

## Seams

**Objectives:** At the end of this lesson you shall be able to

- name the features and applications of seams and seam finishes
- explain the supporting techniques for a good seam construction.

Seaming is a method of joining two or more pieces of fabric by a row of stitches. Stitching seam belongs to the basic and structural activities for construction of garments. If the purpose of a seam is mainly functional it is called a **constructional seam**, like side seam, underarm seam, waistline seam etc. These seams must be inconspicuous and as flat as possible. Beside of that, there are **decorative seams** which are made conspicuous to give a design or decoration to the garment, like piped seam, corded seam, flat and felled seam or topstitched seam.

The direction in which seams are stitched in general, is from the wider part of the garment to the narrower, because grain lines can be matched easier in this direction. A side seam of sleeve for example will be stitched from the armhole to the sleeve bottom. Only in piled fabric the seams are stitched always with the direction of the pile, irrespective of the garment being wide or narrow at the starting point. Most of the seams are stitched with right sides of the fabric together. Seams should be back stitched at the beginning and at the end for reinforcement.

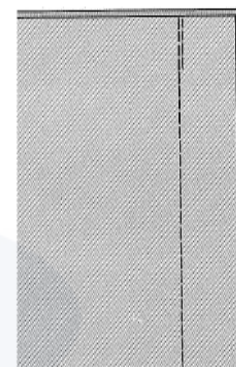
**Seams are of three types -**

1. Plain seam - Plain seam are again of three types -
  - a. Straight seam
  - b. Curved Seam
  - c. Cornered seam
2. Self Enclosed Seam - Self enclosed seams are those in which all seam allowances are contained within the finished seam, thus avoiding the necessity of a separate seam finish. Self enclosed seam are of the following type -
  - a. The French Seam
  - b. Mock French Seam
  - c. Flat Felled seam
  - d. Self Bound Seam
3. Topstitching Seams - Seams are topstitched from the right side with seam allowances caught into the stitching. Topstitching is to hold the seam allowances flat, to add interest to plain Fabric and to keep the under layers flat and secure. Topstitching seams are of the following types -
  - a. Double Topstitched seam.
  - b. Welt Seam

- c. Tucked Seam
- d. Slot Seam
- e. Faggoted Seam

Seams can be constructed in different shapes. The **straight seam** is the most basic and easiest to stitch. (Fig 1) The seam allowances can be pressed to one side and finished together (in light weight fabrics) or they are pressed open and finished separately.

Fig 1

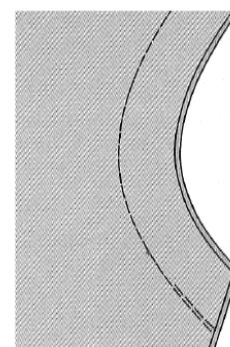


STRAIGHT SEAM

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**Curved seams** require careful attention in handling and shaping. Use a shorter stitch length and a slow speed to get well shaped curves and to ensure extra strength. (Fig 2)

Fig 2



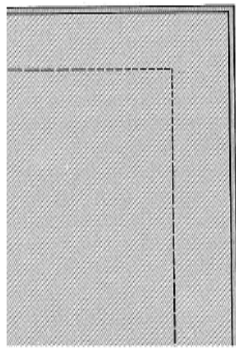
A CURVED SEAM

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**Cornered seam** is reinforced by using a shorter stitch length on either side of the corner. Accurate pivoting is important to get an accurate corner. (Fig 3)

**Supporting seam techniques:** Some additional seam techniques ensure a better fit of seams as there are:

Fig 3

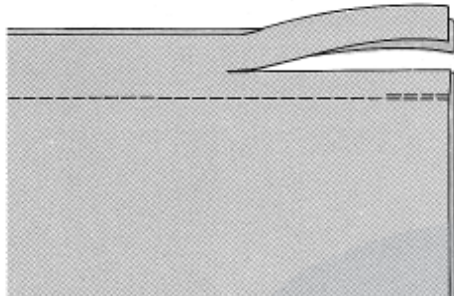


A CORNERED SEAM

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**Trimming** means cutting away some of the seam allowance. This is done to reduce bulk in order to get a better fit (for example at the armhole) or to prepare the seam for further construction (e.g. french seam). (Fig 4)

Fig 4

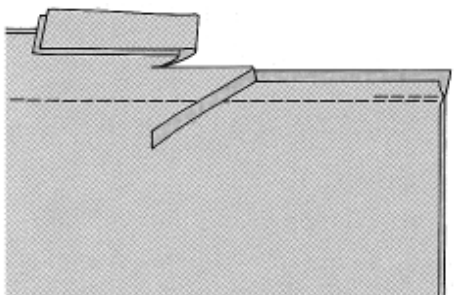


TRIMMING

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**Grading** is a variation of trimming. It is done where bulky seams cannot be pressed open. The fabric layers of the seam allowances are trimmed to different width to avoid a thick ridge at the edge. The widest layer should set nearest the garment. This helps the seams to lie flat without causing a bulky ridge (for example in enclosed seams). (Fig 5)

Fig 5

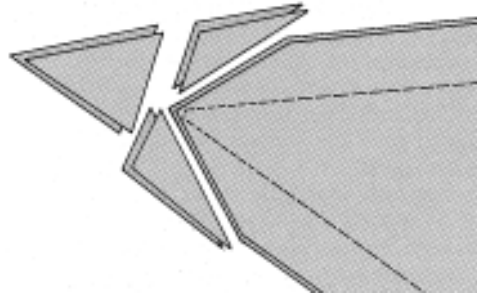


GRADING

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**Trim a corner:** Corners of enclosed seams must also be trimmed to reduce the bulk. First trim seam allowance on point slightly away from the stitch line. Then trim the sides tapering to point. (Fig 6)

Fig 6

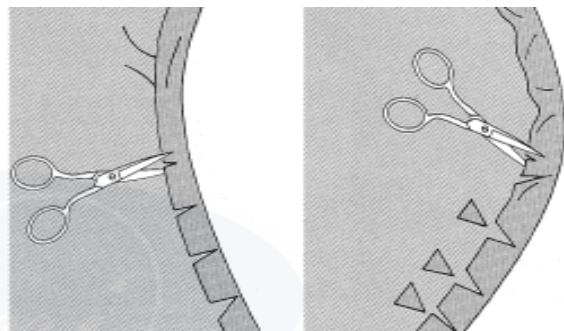


TRIM A CORNER

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**Clipping and notches:** In seam allowances with inward curves and corners, **notches** help to remove bulk of fabric. In outward curves and corners, clipping the seam allowance allows the fabric spread out to lie flat. (Fig 7)

Fig 7



CLIPPING AND NOTCHING

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**Seam finish** is given to the seam edge to prevent the fabric from fraying and to provide a neat look. The type of seam finish chosen depends on the type of fabric, its weight, its weave etc. and wear and tear of a garment; it is not required in lined garments. Some seam finish is given on the edge of the seam allowance, like overcasting, pinking, overlocking, hongkong and bias bound seam finishing. The other method is to enclose the seam allowance, so that it is not visible any more, like in french seam, self-bound seam, flat and felled seam. For enclosed seams, more seam allowance is required. This seam finish is suitable in straight seams and in light to medium weight fabrics. Trimming and pressing are important steps in finishing enclosed seams.

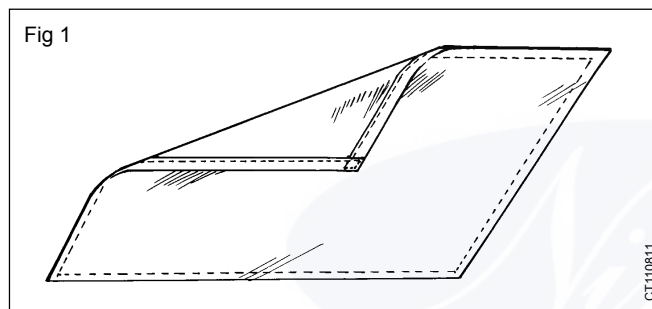
## **Corners**

**Objectives:** At the end of this lesson you shall be able to  
• **describe the types of corners and their features.**

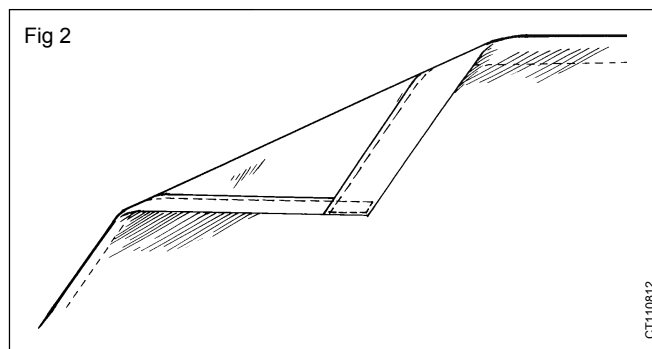
Corners are formed where two edges meet. The meeting place of corners has more layers. They are finished in different methods.

**Overlapping corners** are slightly bulky, therefore constructed in light weight fabrics used for napkins, table cloths, towels, handkerchiefs, bed covers etc. and also on the hem of dresses with full open front.

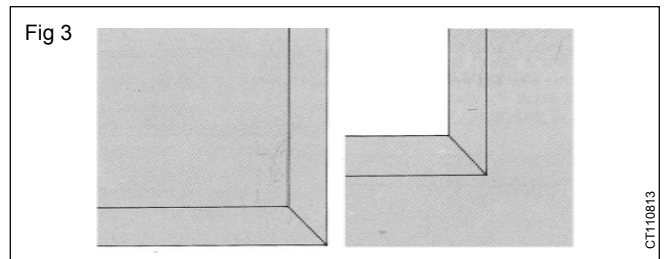
**Variations of overlapping corners:** When the hems on both the edges (lengthwise and widthwise hem) have folds of equal size, we get a **square corner**. Reducing bulk at the corners of a heavy fabric, can be made by cutting away a rectangular piece on the underlay. (Fig 1)



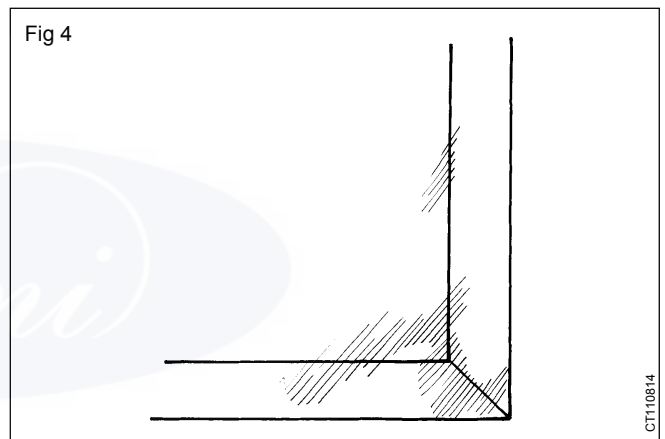
If one hem width is wider than the other side, then the finished corner will form a small rectangle. (Fig 2)



The diagonal joining of two edges at the corner is called **mitring**. The joint may be stitched or folded in place. Only an accurate folding will help you to get a good mitring. To reduce the bulk of the material on the under side, the joint is cut diagonally and pressed open. **Mitred corners** can be finished in two directions, when the mitred piece goes around the corner, it is an outward corner (used in table cloth, pillow cover, bed cover, etc.). If the piece lies within the corner then it is an inward corner (used in neck line) (Fig 3)

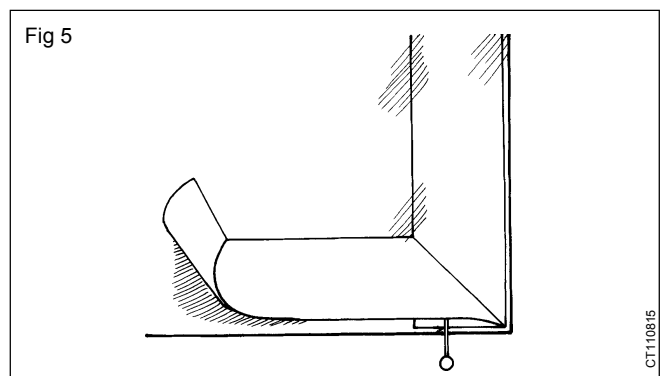


**Variations of a mitred corner:** Self-turned-up corners are worked mainly on the wrong side of the material. The main material is turned to the wrong side and folded in place; This type of corner always forms an outward corner. (Fig 4)

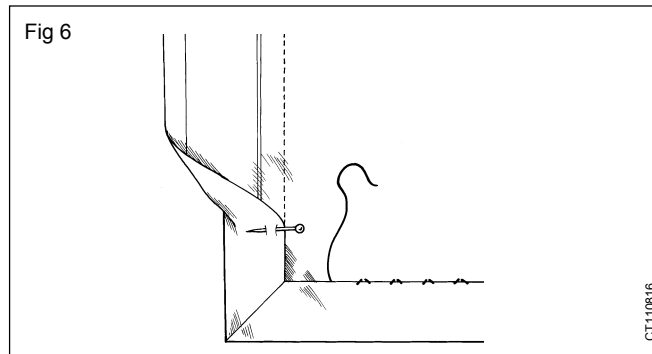


See the other methods of mitring which are explained below to use a separate strip or band to form the corners. They all can be finished as inward or outward corners.

**Mitring with flat tape or ribbon** is done mainly to create a decorative effect on the right side. The size of the garment material remains the same. (Fig 5)

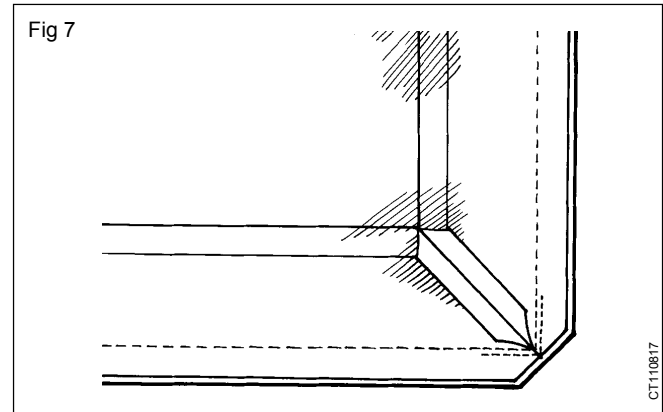


**Mitring with banding** always extends the size of a garment (material). It is used to give a decorative effect as a border or it is used for alteration of length etc., e.g. in children's garments. The banding is always finished on a double layer. (Fig 6)



**Mitring with bias facing** is mainly used for neckline finishes of square or V-shape. Here the facing must be stretchable, therefore a bias strip is used. Because of the

stretchability, this corner finish will give a flat appearance. The bias piece can either be readymade or self-made of light weight underlining fabric. (Fig 7)



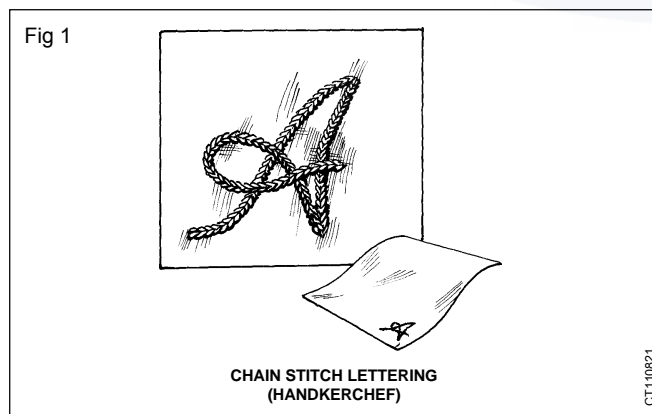
## Lettering and monogram

**Objectives:** At the end of this lesson you shall be able to

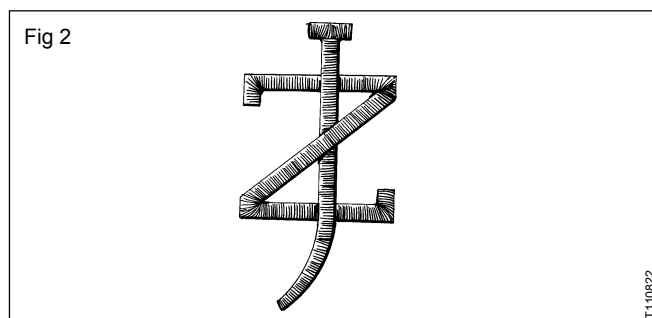
- state the application of lettering and monogram stitching
- select the different letters for monogram.

**Lettering and monogram** is the art of drawing letters and the art in which the letters are embroidered. This is done on clothes and articles for the identification of individuals.

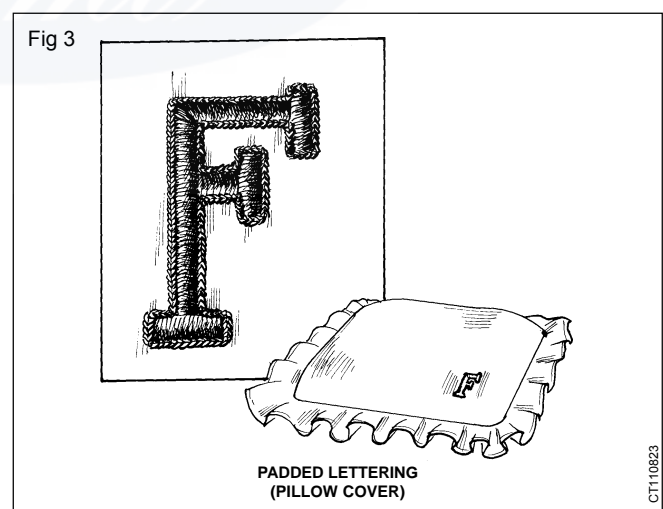
In **lettering**, the alphabets are stitched either by outlining or by filling with stitches like stem, chain, satin, cross stitch, etc. (Fig 1)



**Monogram** is the interlacing of two or three letters with one another. This can be worked either by filling or outlining with stem, satin, cross stitch, etc. (Fig 2)



Padded lettering is done to highlight the letters by special effect. The letters can be raised by working of a pad by running or chain stitches or by using cord first and then covering these with satin stitches. It is applied in curtains, upholstery, etc. The area around the letter or monogram can be embroidered to give an ornamental effect. (Fig 3)



The lettering should be worked on an embroidery frame, to prevent the fabric from puckering. Trace the letters evenly in clearly defined lines and marks.