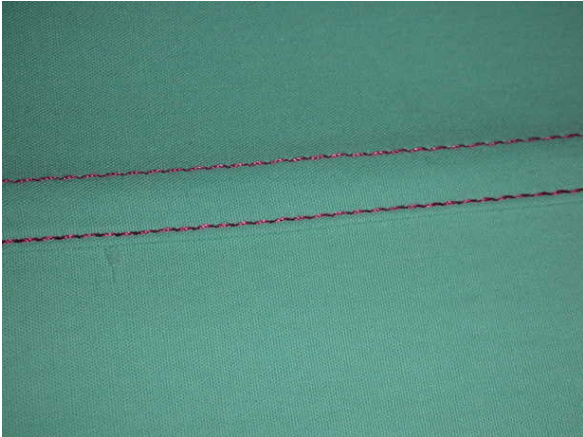


More Serger-less Seam Finishes: The Flat Fell Seam

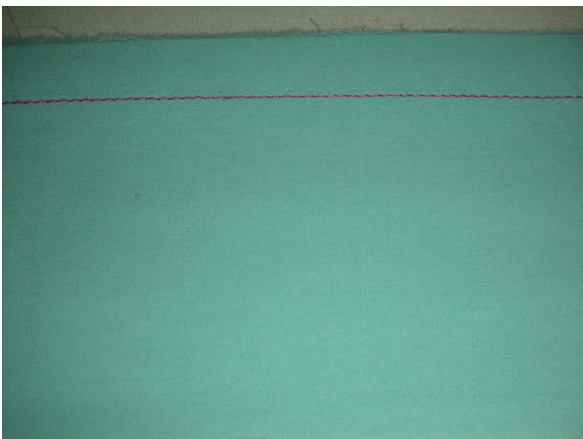
By: Roseana Auten

<http://www.burdastyle.com/techniques/more-serger-less-seam-finishes-the-flat-fell-seam>



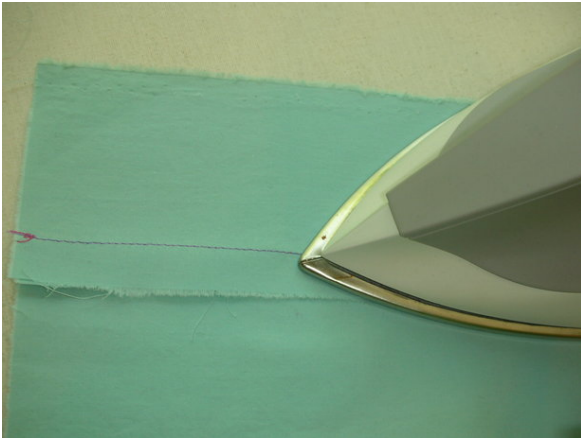
Whether you call it a flat fell seam, or a flat felled seam, it's a great option for a seam that's very strong and cleanly finished. You'll encounter the flat fell seam in ready-to-wear most often in better men's shirts and in jeans (usually the inseams). We home sewists have to go through several steps to recreate what factories sew in just seconds, but the results are worth it when you need a neat and durable finish.

Step 1 — Sew Your Seam



With WRONG sides together, sew your seam, and press it flat, "melding" the stitches into your fabric. Making flat fell seams requires very accurate sewing and excellent pressing â' it's not 'quick 'n dirty,' so prepare to spend a little time sewing a seam that has perfectly even seam allowances, and pressing well.

Step 2 — Press Both Seam Allowances to One Side



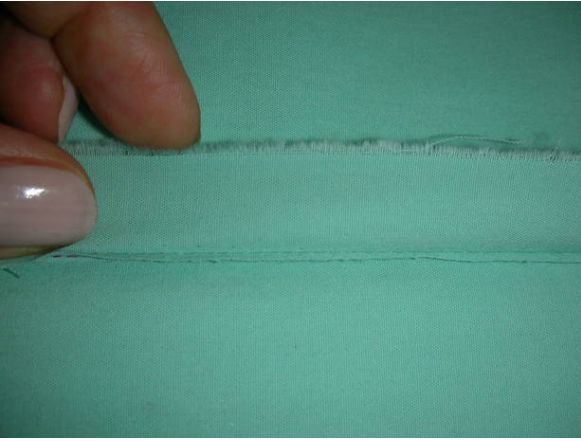
In some other seam finishes I've described, the seams are pressed open. Not with a flat fell seam. Press both the seam allowances to one side. Think carefully before you do this. If you're joining the side seams of a shirt, for example, you want both those side seams to be pressed toward the back of the garment.

Step 3 — Trim One of the Seam Allowances



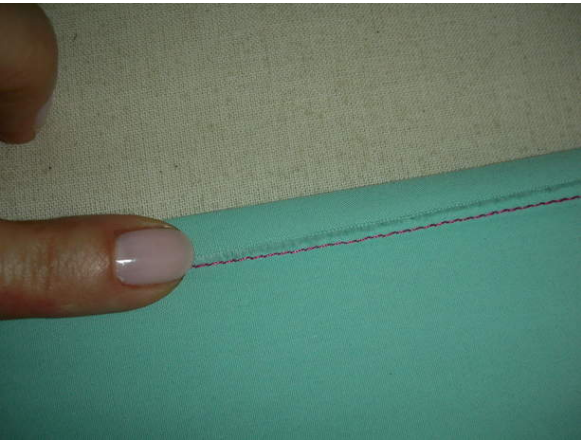
Next, trim one of the seam allowances to 1/8". Again, stop and think carefully before you do this. This trimmed-down seam allowance is going to be covered neatly by the remaining seam allowance and stitched down. So make sure you've got your seams oriented the way you intend to toward the back of the garment. For this trimming operation, I really love my duck billed appliqué scissors. They let me get in very close to my stitching.

Step 4 — A Very Closely Trimmed Seam



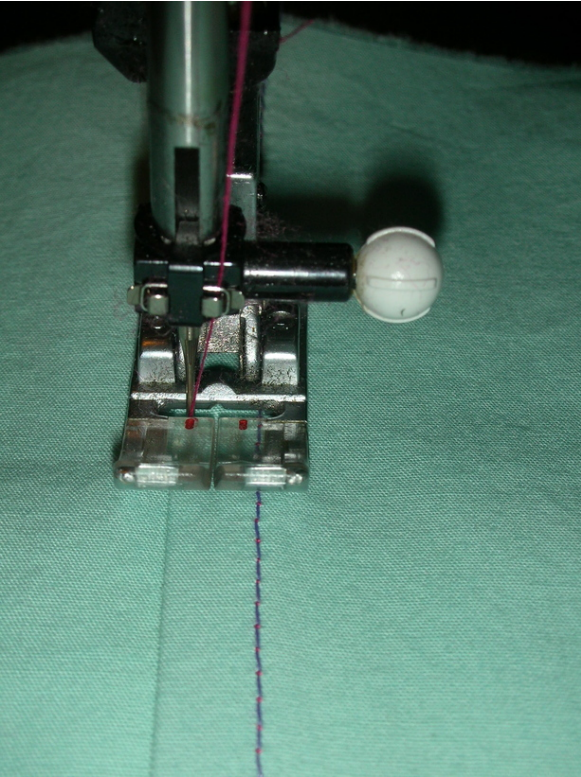
See?

Step 5 — Fold the Remaining Seam Allowance In



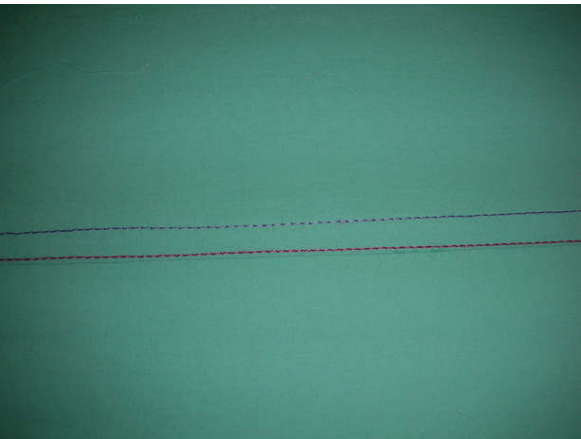
Fold the untrimmed seam allowance in toward your stitching, and press it.

Step 6 — Topstitch the Seam Down



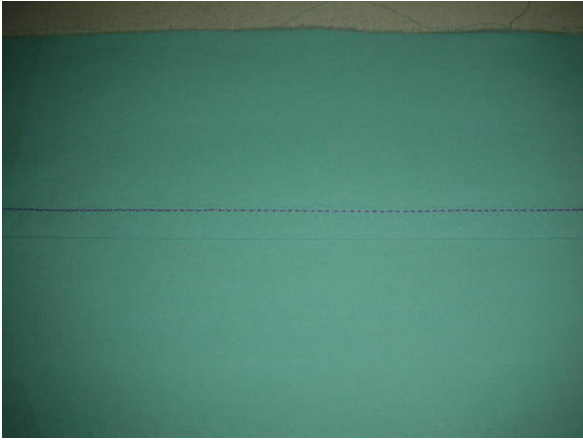
Now open your work and lay it flat. Carefully insert the work under your presser foot. You're going topstitch this wonderful little fold, all the way down. Even if you use thread that matches your fabric, any stray sewing that's not neat as a pin will show up, so go slowly!

Step 7 — A "Professional" Look



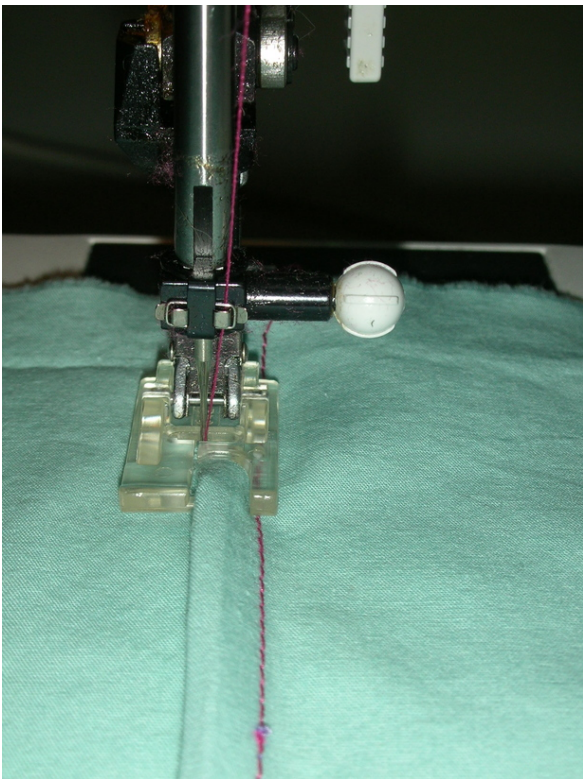
You wouldn't necessarily use two contrasting threads for this, but I wanted it to show up for photography.

Step 8 — View of the Wrong Side



It's nice and neat on the inside, too. Having the seams clean and smooth like this makes the garment very nice to wear. So when's a good time to use a flat fell seam? When your seams are straight and vertical, as in side seams of shirts and jeans, and tote bags.

Step 9 — Using a Special Presser Foot



I have a flat fell presser foot for my machine, so I decided to give it a try for the topstitching phase. It works well. Using special machine feet takes a little finesse.

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