Sewing fast requires experience and know-how. As an intermediate sewer you may attempt complicated sewing projects without hesitation because of your sewing experience. However, in spite of an enthusiastic beginning, you may sometimes become discouraged because of the time it takes to complete some sewing projects.

Learning how to use speed techniques can relieve this frustration. Use the speed methods explained here to help produce a quality garment with a minimum amount of time and effort. For more speed sewing tips see Alabama Cooperative Extension Service Circular HE-429, "How To Sew Fast."

Speedy Methods for Simplified Sewing

1. **EASE PLUS STITCHING**

   **What Is It?**
   A way to control fullness where fabric requires a little easing. It is a one-step replacement for the rows of basting stitches you usually make. In ease plus stitching, more yarns of the fabric are forced into each machine stitch than would normally be fed by the feed dog.

   **Where Is It Used?**
   Ease plus stitching may be used to ease the back shoulder that has fullness to a front shoulder or to fit a standard sleeve cap in an armseye.

   **How Is It Done?**
   Press the fabric against the back of the presser foot with the index finger of your right hand while stitching (Figure 1). Threads of the fabric will "bunch up" as the needle makes each stitch. About every 2 inches release the fabric being held down so it does not gather too much. Ease plus stitching should produce a slightly gathered effect with no tucks stitched in.

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3. QUICK LAPPED ZIPPER

What Is It?
A zipper that leaves only one lap showing.

Where Is It Used?
A quick lapped zipper may be used for necklines, side plackets on dresses, skirts, and pants.

How Is It Done?
Sew the seam up to the zipper placket opening as usual. Press the seam open. Then press under the seam for the zipper placket, turning under a 3/8-inch seam allowance on the right side and a 3/8-inch seam allowance on the left. A small pleat will form at the bottom of the zipper placket on the 3/8-inch side. Close the zipper and position it under the right side of the opening with the coil parallel to and touching the folded edge. Using the zipper foot, start at the bottom of the zipper and stitch close to the folded edge (Figure 5). Pin the left side so it laps over the zipper teeth and the row of stitching. Baste in place. Turn the zipper so the underside faces you. Stitch across the bottom of the zipper tape through all the thicknesses, stitching 3/8 inch past the fold; then pivot and stitch toward the top of the zipper about 1 inch (Figure 6). Unzip the zipper and use the seam guide on your sewing machine to sew a straight line to the top of the zipper (Figure 7). This method gives a perfect zipper every time since you can use the sewing machine seam guide to determine the width of the zipper lap.

4. CONTINUOUS BIAS

What Is It?
A method used to make yards of bias in a few easy steps.

Where Is It Used?
Continuous bias can be used anywhere long bias strips are needed, such as belts and bias bindings.

How Is It Done?
Cut a square or rectangle of fabric, following lengthwise and crosswise grainlines. Mark a bias line on the wrong side of the fabric, starting at the top left corner (Figure 8). Draw lines parallel to the bias, making space between lines the width you want the finished bias strips to be. Cut on the first bias marking. With right sides together stitch straight edges A and B with a 3/8-inch seam (Figure 9). Press open. With right sides together stitch straight grain edges C and D together, matching X to X'; one width of the bias will extend at both top and bottom (Figure 10). Stitch a 3/8-inch seam; press seam open. Cut along marked lines for continuous bias (Figure 11). You can get about 24 yards of 3/8-inch bias from a yard of 36-inch fabric.

5. BIAS BINDING

What Is It?
A quick and easy way to encase raw edges. A binding shows as a rolled enclosure at the edge of a seam.

Where Is It Used?
Bias binding may be used on concave (inward) curves to finish necklines and armholes. Convex (outward) bias bindings are used to finish hems, collars, and pockets.

How Is It Done?
Trim seam allowances on edge to be bound. Cut a bias strip three times the