



Making tassels and fringes

Tassels and fringes are generally added for decoration rather than function. Use tassels on cords for tiebacks or on the corners of pillows. Use fringes on the leading edge or hem of curtains, on pillow edges, or on the hems of clothing. There is a plentiful supply of tassels in haberdashery and fabric shops but you can also make them at home. Simple examples require little skill, although more sophisticated tassels need more time and expertise. Fringes and braids can be bought or made at home.

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Simple tassel

Make a simple tassel using some yarn and a piece of stiff card.



1 Cut the card to the required tassel length. Wrap the yarn around the card until the desired fullness is reached.



2 Thread a length of the yarn onto a tapestry needle and slide it under the wrapped yarn on one side of the card. Tie securely together.

3 Slide the wrapped yarn off the card and cut opposite the tied end.



4 Bind the neck of the tassel and secure the thread end inside so it is hidden. Trim the cut end to finish.





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Tassel tips

- Use yarn or thread in a single shade, or mix colours or textures.
- Rayon and stranded cottons can be used for a smooth look and chenille or bulkier yarns for a more chunky tassel.
- For a perfect colour match, draw out threads from remnant fabric and use it to make tassels.



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Finish with a fringe

Some loosely woven fabrics are ideally suited to fringing and finish a garment perfectly. Try this on a vest or a skirt.



1 Use shears to cut the edge neatly between two woven threads.



2 From spare fabric, remove a long, strong yarn and place it 2.5cm (1in) below the cut edge.



3 Set the sewing machine to a narrow zigzag (the width of the pulled yarn) and stitch over the yarn and fabric. Draw out all the threads above the stitched line. The zigzagged yarn will secure the edge and ensure that no more come out.



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Adding a fringe

To make a fringed length for a curved edge to be inserted into a seam, cut a 4cm (1 $\frac{5}{8}$ in) strip of fabric on the grain. Remove a band of 2.5cm (1in) of the threads from the weave on one side, leaving a 1.5cm ($\frac{5}{8}$ in) strip to sew into the seam allowance. Place this to the edge of the fabric and sew to the hem or into a seam.



For a frayed finish

On bias-cut fabric it is not possible to make a fringe by removing threads. However, an attractive edge finish can be created by deliberately distressing the bias-cut edge. Cut a skirt or dress to the length required and rub the threads on the cut edge with your fingers or nails. If the edge becomes too distressed and tatty after washing, it may be necessary to trim it to neaten.

Piping

Corded edges improve shape and outline. Use piping as a detail on pillows, slipcovers, bags and clothing. Use bought piping cords or make your own with self-fabric to insert into seams and edges to finish your sewing projects.

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Buying piping cords

There are lots to choose from in a range of thicknesses. These cords have a flange attached, which allows them to be sewn into a seam. Trap the flange in the seam as you sew and the cord will sit securely on the outside edge.

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Covering piping cords

Covering your own cord is simple. Select the thickness of the cord required and cover with bias strips of fabric to match or contrast with the project. Use fine piping for delicate edges on collars or cuffs, and thicker cords for soft furnishings.

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How do I pipe corners?

The bias strips make piping flexible but additional snips and notches help achieve a neat finish. Pin up to the corner. Snip into the seam allowance at the corner position to release to the outer edge or flange. Continue to pin to the next corner and then repeat. Turn through. Pull and adjust the cording within its casing to remove wrinkles before finishing off.



How do I join cording neatly?

Overlap the edges and cut the piping edge to edge, leaving the bias strips. Wrap one end flat over the join and tuck the raw edge of the opposite end under before wrapping it over the lower layers. Trap within the seam to finish.



How do I cord with fine silk fabric?

The texture and twists in the cord may be visible through a thin fabric. In this case, cover with a bias strip of cotton lawn, then cover with a bias strip of the fashion fabric.



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Top cording tip

Cord is available in polyester and in cotton. Polyester is strong and slightly stiff so it is ideal for soft furnishing projects. Cotton fibre cord is better for garment making as it is softer. Prewash both types before sewing to prevent it shrinking.

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Can I decorate cording?

Create an individual corded edge by stitching over the cord with decorative thread before inserting it into a seam. Choose a stitch that covers the cording, such as a fancy zigzag. Metallic thread adds a subtle touch.



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How to make corded edges

Cover your own cord and insert into vertical bodice seams, cuffs, collars, and waistbands or use to border pillows and slipcovers.



1 Select the appropriate thickness of cord for the project and measure the circumference.

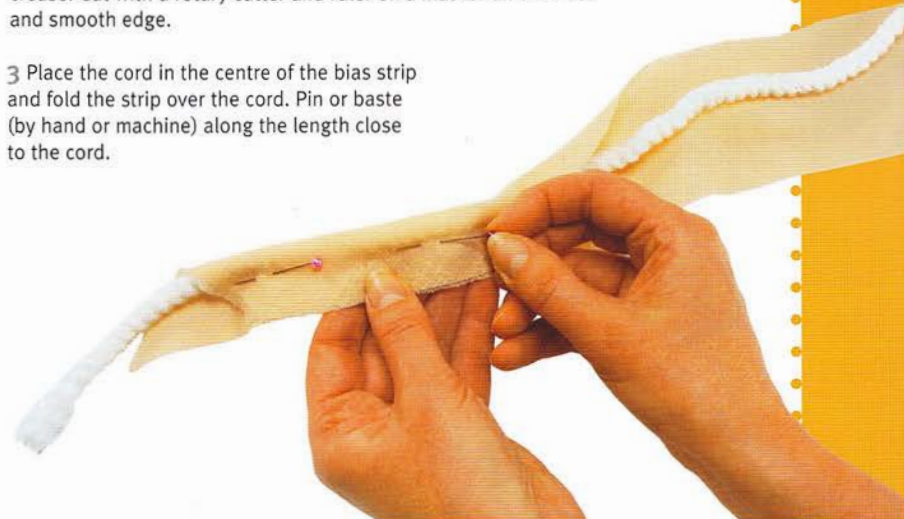


4 Place the raw edge of the piping to the right side of the fabric with raw edges level. Stitch with a zipper foot.



2 Add two seam allowances at 1.5cm (5/8in) and cut bias strips this width. The bias strips lie smoothly around curves and corners. Strips cut on the straight grain will be more difficult to manipulate and will crease. Cut with a rotary cutter and ruler on a mat for an accurate and smooth edge.

3 Place the cord in the centre of the bias strip and fold the strip over the cord. Pin or baste (by hand or machine) along the length close to the cord.



5 Fit a zipper foot to the sewing machine to get close to the cord. Place the second layer of fabric over the cording with right sides facing and edges matching. Pin and baste through all layers. Turn over and sew from the opposite side. Keep inside the previous line of stitching to prevent these stitches showing on the right side.