

DRESS TO IMPRESS WITH THESE TRADITIONAL TECHNIQUES

As the old saying goes, 'it's the details that count' – and this is certainly true when it comes to dressmaking. Whilst you can create a perfectly lovely dress using simple seams and quick-fixes, you can easily take your garments to the next skill level by adding in couture techniques that will neaten them up and make them last longer. Here we've brought together a few that'll really make your projects shine!

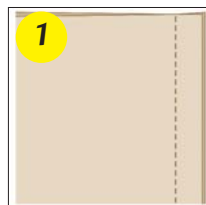
Couture classics



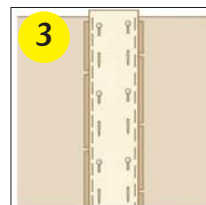
How to...add a boned seam



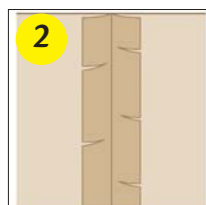
1 Make a plain seam with the fabric placed right sides together, and sew a line of straight stitches 1.5cm from the edge.



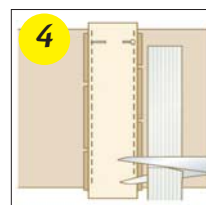
3 Place a 1.8cm wide satin ribbon over the seam allowances and pin to the edges. Sew the edge of the ribbon to the seam allowance.



2 Press open and snip the outer edges of the seam allowances, if necessary, to ensure that the seam lies flat.



4 Place a pin across the top of the seam and insert the boning. Check and trim the boning to the correct length.



Sew smart

When cutting the boning, either smooth off the corners to remove the chance of sharp edges poking through the garment, or cover these edges with small scraps of fabric sewn in place, before feeding it into the channel.

Attach boning with this method, rather than sewing it to the lining, to create a more secure finish to a garment.

Add boning to eliminate the need for straps – it will help to hold the garment snugly to the body.

Boning is added to seams mainly for evening and bridal wear to give additional support and to improve the final appearance. There are various ways of attaching boning, but this method works well with all types of fabric.

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Dressmaker's essentials (see page 34 of this month's Sew)

Satin bias ribbon

Boning

How to...use horse-hair braid



A hem finished with a horse-hair braid has a stiffened effect that gives a crisp finish to full skirts and dresses. Whether narrow or wide, both types of braid are easy to apply.

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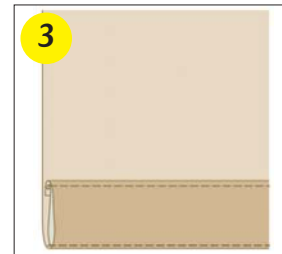
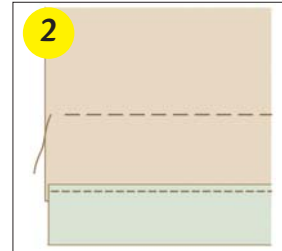
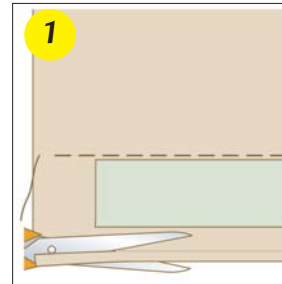
Dressmaker's essentials (see page 34 of this month's Sew)

Nylon "horse-hair" braid, narrow or wide

1 Mark the length of the finished hem, then add the width of the braid, plus an additional 6mm. Trim the hem at this level.

2 Working on the inside, place the braid over the bottom edge 6mm from the edge on the wrong side. Stitch together close to the edge of the braid.

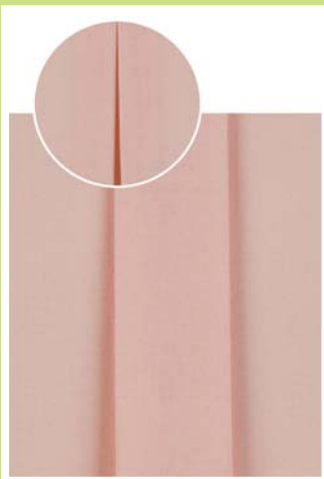
3 Fold the braid up twice to conceal it within the hem. Finish a narrow braid with top stitching and edge stitching and a wide braid by hand, with either a slip stitch or lockstitch.



Sew smart

Take care not to pull the nylon braid when attaching it; this may cause a wavy edge.

How to...work box pleats



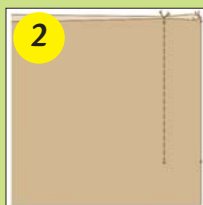
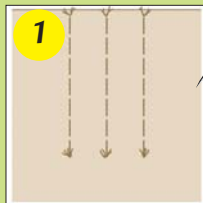
A box pleat is a reversed inverted pleat. The two folds face away from each other on the surface giving a wide vertical pleat. Use it on skirts, pockets, and the centre back of a shirt where it meets the yoke.

1 Mark the position and size of the pleat with tailor's tacks or chalk.

2 Fold the pleat through the centre with the wrong sides of the fabric facing. Machine a straight stitch along the marked line.

3 Press the line of stitching, then fold so the centre seam lies flat and directly below the centre of the box pleat. Tack within the seam allowance.

4 Press the box pleat and continue to make up the garment.



Sew smart

Box pleats may be stitched partly down as described, or alternatively left to hang free from the waist or a seam.

Choose fabric wisely. A synthetic fabric may be too springy for box pleats. Material made of natural fibres, however, may pleat well, but also crease badly.

Secure thread ends and use a cloth when pressing, to protect the surface of the fabric.

Take it further

For these and more fantastic guides and dressmaker's tips and tricks, make sure to check out Lorna Knight's **The Dressmaker's Technique Bible: A Complete Guide to Fashion Sewing Techniques** (£14.99, David & Charles).



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Dressmaker's essentials (see page 34 of this month's Sew)

Pressing cloth

FOLLOW OUR GUIDE FOR PERFECT RESULTS!

