



Mastering Zipper Techniques

with Sunni Standing

Instructions

What You Will Need

Zipper Feet

There are three types of zipper feet out there: a zipper foot, an adjustable zipper foot and an invisible zipper foot. I have an adjustable zipper foot and an invisible zipper foot and feel that those are the only two that you really need.

Stabilizer

Silk organza, fusible tricot or stay tape are but a few options. I prefer SewKeysE Knit Stay Tape in the 1" or 1¼" widths. You can find it online in my shop here: shop.afashionablestitch.com

Steam-a-Seam Fusible Web Tape

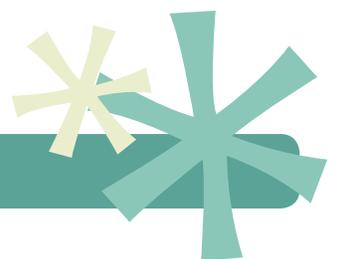
I love this stuff for temporary basting. It makes zippers so much easier to put in and I'm quite sure that you'll find it useful for a menagerie of other sewing projects. It can usually be picked up in your local fabric store. I use the ¼" width and it lasts an awfully long time.



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Learn more about the Bernina 3-Series machines used in this class at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8oQbGKRcZGU>





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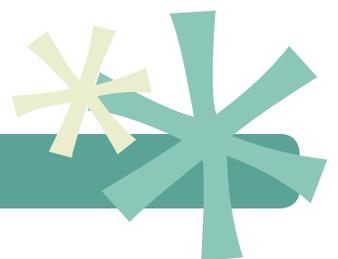
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Traditional Slot Seam Zipper Insertion

Step by Step

This zipper application is great for all types of garments. My favorite is on a skirt with a waistband.

1. Prep the zipper: If needed, shorten your zipper to the desired length by bar tacking across the zipper teeth/coil with needle and thread at the new zipper stop location. Cut off the end of the zipper 1" – 1½" away from your newly formed thread stop.
2. Prep the zipper opening in the garment: Stabilize the wrong side of the zipper opening with strips of silk organza, fusible tricot, or a fusible knit stay tape. Stitch the garment's seam to the zipper stop location and backstitch in place.
3. Press the garment's seam open. Continue on, pressing the zipper opening by folding back the zipper opening's edges by the allotted seam allowance width and pressing permanently in place.
4. With the garment right side up, align the zipper opening's folded edges together. Take your zipper and center it under the zipper opening. Hand baste in place or use Steam-a-Seam tape to temporarily tack the zipper tapes in place.
5. With a zipper foot attached to your machine, stitch the zipper permanently in place. To do this, stitch from the right side of the garment, with the zipper unzipped and stitching ¼" – ⅜" from the zipper teeth. Stitch down one side, then across the bottom of the zipper opening and back up the other side. Remove hand basting stitches if applicable.





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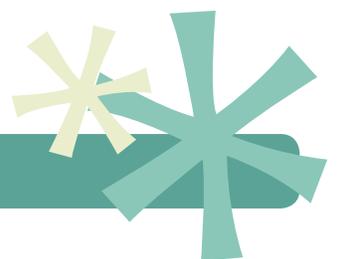
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Slot Seam Zipper Insertion with a Lining or Facing

Step by Step

I prefer my zipper applications to look clean on both the inside and out. When dealing with a lining in, say, a dress or a skirt, sometimes the inside doesn't end up looking as clean as the outside. To prevent this, I do the entire process by machine.

1. Prep the zipper: If needed, shorten your zipper to the desired length by bar tacking across the zipper teeth/coil with needle and thread at the new zipper stop location. Cut off the end of the zipper 1" – 1½" away from your newly formed thread stop.
2. Prep the zipper opening in the lining or lining/facing unit: Stitch the garment's seam to the zipper stop location and backstitch in place.
3. Insert the zipper into the lining. To do this, stitch the zipper tape to the lining zipper opening with the zipper wrong side pinned to the lining zipper opening. In other words, if you were to put the lining on at this point, the zipper would be facing outward from the body. Set aside.
4. Prep the zipper opening in the outer shell/garment: Stabilize the wrong side of the zipper opening with strips of silk organza, fusible tricot, or a fusible knit stay tape. Stitch the garment's seam to the zipper stop location and backstitch in place.
5. Press the garment's seam open. Continue on pressing the zipper opening by folding back the zipper opening's edges by the allotted seam allowance width and pressing permanently in place.
6. Place the lining inside the garment with the garment/outer shell right side out. Take your zipper/lining unit and center it under the zipper opening in the garment/outer shell. Hand baste in place or use Steam-a-Seam to temporarily tack the zipper in place.





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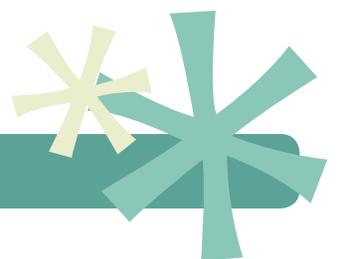
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Slot Seam Zipper Insertion with a Lining or Facing

7. With a zipper foot attached to your machine, stitch the zipper permanently in place. To do this, stitch through all layers from the right side of the garment, with the zipper unzipped and stitching $\frac{1}{4}$ " – $\frac{3}{8}$ " from the folded edge of the zipper opening. Stitch down each side separately and then stitch across the bottom of the zipper opening with a narrow and fine zigzag stitch. Remove hand basting stitches if applicable.

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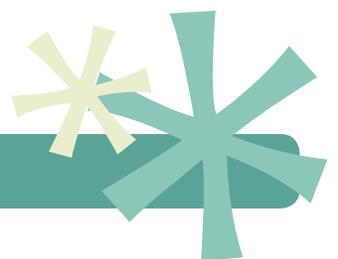
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Invisible Zipper Insertion

Step by Step

I have a love/hate relationship with invisible zippers and you might find the same. I still use them for many applications as I truly love the invisible quality of invisible zippers. For my purposes, I feel that they require an invisible zipper foot, but I've seen many beautifully and perfectly inserted invisible zippers done with a regular adjustable machine foot. Every machine is different, so try out your adjustable zipper foot before investing in an invisible zipper foot. You may find you don't need one.

1. Prep the zipper: If needed, shorten your zipper to the desired length by bar tacking across the zipper teeth/coil with needle and thread at the new zipper stop location. Cut off the end of the zipper 1" – 1½" away from your newly formed thread stop.
2. Prep the zipper opening in the garment: Stabilize the wrong side of the zipper opening with strips of silk organza, fusible tricot, or a fusible knit stay tape.
3. Temporarily mark the zipper opening's seam allowance by temporarily steaming the seam allowance fold in place or thread tracing the seam line. If you creased the seam allowance, unfold and lay flat.
4. With the zipper unzipped, pin one side of the invisible zipper tape to the zipper opening, right sides together.
5. Using your invisible zipper foot, or your conventional zipper foot, open the teeth with your finger and stitch from the top of the zipper to the bottom through all layers. Stitch close to the zipper teeth, being careful not to catch the zipper teeth. Backstitch a few times at the bottom of the zipper opening mark.
6. Repeat step 4 and 5 for the other side of the zipper opening.





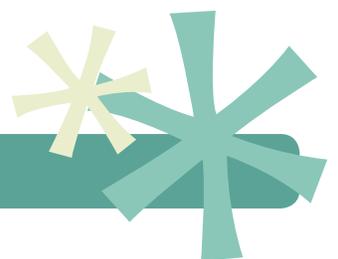
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Invisible Zipper Insertion

7. Close the zipper. At the base of the zipper, pull the zipper tape away from the seam allowance with your fingers and spear a pin from one stitched side to the other. Stitch and backstitch with an adjustable zipper foot from a few stitches above the speared pin to the end of the garment.





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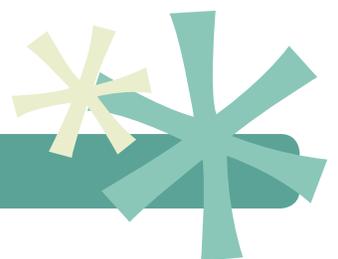
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Invisible Zipper Insertion with a Lining or Facing

Step by Step

The great part about using an invisible zipper in a garment with a lining or a facing or a combination of the two, is that you don't have to do the process in reverse like in the Slot Seam Zipper with Lining or Lining/Facing Unit. Once you have your invisible zipper installed in your garment shell, you can begin with the next steps.

1. After attaching zipper to garment's outer shell, stitch facing or lining together. If you're dealing with a facing/lining unit, as in the case of a skirt with a waistband, and you want the zipper to extend into the waistband, stitch the lining and facing together in the same fashion as you stitched the outer shell.
2. With the zipper unzipped, attach the outer shell to the facing, lining, or lining/facing unit. To do this, use an adjustable zipper foot on your sewing machine and stitch the facing and/or lining with right sides together along the zipper tape, sandwiching the zipper coil inside the lining and outer shell. Do the same for the opposite side of the zipper opening.
3. Now, with right sides together, stitch across the top of the zipper opening area attaching the garment's outer shell to the facing and/or lining. This step is easier to envision with a skirt that has a waistband. You would attach the outer shell waistband to the facing and/or lining unit waistband area.
4. Clip the corners, at the top of the zipper opening and turn your garment to the right side. Press in place.
5. If needed, as on a skirt with a waistband, stitch in the ditch, where the skirt meets the waistband from the right side of the garment to secure the facing and/or lining unit to the outer shell.





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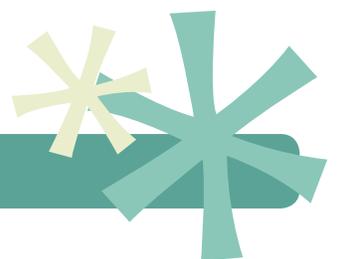
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Lapped Zipper Insertion

Step by Step

Here's a popular alternative to either of the above zipper insertion techniques. This zipper insertion combines the best of both worlds – using a traditional zipper and giving it an invisible like quality whilst also being very attractive in garments. It's a favorite of mine! I love lapped zippers in the side seam of dresses. Please note that this particular zipper insertion requires a seam allowance of $\frac{5}{8}$ " or wider.

1. Prep the zipper: If needed, shorten your zipper to the desired length by bar tacking across the zipper teeth/coil with needle and thread at the new zipper stop location. Cut off the end of the zipper 1" – 1½" away from your newly formed thread stop.
2. Prep the zipper opening in the garment: Stabilize the wrong side of the zipper opening with strips of silk organza, fusible tricot, or a fusible knit stay tape. Stitch the garment's seam to the zipper stop location and back stitch in place.
3. Baste the zipper opening closed. Press seam open.
4. Position the garment so that one seam allowance is laid flat away from the garment; pin the closed zipper to this seam allowance. When positioning, the zipper teeth should be directly over the middle of the seam. Baste zipper to the seam allowance close to the seam allowance edge.
5. Keeping the seam allowance where you've just basted the zipper free from the garment, fold over the seam allowance near the seam to the edge of the zipper teeth. Pin in place. Machine stitch folded seam allowance edge to zipper with the aid of an adjustable zipper foot.
6. Turn the garment right side out. From right side, pin zipper to remaining seam allowance. Topstitch across the top (for side application on a dress only), down the side, and across bottom of zipper, stitching approximately $\frac{3}{8}$ " – $\frac{1}{2}$ " from the seamline.
7. Unpick the zipper opening and Voila! A beautifully lapped zipper is now adorning your handmade garment.





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Zipper Tips



Zip It Up

Zippers can be the bane of a sewer's sewing life! With a few tips and tricks, they don't have to be though. Allow yourself ample time for zipper insertions and know that the process for a beautifully inserted zipper is not done in the same amount of time it takes to sew a simple seam. Also remember the old adage, "practice makes perfect." This is true of many techniques in sewing and zipper insertions are no different. If your first zipper insertion isn't everything you had hoped, don't let that get you down! Don't stop trying to perfect your skill! The road to beautifully applied zippers is just around the corner and

though you'll probably never stop learning better and newer ways to insert zippers, conquering one zipper application takes a few practice runs.

Tips & Tricks for Stellar Zips

I feel that all zippers benefit from the zipper opening being stabilized. I've used silk organza cut in 1" strips and fusible knit stay tape. I feel that stabilizing the zipper opening also makes the zipper easier to sew, and gives it a longer life.

If your zipper is wrinkled or crinkled, iron out the zipper tape before insertion. Don't place a hot iron directly on the coils or teeth though! Those zippers with polyester and nylon coils melt under the iron. They'll still zip up and down, but once they've been inserted into a garment they can rip apart. Ask me how I know!

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