

About Buttonholes



Pictured: Common tools for making buttonholes.

1. Marking Pencil
2. Zig Zag Foot
3. Button Twist
4. Craft/Quilting Thread
5. Sewing Gauge
6. Shank Buttons
7. Small Snips
8. Interfacing

Types

There are **two categories** of buttonholes: *Hand Worked and Machine Stitched*.

Machine stitched buttonholes require the use of a zig zag or buttonhole foot and generally the automatic setting for buttonholes is used on a machine. Buttonholes can be machined without the use of the special selected buttonhole stitch.

Keyhole Buttonhole



Bound Buttonhole



Plain Buttonhole



Hand Worked

Hand worked buttonholes are beautiful when worked properly and are generally made when a fine or lightweight fabric is selected.

Hand worked buttons involve cutting a slit where the buttonhole is to be worked, then using button twist to hand sew (buttonhole stitch) around the raw edges of the buttonhole.

Hand worked



Which to Use? Your buttonhole type will be determined by several factors:

- **Fabric used**—Lightweight fabrics (sheer, cottons, some linens, silk) will not hold shape nor will it look good with a bound or other machined buttonhole. Unless otherwise stated a hand worked buttonhole will be the best choice.
- **Garment style/type**—A dress made of light chiffon will usually be backed and interfaced where it will be secured (buttoned), or a zipper in place. Suit jackets generally use a bound buttonhole and keyhole buttonholes worked into the sleeves. Most patterns will state which to use.
- **Placement**—Where will the buttons be? Sleeves? Back? Front? What type of material is holding the buttonhole? Placement plays into the esthetics of your garment. You won't want a bound buttonhole in the back of a lightweight dress, nor would you want a plain buttonhole on the front of a man's suit jacket.

Next:

Part II: How to Make Machined and Hand Worked Button Holes