THE HEM OF YOUR DRESS OR SKIRT can enhance its charm or it can spell utter disappointment. Some quick and easy methods of hemming are discussed in this leaflet.

Standard professional-looking hems have the following characteristics:

- Uniform width throughout.
- Uniform distance from the floor.
- Wide enough to provide enough weight to hang well and to suit present styles.
- Handstitches about \(\frac{1}{2}\) inch apart, uniformly spaced and inconspicuous.
- Flat and smooth.
- Free from the appearance of oversewing and overpressing.
- Excess fullness in circular hems controlled by easing and shrinking fullness.
- Entering seamlines pressed open in hems, and clipped in back edges of pleats.
FINDING THE HEMLINE

Fashion suggests the possible location of a hemline, but it may be moved up to emphasize well-proportioned legs and ankles, or moved down to minimize the larger, less graceful ones.

The garment should be complete except for the hem. Place it on a hanger and let hang for 48 hours to allow for stretching or sagging of bias or circular cut skirts, Figure 1.

Put on the garment over the foundation garments that will be worn. Have on the type shoes that will be worn with it. Decide on a becoming length for the skirt and measure from the floor. Have another person mark this distance around with a yard stick or marker with pins placed 2 to 3 inches apart and parallel to the floor, Figure 2.

Remove the garment and check to see if the line of pins is smooth. Turn to the wrong side and fold hem back along the marked line. Press lightly as you remove the pins. Do not press over pins. Match center front, center back and side seams. Pin raw edge to garment and try on to check evenness from floor and the becomingness of length. Cutting and stitching that have been done carefully and accurately eliminate this step in hemming. The allowed hem may be turned up and pressed ready for the finish.

The width of the hem is determined by the type garment, build of the individual, the fabric and the current fashions.

The average hem of a comparatively straight skirt is 2½ inches finished. With gored skirts, from 60 to 70 inches around, a smooth finish usually is best obtained with a 2-inch hem. A very circular skirt would require a narrower hem. This varies from a ½ inch rolled hem to a 2-inch hem, depending on how much of the fullness can be removed by shrinking or easing.

Begin measuring at the narrowest part of the hem allowance. Add ¼ inch for the finish, set the gauge to the desired measurement and mark the width around with chalk or pins through one thickness of fabric, only. Trim off excess fabric along the marked line, Figures 3 and 4.

FINISHING A HEM

turned hem

A turned hem is used on sheer, thin, less bulky fabrics. The hem is fairly flat without much extra fullness due to circularity.

1. Turn under ¼ inch on top edge of hem and press.
2. Pin edge to garment easing in small amount of fullness, Figure 5.
3. Fasten with vertical hemming stitch, Figure 6. Bring the needle out of the folded edge at (a) and insert at (b) close to the edge of the hem and directly below (a), picking up a single yarn and holding the needle parallel to the edge of the hem. Slip the needle into the edge of hem at (c) a ½-inch stitch length beyond (b). The long stitch (bc) will be almost hidden under the fold.
4. Press lightly on the wrong side.

**turned and stitched hem**

This hem is used as a hem finish on light-weight fabrics in straight, gathered or pleated skirts, Figure 7.

1. Turn under ¼ inch on top edge of hem and press.
2. Stitch close to fold using 8 to 10 stitches per inch.
3. Place skirt wrong side up on ironing board. The top edge of hem is fuller than the skirt. Pull the underneath thread of stitching until edge of hem fits the garment. Distribute the fullness evenly.
4. Pin edge to garment and fasten by the vertical hemming stitch illustrated in Figure 6. Press lightly, always into the hem with the point of the iron.

A variation of this method is used sometimes on fabrics that are crisp or wiry and not as easily handled as a softer fabric.

1. Stitch ¼ inch from top of hem through one thickness of fabric, using 8 to 10 stitches per inch.
2. Place skirt wrong side up on ironing board. The top edge of hem is fuller than the skirt. Pull the underneath thread of stitching until edge of hem fits the garment. Distribute the fullness evenly.
3. Turn under edge along stitched line and press.
4. Pin edge to garment and fasten by using the vertical hemming stitch, as illustrated in Figure 6. Press lightly, always into the hem with the iron.

**tailors’ hem**

This type hem is used on firm nonfraying wool and wool-like fabrics and other heavy fabrics.

1. Stitch ¼ inch from top of hem through one thickness of fabric. Use 8 to 10 stitches per inch starting and stopping stitching at seams for ease in distributing the fullness evenly, Figure 8.
2. Place skirt wrong side up on ironing board. The top edge of hem is fuller than the skirt. Pull the underneath thread of stitching until edge of hem fits the garment. Distribute the fullness evenly.
3. Shrink out fullness. The amount will vary according to shrinkage of the fabric. Place brown paper between the hem and garment to avoid an impression on the right side, and steam hem until it is as flat as possible, Figure 9.

In heavy fabrics a supporting stitch is used. Follow steps 1, 2 and 3. Mid-way of hem depth place a supporting stitch, Figure 10. Use a long running stitch with stitches about 1 inch apart. Do not draw the thread tightly. This stitch helps to support the weight of the hem.

4. Pin hem to garment ¼ inch below stitching. Turn back edge and fasten with a running stitch, inserting needle into fabric just above line of stitching on hem edge, then picking up a thread of the garment with each stitch. The stitches are ½ inch apart, Figure 10. The edge of hem is pinking, overcast or left plain. In bulky, fraying fabrics seam tape is used, Figure 11. On cottons a bias cotton tape can be used, Figures 12 and 13.
machine hem

The machine hem is used on housedresses and sports wear. It is not recommended for the hem that may need to be altered. This method works best on a straight hem. See Figure 14.

1. Turn in raw edge of hem 1/2 inch. Turn hem to the desired width and press a sharp crease. Pin in place, Figure 14-A.

2. Fold back against right side with hem extending about 1/16 inch beyond the fold, Figure 14-B.

3. Adjust machine to 10 to 12 stitches to the inch. Have the tension slightly loose, never tight. Stitch on extending edge of hem for 5 stitches. With machine needle up pivot the fabric and put needle into body part of garment once, then bring needle up, pivot fabric into original position and continue in this way:

- 5 stitches in edge of hem
- 1 stitch in body part of garment, Figure 14-C.

Remove pins as you go.


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SEAM TAPE

a. Stitch 1/2 inch from edge of hem through one thickness of fabric starting and stopping on the seams. Proceed as in steps 1, 2 and 3, under Tailor's Hem.

b. Press seam tape. For circular skirts the tape can be shaped while pressing to fit the curve of the hemline.

c. Place seam tape so that one edge extends just over cut edge. The other edge will fall on ease stitch line. Pin to one thickness of fabric. The tape should fit the skirt, but not too tightly. Machine stitch close to the lower edge of tape and press.

d. Pin hem into position and fasten down with the vertical hemming stitch.

BIAS COTTON TAPE (Figures 12 and 13)

a. Stitch 1/2 inch from edge of hem through one thickness of fabric, starting and stopping at the seams. Follow steps 1, 2, and 3, under Tailors' Hem.

b. Use a light-weight, single-fold bias tape.

c. Unfold one edge of bias tape. Place right side of tape to right side of hem with the crease of the fold on the ease stitch line. Stitch with machine. Turn up with the edge of tape extending just over the cut edge of the hem.

d. Press, pin in position and fasten with the vertical hemming stitch.