

Fasteners Made Easy

Cooperative Extension Service
College of Agriculture and
Home Economics



Guide C-232

Adapted by Susan Wright from a publication by Evelyn Brannon, Clothing Specialist, Alabama Cooperative Extension Service

This publication is scheduled to be updated and reissued 8/05.

Fasteners are used on garments mainly to keep plackets closed, but they sometimes substitute for buttons. The most common fasteners are snaps, and hooks and eyes. Some are decorative and add to the appearance of the garment.

Your choice of fastener depends on the fabric you will use, the kind of opening, and the type of garment. For example, a delicate fabric may call for covered snaps, while rugged active wear needs a heavy duty snap fastener.

CLOSURE BASICS

To close and fasten most garments, one edge of the opening laps over the other. On women's garments the right side laps over the left; men's lap left over right. Most fasteners have two parts—one part is sewn to the overlap, the other to the underlap.

The following directions are for attaching fasteners to women's clothes. Remember to reverse the positions when sewing for men. Also, be aware that *right side* and *left side* refer to the

sides that are on the right and left *when you are wearing the garment*.

HOOKS AND EYES

Hooks and eyes are hidden fasteners. They can be used to hold edges together or overlapped. Hooks and eyes are available in several sizes and colors to match different fabrics. Hooks come with either loops or straight eyes (fig. 1). Most must be sewn in place, but no-sew hooks and eyes are also available. The no-sew versions must be clamped in place. Always follow the instructions in the package.

For Edges That Overlap:

1. Complete the garment before sewing on the fasteners.
2. Select a hook and straight eye that is right for the fabric. Place the hook on the wrong

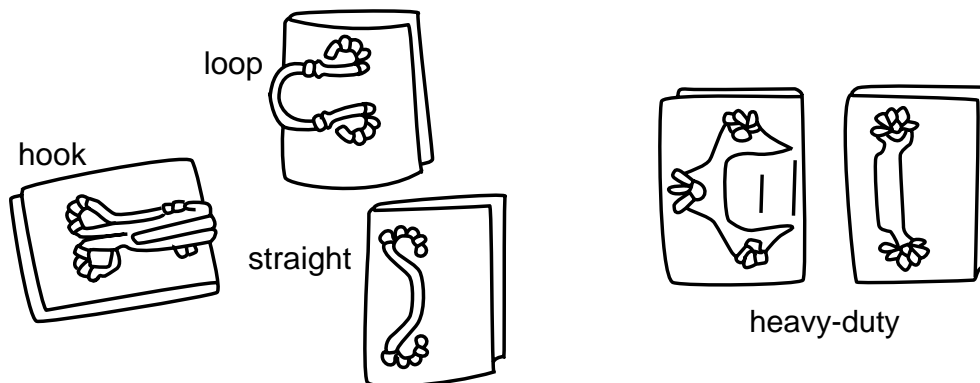


Figure 1

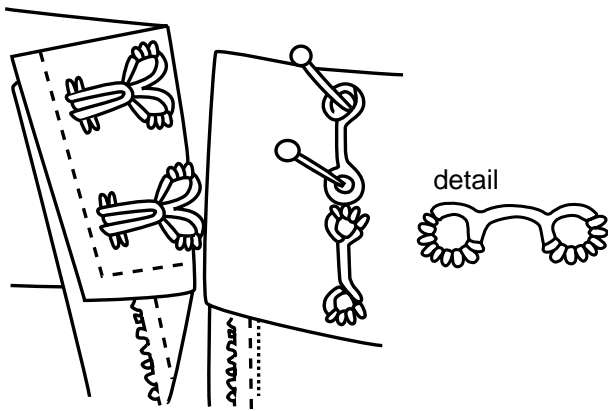


Figure 2

side $\frac{1}{8}$ inch from the edge of the overlap (fig. 2). Sew it in place with a few tacking or buttonhole stitches through the holes and across the end to hold it flat. The stitches should not show on the outside of the garment.

3. Close the placket and align the overlap. Mark the position for the eye with pins. Sew the eye to the underlap.
4. If the opening is wide as for a waistband, use two sets of hooks and eyes or a skirt/pants hook.

For Edges That Just Meet:

1. Complete the garment before sewing on the fasteners.
2. Select a hook and loop eye that is right for the fabric. Sew it on as in step 2 above.
3. Close the placket to align the edges. Mark the eye position with pins.
4. Let the eye extend slightly beyond the garment's edge. Tack in place with stitches through the holes. Make a few stitches along the sides of the loop to hold it flat.

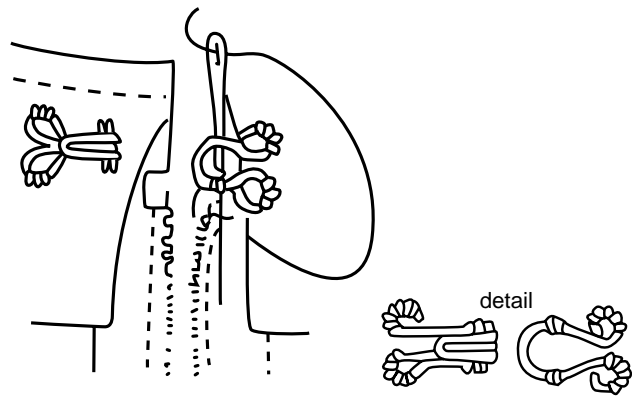


Figure 3

For Edges That Are Exposed:

If the fastener area of the garment will be exposed, such as a back neckline opening, you may want to use a short crocheted chain or buttonhole loop instead of an eye. Do not use this method in an area of strain.

Crocheted Chain

1. Attach the hook as in figure 3. Align the garment edges and mark with pins where the chain should begin and end.
2. Use a double thread with a knot. Bring the thread up through one of the markings. Take a tiny stitch to secure the thread (fig. 4).
3. Leave a loop large enough for your fingers to slip through (4a). Slip your thumb and first finger through the loop. Pull the thread through the loop to make a second loop (4b). Tighten the first loop as you pull (4c). Repeat these steps (4d and e) until the chain is the right length.
4. Run the needle through the last loop to lock the chain (4f).
5. Tack the finished loop securely to the other mark (4g). There should be some slack in the loop.

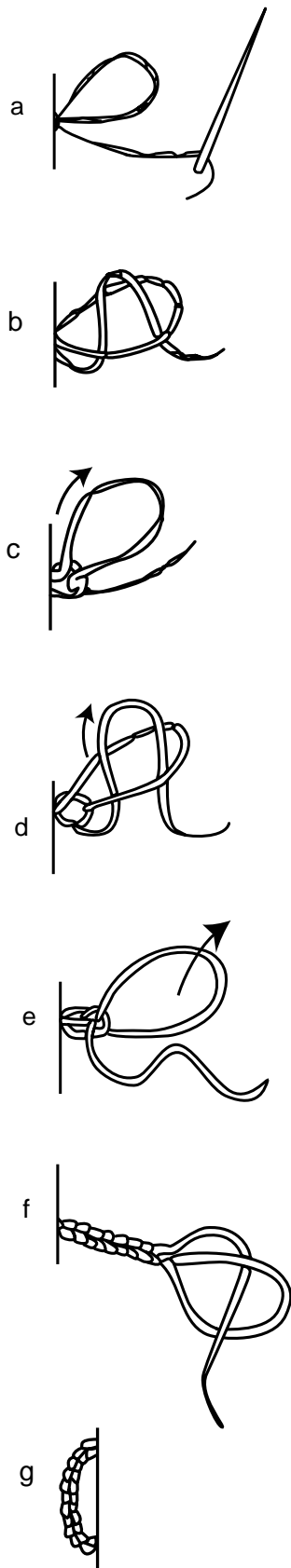


Figure 4

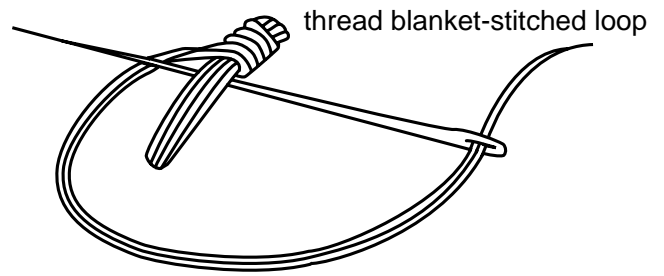


Figure 5

Buttonhole Loop

1. Attach the hook as in figure 3. Close the placket and mark with pins where the loop should begin and end.
2. Use a double thread with a knot. Insert the needle through the mark at one end of the loop. Take a stitch through the mark at the other end, allowing a little slack.
3. Take another stitch at the first end and fasten the thread securely. Use four strands of thread extending from one mark to the other with some slack. These form the core of the loop.
4. Cover the core with the buttonhole stitch (fig. 5). Fasten the last stitch in the fabric.

SNAPS

Snaps are metal fasteners (fig. 6) that come in several sizes for lightweight to heavy fabrics. They can be covered with matching fabric if the metal snap is too obvious.

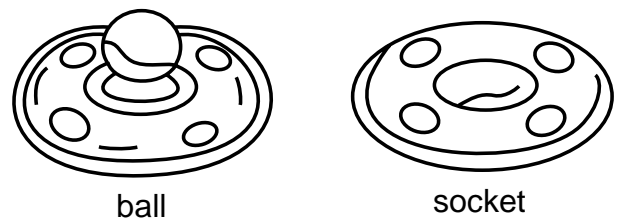


Figure 6

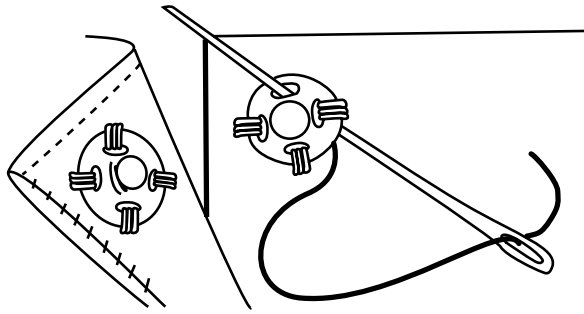


Figure 7

Use snaps on overlapping edges where there will be little strain. Sometimes they can be used when there is no overlap by the hanging snap method.

For Edges That Overlap:

1. Complete the garment before sewing on the snap.
2. Sew the ball of the snap to the overlap about $\frac{1}{8}$ inch from the edge (fig. 7). Make several tacking stitches through each hole, then run the thread under the snap to the next hole. Stitches should not show on the outside of the garment.
3. Rub chalk on the ball and close the placket. The chalk will mark the place for the socket.
4. Sew the socket in place the same way.

For Edges That Just Meet:

1. Complete the garment before sewing on the snap.
2. Sew the ball of the snap to the finished edge of the garment by sewing through only one hole (fig. 8). This is called a hanging snap.
3. Sew the socket in place as shown.

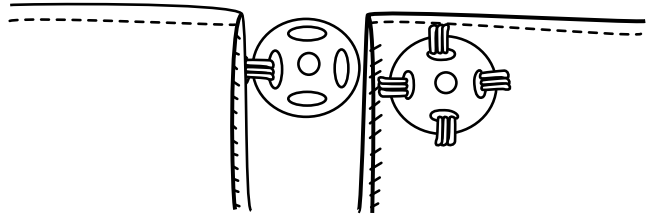


Figure 8

For Snaps That May Show:

1. Complete the garment before sewing on the snap.
2. Cut two circles of matching fabric or lining. The circles should be twice the diameter of the snap.
3. Run a gathering stitch along the outside edge of one circle (fig. 9a). Place the socket of the snap face down in the center of the circle (9b). Draw up the thread (9c) and tack it securely to the underside of the snap (9d).
4. Cover the ball of the snap the same way.
5. Sew the snap in place on the garment as in figure 7. Opening and closing the snap will open the center hole.

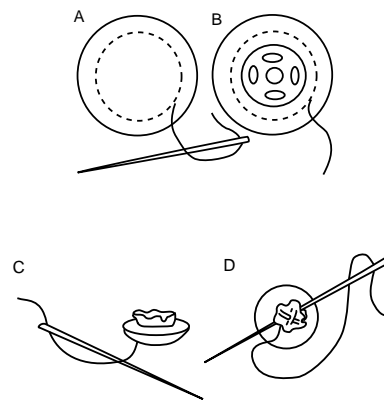


Figure 9

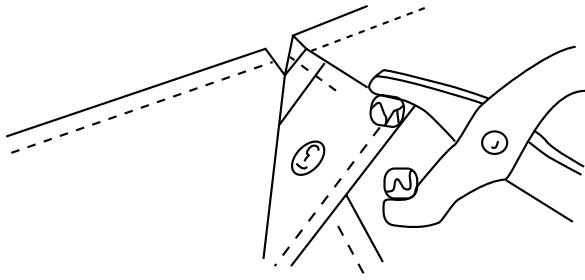


Figure 10

SNAP FASTENERS

No-sew snap fasteners can be used in place of buttons and buttonholes on Western-look casual wear, jeans, children's clothes, and other active wear. Snap fasteners are sold packaged with directions and an applicator (fig. 10), or you can buy the pliers-like tool separately. Both plain and decorative styles are strong and long wearing.

1. Complete the garment before attaching fasteners.
2. Mark the place for the ball part of the fastener on the overlap side of the garment (fig. 11).
3. Follow the package directions to attach.
4. Close the placket to mark the place where the socket part of the fastener goes.
5. Attach the socket part.

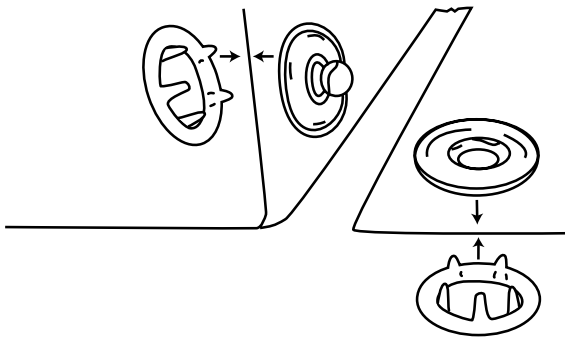


Figure 11

Gripper tape is an easy-to-apply and decorative use of snap fasteners. It is good for sportswear and infant sleepwear. The fasteners have been applied to strips of cloth tape. Simply machine stitch the socket side of the tape to the underlap of the garment and the ball side to the overlap. Be sure to line up the snaps carefully.

SELF-GRIPPING FASTENERS

Self-gripping fasteners can be sewn on by hand or by machine (fig. 12). These fasteners are made of tiny, firm, polyester hooks on one piece and soft, loops on the other. Together, they grip with strength, but peel apart easily. The size of the fastener indicates its holding strength.

Self-gripping fasteners are packaged in several shapes (fig. 13) and come in fashion colors.

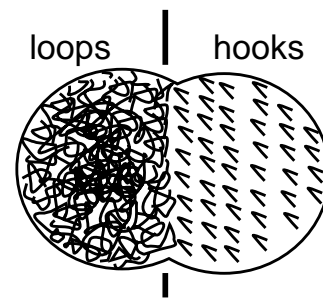


Figure 12

1. To conceal stitches, sew fasteners to the facing before joining the facing to the garment. Sew the hook piece on the side of the placket that will face away from the body.

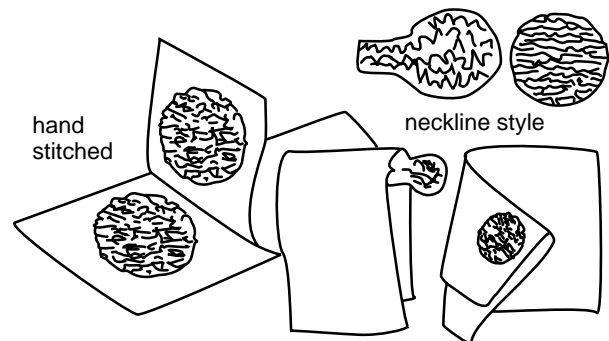


Figure 13

2. Secure fasteners in place with pins or glue stick before stitching.
3. Sew fasteners directly to the facing using 12 to 15 machine stitches per inch, or sew by hand.
4. If you apply fasteners after the garment is complete, hide the stitching on the outside with buttons or trim.

DECORATIVE FASTENERS

Some popular decorative fasteners are frogs, toggles, and ties (fig. 14). Use them instead of buttons. Frogs can be bought or handmade. You usually see them on oriental-style jackets and on capes, velvet jackets, or quilted vests. Toggles can be used on all kinds of outerwear. Ties make

an easy closure for all types of clothing. You can use ribbon or matching fabric.

For Frogs And Toggles:

1. Complete the garment before sewing on the fastener.
2. Lap or match the garment edges according to pattern directions.
3. Pin the ball of the frog or toggle in place on the left side of the garment. Pin the loop on the right side. Be sure the garment closes properly when it is fastened.
4. Hand-tack frogs neatly in place. Toggles may be stitched by hand or machine.

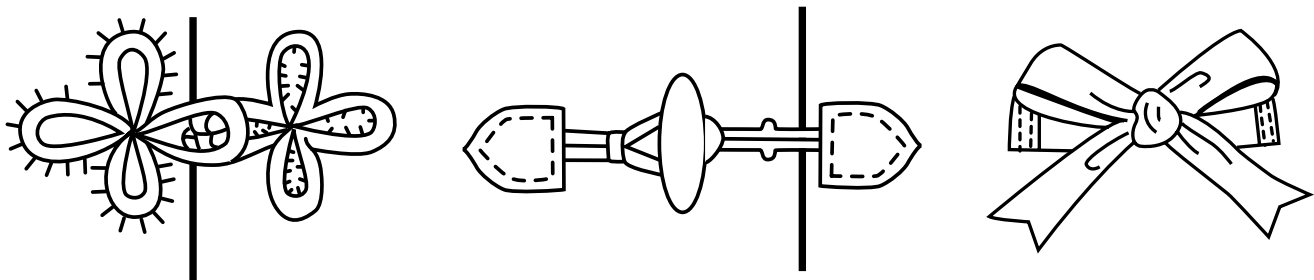


Figure 14

For Self-Fabric Ties:

1. Cut two strips of fabric for each tie. They should be four times the desired width. Add $1\frac{1}{4}$ inches to the desired length.
2. Fold the raw edges of the long sides to the middle of the strip. Turn one short end under $\frac{3}{8}$ inch. Then fold the strip in half lengthwise. Stitch the three folded sides about $\frac{1}{8}$ inch from the edge.
3. Lap the garment so the center front lines meet. Mark the positions for each tie. The marks should be 1 inch from the center front line.
4. Pin the raw edge of each tie to the garment with $\frac{3}{8}$ inch extending over the mark (fig. 15a).

5. Stitch on the mark. Trim the raw edge to $\frac{3}{8}$ inch.
6. Press the tie toward the center front line. Stitch through all layers $\frac{1}{4}$ inch from the turned edge (15b). Backstitch to secure stitches.

For Ribbon Ties:

Follow steps 3 through 6 for self-fabric ties above. After stitching, notch the raw edges or cut them diagonally to prevent raveling.

REFERENCES

Cooperative Extension Service, Ohio State University, *Plackets and Buttonholes*.

Simplicity Pattern Company, *Fasten It*.

The McCall Pattern Company, *"Show Me" Book of Sewing*.

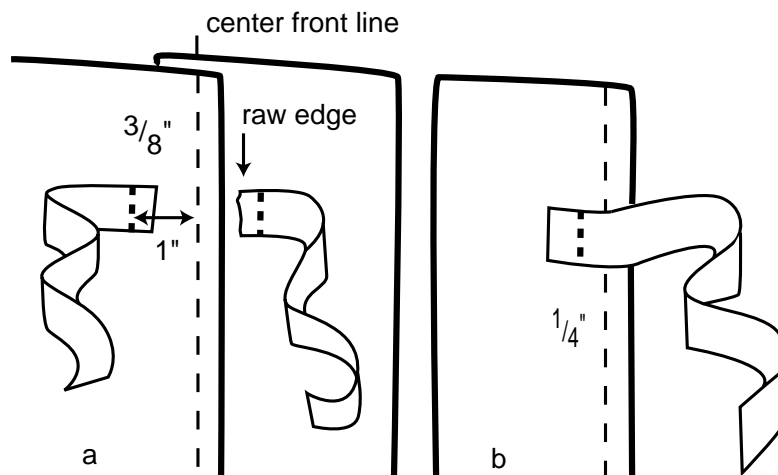


Figure 15

New Mexico State University is an equal opportunity/affirmative action employer and educator. NMSU and the U.S. Department of Agriculture cooperating.