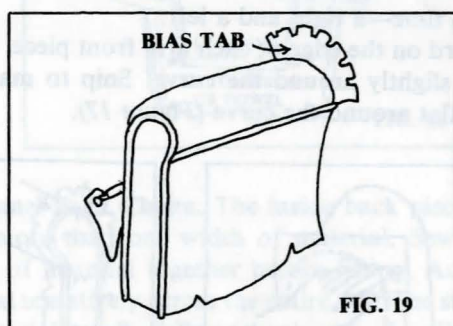
Pin the outside to the inside arm at cord and stitch (Figure 18).



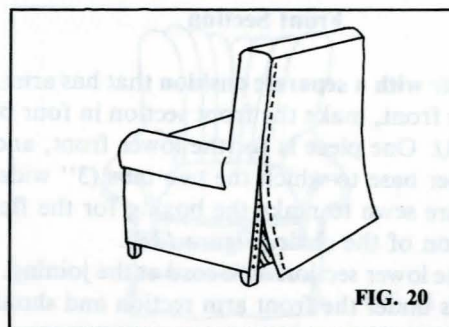
**Join to Front**—Place the corded front arm piece on the chair, seam outward. Return the inside-outside arm piece to the chair. Fold under the seam allowance on the arm covering and pin the folded edge to the stitching line of the cord on the arm front piece. Pin closely.

Now fit the arm curve in back. Be sure the under arm corded seam is pinned securely to the outside back of the chair. Smooth the material from the arm front to back. Cut 1" tabs around the curve as you did for the inside back (see Figure 8). Chalk-mark the curve and add a 3" bias. The material below the curve down to the seat will serve as a tuck-in.

Remove the arm section from the chair. Stitch and trim the seam. Hem the lower edges. Doweling can be inserted in the lower inside arm to help keep it in place (Figure 19).

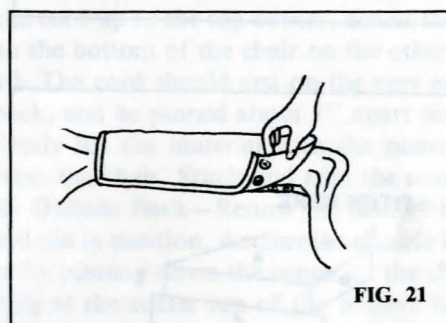


Make a back closure to join the arm and back sections with a zipper or snap tape (Figure 20).



**For Chairs with Open Arms**—Where wood and upholstery meet at the front, fold in a small pleat or ease the fabric on each side of the arm. Make snips if necessary to make it fit smoothly around the wood arm. Apply cord on this edge.

Later when the slipcover is put on the chair, it can be tacked to the chair with a curved needle or snapped along the seam overlap on the underside of the arm (Figure 21).

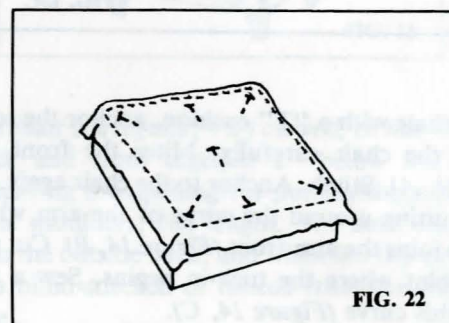


## Cushion

**Fit Cord to Cushion**—Center the fabric on the cushion and pin smoothly. Chalk mark for a seamline, following the outer edge of the cushion (Figure 22).

Place right side of cording on the right side of the cover, beginning about 3" from the back on one side and continuing around the cover.

At corners, clip the cording the width of the seam allowance so that a square corner can be turned (Figure 23).





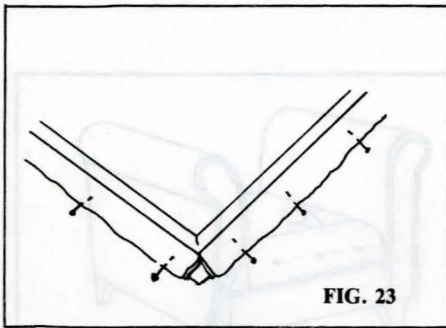


FIG. 23

**To Join Cord End**—Let the cord lap 1" and snip. Rip back one end of cording 1". Cut out 1" of cording and turn 1/2" raw edge under on this end. Lap 1/2" over the other end of the cord, so the cords just meet. Stitch. Repeat for the bottom cover (Figure 24).

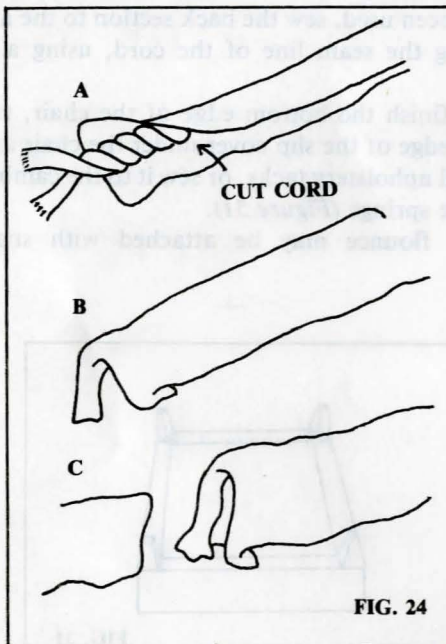


FIG. 24

**Fix the Boxing**—Locate opening in the center of the boxing across the back and 4" along each side.

If no zipper or snap tape is used, the boxing is made in a continuous strip. One side is left open across the back and 4" along each side, which is stitched in place on the cushion.

If a zipper or snap tape is used, cut the boxing for the back opening in two pieces, each about 3 1/2" wide and the length of the opening plus 2" for the seam allowance.

**To Apply Zipper**—Join the two pieces with 1" seam down the center and stitch 1 1/2" by machine. Secure the thread, and then baste to within 1 1/2" of the other end which is machine stitched (Figure 25). Press the seam open.

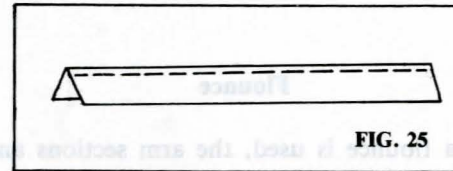


FIG. 25

Open the zipper and place it right side down on the wrong side of the seam, with the teeth next to the stitched seam, beginning where it is basted. Using a regular pressure foot, stitch from the beginning of the zipper tape to 1/2" beyond the end of the zipper. Leave the needle in place in the fabric. Close the zipper. Turn square corner, stitching across the ends of the tape; turn again and stitch the other side of the zipper back to the opposite starting point. Remove the basting stitches.

**To Apply Snap Tape**—Fold under 1/2" on one piece of boxing and turn up 1/2" on the other piece. Sew snap tape on the under side of the first piece and on the top side of the second piece, covering the 1/2" seam allowance (Figure 26).

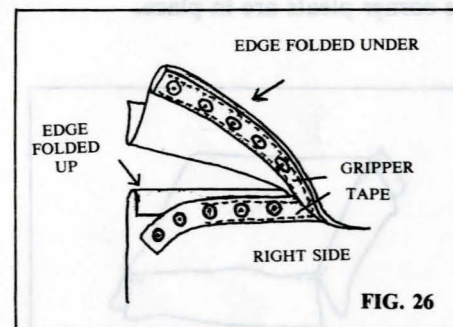


FIG. 26

**Join back boxing to front boxing** and test to see that it fits snugly around the cushion (Figure 27).

Complete the cushion by stitching the boxing to the top and bottom corded cover (Figure 28).

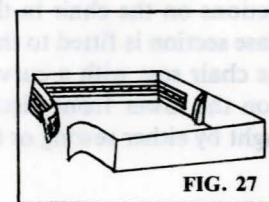


FIG. 27

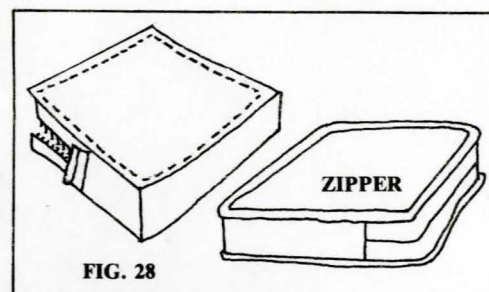


FIG. 28

## Flounce

When a flounce is used, the arm sections and seat base front section can be joined together.

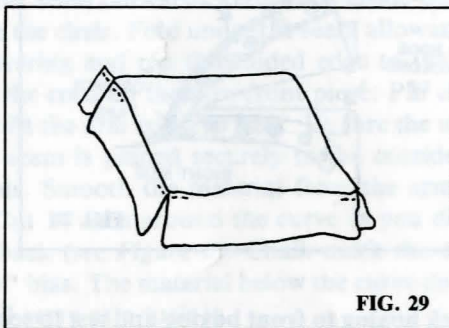
Sew cord to the bottom of the slipcover. Use a square or yardstick to measure this stitching line equal distance from the floor.

Decide the type and depth of flounce you want. A plain flounce with inverted pleats takes the least material and looks tailored. Corner pleats should be at least 3" deep. Cut the flounce, allowing at least 1" for the hem.

Sew one flounce piece to the back section, turning back 3" on each corner. This 3" forms part of the pleat.

Side and front sections of the flounce are made in one piece. If the pleats need to be pieced, do it under the corners. At the back corner, make one half of the 3" pleat and let the material extend over the back. Stitch all pleats across the top to hold them in place (Figure 29).

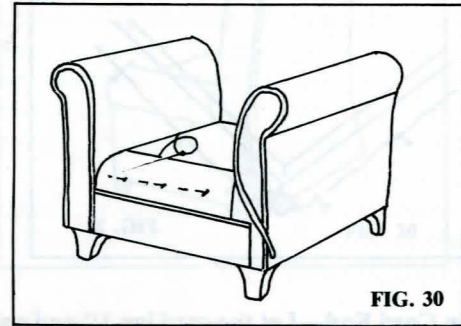
Stitch the flounce on the seam line of the cord, being certain the corner pleats are in place.



## Attach the Slipcover to the Chair

Put finished sections on the chair in this order:

1. **Front seat** base section is fitted to the chair and the top stitched to the chair seat with a curved needle. The tabs that extend on the lower front piece to front arm section can be caught by either sewing or tacking (Figure 30).



2. **Arm sections** are slipped on next, bias flanges turned upward. A rolled magazine or doweling inserted in the hem will help keep sections in place. Sew arm front pieces across the chair to the bottom of the chair.

3. **Back section**—tuck in all tabs. If no zipper or snap tape has been used, sew the back section to the arm section along the seam line of the cord, using a curved needle.

4. To finish the bottom edge of the chair, turn the hemmed edge of the slip cover under the chair and tack with small upholstery tacks, or sew it to the cambric that covers the springs (Figure 31).

5. The flounce may be attached with snaps, or stitched.

