



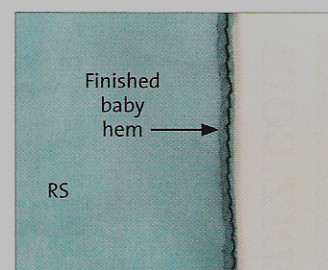
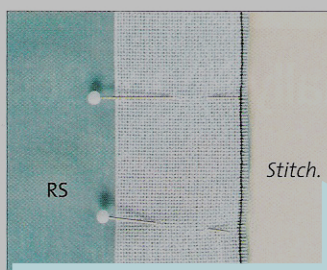
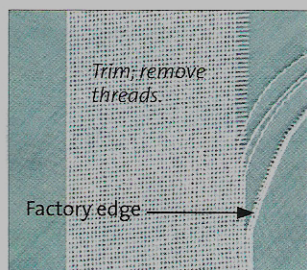
### Sew a perfect baby hem in sheers

I learned this wonderful hemming trick from a veteran of the J. Mendel workshop.

Cut a strip of Ban-Rol waistband insert tape (available at SewTrue.com) the length of your final planned hem. Carefully trim the factory edge on one long side. Next, remove several lengthwise threads to produce a comb-like fringe the width of the desired hem depth; usually two or three threads is enough. Trim the fabric to double the desired finished hem width. Align the Ban-Rol's comb

edge on the right side of the fabric's cut edge. Use a 1.5-mm-long stitch, and sew through both layers close to the first lengthwise thread without stitching over it. Turn the fabric over (wrong side up), then turn the Ban-Rol to the wrong side so the fabric wraps the comb and forms the tiny hem allowance. Sew the hem with a slightly longer stitch. Remove the Ban Rol by gently pulling it away from the hem. A perfect baby hem remains.

—Alaina Zulli, Brooklyn, New York



#### AN EASIER WAY TO FINISH A COVER STITCH

I loved the article, “The Cover Stitch” (p. 20) by Pamela Leggett (*Threads* no. 157). It certainly inspires all of us to use our machines to their full potential.

I would like to suggest that there is another easy way to tie off the cover stitch. This will save your eyes (especially with dark fabric and thread) when pulling needle threads to the garment's wrong side.

Stop stitching with the needles in the highest position. Raise the presser foot and release the needle tension. Sweep a long, thin tool (I use the Allen wrench

between the presser foot and the fabric, hooking the needle threads only, as you sweep forward. When the needle threads are pulled successfully to the front, cut them. Then pull the fabric straight back and cut the looper thread.

What happens is the looper thread remains intact on the garment, but the cut needle threads are pulled to the wrong side. Your hem is complete and secure!

—Mary Yuzwa, Port Moody  
British Columbia, Canada

#### SOLO PANTS HEMMING

It's difficult to mark the hem on a pair of pants when you don't have a willing helper or a hemming tool designed for the purpose. I have developed a process that works more accurately than other methods when I'm alone. All that's needed is a full-length mirror.

Trim the raw edges of each leg, put on the unhemmed pants with appropriate shoes and underwear, and stand in front of the mirror with a pincushion nearby. A wrist pincushion is particularly handy.

At thigh level, pinch up fabric until you

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like the way the fabric's unfinished bottom edge breaks. Pin the pinched fabric. Turn sideways and, while standing erect, reach back and pinch and pin another pleat. Continue pinching and pinning until both legs have been pinned. Observe each leg's bottom edge and make adjustments at the thigh as needed.

Take the pants off, measure the pleat width, and double it. Pin up the leg hems using this measurement, then remove the pins from the thigh area. Trim and serge or otherwise finish the raw edges as desired. Try on the pants to double-check the length, then complete the hems for a perfect fit.

—Kathleen Poole  
Walnut Creek, California

#### RECYCLE OLD CUTTING MATS

Cutting mats are expensive, but even if you take good care of them, they eventually wear out and lose their effectiveness. When that happens, I save them to use in the bottom of the tote bags I make. They can be cut to a specific size, or, if your cutting board is especially large, you can cut it into smaller chunks until you're ready to use them. They are lightweight but sturdy and are ideal for totes and other projects requiring structure. I have even used them in purchased grocery totes to add strength to the bag's bottom.

Our local foundry cut my cutting board

in the sizes I needed and rounded the edges as well. Depending on your cutting board's size, you can often get several new tote bottoms from one decommissioned mat.

—Kathy Weed, Northfield, Minnesota

#### UNBAG A LINING FOR EASY REPAIRS

If you need to get inside a lined jacket (for example, to add or remove shoulder pads, or to fix a lining that shows below the jacket hem), examine the lining underarm sleeve seams first. Usually on the left sleeve lining you'll note an area about 8 or 10 inches long where the seam was topstitched closed. The seam will likely be narrow with almost unnoticeable stitching. Carefully remove this stitching, and you can turn the jacket inside out. Then pull the outer jacket through the opening. It's essentially making a bagged lining in reverse. (See *Threads* no. 115, "Key Turning Points for Lining by Machine" by Shannon Gifford.) Make your repair, and restitch the sleeve lining seam closed.

—Nan Reber, El Segundo, California

#### SWIMSUIT WITH STRAP VARIATIONS

The halter strap on my two-piece bathing suit was causing a fixed tan line around my neck, which I didn't want. To help eliminate the tan mark, I converted the straps so that I could switch between the halter style and standard shoulder

style straps. The swimsuit's bra back was relatively narrow, so I made loops on the end of each strap that the bra back could slip through to transform the halter straps to regular straps. I simply folded up the end of each halter strap creating a loop, adjusted it to the proper length, and stitched each loop tightly in place. When I slid each half of the bra back through a loop—shoulder-style straps were formed. It was easy to adjust the shoulder straps so that they were either close to the center of my back, or farther apart, which also helped reduce my tan line. I also could remove the ties from the bra back and tie them in the original halter style. With all these variations, I had a beautiful, even tan.

—Susan Mitchell, Calgary  
Alberta, Canada

#### SANDPAPER THIMBLE GRIPS WELL

I use lots of pins when I sew and quilt, and spend a great deal of time hand-stitching—and I have the frayed fingers to prove it! Using a thimble slows me down and limits my tactile experience. However, I discovered the perfect alternative.

I had some fabric grips on hand that I had never used. Fabric grips are small, self-adhesive sandpaper disks about the size of an Altoid breath mint. They are designed to attach to the bottoms of rulers and templates so they don't slip while

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## Hanging files to store *Threads*



I have a large number of *Threads* magazines, and storage became a problem. I bought hanging file folders at an office supply store and cut the folded paperboard bottoms 6 inches up from the fold. Two separate paperboard flaps remained, each attached to one hanging bar. I place the bars in my file cabinet, and hang each magazine centered over a hanging bar in date order. They're neat, protected from the light, and easy to retrieve.

—Foy Elen Eisenberg  
Hendersonville, Tennessee