SEAMS

A seam is the line of stitching that joins two or more pieces of cloth. There are different types of seams. It is important to choose the correct seam for any given article or part of garment.

Points to Consider when Choosing a Seam

a. Kind of material or fabric being sewn: for instance, flat seams (e.g. run-and-fell) are suitable for bulky materials like wool. French seam is suitable for thin material like silk.
b. Purpose or use of garment: for instance, flat seams are suitable for night gowns.
c. The person to wear the clothes: for instance, flat seams such as run and fell seams are suitable for children's clothes that require constant washing.
d. Position of the seam: for instance, lapped seam is suitable for curved seams.

Types of Seams

Open or plain seam: this is the simplest and most commonly used seam. It has little bulk. It leaves raw edges that need to be finished or neatened. To make:

- Place the right sides of material together,
- Mark seam line,
- Pin, tack, and sew from the wrong side of fabric with proper sewn allowance,
- Remove tacking thread and press open the seam,
- Finish or neaten the raw edges.

French seam: this is a flat seam. It does not show from the right side. All raw edges are completely enclosed. It is suitable for children's clothes. To make:

- Place wrong sides of fabric pieces together,
- Pin and tack along fitting line (seam line),
- Remove pins and sew 3 – 6mm nearer the edge than seam line, using back-stitch or machine,
- Trim the seam allowance carefully,
- Remove tacking and fold the fabric right sides together,
- Roll the seam between fingers and thumbs until stitching is along the edge,
- Tack and press into place,
- Sew along seam line,
- Remove tacking and press.

Run and fell seam: this lies flat with two rows of stitching on the right side of the garment. All raw edges are enclosed. Thus no extra neatening is required. It is strong and durable.
To make:

- Place wrong sides of the fabric together and make a plain seam,
- Press the seam to one side,
- Trim the underneath seam allowance to about 3mm,
- Trim the upper seam allowance to 10mm,
- Fold and press the upper seam allowance over the lower one,
- Sew through all layers close to the folded edge, Press.

Lapped or overlaid seam: this is visible on the right side. It is very strong. It is commonly used on curved or pointed seams, where stitching from the side is difficult. It is also used to give decorative effect.
To make:

- Mark the lapping lines on each pieces of fabric,
- Turn under the seam allowance on the overlay to the wrong side,
- Press and tack into place,
- Prepare the underlay,
- Place the overlay right side up on the underlay. Match fitting lines, as well as patterns,
- Pin and tack the folded edge of the overlay onto the seam line of the underlay,

- Sew 3 – 6mm from the fold through all layers,
- Trim and neaten the seam allowances on the wrong side.