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**BULLETIN 19A • Applying Zip Fasteners**

# Applying Zip Fasteners

THROUGHOUT THE CENTURIES various methods have been used for the fastening of garments and many of these, such as buttons and buttonholes, we accept to-day without questioning their origin.

During the long evolution of costume, fastenings have developed from the pointed fragment of bone with which primitive man secured his garments of skin and fur. Crude metal prongs, closely resembling the modern hook and eye,

closed the leather jerkin of the Roman soldier; buttons secured and also decorated the long fitted tunics of the women of the thirteenth century; the press stud was designed and used in the nineteenth century and now, to-day, the zip fastener, the contribution of the twentieth century is the most widely used form of fastening on many articles of clothing. In fact, it is difficult to imagine life without it. The application is simple and produces an almost invisible closure.

## SELECTION

It is most important to select a zip fastener of the correct weight and colour for the fabric—and also the exact length for the opening. Generally, featherweight fasteners may be used for silk, cotton, rayon and light woollen fabrics. Lightweight fasteners should be used for skirt plackets, irrespective of fabric weight; for longer openings as in housecoats and for furnishings, loose covers, etc. They must always be used for all dress applications on heavier fabrics, tweeds, etc.; and for garments such as slacks, beachwear and other sports garments where abnormal strains are likely to be encountered.

Use open-ended zip fasteners, which separate completely at the bottom for all garments that open fully, *e.g.* jenkins. They should be applied by the semi-concealed method, provided the fabric is firm. The standard closed-end zip fastener, however, should be used on housecoats, as it is simpler to step into such garments than to join an open-end fastener.

The colour of the tape should match the selected fabric as closely as possible. As the coloured tapes of fasteners are rarely fast-dyed, coloured tapes must not be used on white or light-coloured fabrics and tapes a tone lighter than the fabric are preferable to those of a tone darker.

The length of a zip fastener is measured over the full length of the metal from the bottom stop to the top of the slider, when the fastener is closed. It is most important to make the opening sufficiently long and to have it equal in length to the fastener. Too short an opening will cause strain which, in time, will damage the fastener.

## APPLICATION

**Points to Remember.** (1) There should be a seam allowance of at least  $\frac{3}{4}$  in. on an opening where a zip fastener is to be inserted. (2) If you are a beginner choose the semi-concealed method on a seam. (3) Never cut the tape ends as this will weaken the fastener stops. If the fastener tapes extend beyond the fitting line, mitre them as in diagram 1, otherwise leave the tape ends as they are and catch them to the

seam allowance. (4) Keep the fastener closed whilst inserting or stitching to ensure the correct alignment of the teeth. Ease the fabric slightly when applying it to the fastener in order to prevent waviness in the fastener, thus ensuring that the fastener lies flat when fitted. (5) The folded edge of the fabric must never lie so close to the teeth that it interferes with the smooth movement of the slider. (6) When stitching a zip fastener always use a piping or cording foot attachment, so that it is possible to stitch close to the metal teeth. (7) When stitching, in order to pass the top of the fastener and the slider, leave the needle in the fabric, raise the piping foot, open the fastener slightly, lower the piping foot and continue stitching. (8) A hook and eye at the waistline will keep the edges of the opening from gaping.

## SEMI-CONCEALED METHOD

The semi-concealed method of application is more simple to construct than the concealed method of application, but the metal teeth may be slightly visible. The following instructions are for a skirt placket opening: (1) Stitch the seam leaving the opening free and finish the stitching securely. Press the seam allowance of the seam and the opening flat. Baste along the folded edges of the opening. (2) Place the fastener in position, under the opening, with the right side of the fastener to the wrong side of the garment and with the bottom stop just visible on the right side and the top of the slider on the fitting line. Pin the fastener in position at the top and the bottom. (3) Place one folded edge on top of the metal teeth, just a fraction over the centre. Pin and baste this edge in position to the fastener tape. Repeat with the other folded edge so that it also lies on top of the metal teeth, just a fraction over the centre. (4) Stitch round the fastener,  $\frac{1}{4}$  in. from the folded edge. The stitching line at the bottom may be horizontal or pointed (diagram 2). (5) Catch the lower tape ends lightly to the seam allowance on the wrong side.

If this method of application is used on the side opening of a dress, place the zip fastener in position, without mitring the tapes. Stitch

round the fastener (diagram 3), with either horizontal or pointed ends. Catch the ends of the tapes to the seam allowance.

## SEMI-CONCEALED METHOD OF APPLICATION WITHOUT A SEAM

In this case, as there is no seam, the opening must be faced and slashed. Do not attempt this method unless you have experience in sewing.

(1) Mark the length (including the seam allowance) and position of the opening with basting stitches. (2) Cut a facing 4 in. wide  $\times$  the length of the opening plus  $2\frac{1}{2}$  in. (3) Place the facing to the garment, right sides together, raw edges even, with the centre of the facing lying on the line of the opening. Baste in position. Working on the wrong side of the garment, machine stitch  $\frac{1}{4}$  in. on either side of the marked opening, bringing the stitching to a point (diagram 4). (4) Cut along the line of the opening, through all thicknesses, to the bottom of the stitching. (5) Turn the facing to the wrong side and press. (6) Mitre both the top tapes of the fastener. (7) Place the fastener in position, under the opening, with the right side of the fastener to the wrong side of the garment. The bottom stop should be just visible at the bottom of the opening and the top of the slider should be on the fitting line. Pin the fastener in position at the top and bottom with the metal teeth exactly in the centre of the opening. Baste the fastener in position so that the folded edges just overlap. Stitch down both sides,  $\frac{1}{4}$  in. from the centre and across the bottom of the opening, immediately below the bottom stop.

## CONCEALED METHOD OF APPLICATION

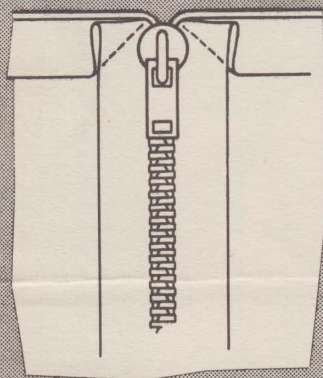
The following instructions are for a skirt placket opening. In this case, stitch from the bottom stop upwards on both sides, so that there will be no extra fullness at the lower end of the opening.

(1) Stitch the seam leaving the opening free and finish the stitching securely. Press the seam allowance of the seam and the opening flat. Baste along the folded edge of the opening on the front section of the garment. Extend

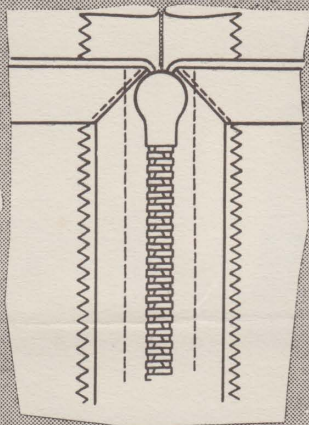
### METHODS

There are three methods of fastener application—visible, semi-concealed and concealed.

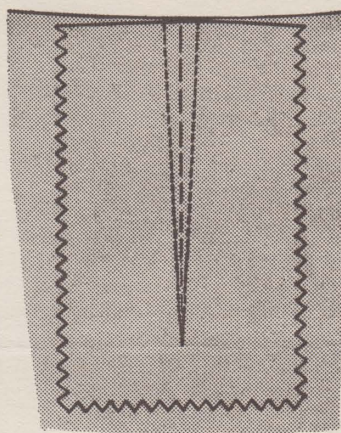
The visible method of application is, on the whole, unsuitable for fabrics, as the metal teeth are completely exposed. Its true purpose is for leather, plastic materials, etc.



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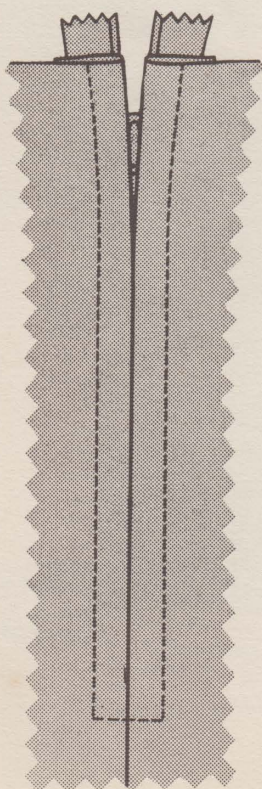
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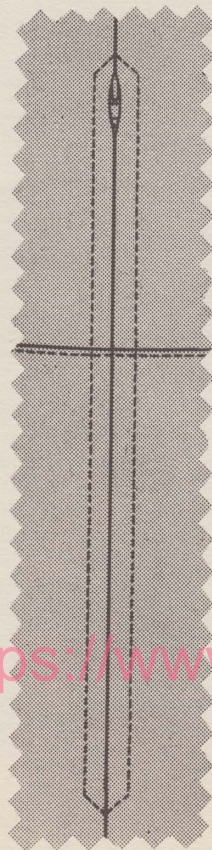
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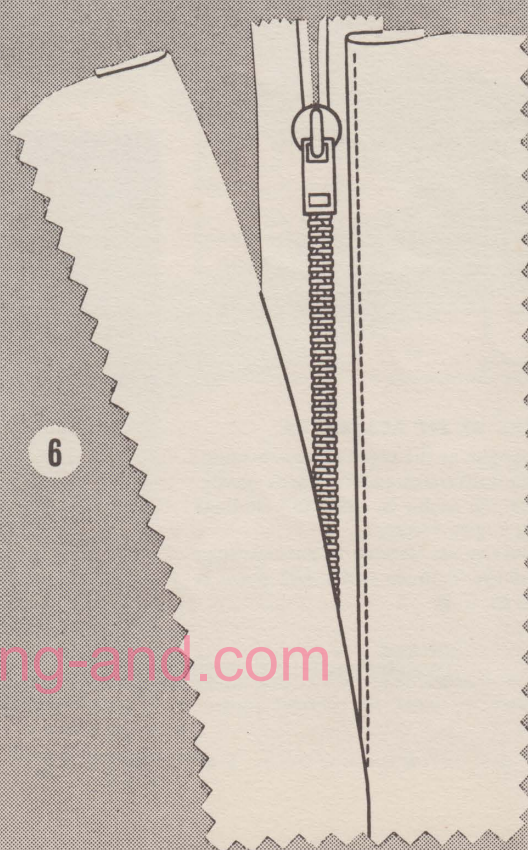
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the other folded edge (back edge)  $\frac{1}{8}$  in. beyond the fitting line (diagram 5). Baste. (2) Place the fastener in position under the opening, with the right side of the fastener to the wrong side of the garment, with the bottom stop just visible on the right side and the top of the slider on the fitting line. Pin the fastener in position at the top and the bottom. (3) Place the back edge as close to the metal teeth as possible, ensuring that the slider can still pass freely up and down. Baste this edge to the fastener tape. Stitch, using the piping foot attachment (diagram 6). (4) Pin the front fitting line to the back fitting line (diagram 7). Baste. (5) Baste the front section in position to the tape, down the length of the opening and across the lower end of the fastener. (6) Stitch  $\frac{3}{8}$  in. from the fitting line, following the line of the basting stitches. At the bottom the stitching line may be horizontal or pointed (diagram 8). (7) Catch the tape ends to the seam allowance on the wrong side.

If this method of application is used on the side opening of a dress, place the zip fastener in position, without mitring the tapes. Stitch the fastener (diagram 9), with either horizontal or pointed ends. Catch the ends of the tapes to the seam allowance.

In the following table the best method of application is double-starred and the alternative method has one star.

	SEMI-CONCEALED	CONCEALED
Skirt Placket	*	**
Dress Placket	*	**
Centre Back (with seam)	**	—
Centre Back (without seam)	**	—
Long Centre Front Opening (with seam)	**	—
Front Neck Opening (without seam)	**	—
Pockets	**	—
Sleeves (with seam)	**	*
Sleeves (without seam)	**	—

#### CARE OF ZIP FASTENERS

If fabric is caught in the teeth of the fastener, ease the slider backwards and forwards gently. Do not force the slider as this will damage both the fabric and fastener.

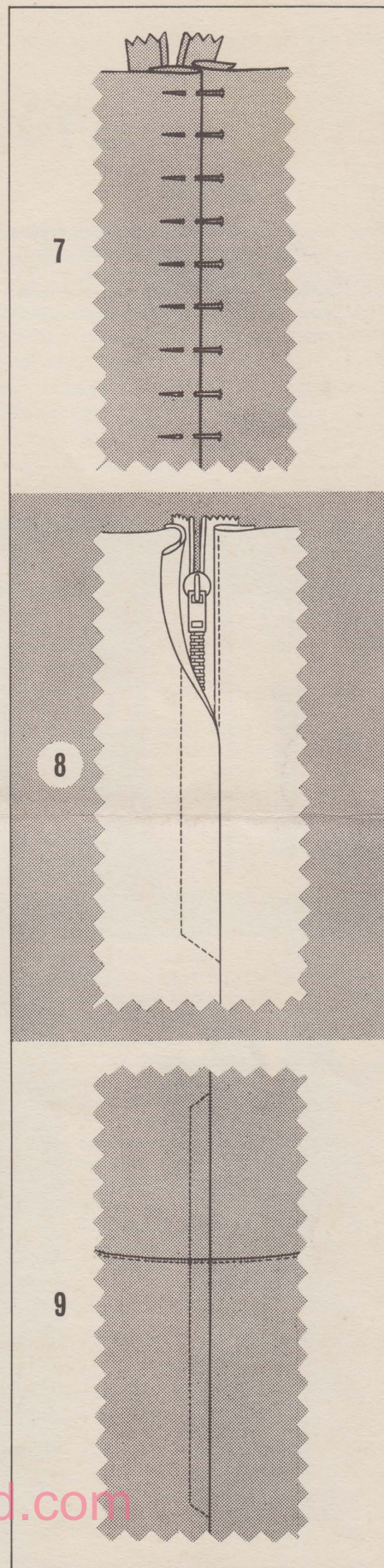
Never allow the zip fastener to pass through the rollers of the wringer and never press it heavily with an iron.

#### SHIELD

In certain cases it is advisable to attach a shield to the fastener in order to prevent under-

garments being caught by the teeth. There are many methods of making and applying a shield but the most simple method is to attach a piece of fine, firm petersham ribbon  $1\frac{1}{4}$  in. or  $1\frac{1}{2}$  in. wide  $\times$  the length of the fastener tape. Finish the raw edges of the ribbon and attach it with running stitches to the back tape of the fastener, after the fastener has been inserted.

This simple, woollen dress, with a tucked, front-buttoning bodice, three-quarter length sleeves and a four piece gored skirt, illustrates the use of the concealed method of application of a zip fastener in a side placket.



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