

Set your zipper straight

Sew each side in the same direction

The standard centered zipper application never goes out of style. You may have studied garment construction in home economics class or followed the zipper's package directions to teach yourself. However, you probably didn't learn the fine details that make for a perfect application. Typically, a centered zipper is stitched down one side and up the other, but this can lead to zippers that curve to one side, even when the fabric is properly cut on grain. Patience, some basting and invisible tape, and directional stitching techniques all make the zipper lie perfectly straight.

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When a centered zipper defines a garment's back, it should be perfectly straight. A simple process ensures a zipper you can be proud of.

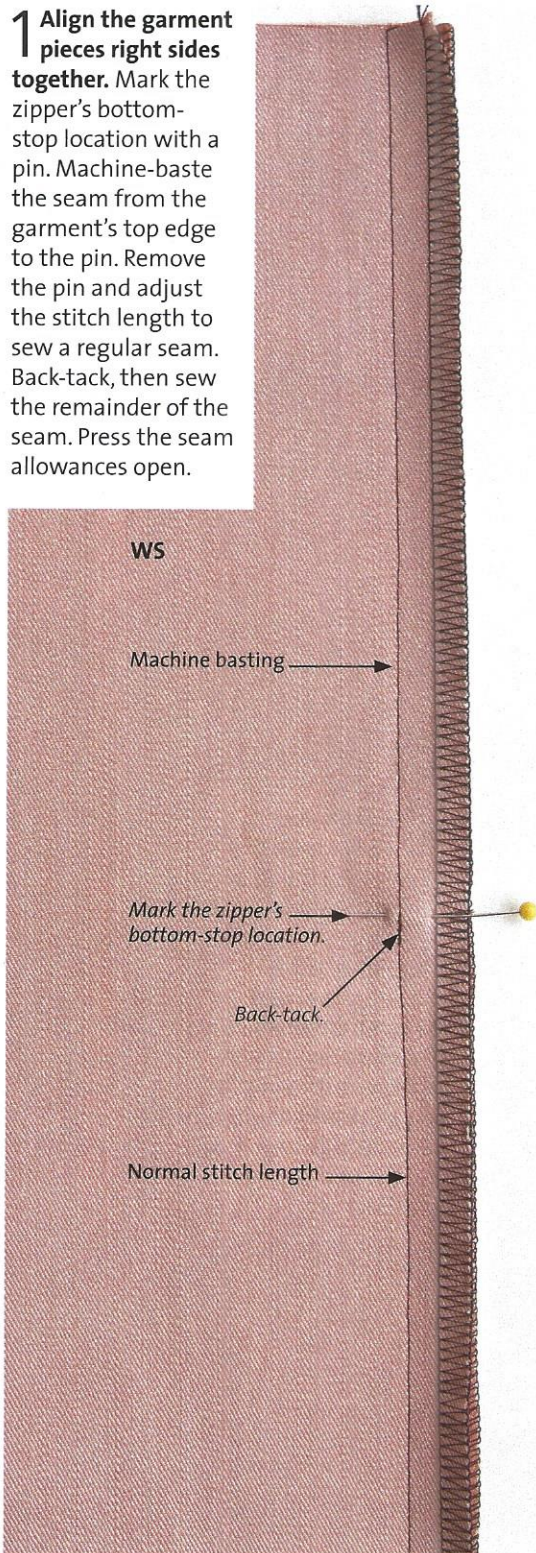
Pattern: How To Do Fashion No. 6 K@benhavn.
Fabric: stretch denim, EmmaOneSock.com.



Baste and stitch the zipper in place

Pave the way for a perfect centered zipper installation with preparatory steps. Basting is the key to holding the fabric and zipper in position. Invisible tape is your stitching guide. It is important to stitch both zipper sides in the same direction, ending in the seam at the tape guide bottom.

1 Align the garment pieces right sides together. Mark the zipper's bottom-stop location with a pin. Machine-baste the seam from the garment's top edge to the pin. Remove the pin and adjust the stitch length to sew a regular seam. Back-tack, then sew the remainder of the seam. Press the seam allowances open.



2 With the garment wrong side up, center the closed zipper, right side down, on the opened seam allowances. Keep the top edge of the zipper tape flush with the top garment edge. Pin carefully in place.



IDENTIFY YOUR ZIPPER

It is important to understand the difference between an invisible zipper and a regular zipper. They are not interchangeable, and if they are used interchangeably, the effect is awkward. The invisible zipper has no visible coils and a teardrop-shaped tab. The standard zipper is used for centered zipper applications. It has visible coils and a standard tab. For information on installing invisible zippers, see "Invisible Zipper Insights" in *Threads* #186, Aug./Sept. 2016.



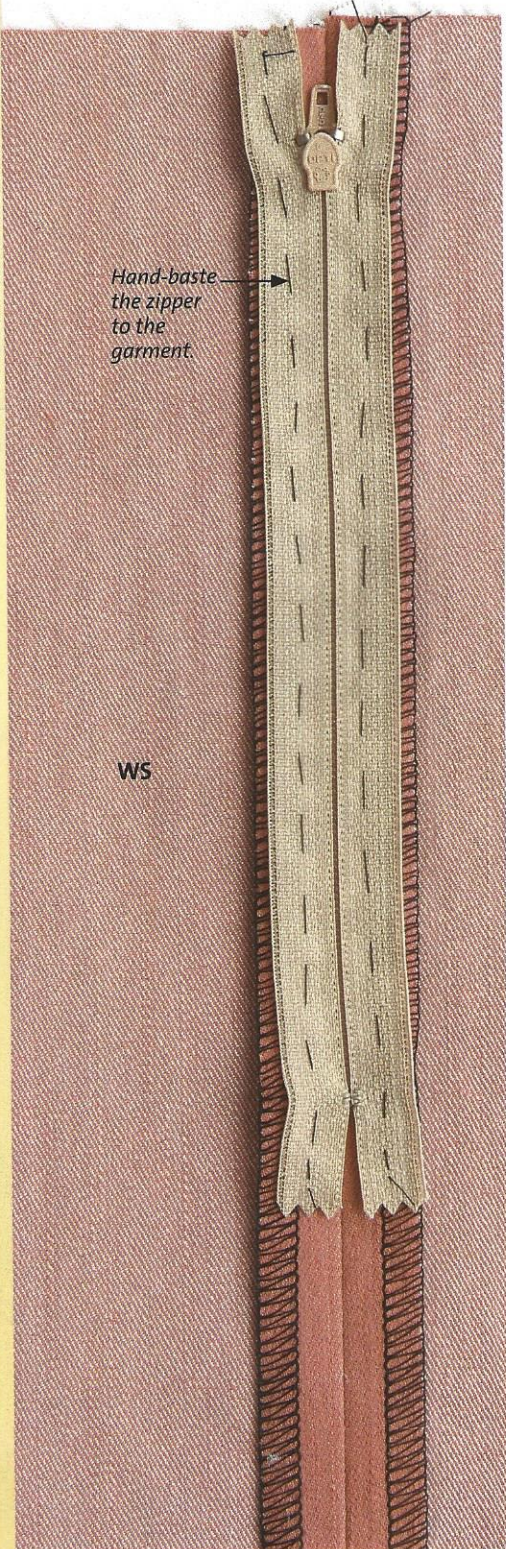
Invisible zipper



Standard zipper

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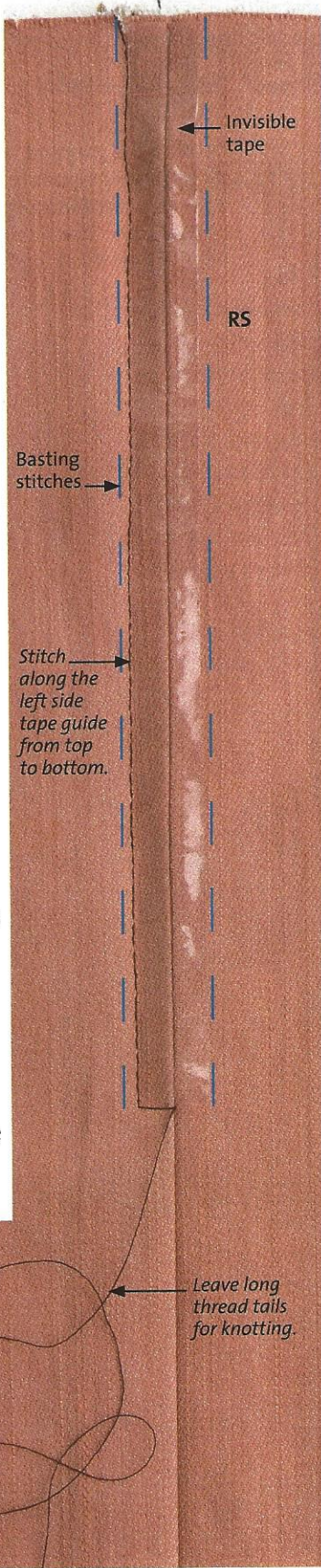
3 **Hand-baste the zipper in place.** Stitch through the seam allowances and the garment layer. You'll get a smoother installation because you can remove the pins.



Hand-baste the zipper to the garment

WS

4 **Use 1/2-inch-wide invisible tape as a stitching guide.** Affix the tape even with the top of the garment on the garment's right side. Make sure it is centered on the seamline and ends just below the bottom zipper stop, which you can feel through the fabric. Also be sure the tape clears the metal parts.



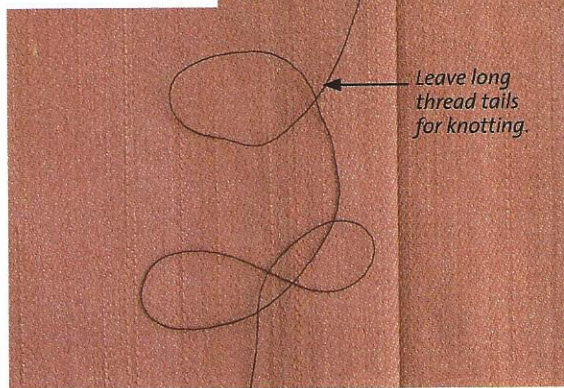
Invisible tape

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Basting stitches

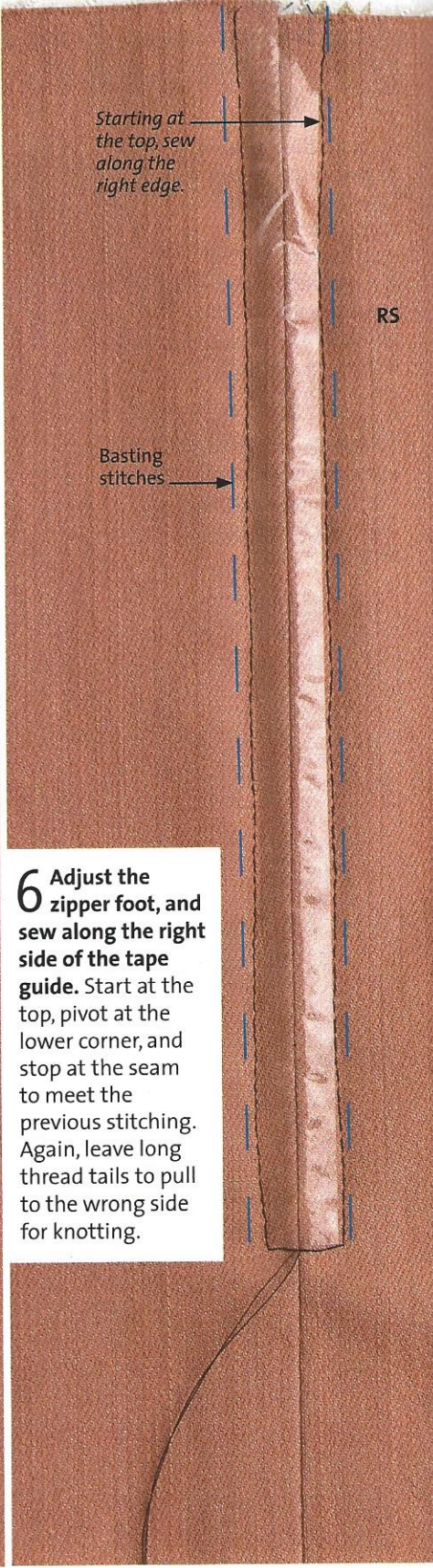
Stitch along the left side tape guide from top to bottom.

5 **Install a zipper foot to stitch along the left side of the tape guide edge.** Sew from the top edge and pivot at the lower corner to stop at the seam. When cutting the threads, leave long thread tails for knotting. Don't worry about the bulk of the zipper tab. It will move slightly to accommodate the zipper foot. Remove the garment from the machine.



Leave long thread tails for knotting.

Starting at the top, sew along the right edge.



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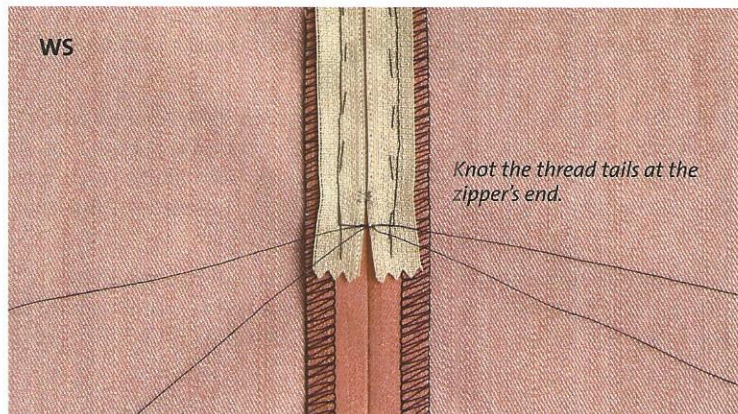
Basting stitches

6 **Adjust the zipper foot, and sew along the right side of the tape guide.** Start at the top, pivot at the lower corner, and stop at the seam to meet the previous stitching. Again, leave long thread tails to pull to the wrong side for knotting.

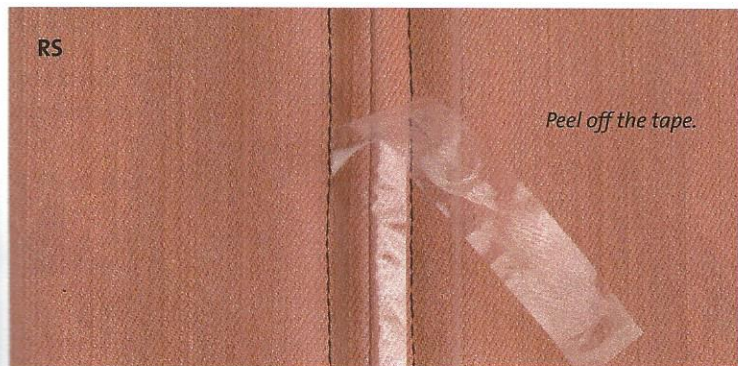
Remove the basting

With the zipper sewn in place, secure the long thread ends near the bottom stop. Peel off the tape, and extract the basting stitches to reveal the centered zipper.

1 On the garment's wrong side, pull the bobbin threads at the zipper bottom and bring the needle threads through to the wrong side. Tie them together with a knot and trim.



2 Peel off the tape guide. Remove all the hand-basting threads from the zipper.



3 Carefully remove the original machine basting from the seam. Cut the threads and gently pull them to expose the zipper. There is enough space above the zipper tab to install a facing. The top of the zipper tape does not have teeth and can bend easily into the seam allowance of a facing, collar, or waistband.



When the zipper hangs straight, the whole garment looks professional and polished.

Photos (p. 68, p. 71, right): Jack Deppa; (left, center, right): FreePeople.com; Styling: credits; necklace: FreePeople.com; shoes: Tahari (D&W.com).