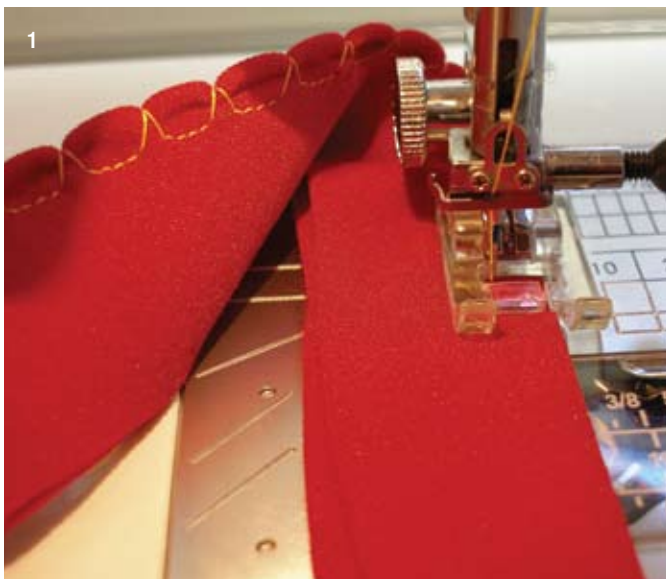


Pebble Piping

By Martyn Smith for Kwik•Sew



Finding just the right coloured piping or trim to finish a neckline or armhole is almost impossible, so making a self fabric trim seems the easiest option. Necklines and armholes can benefit from this edging as it adds a little something to an otherwise plain garment.

Bound necklines and armholes are a chore with some fabrics but this edge is easy to create simply by using the 'blind hem' or 'shell tuck' stitch on your machine and can be used on knits, cottons, satins and soft silks. Fabrics that are thick, bulky or stiff don't give the desired affect as the shell edge will not tuck or even form at all.

Cut some bias strips (even for knit fabrics) about 5-6 cm (2 – 2 $\frac{3}{8}$ in) wide and as long as possible. Joins in the bias can interrupt the edging if they are too bulky. Fold the fabric in half and set the machine to a blind hem or shell tuck stitch with the widest width setting and a stitch length of 2 – 3.5, depending on the desired distance between the tucks. To make the tuck form on firmer fabrics, increase the top tension a couple of notches. Stitch along the folded edge to form the tucks. See photo 1.

When the piping is finished, overlock along the edge so the piping is 1cm ($\frac{3}{8}$ in) from the neatened edge to the straight stitch of the tucking. See photo 2.

Apply the piping onto the right side of the garment making sure that the stitching is sitting on the 'straight stitches' of the tuck stitch to ensure they are not visible when the piping is turned to the underside (an open-toed embroidery foot allows you to see more easily and adjusting your needle position will help you stitch exactly on those shell stitches). See photo 3. A zipper foot can be used but the fabric may not feed through as well when dealing with knit fabrics.

A little tension is sometimes required when applying this sort of piping on a knit as it needs to be treated like a rib trim. Photo 4 shows the underside of the piping/garment after it's been double edgestitched from the right side of the garment. See photo 5. A decorative machine stitch could be used instead of the double edgestitching for further effect.

