

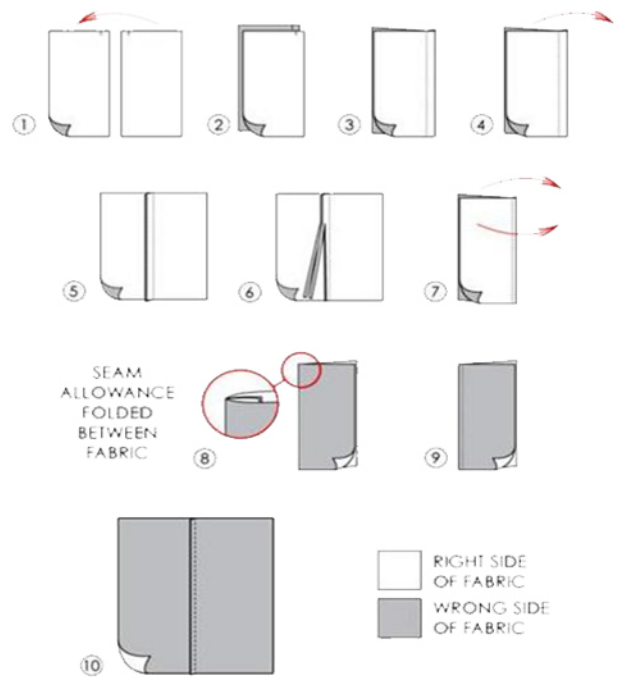
**[1]** The most common sort of seam that is used is a plain seam.

This plain seam can be made into a special feature by inserting piping or cording into the seam. This is an embellishment that defines the edges or style lines of a garment. It is more commonly used on upholstery and pillows, but also used on garments.

**[2]** In a **French seam**, the raw edges of the fabric are fully enclosed for a neat finish. The seam is first sewn with wrong sides together, then the seam allowances are trimmed and pressed (or you could over-lock close to the edge instead - the seam would not need trimming them). A second seam is sewn with right sides together, enclosing the raw edges of the original seam.

**[3]** This sort of seam will be used on delicate fabric that easily frays or on sheer fabrics (where the inside finish will be noticed from the outside of the garment). It provides a clean, finished high quality/professional look on the inside of a garment and stops the garment from ending up with frayed seams. Because the seam is entirely concealed, this seam can be used when threads would distract from the integrity of the design.

It is often used on light women's shirts (eg muslin) and lingerie (eg silk). It is also a good seam for delicate skin, as there are no irritating frayed edges or trailing threads - particularly so for garments worn close to the skin.



A French seam is also good for garments where the seams are going to be exposed, like an unlined jacket.

French seams are also practical for garments that are going to get washed a lot.

**[4]** In a **lapped seam**, the two layers overlap with the wrong side of the top layer laid against the right side of the lower layer. Lapped seams are typically used for bulky materials that do not fray, such as leather, suede, felt, fleece and heavy wools. The finished effect is a clean, flat seam with an exposed raw edge that creates a style that is modern and organic.



**[5]** For leather and suede, use a leather needle, a slightly longer stitch (shorter stitch for finer fabric) and polyester thread. Sew with a roller or walking foot that won't stick to the fabric when sewing.

Press leather and suede with a dry iron and use brown wrapping paper as a pressing cloth. Use a steam iron for most other fabrics.

**[6]** All the pieces should be cut to the 1.5cm seam allowance.

The outside piece that will have the exposed seam should have most of the seam allowance trimmed back—use a rotary cutter and straight edge ruler. Now mark (with chalk a 1.5cm line on the wrong side of this same piece. Lap it over the under piece. Hold the two pieces in place with basting, glue stick or double sided basting tape. The lap will be edge stitched and possibly top stitched, both usually with a longer stitch (whatever looks best). The single stitch seam line will give a more clean modern look. The double stitched line is good for when a strong durable seam is needed.

**[7]** Alternatively, the piece that is going to sit on top is folded under on the seam allowance and then placed on top of the seam allowance strip marked on the under piece. This means that the raw edge is not exposed, so works well with less bulky fabrics (where three layers of fabric is OK). This can be used when sewing a plain seam is difficult eg a shirt yoke, V neck, or curved pieces or small areas in woven and knitted fabric.

**[8]** Another way of creating the lapped seam is to sew a plain seam, overlock one side to neaten it, trim back the other side, fold the over-locked side over the trimmed side. Top stitch on the outer side as desired (use the seam line as a guide). This is often used on outer garments like jackets, or on sportswear, or it is a version of a seam that is often found on jeans. It is used because of its strength.



**[9]** This is called a **turned lapped seam**. If it is edge and top stitched, then it will look identical on the inside as the outside, so is perfect for reversible garments. You can also layer two fabrics together, to get a different fabric on each side. This layering would end up with lots of layers of fabric in the seam, so definitely not good for thick fabrics.



**[10]** Here is a turned lap seam has been used to attach the yoke to the body of the coat.

A flat lap seam (no turning under) was used down the middle of the yoke. This was to show off the effect of the unique salvaging.