Garment Sewing with Woven Fabrics: Finishings and Hems with Amanda Todar

Chapter 1 - Garment Sewing with Woven Fabrics: Finishings and Hems
Overview
(gentle music) - I'm Amanda Todaro, I am a sewing educator for Ditto patterns. Finishing the interior of your garment and setting your hems is just as important as sewing the seams. Having a good seam allowance finish will ensure that you can wear your garment over and over again.

Finish a raw edge with a zig zag stitch
- Have you ever looked inside your store-bought clothing? You'll notice that the edges of the fabric is always secured in some way to prevent fraying. The easiest way to create this at home is with a zigzag stitch on your sewing machine. Set the raw edge of your seam allowance underneath the machine foot. (sewing machine whirring) As you can see, I'm bridging the edge of my fabric with the zigzag. (sewing machine whirring) Complete this stitch on the other side of your seam allowance. (sewing machine whirring) Your seam allowances are now secure and you can move on to your next seam.

Finish a raw edge with an overlocker
- An overlock machine, also known as a serger, is a great way to finish your seam allowances and even sew your garments. You can use this machine to achieve a more professional look. I have this overlock machine set on a four-thread safety overlock stitch. This is a great stitch for finishing seam allowances and sewing. Your machine may come with several stitches, and I encourage you to try them all. To finish a seam, set the fabric underneath the foot and drop it. (overlock machine whirring) The knife will cut off any fabric that goes past it, so if you don't wanna remove any seam allowance, be sure to line up the raw edge of your fabric on this edge of the machine as you sew. (overlock machine whirring) (overlock machine whirring) Now our seam allowances are encased and look very professional and finished.

Sew a basic machine hem
- A basic machine hem is as easy as the name suggests. You'll fold your fabric twice before sending it through the sewing machine. This hem is used on casual pants, shorts, and skirts. The seam allowance for this hem on this pattern is an inch and a quarter. I'm going to use a hem gauge to measure up 1/4 of an inch, and then another inch. Set your hem gauge to 1/4 of an inch, and use it as a guide as you iron. (iron swooshes) Once your first fold is pressed, we will set our hem gauge to an inch, and measure and fold again. If your hem doesn't press well as you go, add pins. You can now take this hem to your sewing machine. We're going to sew about 1/8 to 1/4 inch in from our fold. Be sure to backstitch at the top and bottom, or beginning and end of your hem. (sewing machine whirring) Now that your hem is complete, you can give it a good press, and it's ready to wear.

Sew a rolled hem
- Using a rolled hem foot on your sewing machine is a great way to create a beautiful, tiny, almost invisible hem for lightweight and sheer fabrics. This hem is used on bridesmaid's dresses, formal wear, home decor, and lightweight scarves. Rolled hem feet come in different sizes that are

© Amanda Todaro of Ditto and Creativebug Inc., 2026

measured in millimeters. The smaller the roll, the smaller the hem. Set the rolled hem foot into your machine. Next, we have to start our roll before setting it into the machine. Fold once, fold again, and then finger press your roll in place before setting it into the machine. Stitch a few stitches, drop your needle, lift your foot, and then use a set of tweezers to manipulate the fabric around the roll of the foot. Once in place, drop the foot and continue stitching. You'll want to keep this fold consistent and the size of the opening here as you sew. (sewing machine clicking) (sewing machine whirring) Now you have a nice, small, perfect hem for scarves and lightweight fabrics.

Sew a blind hem

- A blind hem is a great hem for dress pants, skirts, and blouses. You sew this hem on your machine, however, when finished, you won't see the stitches from the front side. We're going to start this hem similar fashion as we did the basic machine hem. We'll fold up once and then fold again and pin. I'm using my hem gauge set at 5/8 seam allowance to do the first fold. Once the first fold is in place, we'll move our hem gauge to one inch and fold and iron again. Next, we're gonna pin this fold, the difference is that we are going to pin horizontally into our fold. To create a blind hem, you'll need to install a blind hem foot on your machine and set your machine to the blind hem stitch. (sewing machine beeps) This stitch has multiple adjustments, so I suggest using a sample piece of fabric and testing your hem and settings before moving on to your actual garment. You're gonna start by folding over your hem like this. What we wanna see is this edge of fabric, this is where we're going to sew and the needle is going to pick up bits of the fabric over here. This guide on the foot should rest on the fold of your fabric. Once your machine is set to a blind hem and your hem is folded and against the guide, you can begin stitching. (sewing machine whirring) What we're looking for is for our stitches to end up on this fold and for just a little bit of the needle to hit through this fabric. You can open up your sample piece of fabric to see how it looks. These stitches are too visible, so I'm gonna adjust my settings. I'm going to lessen my width and make the stitch slightly longer. I'm also going to turn my guide so that more of the stitches end up on this outer fold. I will then test my hem again. (sewing machine whirring) This time, none of my folded area here was picked up, so I need to adjust the settings to fix that. I'm going to change my width one over and move the guide slightly back out. (sewing machine whirring) As you can see, now all my stitches have ended up on this interior fold and the needle has just picked up a little bit of the fabric on each stitch. On the right side of my fabric, my stitches are barely visible. You can give this a good press and your hem is complete.

Make bias tape

- Bias tape is a great way to bind seams, finish necklines, and sleeves and hems. You can purchase pre-made bias tape, or you can make your own. To make bias strips, we're going to cut our fabric on a 45-degree angle. Cutting your fabric into strips on this angle gives the fabric the ability to curve and stretch. I lined up my square of fabric on this mat because it already has the angle marked. Line up your ruler with the 45-degree line. Use a rotary cutter, or draw a line and cut with scissors. Once your bias line is established, you can cut many strips across the fabric. I'm going to make 1/2 inch bias tape using my bias tape maker, so I need to cut one-inch width strips. If you need a long length of bias tape, you can connect two or more pieces together. Lay one piece down, right side up. Lay another piece on top, so that right sides are together. Pin in place. Now we're going to stitch across our strips to combine these two pieces. Be sure to backstitch at the top and bottom. (sewing machine whirring) Next, clip your seam allowance down. I'm cutting mine to about 1/8 inch. Once

© Amanda Todaro of Ditto and Creativebug Inc., 2026

clipped, you can press your seam open. You can also cut any corners that are sticking out from your strips. I'm using a bias tape maker that makes a 1/2 inch bias tape. Send the corner of your bias strip into the maker. Pull gently to begin the tape. Press and start pulling, as you press the tape in place. You're looking for the raw edges of your fabric to meet in the center. Anytime you go over a bias strip transition, you may need to adjust and press by hand. You can then continue on with the bias tape maker. Your bias tape is now ready, and can be used to bind necklines, sleeves, and hems.

Apply bias tape
- Let's add your bias tape to the neckline of this bodice. Before you start, cut down your seam allowance to a quarter inch. You will then sew a basting stitch one eighth in. This stay stitch will keep your neckline from stretching as you sew in the bias. Take your bias tape, open it, and line up the fold. We're lining up the raw edge to the raw edge of our bodice. Pin inside the fold. Work the bias tape around the neckline. Line up the needle with the fold of your bias tape, and use that as a guide as you sew. (sewing machine whirring) Now we will iron our bias tape down and pin it in place. Fold the bias tape in towards the garment. Begin pressing around the bias tape to shape it. Use pins to hold the bias tape in place. Cut off any excess bias tape, and then we can take it to the sewing machine. Set the neckline underneath the foot and drop down. When sewing, you wanna sew towards the edge of this fold while keeping the distance from your new neckline to your needle consistent. (sewing machine whirring) Here is your finished bias neckline. Using a contrasting fabric for your bias is a really nice way to add a personal touch to your garments. You can use this technique on your sleeves and on hems. I've shown you a multitude of techniques for finishing seams and hems. You can use these to finish almost any garment you want to add to your wardrobe.

© Amanda Todaro of Ditto and Creativebug Inc., 2026