

# Basic Welt Pockets and Bound Buttonholes

## A modified Bishop Method

### Gilbert Muniz

The length of your pocket opening needs to fit your hand plus an extra ½ inch, but really, you can make the pocket opening as long as you want.

You can use this same welt technique to create buttonholes. Just make the welts of the buttonhole narrower, and shorten the buttonhole to the length of the button plus 1/8<sup>th</sup> inch.

This same pocket/buttonhole technique can be exaggerated and used vertically as arm openings on capes.

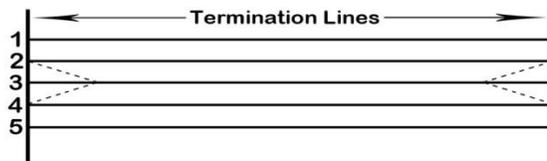
### Basic Welt Pocket: Welts

1 - Determine the placement of the pocket, and on the wrong side of the fabric, fuse a strip of lightweight interfacing to the pocket area. The interfacing should just be wide enough to cover both of your termination points.

2 –On the fused interfacing, mark the ends of the pocket with a pencil.

3 – By hand, baste the placement line and cross mark the ends. Set aside.

4 – On a starched fabric or non-fusible stabilizer stay, draw your desired pocket-width diagram. You can make the welts as wide as you want, but keep the lines parallel and even with each other, and number them accordingly. The space between lines will determine the finished size of the pocket's welts.



5 – Matching line 3 to the wrong side of the marked pocket placement and matching the termination points exactly, pin or tape the stay in place.

6 – Cut a welt piece from fashion fabric (use a fusible interfacing on the wrong side if the fabric is lightweight), at least the width of your drawn diagram plus 2 times the finished pocket width **BY** the finished pocket length + 2 inches.

For example, if your finished pocket is going to be 1" wide (1/2" welt + 1/2" welt) by 5 inches long, then your fashion fabric welt needs to be:

2" wide for the line diagram + 2" for double the finished pocket width (**4 inches**) by 5 inches + 2 inches (**7 inches**).

When in doubt, make the fashion fabric welt piece bigger than you need. You can always trim off later. If you are matching plaids or prints, do so at this time.

7 – Center the right side of the welt piece on the right side of the garment, over the basted pocket placement. Pin or tape in place. You can adjust the piece, at this time, if you need to match plaids.

8 – On the wrong side of the garment, following lines 1 and 5, machine or hand baste just past the termination lines. If you are working with a lightweight fabric, you should hand baste. Once you've basted, remove the pins or tape.

- 9 – On the right side of the garment, fold one side of the welt fabric over line 1 and press firmly. Pin or tape in place.
- 10 – Turn to the wrong side of the garment and stitch on line 2 of the diagram, with a shorter than average stitch (2.0 or there about). Begin and end EXACTLY on the termination lines. Count your beginning backstitches to make sure you are on point. Remove pins/tape.
- 11 – On the right side of the garment, fold the other end of the welt fabric over line 4 and press firmly. Pin or tape in place keeping the first folded edge you sewed free (If you have to, pin or tape it out of the way).
- 12 – Turn the garment to the wrong side and sew on line 4, just like in step 10. Remove pins/tape.
- 13 – Remove all basting stitches from the pocket area.
- 14 – With sharp scissors, slash on line three, keeping folded welt ends free. Cut until about  $\frac{3}{4}$  away from the ends, then cut a wedge like the diagram. Using sharp scissors, clip to just a thread's distance away from the stitched lines at the termination points, but don't cut past the termination points.
- 15 – Turn the welts to the inside and finger press. Keep the ends clean and even making sure to hide the wedge to the back. You can wiggle the corner ends of the pockets slightly, to get the welt corners nice and even. When you are happy with the results, press with an iron. At this point you can trim any welt seam allowance if necessary. Leave at least  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch around the sewn welts.
- 16 – Keeping the garment free, stitch the wedge down along the edge of the welts, through the welt fabric. This will keep the sides of the pocket crisp and keep the wedge from rolling to the outside.
- 17 – Once pressed and trimmed, hand-baste the welts closed with a running whipstitch. This will keep them from warping as you finish the garment.

### **Basic Welt Pocket: Optional Flap**

If you want your pocket to have a flap, I suggest you don't draft a pattern for the flap until after the pockets are sewn. Even though you've been as precise as possible, there is a chance that each of your pockets is slightly uneven, even if by  $\frac{1}{8}$ <sup>th</sup> of an inch.

The pocket flap should go to and should be measured for after the pocket welts are sewn.

You will insert the flap prior to basting the finished welts closed.

For a simple flap:

- 1 - Cut a piece of fabric (if the fabric is lightweight, use a fusible interfacing on the back) that is about 1 inch longer than the finished pocket and twice the width of desired flap plus 2 inches, and fold it in half, horizontally.
- 2 - Pin the sides together and place the upper raw edge on the lower welt.
- 3 - Mark, with pencil or pin, the length of the flap just inside of the pocket's corners. Draw a straight line (or shaped as desired) to the fold, on each side.
- 4 - Stitch on the drawn lines, trim seam allowance to about  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch on the stitched lines only, turn the flap inside out, and press well.
- 5 – Baste the raw edges together.
- 6 – Insert the flap over the bottom welt and under the top welt of the pocket. Adjust it until the flap is even and perpendicular to the open pocket line, and pin the flap to the welt seam allowance.
- 7 – Keeping the garment free, and stitching as close to the welt stitching on the welt seam allowance as possible, baste the flap in place along the welt seam allowance edge.

8 – Now you can baste the welts closed.

### **Basic Welt Pocket: Attaching the Pocketing**

The pocket can be as deep as you need, but be sure it doesn't extend past the hem of the garment or lining.

1 - Cut a strip of pocketing or lining your desired length plus 2 inches by the width of the pocket, plus 2 inches. The two inches are approximate. It just depends on how much seam allowance you left around the welts – adjust accordingly.

2 –Pin one end of the pocketing, right sides together, to the seam allowance of the bottom welt, matching raw edges. Stitch across, as close as possible to the welt stitching. Finger press the pocketing down.

3 –Fold the other end of the pocketing to the top edge of the welt fabric, match raw edges, and stitch as close to the welt stitching as possible. Lightly press the pocketing fold.

4 – Lay the garment down and fold back the garment on one side of the pocket, against the edge of the welt. The fold will indicate a straight line on the pocket. Lightly draw this straight line with a pencil. Repeat on the other side of the pocket. Pin the pocketing together if necessary to keep from shifting.

5 – Keeping the garment free, stitch on the pencil line from the top of the top welt all the way to the bottom fold of the pocketing. Try to go over the stitches that are keeping the wedge down. If desired, you can slightly curve the bottom of the pocket with stitching. Repeat for the other side.

6 – Trim all excess seam allowance as desired. The pocket is complete. Keep the basting on the welts until the garment is completely finished.

### **Basic Bound Buttonhole: Facings**

If you are making a buttonhole, you will need to have an opening on the facing of the garment so the buttonhole can function. If the buttonhole is just decorative, you can skip this step.

It is best to cut the facing, make the buttonhole backs, and then attach the facing to the garment. Make sure to be exact in the backings' placements when you mark them; otherwise, your buttonholes and backings won't match when sewn.

You can use any technique you want, but one of these three will usually work for most applications:

**A – Make a machine buttonhole** that is the same length as the bound buttonhole, in the exact spot the bound buttonhole opening matches to the facing, then slip stitch the two opening together so they act as one. Make sure to stitch just to the back of the welts so the hand stitching doesn't show to the front of the bound buttonhole. (Personal note: This is my least favorite technique, but works well with costumes.)

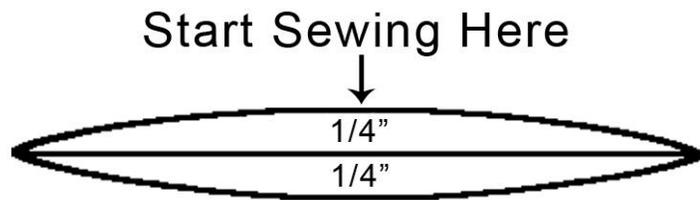
### **B – Use a Spanish snap opening (I typically use this for lighter weight fabrics)**

1 – Mark the buttonhole opening on the right side of the facing with a pencil, in the exact spot the bound buttonhole matches the facing. Apply a small piece of lightweight fusible interfacing to the wrong side of the facing, directly over the marked buttonhole.

2 – Take a piece of lightweight batiste or silk organza that is just about an inch bigger, on all sides, than the buttonhole opening.

3 – Starting in the middle, about ¼" away from the marked line, stitch a narrow football shape that ends 1/16<sup>th</sup> out from the end of the buttonhole. Sink the needle, raise the presser foot and pivot the facing.

Continue stitching just as before, but go all the way to the other end of the opening, going past the mark by  $1/16^{\text{th}}$  inch. Pivot as before and continue back to the beginning and overlap the stitches by about  $1/4$  inch. Backstitch just a few stitches.



4 – Slash the center of the football, up to about a thread way from the ends, but do not clip past the ends.

5 – Turn the organza to the inside and grab the two ends with both hands. Now pull the ends of the organza tautly. This is the “snap” part. The tugging forces the corners in.

6 – Finger-press the organza so none of it shows to the outside and then press well with an iron.

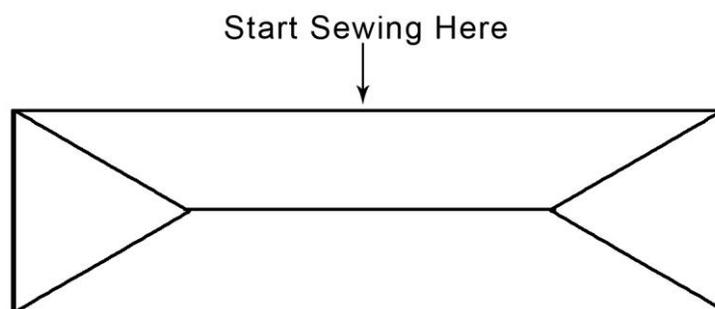
7 – Once all the facing openings are complete and the facing has been sewn on, sew all the facing openings to the buttonholes with a slip stitch or tiny applique stitch. Make sure to sew just to the back of the welts so none of the stitches show to the outside.

### **C – Make an exact opening (I typically use this for heavier fabrics)**

1 – Mark the buttonhole opening on the right side of the facing with a pencil, in the exact spot the bound buttonhole matches the facing. Apply a small piece of lightweight fusible interfacing to the wrong side of the facing, directly over the marked buttonhole.

2 – Take a piece of lightweight batiste or silk organza that is just about an inch bigger, on all sides, than the buttonhole opening.

3 – Starting in the middle, sew a rectangle around the marked line that is the same measurement as the welt width, but when you get to the side, stitch just to the outside of the marked line. Pivot at all the corners and stitch all the way back to the beginning. Overlap the previous stitches by  $1/4$  inch. Backstitch a few stitches.



4 – Slash the center line until about  $3/8^{\text{th}}$ s away from the ends. Cut small wedges to the corners, but do not clip past the corners.

5 – Turn the organza to the wrong side and finger press until no organza shows to the outside. Press well with an iron.

6 – Once all the facing openings are complete and the facing has been sewn on, sew all the facing openings to the buttonholes with a slip stitch or tiny applique stitch. Since the openings are the same size and shape, you will be able to see all of the welts on the inside of the garment.