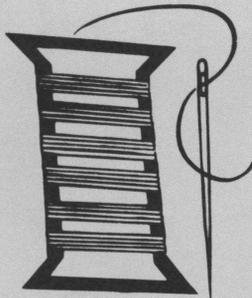


FACT SHEET

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DENIM LOOKS ALL SEWN UP!

Vivian C. Simmons*

Denim is popular today for all types of garments from work clothing to evening wear. It is made with right-hand or left-hand twill diagonal line construction, easily recognized from the face of the fabric. Indigo-blue is the signature of denim but recently denim has been dyed in an array of colors and designs. The fiber content may be cotton, cotton/polyester or elastic yarns for greater comfort. Denim is woven and often has a permanent press finish.

Pattern Selection

Pattern selection is almost unlimited. The pattern may incorporate construction details unique to denim—topstitching, flat-felled or welt seams and patch pockets.

Construction

Denim is easy to cut, sew and press and requires no special equipment. The twill weave of denim, woven with one-way direction, requires that pattern pieces be laid out in a one-way direction. This means using a “nap” layout and “nap” yardage.

Use cotton or cotton/polyester thread when sewing denim. Cotton/polyester or 100% polyester thread is preferred for cotton/polyester denim.

Seam Finishes

Topstitched seams: After stitching a plain seam, press seam to one side. Top stitch the desired distance from the seam on the right side of the fabric through all thicknesses.

Flat-felled seams: The flat-felled seam is a sport clothes feature. Most seams can be finished by this method, but the armhole seam can be felled only if the top of the sleeve is almost straight (as in a shirt sleeve) with a very shallow cap and no ease.

To fell a seam, place *wrong* sides together and stitch a plain seam. After pressing open, re-press

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with both seam allowances turned in the same direction (figure 1).

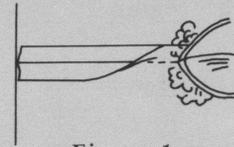


Figure 1

Trim one seam allowance to $\frac{1}{8}$ inch. Fold the other seam allowance to half its width and place over the narrow seam allowance (figure 2).

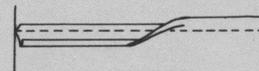


Figure 2

Edgestitch fold to garment (figure 3).

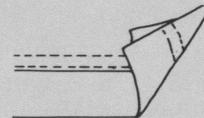


Figure 3

Bound seams: The seams of an unlined jacket or coat may be bound for a finished look. Encase the edge of each seam allowance in purchased double-fold bias tape. Place the slightly narrower edge of the tape on top and edgestitch (figure 4).

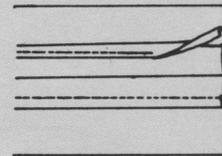


Figure 4

Topstitching

Topstitching is one of the most popular forms of fashion stitchery used on denim. It emphasizes the structural lines of the garment while keeping the seams and edges flat. The stitching can be done after the garment is completed, but it is often easier to stitch individual pieces or large areas during construction.

Topstitching can be easy if you follow these special hints. Use a size 16 needle to allow the thread to feed through the eye of the needle without breaking or fraying. Use buttonhole twist or two spools of regular thread. Stitch carefully using a guide such as the new adhesive tapes for topstitching.

Patch Pockets

Turn the raw, top edge of the pocket section $\frac{1}{4}$ inch to the wrong side and stitch close to the fold. Fold the hem to the right side on fold line, as indicated on the pattern. Stitch ends and trim as shown in figure 5. Ease stitch the rounded area $\frac{1}{4}$ inch from the seamline on the seam allowance to get a flat finish (figure 5).

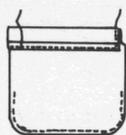


Figure 5

Pull in the ease-stitches. Turn both the hem and the seam allowance to the inside. Baste around the edges, notching away the excess fullness. Press (figure 6).

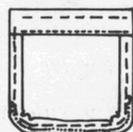


Figure 6

If the pocket is square, miter the corners. Turn all seam allowances to the right side (figure 7). Make a diagonal fold in the turned back seam allowances at the corners and press. Stitch along the pressed diagonal crease (figure 7).

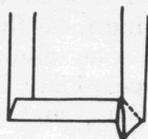


Figure 7

Trim the seam to $\frac{3}{8}$ " or less for bulkier fabrics. Press diagonal seam open (figure 8).

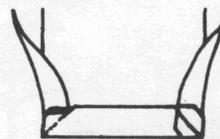


Figure 8

Turn the corners to the inside (figure 9). Press.

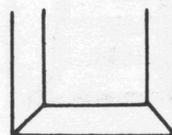
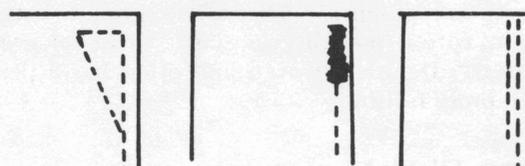


Figure 9

Baste the pocket to the garment; topstitch with one or two rows along the edges. To reinforce the top corners, stitch a triangle (10A), make a close zigzag stitch about $\frac{1}{8}$ inch wide for $\frac{1}{2}$ inch (10B) or backstitch for about $\frac{1}{2}$ inch (10C).



10A

10B

10C

Figure 10

Hems

As denim ravel easily, the best hem finishes are those that cover the raw edges of the fabric.

For added interest:

Facings. They can be used along the center front closing, neck, sleeve hem and pocket. The hem can be faced with fabrics such as prairie print.

Fastenings. Select decorative zippers, sporty buttons in colored plastic and decorative or gripper snaps.

Trims. Use decorative braids—wide, bright or textured in weave or embroidery—or designs of Indian or peasant prints.

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