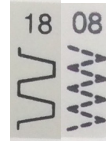


Basic Garment Seams on a Sewing Machine for Knits and Wovens

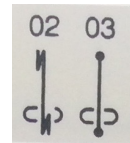
WOVEN FABRICS

Woven fabric will ravel, so the edges of the fabric will need to be overcast with thread to eliminate the fabric from coming undone.

Pressing the seam allowance open will reduce bulk. Overcast the edges of the fabric before sewing the seam. Triple zig zag or a specific over edge stitch will usually do the trick and not create tunneling in the fabric edges as a simple zig zag stitch. Use a foot designed for this with an edge guide and stitch creation supports to keep the stitching flat.



Finish the seam with a standard straight stitch or with an automatic locking stitch to save time. Most fabrics are well seamed with a stitch length of 2.5 mm. The automatic locking stitch will reinforce the seam with either stitches in place or with a short reverse stitch. At the end of the seam, press the reverse key to automatically lock the seam. The machine will start the next seam with the reinforcement stitching.



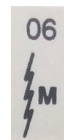
If bulk isn't an issue, choose a stitch that creates the seam and overcasts the edges simultaneously. Stitch on a scrap of fabric and if the seam is wavy or distorted, use a strip of sticky wash away stabilizer on the side of the seam next to the feed dogs to stabilize the seam. If sewing a knit to a woven fabric, place the woven fabric next to the feed dogs. Lowering the foot pressure may also help with wavy edges.



KNIT FABRICS

Most knit fabrics do not ravel, so they seldom need to be over cast. Knit seams usually do need to have a little stretch in the seam or the seam may pop open as the fabric stretches around the seam.

Use the knit stitch for seams in knits. This stitch looks a little bit like a lightening bolt. The back and forth stitching allows a little give in the seam and the narrow width allows the seam to be pressed open flat.



Some knit seams such as shoulder seams need to be prevented from stretching out over the life of the garment. Choose a stitch that creates a seam while also overcasting the edge. The overcast will hold a stabilizer in place. Insert something to stabilize the seam such as seam tape, some cut away stabilizer or even a soft narrow ribbon. Stitch the seam directly over the stabilizer.



Hems in knits are usually narrow and need to retain a little stretch. A “cover stitch” created on a serger is the garment industry’s choice, but this can be mimicked on a zig zag sewing machine by using a double needle. Double needles are available in a variety of widths and types. Fold up the hem, press and secure the seam with wash away tape or fuse with Floriani Appli-Kay Wonder to reduce distortion along the most stretchy direction of the fabric. Use a roller foot and loosen the foot pressure to help reduce stretching out the fabric.

RECOMMENDED SUPPLIES

Skipped stitches on a knit fabric: use a **Stretch or Ball point needle**. Use a ballpoint needle for heavier, looser sweater knits and a stretch needle for highly elastic fabrics, like Spandex, or Lycra. Both needles have rounded points that do not cut the fabric threads. The needle penetrates the fabric around the fabric threads rather than through them. If the ballpoint needle skips stitches, try the stretch needle with a slightly less rounded point.



Stabilize seams to prevent stretching: use a sticky wash away stabilizer such as **Floriani Wet N Gone Tacky** by cutting narrow strips and sticking along seam. Stitch with stabilizer next to feed dogs. Follow manufacturers directions to remove stabilizer, usually just a soak in water or with a machine wash cycle.

Begin a seam without thread build up on a knit: use a small piece of tear away stabilizer such as **Floriani Medium Tear Away** 1/4" to 1/2" under edge of fabric to be seamed. The needle tends to push the edge of the fabric into the large opening in the needle plate. Tear away the stabilizer while supporting seam with a pinch when stitching is complete.

Support a buttonhole in a knit: use a fusible stabilizer behind the buttonhole area such as **Floriani Dream Weave Fusible** to support the buttonhole and not change the feel of the fabric.



Support a seam that can stretch out such as a shoulder seam: use a narrow strip of cut away stabilizer such as **Floriani Medium Cutaway or Floriani No Show Nylon Mesh** and sew into seam.

Stabilize decorative stitches without adding or needing to remove a product from the back of the fabric: use a spray on product such as **Best Press 2** to stiffen the fabric. The product will wash out after stitching.



Create a knit hem that mimics a cover stitch: use a **double needle** on your zig zag machine. The zig zag machine has a wide opening in the needle plate to accommodate the wide profile of the needle. Double needles are available in a variety of widths and types. See your owners manual for threading a double needle on your machine. Do not use an automatic needle threader or the scissor function on your machine when a double needle is inserted. Always choose a center needle position with the straight stitch to avoid needle breakage. Fold up the hem, press and secure the seam with **wash away tape** or fuse with **Floriani Appli-Kay Wonder** to reduce distortion along what is usually the most stretchy direction of the fabric. Try a **roller foot** and loosen the foot pressure to help reduce stretching out the fabric.