

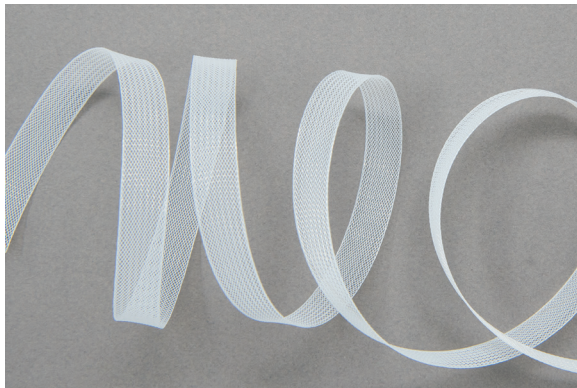
How to Use Polyester Horsehair Braid

Transform a limp skirt edge into one with flair and strength with horsehair braid. This braid is a flexible polyester mesh designed to reinforce and define both straight and curved hems. Use it to create a sleeve head, giving invisible support to extended shoulders or puffed sleeves. Insert horsehair into fabric tubes to create bows and ties or use it along seams to reinforce a bodice shape. It is available in black or white in 1/2" or 1" widths; it is easy to use and offers invisible structure wherever it is placed. This lightweight, uncrushable and nearly invisible braid should be a staple for any sewing room.

Not sure of the correct width? Test both widths on a sample of your fabric. You may need more than one layer when using it to add dimension to sleeves or ruffles. If one layer isn't strong enough for your needs, double or triple it.

You will need:

- Dritz® Polyester Horsehair Braid
- Your project
- Sharp scissors
- Matching thread
- Ribbon or lining scrap to cover braid ends
- Sewing machine



Horsehair is wiry and may seem to have a mind of its own. Don't force it into place; allow it to lay flat and pin well.



No horsehair in hem



Horsehair used in hem

Cut ends may irritate skin or snag fabrics. To prevent this, plan to cover cut ends with a strip of matching fabric or a piece of ribbon. Don't fold braid ends under to finish as the wiry mesh will poke through.



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HORSEHAIR USED FOR HEM SUPPORT:

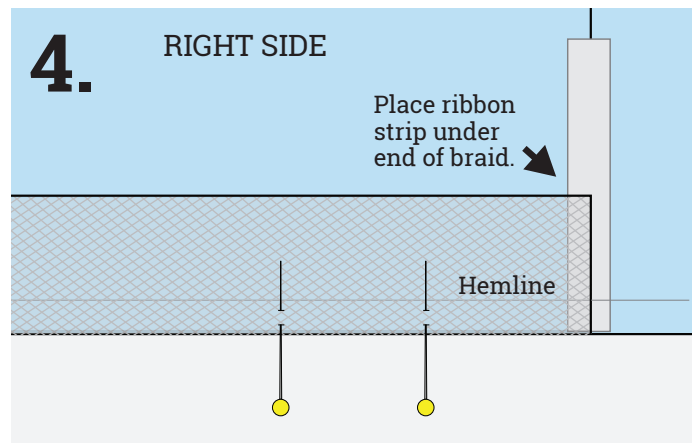
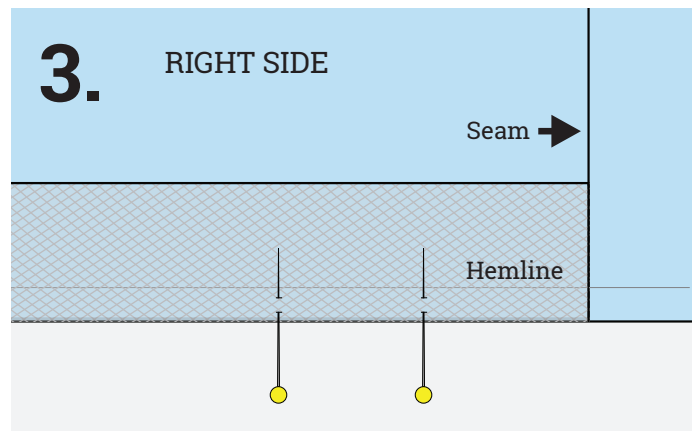
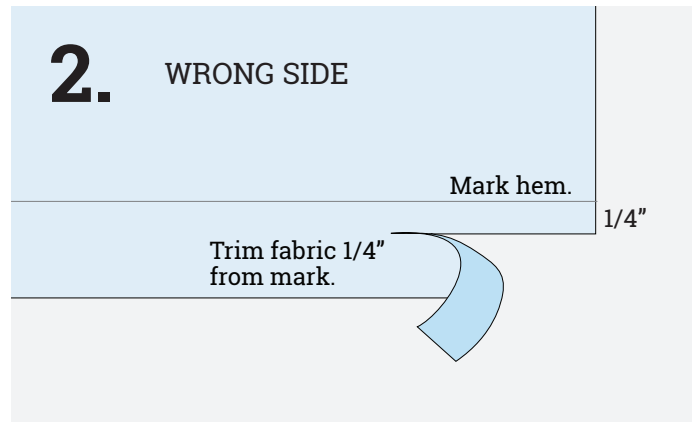
Use this method for an unlined garment, or one with a loose lining (not connected to the hem).

1. Purchase enough braid to extend around the entire hem plus 1/8 yard for finishing.

2. Mark hemline. Trim hem allowance to 1/4".

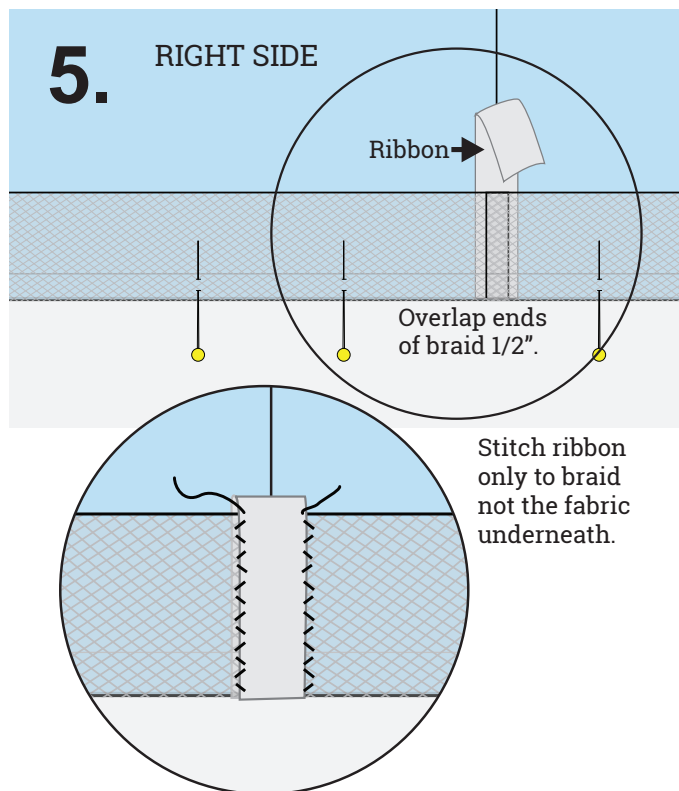
3. Starting at a seam, place braid on right side of garment so long edge is even with cut edge of fabric. Pin.

4. Place a piece of ribbon under the cut end of the braid between fabric and braid so cut end of ribbon aligns with cut edge of fabric. Continue to pin braid to hem edge until it meets the seam. Trim braid so ends overlap.

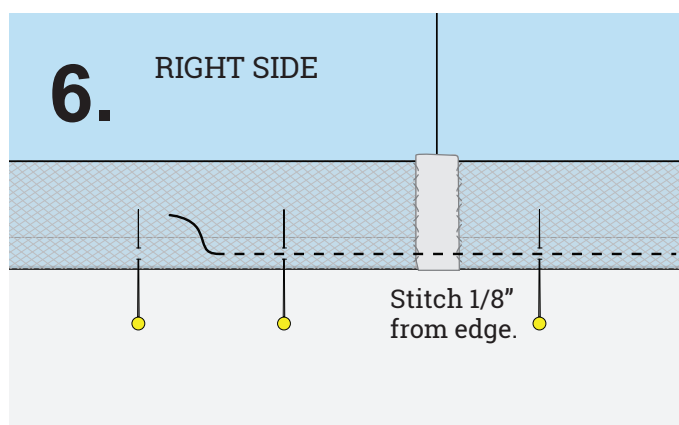


How to Use Polyester Horsehair Braid

5. Fold ribbon over braid so it covers cut ends of braid. Hand stitch both layers of ribbon to braid to secure.



6. Machine stitch 1/8" from edge of braid and fabric.



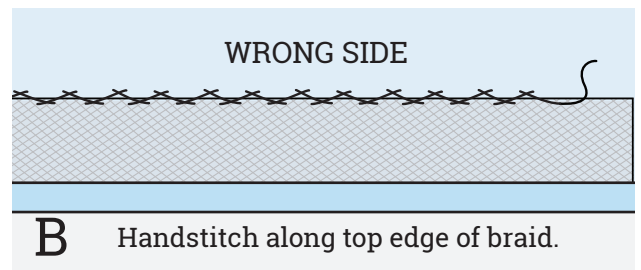
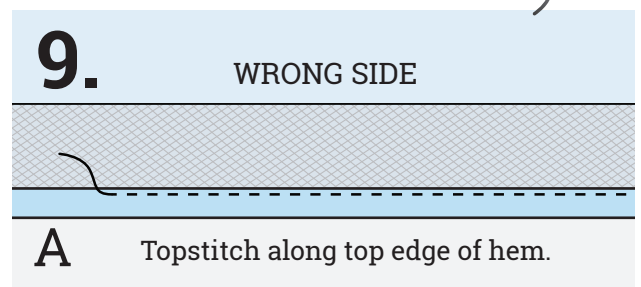
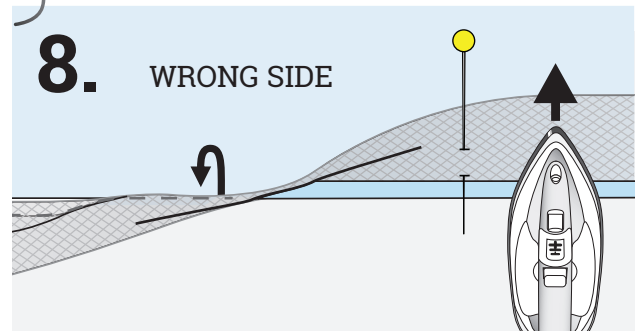
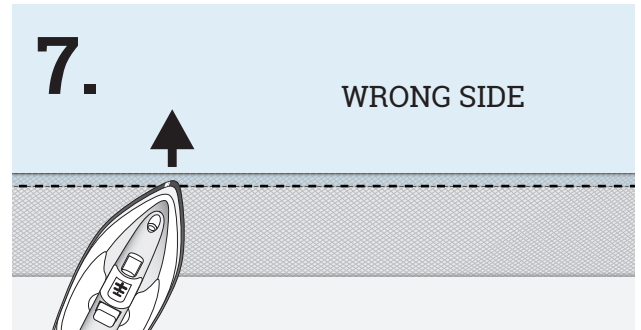
How to Use Polyester Horsehair Braid

7. Fold braid down at stitch line. Working from the wrong side, press fabric and braid edges up toward wrong side of garment on the stitch line.

8. Then fold hem and braid up toward wrong side so braid edge aligns with marked hemline. Carefully press just the hem edge using a sheer press cloth; pin.

Use a sheer press cloth when pressing. Avoid pressing where there is no layer between garment fabric and horsehair to prevent imprinting your good fashion fabric.

9. To secure hem, topstitch along top edge of hem catching all layers (A) or hand stitch along top edge of braid (B). Be sure to take a very small bite of the garment fabric so hem stitching does not show. A catch stitch works well.



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Curved Hem – Method 1

This method is for full skirts that are about knee length, such as a circle skirt or goared skirt. While you can also follow this method when hemming a long gown, the required hand or top stitching may be inadvisable. Read the instructions for both methods before starting your project.

1. Purchase enough braid to extend around the entire hem plus 1/8 yard for finishing.

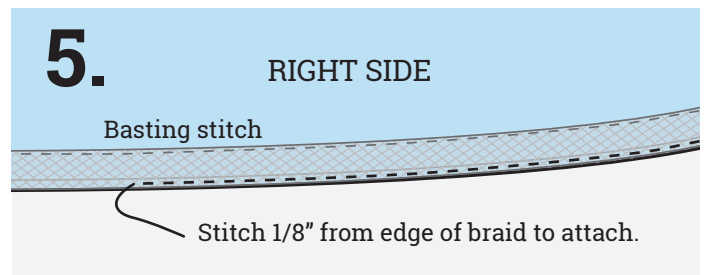
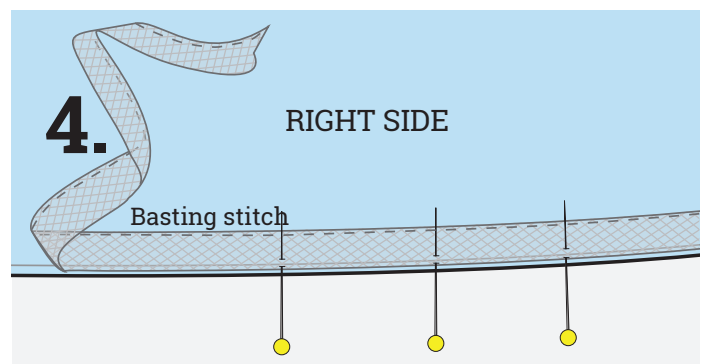
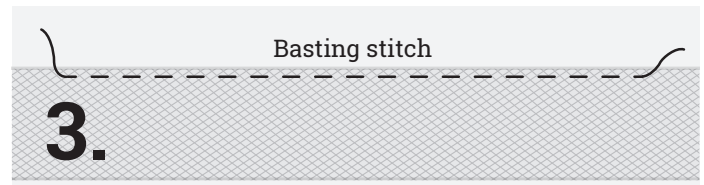
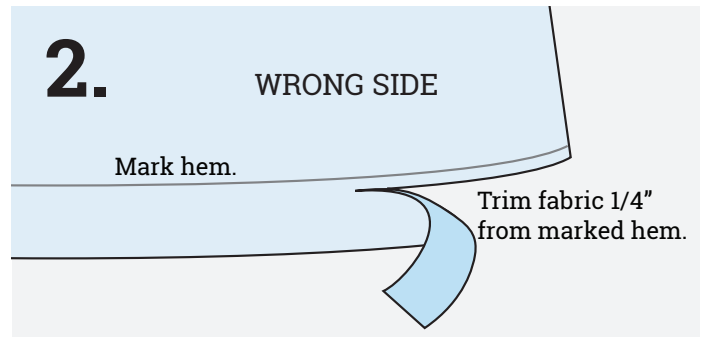
2. Mark hemline.
Trim hem allowance to 1/4".

If you are working with fragile fabric, consider basting the measured hem line to mark it, using a fine needle and very long, loose stitches. This way it is visible on both sides of the fabric and removes easily when hem is complete.

3. One-inch braid is recommended. A curved hem requires the top edge of the braid to be eased to eliminate fullness. To ease in the fullness, first stitch a line of machine basting (the longest machine straight stitch) along the top edge of the braid before pinning it to the skirt.

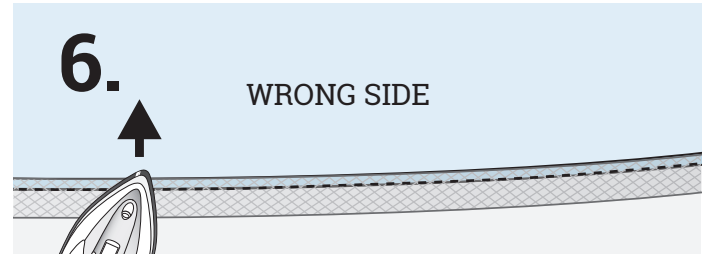
4. Follow step 3 from Straight Hem, pinning the unstitched edge of the braid along the cut edge of the fabric. Be careful not to stretch the braid.

5. Follow steps 4 through 6 from Straight Hem to cover braid edges with ribbon and stitch to garment.

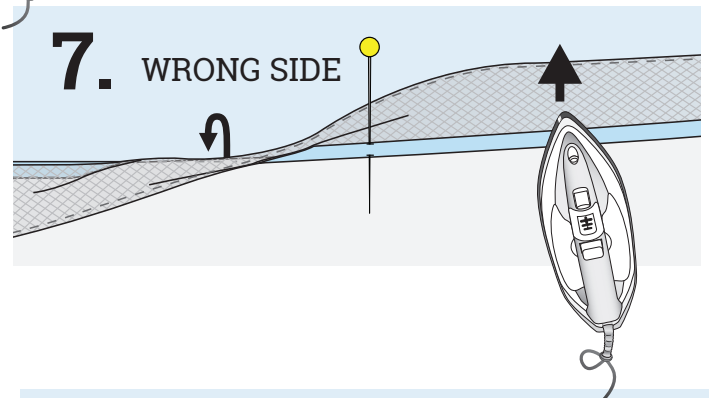


How to Use Polyester Horsehair Braid

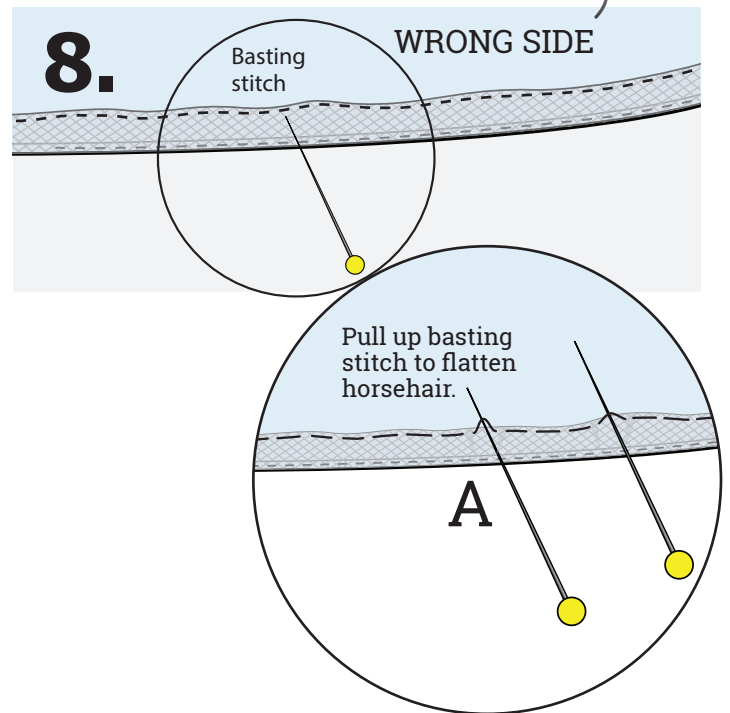
6. Fold braid down at stitch line. Working from the wrong side, press fabric and braid edges up toward wrong side of garment on the stitch line.



7. Then fold hem and braid up toward wrong side of garment so braid edge aligns with marked hemline. Carefully press just the hem edge using a sheer press cloth; pin.

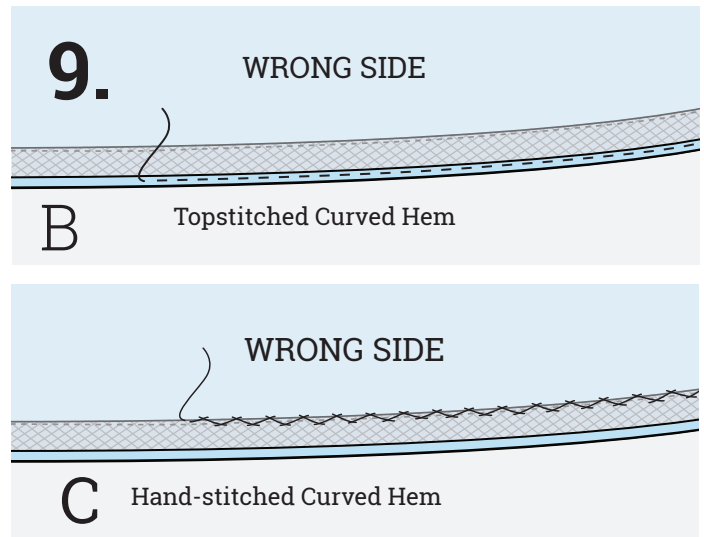


8. Examine the top edge of the braid. You will notice that it buckles and does not lay smooth around the skirt. To smooth out the braid, you must reduce the size of the top edge of the braid. To do this, use a straight pin to carefully pick the basting stitch (A). Pull it slightly until the braid eases in to fit the fabric. Repeat this around the skirt hem, distributing the fullness uniformly.



How to Use Polyester Horsehair Braid

9. When the fullness of the horsehair is evenly distributed, secure the hem. To do this, topstitch along top edge of hem catching all layers (B) or hand stitch along top edge of braid (C). Be sure to take a very small bite of the garment fabric so hem stitching does not show. A catch stitch works well. Press carefully.



Curved Hem – Method 2

Attaching a Lining to a Straight or Curved Hem

Long full skirts such as those in prom and wedding dresses, or any skirt that has a lining connected at the hem require a slightly different technique, as topstitched hems are unsuitable for gowns—even hand stitched hems can create unsightly stitching dents. For the smoothest hem, consider lining this type of dress.

Lining is cut and stitched as a separate skirt. The lining can be hemmed separately from the dress. However for our purposes, the lining and outer fabric should be attached at the hem edge. This conceals the horsehair and eliminates visible stitching.

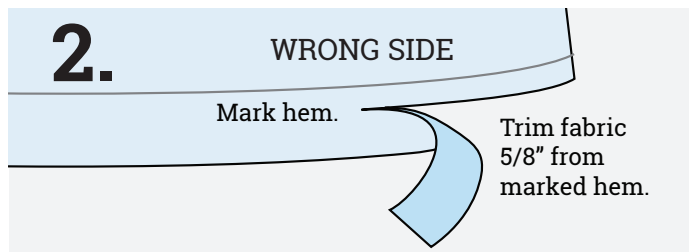
1. Purchase enough braid to extend around the entire hem plus 1/8 yard for finishing. 1/2" braid recommended.

Underlining, which is cut exactly the same as the outer fabric, is placed against the wrong side of the outer fabric. Underlining and outer fabric are basted together and then handled as one piece of fabric. Follow the straight or curved method to complete. Hand tack horsehair to the underlining to finish. Do not topstitch; no stitches will show to the right side. A garment can be both underlined and lined as desired.

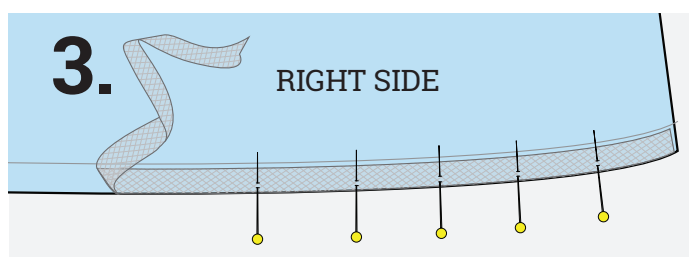


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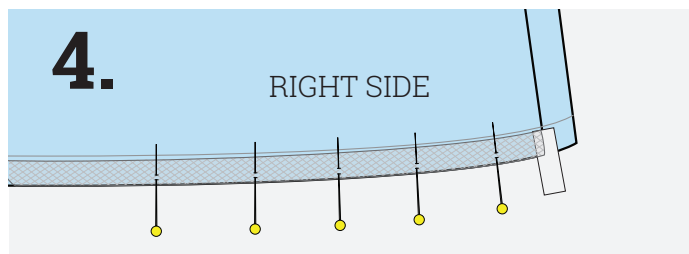
2. Mark hemline. Trim hem allowance to 5/8".



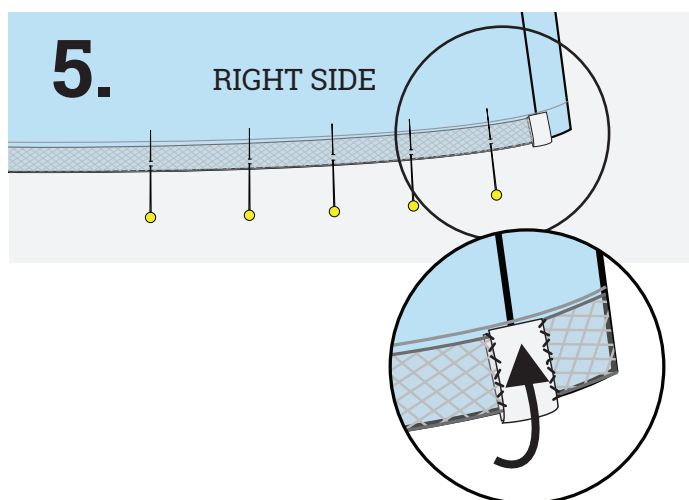
3. Starting at a seam, pin braid to the right side of the fashion fabric, aligning one long edge to the cut edge of the fabric.



4. Place a piece of ribbon under the cut end of the braid between the fabric and the braid so cut end of ribbon aligns with cut edge of fabric.

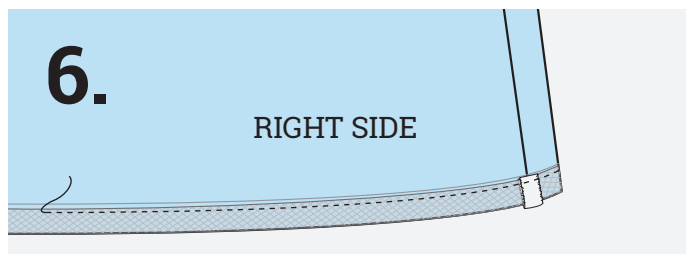


5. Fold ribbon over braid so it covers cut ends of braid. Hand stitch both layers of ribbon to braid to secure. Be careful not to catch outer fabric.

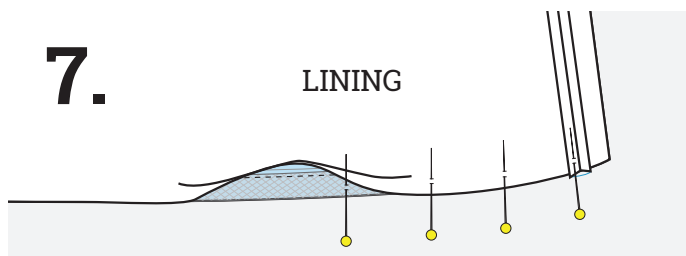


How to Use Polyester Horsehair Braid

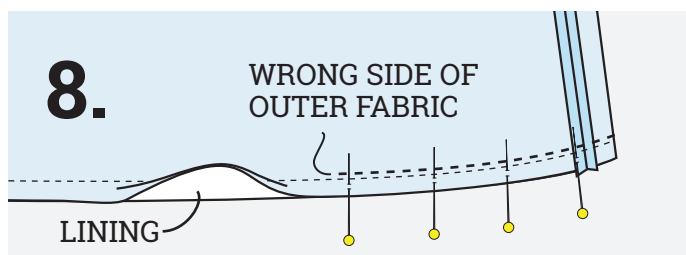
6. Stitch 1/8" in from the top edge of the braid.



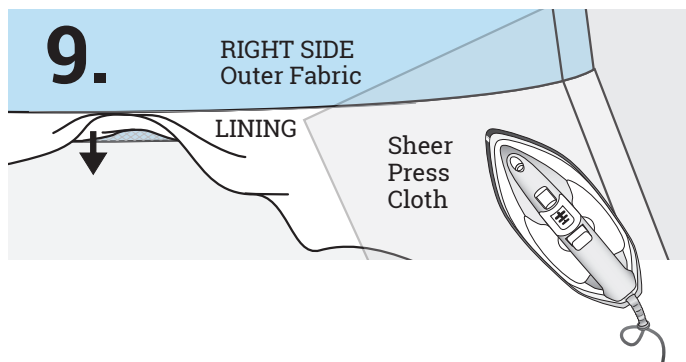
7. Pin the skirt lining to the skirt right sides together at the hem edge.



8. Stitch with the fashion fabric side facing up. Using the braid stitching as a guide, sew 1/8" above the braid stitching.

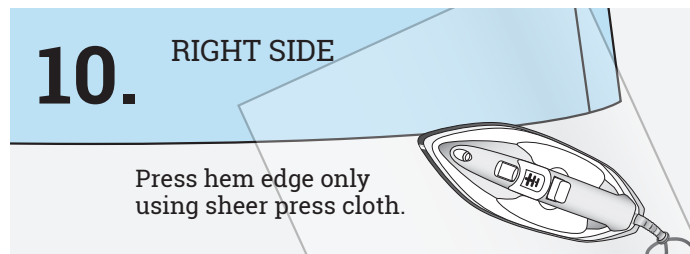


9. Turn the skirt right side out. Press the hem using a sheer press cloth, placing the iron on the lining. Press the hem allowance toward the lining. Fold the lining to the inside.

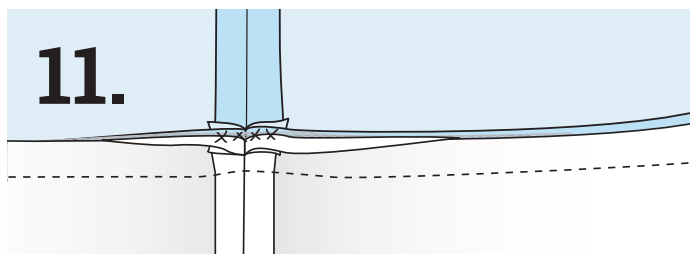


How to Use Polyester Horsehair Braid

10. Again using a sheer press cloth, carefully press the hem edge so that lining and outer fabric meet cleanly at the pressed seam. Lining should not show to the outside.



11. Pin the hem layers together. Hand tack the lining to the outer skirt at each seam allowance. Do not allow any stitches to show on the outside.



12. Pull the skirt so it meets at the top edge. Layers should not pull or twist. Pin. Baste the layers together at the top edge and complete your garment.

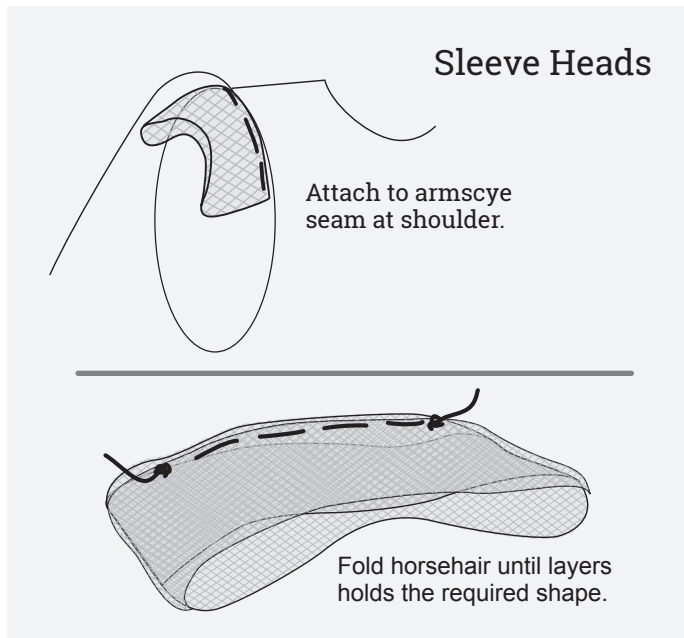


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MORE HORSEHAIR IDEAS

Making a sleeve head

To add structure to extended shoulders and gathered sleeve caps, fold horsehair into layers. Pin to armhole seam at the shoulder. When fullness and stability is as desired, hand stitch the horsehair to the seam.



Making small bows or ties

Stabilize small bows and bow ties by inserting horsehair inside the stitched fabric. Create a tube the required size. Slide the horsehair into the tube. Form your bow.

