

Narrow Binding on Necklines in knit fabrics

I enjoy sewing with knits and I am always looking for interesting neckline treatments to finish off the edge of a knit top. The binding technique which I am going to demonstrate is one of my favorites and gives a neat finish to any raw edge. Whenever the pattern says to turn under the raw edge and topstitch, ignore it and follow these instructions. So here's how I do it.



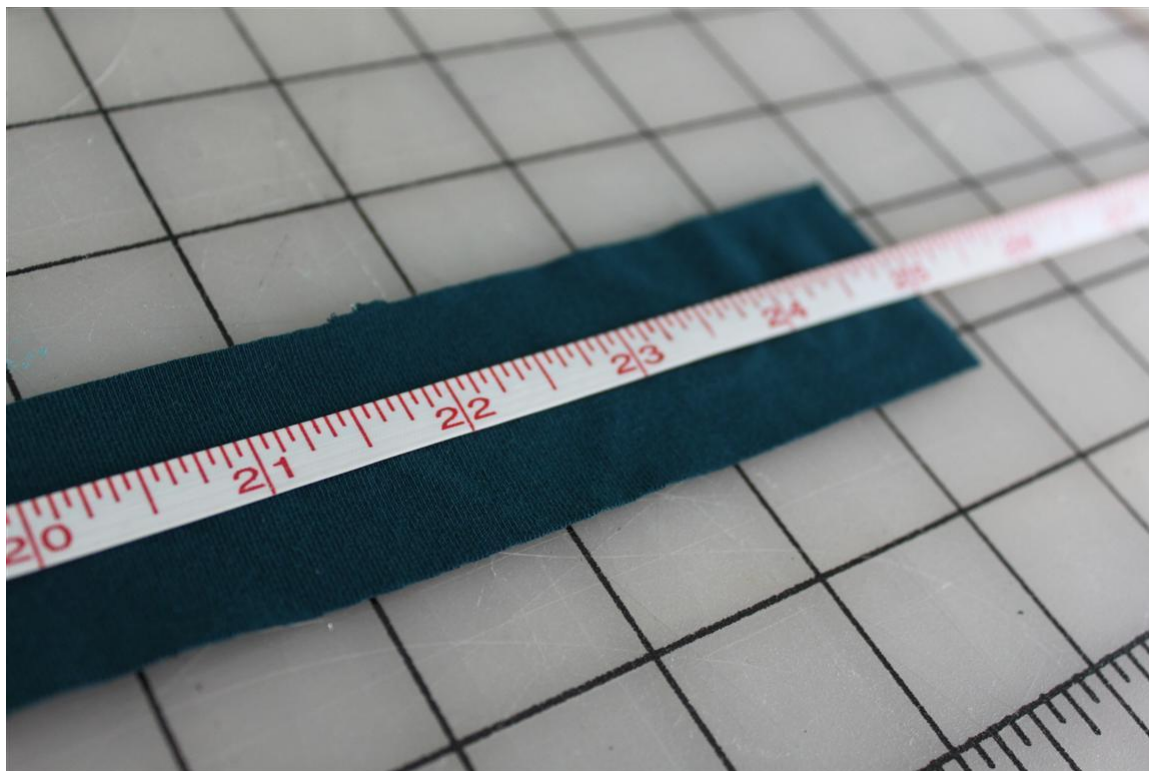
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Step 1: Measure the circumference of the neck or armhole on the stitching line (not on the cut edge). For example let's say its 26.5 inches. Now add 1/2" more to this (for 1/4" seam allowances). So our total is now 27".



Step 2: How stretchy is your knit? If it has 50% or more stretch in the crosswise direction you can easily subtract 2" (sometimes even more from this measurement. Otherwise subtract 1" from it. So let's say we are doing this on a rayon knit with spandex which has over 50% stretch, our final measurement is 25". Now cut one strip (two if this is for the armholes) on the crosswise grain of fabric. Width of the strip should be roughly 4 times the final width of the binding. This binding will be seen from the right side of the fabric. I usually do 3/8" or 1/4" bindings so I'll cut my strip 1" X 25" .



Step 3: Sew the binding strip in a circle; joining the short ends together (Right sides together). Press seam allowances open. I like to do this on my sewing machine - much less bulk, but you could certainly use a serger. If you are using a serger, you would press the seam allowances to one side.

Step 4: Find the center front and center back of your neckline. Now you need two more marks to quarter the top. Mark similarly on the binding.



Step 5: Pin the binding to the Neckline Right sides together matching the marks, stretching the binding evenly.



Step 6: With binding on top and the neckline or armhole towards the sewing machine/serger bed, start stitching. Sew all around the neckline stretching the binding evenly to match the neckline. I usually just use a straight stitch for this. Fold the seam allowances towards the binding and press.



Step 7: Fold over the binding on the seam allowances and to the inside so that the binding is visible on the Right side of the garment. Press and pin again. I like to press on a curved surface - like a sewing ham.



Step 8: Finally stitch in the ditch from the right side to secure the folded over binding to the inside of the top. This means finding the "well or ditch" of the previous stitching and stitching right in the center of it so it's virtually invisible. It's very easy to do this if you use an edge stitching foot. Since we are using a knit, the raw edge inside won't fray, but if your knit ravels, finish one long edge before doing all this.



Step 9: Trim off the excess seam allowance using applique scissors.



Step 10: Give it a final press and admire your work :)



10 steps seem like a lot of work, but once you do this technique you will see how easy it is. I really like it because even if there is a slight chance of gaping, with this method it's

taken care of.

Remember that the binding should always be slightly smaller than the neckline/armhole circumference.

You can find this and 999 more cool tips and techniques in the book [1,000 Clever Sewing Shortcuts and Tips](#). All royalties from the sale of this book go to National Breast Cancer Foundation.

