

Zipper Application 101

Since I started sewing at age 9, I have learned many lessons and techniques that were easy to put in practice. When I took a seamstress course at 15, the most scary lesson for me to learn was how to apply a zipper. The only idea of applying a zipper was like trying to climb the highest mountain on earth: almost impossible!

I know that for many of you the word “zipper” is taboo, a no-no; and I’ve talked with many sewers that spend years sewing only projects that didn’t require zippers just for the fear of it. That’s why I made this tutorial. Do you think you’ll never be able to do it? Well, it’s not as difficult as you think! Just follow these steps...

Ways to apply a zipper

There are 4 ways to insert a zipper:

- The exposed way
- The centered way
- The lapped way
- The invisible way

Every method has their own secrets, and differ in degrees of difficulty.

(here they are listed from the easiest to the most difficult)



On this tutorial I will teach you **HOW TO APPLY AN EXPOSED ZIPPER** (that is, you will see the teeth)

This is the most basic method you could learn at any sewing course and it's great for interior parts of a garment, pillow covers, clutches and handbag pockets.

MACHINE ZIPPER FEET

A zipper foot is actually a foot that comes with your sewing machine's feet arsenal and looks like half of a standard sewing foot. One side is avoided so you can get close to the zipper teeth without bumping into them. Even though there are several brands and styles, all serve the same purpose. In some machines the foot will snap on the vertical shank; other brands will provide the foot and shank incorporated in one piece. Depending on your foot, you will need to move the position of your sewing machine's needle, to the left or to the right.

Please refer to your sewing machine instruction manual for more information on how to position needle and foot.

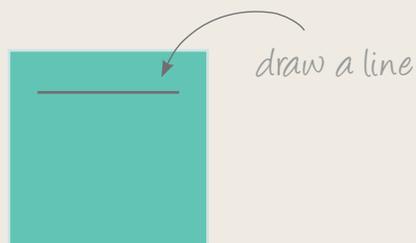


all in one

snap-on

STEP 1

- To start, have your exterior fabric piece ready. This piece has to be wider than the zipper itself. It doesn't matter how big, it will depend on the piece you are constructing. You'll need to draw a line that will be the zipper placement guide (use a water soluble marker). Make sure this line has the same length of the zipper.



STEP 2

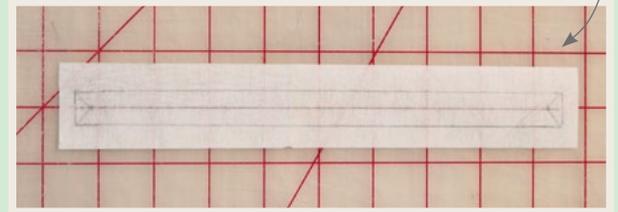
- Cut the zipper facing. Most of the times will be a rectangle with 2" in height. It has to be 1" longer than the zipper itself.
- Cut the zipper interfacing. This piece usually is a medium weight fusible interfacing (to give stability to the construction). It has to be 1/4" smaller (on each side) than the zipper facing.

Take this as an example: if the zipper is 9" long, the facing will be 2x10, and the zipper interfacing should be 9 1/2" by 1 1/2".

STEP 3

- On the non fusible side of the interfacing draw a 9" by 1/2" rectangle that will be centered. Draw a line across the center. Then, measure 1/4" in on each side of the center line and make a dot. From that dot, draw a line connecting each corner of the rectangle.

draw on interfacing



STEP 4

Now fuse the interfacing piece to the zipper facing:

- Place the zipper facing wrong side up
- Center the interfacing piece with fusible side down on top
- Press following manufacturer instructions.

center both pieces

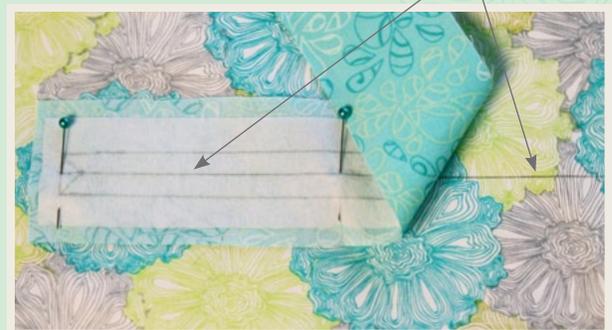


press

STEP 5

- Facing right sides together align the zipper facing piece with the placement guide on the exterior fabric. Pin in place.

align

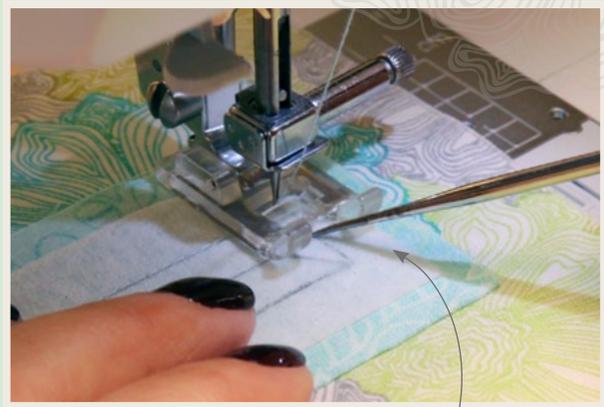


right sides together



STEP 6

- For this step you will use your regular straight stitch presser foot. Starting from one corner, stitch around the rectangle exactly on top of the drawn line, as shown. Pivot 90° on corners.



pivot 90° on corners



STEP 7

- Working with a small pair of scissors insert the blade on the center line and cut across stopping at the marked dot.
- Cut along the center marked line through both fabrics, also snipping the diagonal lines, out and towards the corners.
- Make sure you don't cut through the stitched lines.



cut on the red lines only



STEP 8

- Working from the right side of the exterior fabric, turn the facing rectangle towards the back of the exterior fabric by pushing it through the cut line.



STEP 9

- Working on the wrong side of the fabric press down the zipper facing until you yield nice and crisp corners.



STEP 10

- Flip the fabric piece over to the right side, place the zipper behind the open rectangle.
- Center in place. Pin from the front.
- For this step, switch to a zipper foot. Sew around the facing rectangle hole, 1/8" from the edge (you will be sewing through the exterior fabric, zipper facing, and the zipper tape).



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