

Clothing and TEXTILES

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Sewing Technique: Buttons

There are two kinds of buttons that are normally used, a sew-through button and a shank button. Buttons can be used for garment closure and as a decorative touch to a garment. The choices available for buttons is endless and can allow for individualization of a garment. Sew-through buttons are flat with two or more holes and can be sewn on by hand or a machine. This type of button can lie flat against the garment to add a decorative element, however, for it to be functional a thread shank needs to be used that is long enough for the button to fit through the button hole and lie flat with no twists or puckers. Buttons with shanks already have shanks on the underside of the buttons raising the button high enough to fit through multiple layers of fabric. This type of button can only be sewn on by hand and may need a thread shank if additional length is needed.



SUPPLIES:

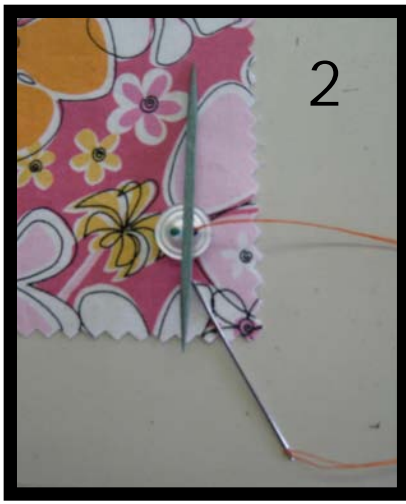
Fabric, Needle, Thread, Scissors, Button, Toothpick, and Interfacing

*Follow pattern specifications to prepare for button attachment. Most patterns recommend the garment fabric to be interfaced to add strength and support to the button. Consult pattern for button placement. Mark desired placement directly onto fabric for accuracy.



Directions for sewing on a button by hand:

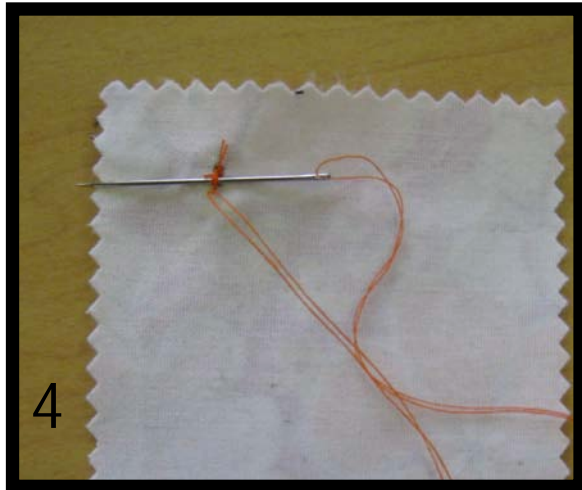
STEP 1: Secure a double thread on the underside of the garment. The thread should go through both the interfacing and the fabric. For the first stitch, start from the underside of the garment and guide needle and thread up through one of the holes of the button.



STEP 2: Place a toothpick on top of the button (as seen in Photo 2). With the toothpick in place, guide the needle down through the adjacent hole.



STEP 3: Repeat step two moving from the front to back side of the garment until the button is secured onto garment fabric (approximately five times).



STEP 4: Once the button is attached and the needle and thread are on the underside of the garment, stitch through the threads catching the fabric. Avoid pulling the thread tight and place the needle back through the loop created. Pull the thread tight to create a knot in the thread. Finish by removing the toothpick.



STEP 5: To create a shank with a sew-through button bring the needle back to the right side of the garment. Wrap the thread around the loose threads three to four times. To secure the shank stitch back down through to the underside of the garment and secure thread the same as in step 4.

Note: If attaching a shank button to a garment, follow the same steps as a sew-through button. A toothpick is not needed for this technique to create length or to complete step 5. Be sure to secure thread on the underside of the garment.



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Directions for Attaching a Button with a Sewing Machine:

STEP 1: Measure the distance between the holes on the top of the button. Adjust the stitch width setting on the sewing machine to match the distance between the holes on the top of the button being attached to garment.

STEP 2: Once width has been determined, stitch 5 to 8 consecutive stitches.

STEP 3: To secure button on garment, pull threads to underside of garment and tie a knot with the excess threads.



Industry Standards for Attaching a Button to a Garment

- Buttons, functional or decorative, are appropriate size and style for garment
- Button has accurate shank width to accommodate thickness of fabric
- Correct placement on garment
- Neat in appearance on back and front side of garment
- Button is securely fastened with appropriate thread and neat stitches
- Fabric is reinforced with interfacing or an additional button according to fabric type and use
- Button keeps garment closed

Industry Standards for a Well-Constructed Buttonhole

- Buttonholes are an equal distance apart
- Buttonhole is the correct length and width for button to fit through
- Buttonhole is neat in appearance on right and wrong side of the fabric
- Buttonhole is flat and attractive
- Buttonhole is positioned so button is secured when garment is being worn
- Buttonhole is evenly slashed and excess threads are trimmed

References:

Readers Digest. (2010). *New complete guide to sewing*. Pleasantville, NY: Readers Digest Association Inc.

Brackelsberg, Phyllis, & Marshall, Ruth. (1990). *Unit method of clothing construction, 7th ed.* Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press Inc.

Cole, J., & Czachor, S. (2009). *Professional sewing techniques for designers*. New York: Fairchild Publications, Inc.

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This publication is issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Noelle E. Cockett, Vice President for Extension and Agriculture, Utah State University.(FC/Clothing&Textiles/2012-09pr)