Sewing Glossary: How To Sew Flat-Felled Seams on Sleeve

Description

Donât you just love it when your garment looks as good on the inside as the outside? There are many terrific sewing techniques that can provide a neat and clean finish to your projects and the flat-felled seams are one of them.

A flat-felled seam finish gives sturdy seams and a clean look. Just like withÂ French seams, the raw edges are completely enclosed within the seam with the wrong side looking as good as the right side. It is especially useful when working with linen as it prevents fabric from ravelling and provides a bit of extra strength in the areas where there might be some strain.

In one of our previous tutorials we have already covered the construction process of a flat-felled seam. You will find that this technique is pretty straightforward and easy to master except when it comes to sewing flat-felled seams in narrow places like inside sleeves and pant legs. Doing this inside a tube of fabric can be quite tricky but totally possible! Today we are going to give you a couple of useful tips for achieving the best results on your home sewing machine and without a speciality foot.

Letâs jump in!

Materials

Fabric of your choice (we are using 4C22 HONEYBLOSSOM Softened Heayweight Linen)

Sewing thread

Pattern

If you wish to try this technique on one of our patterns, try the super popular Paola Workwear Jacket. It was designed for inside flat-felled seams throughout.

Tools

Scissors, ruler, pins, fabric marker or chalk, sewing machine

Difficulty

Beginner

Sewing Time

1/2 hour

Steps

Note: Prewash your fabric and tumble dry it until it is still slightly moist, dry at room temperature. Iron the fabric so it is easier to work with.

Sewing a flat-felled seam is a two-step process: the initial sewing of a seam and the felling of the seam that anchors down the folded edge of the wider seam allowance thus enclosing the raw edges within the seam. When

sewing a regular side or shoulder seam, the second step is easy as you can separate the layers of fabric. The challenge begins when youâre closing a sleeve underarm or the inseam of a pant leg since the first step of the process transforms the fabric into a tube. In this case, you have to carefully manipulate the tube as it goes under your presser foot making sure to catch only one layer of fabric. In this tutorial, we will be showing you how to do flat-felled seams on a sleeve. The same steps apply to pant legs.

1. Sew your underarm seam the way you normally would, with right sides together and the indicated seam allowance (as per your pattern instructions). Usually, the seam allowance required for the construction of a flat-felled seam is somewhere between 1/2 and 3/4.Â Â Remember to backstitch at both ends.

Your sleeve has now become a tube of fabric.

2. Press seam allowances to directed side (usually to the back). If you are a lucky owner of a sleeve board, it will come in handy now!

3. Trim the seam allowance that ends up on the bottom by half. You can do this by eye, using the remaining front seam allowance as a guide.

4. Fold the wider seam allowance over the trimmed one all the way to the stitching line and press.

5. Fold it again and press flat to enclose all the raw edges within. Use lots of

steam in your iron for this step since it helps the crease stay in place.

Here’s the tricky part. You must now stitch down the folded seam allowance all the way into the sleeve, which you had closed and made into a tubular shape. The way you do this is to start at the wider end of your tube (sleeve

underarm, top of the leg opening or from hem of the bodice all the way to the sleeve opening if your sleeve is already attached to the bodice) and work your way to the narrower part which is the sleeve opening.

6. Remove the extension table from your sewing machine (if it has one) so that you are working around the âarmâ of the machine.

7. Working from the wrong side of the garment, run a line of stitching along the folded edge. Go slowly, and inch or so at a time, readjust the fabric regularly to make sure that it feeds smoothly under the foot.

Check regularly that your fabric is not scrunched up and that you are catching only one layer of fabric. It might feels like stitching in a tunnel, but the end of the sleeve is near!

The narrower the tube, the more challenging this is. So if it gets impossible to reach, secure your line of stitching with a backstitch, remove the sleeve and start from the other end.

Here’s what your seam looks like from the inside:

And the right side:

Thatâs it! Youâve just finished a neat and tidy flat fell seam. Flat-felled seams are definitely more work, but the final result is totally worth the effort!

Have a browse throughÂ our selectionÂ of linenÂ and see which of our fabrics inspire you to use your new skill!

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Author
rima-khusainova