

advantage of holding the garment up all along the length of the seam, not just at the points of stress at the ends of bones in casings.

If you're adding bones where there is no seam, they need to be attached to the underlining only, before the seams are sewn. Stitch them down around the edges and across the ends.

The waistband

The waistband is one of the keys to keeping the bustier up. It is a 1-in.-wide gros-grain ribbon or twill tape whose bottom edge falls at the actual waistline marks, on the underlining side of the inner layer. The ends will be caught in the under-and-overlap seams if you're using a button closure, or will hook together if you're using a zipper. Cut the band material to the measure of the waist of the garment, *minus* $\frac{3}{4}$ in. to 1 in., plus a few extra inches for seam allowances, or for hooking. Pin the band to the seams with its edge on the waistline marks, distributing the shortage equally between the bones, then hand stitch the band to the edges of the bones.

The amount of extra length you need for the band, beyond the reduced waistline measure, is equal to the total over-and-underlap, plus a little for catching in the seams, if you're using buttons. If you're using a zipper closure, make two buttonholes the same width as the waistband in the inner layer, one on each side of the zipper, 2 to 3 in. away and parallel to it (see the photo on p. 55), and pull the waistband through. After completing the garment, fasten a hook and eye to the ends, remembering to keep the total band length $\frac{3}{4}$ to 1 in. smaller than the waist measure. This will take up any stress that might burst the zipper. Las Vegas showgirls have bands like these in their costumes.

Speaking of showgirls, this is the time to embellish the outer layer, if desired, before the layers are joined together.

Final construction

Once the embellishment is done, pin the outer layer to the inner layer right sides together and baste along the perimeter. (An old tailor once said to me, "Basting is half sewn!" It's good advice.) Then stitch the seam, leaving a large opening to turn the garment—turning a boned garment is like trying to turn a cardboard box inside out. The section you leave open will depend on your particular pattern. For bustiers, I usually leave open the top edge between the princess seams at center front if there's piping and/or trim there to conceal the hand stitches that will



Kenneth King's extraordinary embellishments, as shown above, make his strapless garments look like the decoration is the best part. Those who have worn them also love the comfort and security of knowing that the garments will stay up.

close the seam. For dresses or a bustier where there is no trim or piping on the top edge, the bottom edge of the corset obviously makes more sense, since it can simply be bound or whipped closed.

If you're using buttons, before you turn the garment, stitch bones long enough to extend beyond the top and bottom buttons to both vertical seamlines at the opening edges. Stitch right on top of the seamline, catching the edge of the boning, which should lie on the garment side of the seam.

Trim the seam allowances as follows, to

reduce bulk: The felt and batiste layers should be trimmed to $\frac{1}{8}$ in., and the fashion fabric to $\frac{3}{8}$ in. The underlayer should be trimmed to $\frac{3}{8}$ in. all around. Clip the corners and curves in the usual manner. If there's no piping or other seamline embellishment along the opening seams to make turning the edges easy, staystitch both layers $\frac{1}{8}$ in. to the allowance side of the seamline, then trim the underlining and interlining layers to $\frac{1}{8}$ in. from that. Turn the garment right side out, pressing over a ham to get the proper curve around the figure.

The opening is now closed by hand with a simple running stitch. I use a No. 2 surgical curved needle, available at surgical supply houses (these are much finer than the curved utility needles sold at notions counters). This makes the process much easier. Press the remaining seam allowances under, concealing the staystitching, forming a clean, smooth edge, and allowing the outer-layer edge to extend beyond the underlayer edge.

After closing the garment, hand tack all layers together in the well of the princess seams about $\frac{3}{4}$ in. down from the upper edge. This will keep the lining from rolling over the top edge of the garment.

Here's how to treat the buttons and buttonholes: For the buttonhole side, baste along the edge of the bone, and mark the buttonholes (which must be horizontal, to take the stress) so that the ends butt up against the bone. This forms a kind of casing, and allows the buttons to rest against the bone. Before basting the edge, roll the inside edge slightly in towards the underlayer. This shortens the underlayer enough so that when the garment is worn, the edge won't curl outward. For the button side, stitch the buttons through the bone, but not all the way through to the lining piece, so no stitches show on the outer layer.

For a zipper opening, choose a side seam, if possible, and if the garment is a bustier, use a separating zipper. Machine stitch the zipper over the seam at the opening on the wrong side (the boning side) of the inner layer, with the pull tab facing up. Form the outer-layer zipper opening for it by hand, creating a lapped zipper (front over back for a side opening), tacking the layers together on each side, then put a hook and eye at the top. Have fun! □

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