

Stitches and Seam Techniques

Seen on Dark Age / Medieval Garments in Various Museum Collections

The following notes have been gathered while attempting to learn stitches and construction techniques in use during the Dark Ages / Medieval period.

The following is in no way a complete report, but only an indication of some techniques observed on extant Dark Ages / Medieval garments.

Hopefully, others who are researching “actual” garments of the period in question will also report on their findings, so that comparisons can be made and a better total understanding achieved.

Jennifer Baker –New Varangian Guard – Hodegon Branch – 2009

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VIKING AND SAXON STITCHES

There are only four basic stitches to master:

1. RUNNING STITCH ,
2. OVERSEWING, ALSO KNOWN AS OVERCAST STITCH OR WHIP STITCH
3. HERRINGBONE , ALSO KNOWN AS CATCH STITCH
4. AND BLANKET STITCH. ALSO KNOWN AS BUTTONHOLE STITCH

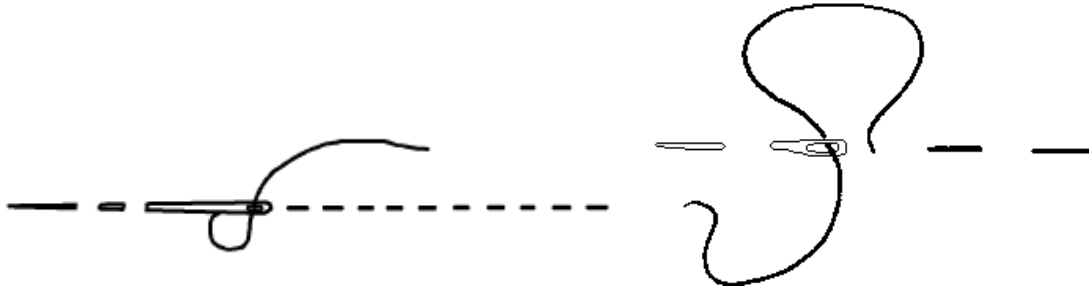
Running stitch is probably the easiest to start with followed by oversewing. With these two stitches you can make clothing.

The other two are for decorative edging.

These directions are for a right handed person, if you are left handed remember to reverse all directions.

Stitches and Seam Techniques

RUNNING STITCH



A running stitch is done through one or more layers of fabric (but normally two or more), with the needle going down and up, down and up, in an essentially straight line. It is pretty much the only stitch where several stitches can be taken at a time on the needle before drawing the thread through. The thread forms a dashed line. The running stitch has very little elasticity and may break if used on stretchy fabrics or on the bias.

Method : Running stitch is worked from right to left. Several stitches can be picked up on the needle at once before pulling the needle through.

Found on:

Running stitch	Danish bronze age	Krogens Mølle Mose, Denmark	Hooded cape	Hald, M. Ancient Danish Textiles, p. 15
Running stitch	Danish bronze age	Aardestrup, Denmark	Skin cape. Running stitched seams	Hald, M. Ancient Danish Textiles, p. 33
Running stitch	Danish bronze age	Roummose, Denmark	Sheep skin cape. Running stitched seams	Hald, M. Ancient Danish Textiles, p. 42
Running Stitch	Danish bronze age	Karlby Mose, Denmark	Skin cape C. Running stitch in gut or sinew	Hald, M. Ancient Danish Textiles, p. 47
Running stitch	Danish bronze age	Karlby Mose, Denmark	Skin cape B. Cape sewn in running stitch with skin thread	Hald, M. Ancient Danish Textiles, p. 47
Running stitch	Danish bronze age	Arden Mose, Denmark	Fragment with running stitches	Hald, M. Ancient Danish Textiles, p. 280
Running stitch	Danish bronze age	Boremose, Denmark	Cape I. Running stitched neck hem	Hald, M. Ancient Danish Textiles, p. 18
Running stitch	Danish bronze age	Boremose, Denmark	Cape II. Running stitch seams	Hald, M. Ancient Danish Textiles, p. 18

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Running stitch	Danish bronze age	Baunsø Mose, Denmark	Skin cape A. Sewn in running stitch with gut or leather	Hald, M. Ancient Danish Textiles, p. 39
Running stitch	Danish bronze age	Baunsø Mose, Denmark	Skin cape B. Hem stitch used for piecing	Hald, M. Ancient Danish Textiles, p. 39
Running stitch	Danish bronze age	Karlby Mose, Denmark	Skin remnants D and E. Pieces of skin sewn together with running stitch	Hald, M. Ancient Danish Textiles, p. 47
Running stitch	Danish bronze age	Huldremose, Denmark	Skin cape. Sewn with running stitch	Hald, M. Ancient Danish Textiles, p. 52
Running stitch	Danish bronze age	Haraldskæ Mose, Denmark	Skin cape. Skins joined with running stitches	Hald, M. Ancient Danish Textiles, p. 58
Running stitch	Viking Era?	York, England	Item 1460b. Ribbon bound-edge on fragment	Walton, P. Small Finds, p. 320
Running stitch	Viking Era?	York, England	Ribbon folded lengthwise & stitched	Walton, P. Small Finds, p. 369
Running stitch	Viking Era?	York, England	16-22 Coppergate No. 1408. Silk reliquary pouch	Walton, P. Textile Production NESAS3, p. 68
Running stitch	Viking era, 9th-11th c	Dublin, Co. Cork, Ireland	Typical elements of silk and woolen caps	Heckett, E. Some Silk & Wool Textiles NESAS3, p. 85
Running stitch	Late 10th c	Hedeby (Haithabu)	Seam treatment: seam stitched in running stitch; raw edges folded in toward each other and stitched together, as for a French seam	Priest-Dorman, p. 9
Running stitch	11th c	Viborg Sønderø, Denmark	Man's shirt	Fentz, p. ; Mulvaney, p. 7
Running stitch	General for middle ages	London, England	Stitching holes on items indicate that in the majority of cases a fine line of running stitches was used for holding two edges of cloth together. Size of stitches vary in relation to fineness and flexibility of cloth. 2-3mm stitch length is usual, though 4mm stitches have been recorded.	Crowfoot et al, p. 155
Running stitch	General for middle ages	London, England	Allowances of backstitched seams held down to either side with running stitches, about 2-3mm out from seam	Crowfoot et al, p. 156

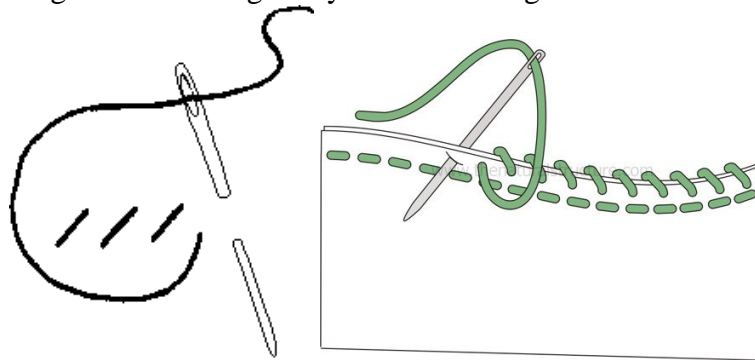
Stitches and Seam Techniques

OVERSEWING

also known as Overcast stitch or Whip stitch

The standard overcast stitch is done through the edge of one or more layers of fabric. The needle goes through the fabric from one side and then is brought around the edge to go through the fabric again from the same side. The thread forms a spiral, going around the cut edge.

Method : Oversewing is worked diagonally from left to right



Found on:

Overcast stitch	Danish bronze age	Huldremose, Denmark	Skin cape. Sewn with overcast stitch	Hald, M. Ancient Danish Textiles, p. 52
Overcast stitch	Danish bronze age	Auning Mose, Denmark	Piece of cloth with overcast edges	Hald, M. Ancient Danish Textiles, p. 54
Overcast stitch	Danish bronze age	Refstrup Hovedgaard, Denmark	Skin cape with overcast seams	Hald, M. Ancient Danish Textiles, p. 56
Overcast stitch	Danish bronze age	Møgelmose, Denmark	Skin jacket with overcast stitches in leather thread	Hald, M. Ancient Danish Textiles, p. 56
Overcast stitch	Danish bronze age	Haraldskæ Mose, Denmark	Skin cape. Skins joined with overcast stitches	Hald, M. Ancient Danish Textiles, p. 58
Overcast stitch	Danish bronze age	Rønbjerg Mose, Denmark	Tunic sewn with overcast stitch	Hald, M. Ancient Danish Textiles, p. 66
Overcast stitch	Danish bronze age	Vester Torsted Mose, Denmark	Fragment of skin garment. Sewn with overcast stitch; overcast stitch around cut out portion	Hald, M. Ancient Danish Textiles, p. 66

Stitches and Seam Techniques

Overcast stitch	Danish bronze age	Denmark (general)	Reference to skins and textiles	Hald, M. Ancient Danish Textiles, p. 279
Overcast stitch	Danish bronze age	Karlby Mose, Denmark	Skin cape C. Overcast stitch in gut or sinew	Hald, M. Ancient Danish Textiles, p. 47
Overcast stitch	Pre-Viking or Viking era	St. Andrew's Parish, Orkney Island, Scotland	Hood. Seam edges whipped together; woven decorative band ends whipped with deep stitches	Henshall, A. Early Textiles, p. 13
Overcast stitch	Late 10th c	Hedeby (Haithabu)	Seam treatment: seam stitched in running stitch; raw edges folded in and overcast, as for a French seam	Priest-Dorman, p. 9
Over stitch	Viking Era?	York, England	16-22 Coppergate No. 1408. Silk reliquary pouch	Walton, P. Textile Production NESAS3, p. 68
Overcast stitch	Viking Era?	York, England	Ribbon folded lengthwise & stitched	Walton, P. Small Finds, p. 369

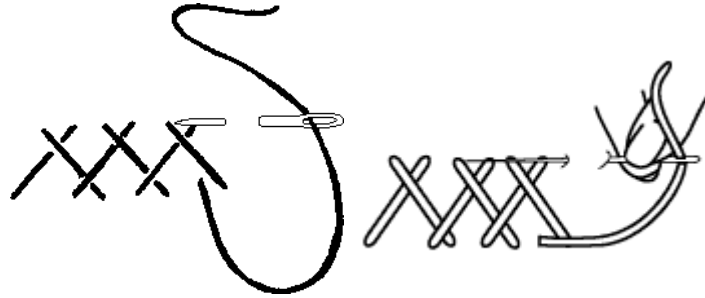
"Through" overcast stitch	11th c	Viborg Sønderø, Denmark	Man's shirt	Fentz, p. ; Mulvaney, p. 7
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Whip (overcast) stitch	11th c	Viborg Sønderø, Denmark	Man's shirt	Fentz, p. ; Mulvaney, p. 6
Whip stitched cord	Viking era, 9th-11th c	Dublin, Co. Cork, Ireland	Typical elements of silk and woolen caps	Heckett, E. Some Silk & Wool Textiles NESAS3, p. 85
Whip stitch	Viking Era?	York, England	Stuffed pleats stitched together across the top	Walton, P. Small Finds, p. 355

Stitches and Seam Techniques

HERRINGBONE

Also known as Catch Stitch



Herringbone tends to be a decorative, rather than a structural, stitch. Think of it as doing two parallel rows of backstitch where you alternate which row you're sewing with each stitch. The stitch is very elastic. The working surface shows a zig-zig with an X at each point, the underside shows two parallel dashed lines.

Method : Herringbone stitch is started at the top of the row. Work from left to right alternately taking a stitch at the top and a stitch at the bottom.

To Work Herringbone Stitch - Commence by bringing the needle out on the left-hand side of the line to be worked. Make a small stitch on the upper line which points to the left. Keep the thread below the needle and pull it through the fabric. Insert the thread on the lower line a little to the right and make a small stitch which points to the left. Pull the needle through the fabric with the thread above the needle.

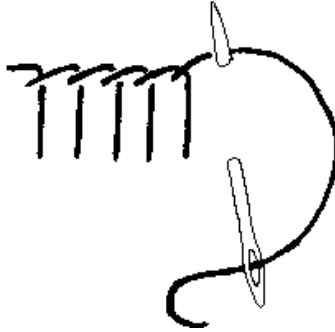
Herringbone stitch	Danish bronze age	Huldremose, Denmark	Skirt	Hald, M. Ancient Danish Textiles, p. 280
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Catch stitch	Viking Era?	York, England	16-22 Coppergate No. 1408. Silk reliquary pouch	Walton, P. Textile Production NESAS3, p. 68
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Stitches and Seam Techniques

BLANKET STITCH.

Also known as Buttonhole stitch



The primary use of the blanket stitch is to finish edges, especially cut edges, but it is also commonly used to finish eyelets and buttonholes. (It may also be called "buttonhole stitch".) It is produced similarly to the overcast stitch, but after the needle goes through the fabric, it catches the loop of thread, resulting in a series of L-shaped stitches along the edge of the fabric. This stitch is also somewhat decorative. In one case, two selvages have been joined by using a blanket stitch that alternates which side of the seam the stitch goes through.

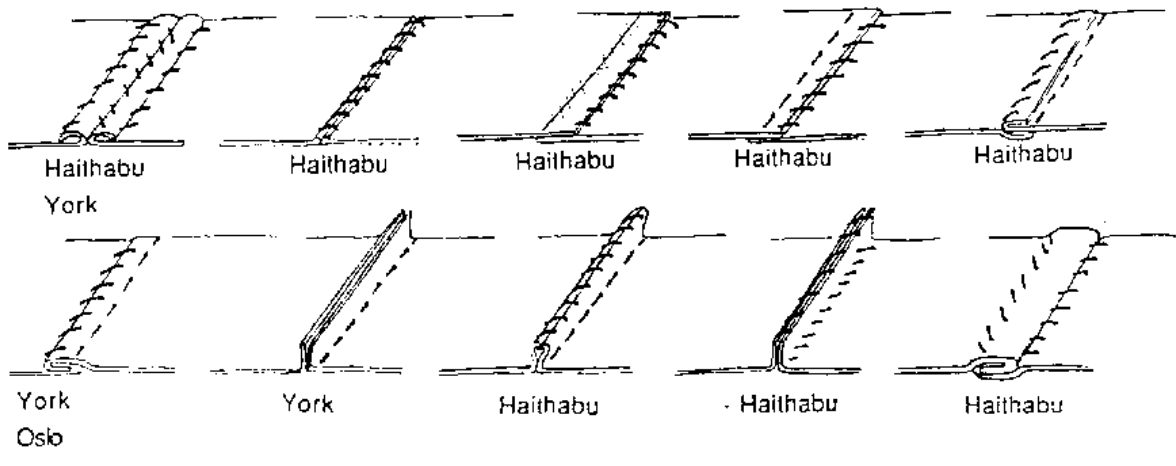
Method : Blanket stitch is worked from left to right. The needle is brought up vertically and brought out of the fabric with the thread tucked under the needle

Buttonhole stitch	Danish bronze age	Denmark (general)	Reference to skins and textiles	Hald, M. Ancient Danish Textiles, p. 279
Buttonhole stitch	Danish bronze age	Bredmose, Denmark	Coarse cloth. 2 seamed edges oversewn with buttonhole stitch	Hald, M. Ancient Danish Textiles, p. 28
Buttonhole stitch	Danish bronze age	Aalestrup Bog, Denmark	Pieces of woven fabric sewn in buttonhole stitch	Hald, M. Ancient Danish Textiles, p. 44
Buttonhole stitch	Danish bronze age	Haraldskæ Mose, Denmark	Fabric II. Fringed edge oversewn in buttonhole stitch	Hald, M. Ancient Danish Textiles, p. 58
Buttonhole stitch	Danish bronze age	Hvilehøj, Denmark	Remains of fine cloth. Fragment with buttonhole stitch.	Hald, M. Ancient Danish Textiles, p. 118
Buttonhole stitch	Late 10th century	Bjerringhøj, Denmark	Ornamental band of silk and gold thread, edge sewn with buttonhole stitch in silk thread.	Hald, M. Ancient Danish Textiles, p. 106

Stitches and Seam Techniques

SEAMS

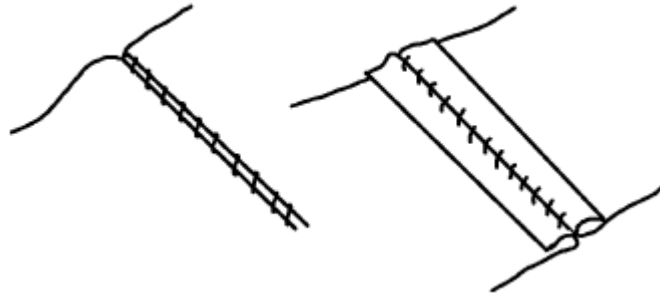
Seams are worked on the same principle as hems. If a cloth is fine, lightweight or tends to fray it should be doubled over. If it is thick, heavy and does not fray it should be overlapped. From the surviving sewn fragments, it would seem that just about any combination of oversewing and running stitches which can be used were used.



Stitches and Seam Techniques

BUTTED SEAMS

Also known as Bound seam



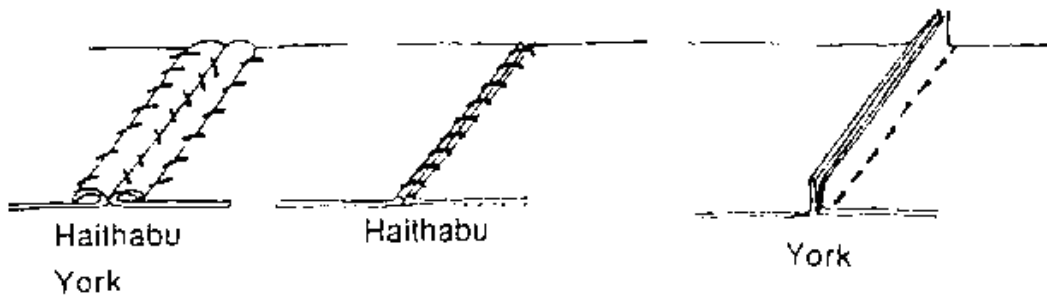
(Two selvedge edges, or two folded edges, brought together edge to edge and overcast; join usually lays flat)



Bound seam fragment

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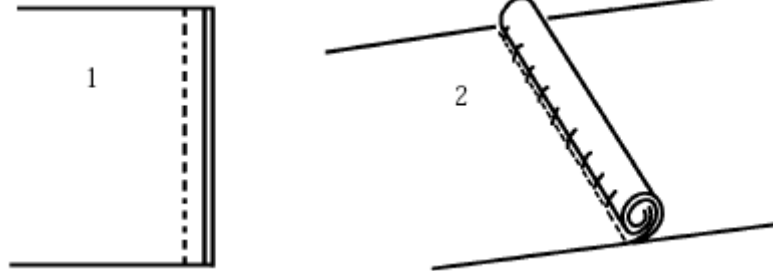
Bound seam	Viking Era?	York, England	Item 1460b. Ribbon bound-edge on fragment	Walton, P. Small Finds, p. 320
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Stitches and Seam Techniques

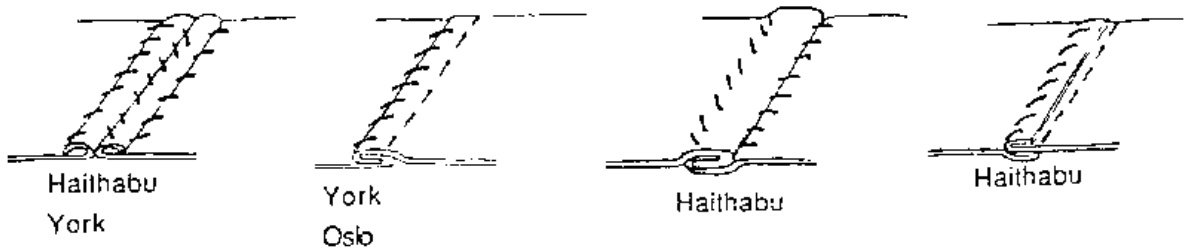
SEAMS cont.

STAND-UP SEAM



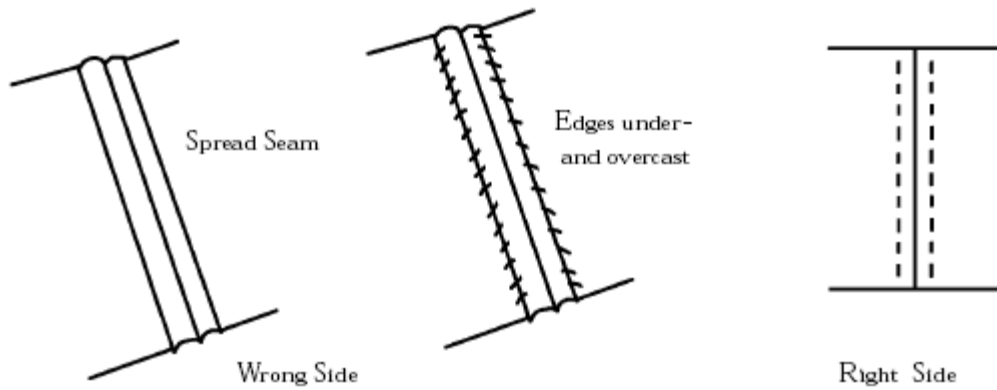
(A seam which is first joined by running or backstitch; then turned in to the line of stitching and overcast. This creates a tubular effect.)

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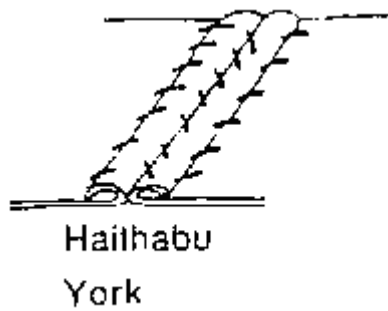


Stitches and Seam Techniques

SEAMS SPREAD OPEN AFTER JOIN IS MADE

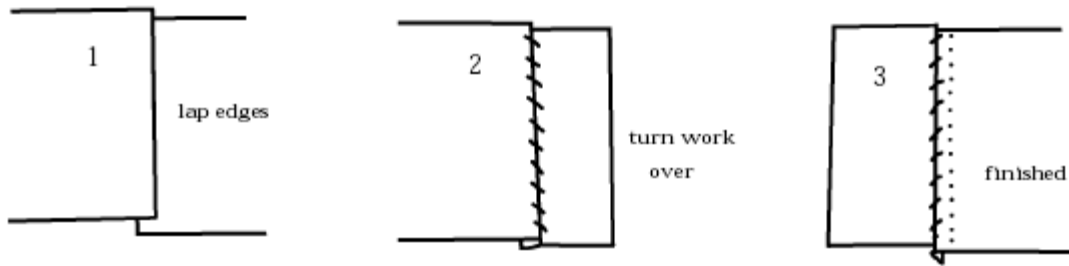


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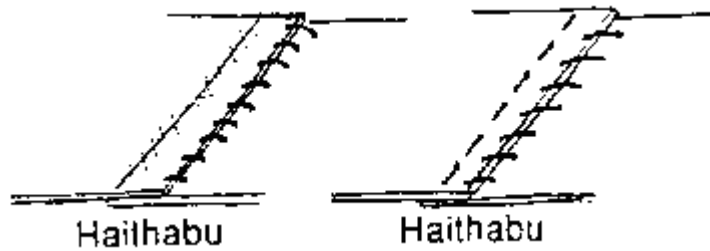
Stitches and Seam Techniques

“LAPPED” FELL SEAM



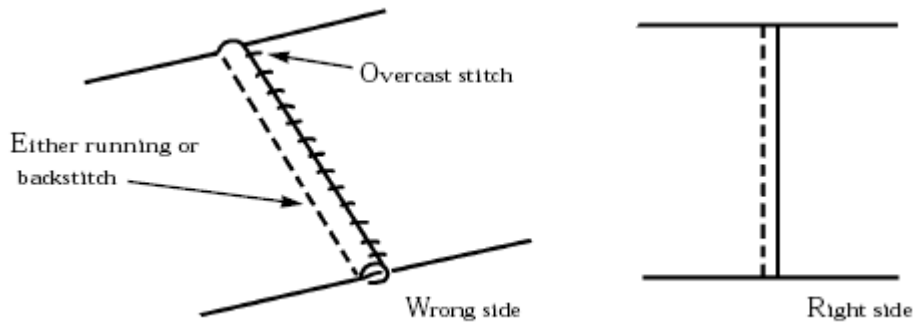
Where a seam in a garment is required, lap one edge over the other for a depth of approx. 1/2". Fold in the raw edge and overcast (whip) down. Turn garment to other side, fold in edge and overcast down. Seam finish will appear the same on both right and wrong sides of garment.

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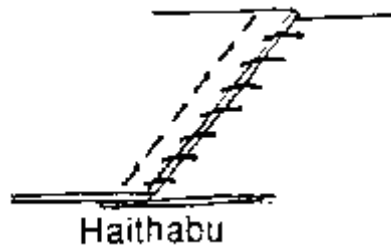


Stitches and Seam Techniques

FELL SEAM WORKED ON WRONG SIDE OF GARMENT

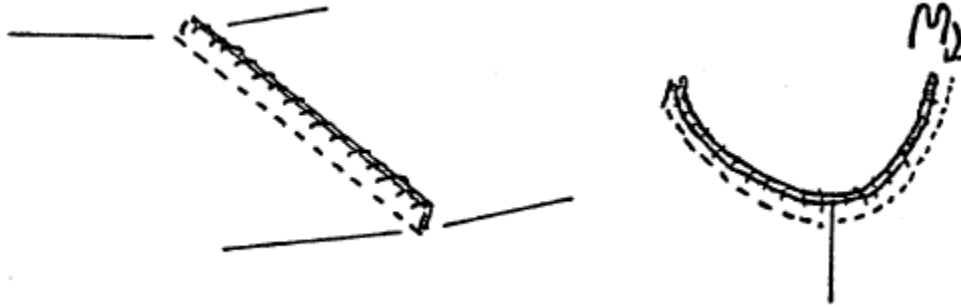


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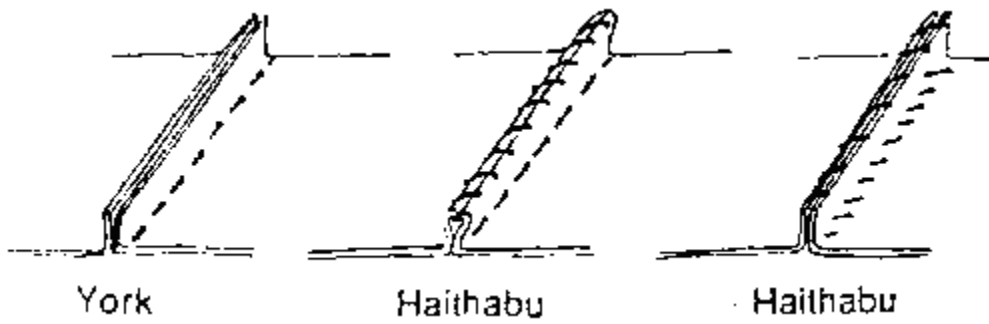


Stitches and Seam Techniques

FINISHES ON RAW EDGES OF SEAMS



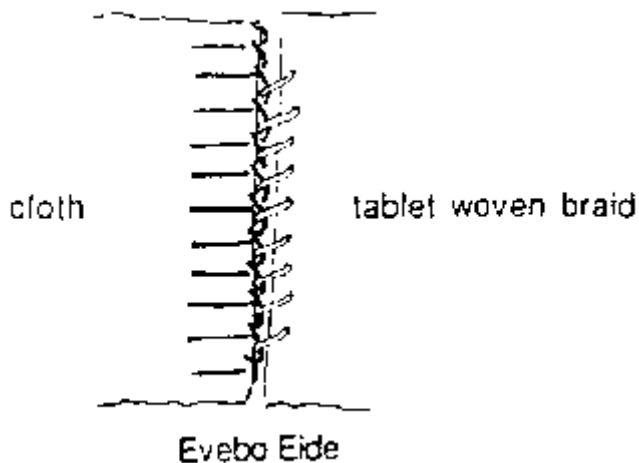
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Stitches and Seam Techniques

SEWING ON TABLET WOVEN BRAID

When sewing on tablet woven braid there are two options: you can sew it over the edge of the cloth and cover up the hem with it, or you can use a row of blanket stitches to stop the edge of the cloth fraying, then use oversewing to join the braid to the blanket stitches. This method was employed on the cloak found in a chieftain's grave at Evebo Eide.



Stitches and Seam Techniques

HEMS

The hem is the seam at the edge of a piece of cloth, how you sew the hem depends on how thick the cloth is.

HEM STITCH

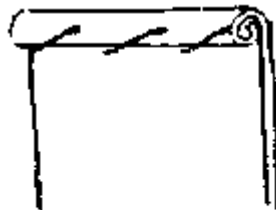
The hem stitch is used to tack an edge (either folded or not) down to a flat fabric the name comes from its use in finishing folded hems. The edge is held down flat against the main fabric and the needle is passed down through the main fabric alone, then up through all the layers, then this is repeated. The thread forms a series of diagonals crossing the line of the edge. This stitch is somewhat elastic, due to the zig-zag path of the thread. The overcast and hem stitches are very similar in structure.

NARROW HEMS AT EDGES OF GARMENT



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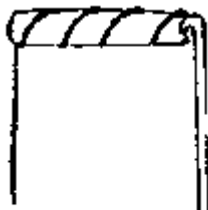
- 1) The rolled seam in York / Oslo is only suitable for fabrics such as silk or very fine linen.



York

Oslo

- 2) The hems from Haithabu and London. Here the cloth is only folded over once and can be used on thick wool



Haithabu

London



Haithabu

Stitches and Seam Techniques

HEMS cont.

- 1) The hem from York. Here the cloth is folded twice and can be used on linen or fine wool. If coarse wool is doubled over twice it will tend to stick out stiffly.



York

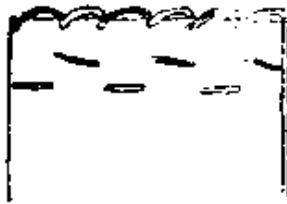
- 4) The hem in Haithabu & York uses the herringbone stitch and is used to hold down a hem on wool which has been folded once. This is a decorative stitch and could be used on the outside of a piece of clothing.



Haithabu

York

- 5) The hem from London. Here two different coloured threads have been used alternately to give a decorative edge. Unusually this seam does not use one of the standard four stitches. It has been worked over the edge of a piece of wool without any folding. This sort of hem should only be used on a cloth which does not fray much, or on leather



London

Stitches and Seam Techniques

Hem stitch	Danish bronze age	Krogens Mølle Mose, Denmark	Hooded cape	Hald, M. Ancient Danish Textiles, p. 15
Hem stitch	Danish bronze age	Roummose, Denmark	Sheep skin cape.	Hald, M. Ancient Danish Textiles, p. 42
Hem Stitch	Danish bronze age	Karlby Mose, Denmark	Skin cape C. Hem stitch in gut or sinew	Hald, M. Ancient Danish Textiles, p. 47
Hem stitch	Danish bronze age	Karlby Mose, Denmark	Skin cape B. Cape sewn in hem stitch with skin thread	Hald, M. Ancient Danish Textiles, p. 47
Hem stitch	Danish bronze age	Baunsø Mose, Denmark	Skin cape A. Sewn in hem stitch with gut or leather	Hald, M. Ancient Danish Textiles, p. 39
Hem stitch	Danish bronze age	Baunsø Mose, Denmark	Skin cape B. Hem stitch used for piecing	Hald, M. Ancient Danish Textiles, p. 39
Hem stitch	Danish bronze age	Refstrup Hovedgaard, Denmark	Skin cape with hem stitched seams	Hald, M. Ancient Danish Textiles, p. 56
Hem stitch	Danish bronze age	Haraldskæ Mose, Denmark	Fabric I. Borders single-turned and hem stitched	Hald, M. Ancient Danish Textiles, p. 58
Hem stitch	Danish bronze age	Vester Torsted Mose, Denmark	Fragment of skin garment. Sewn with hem stitch	Hald, M. Ancient Danish Textiles, p. 66
Hem stitch	Danish bronze age	Vrangstrup, Denmark	Two cloth fragments III. Edge turned over and sewn in hem stitch with 2-ply sewing thread	Hald, M. Ancient Danish Textiles, p. 96
Hemstitch	Danish bronze age	Huldremose, Denmark	Skin cape. Sewn with hemstitch	Hald, M. Ancient Danish Textiles, p. 52
Hem stitch	Pre-Viking or Viking era	St. Andrew's Parish, Orkney Island, Scotland	Hood. Raw edges of seam turned over twice and hemmed down on the outside; edges framing the face turned over twice onto the outside making a hem ½ inch wide; lower edge of the cloth turned outwards and hemmed to edge of decorative band; upper decorative band whipped to upper edge of lower band	Henshall, A. Early Textiles, p. 13

Stitches and Seam Techniques

Hem stitch	Viking Era?	York, England	Item 1460b. Ribbon bound-edge on fragment	Walton, P. Small Finds, p. 320
Hem stitch	Viking era, 9th-11th c	Dublin, Co. Cork, Ireland		Heckett, E. Some Silk & Wool Textiles NESAS3, p. 86
Hem stitch	11th c	Viborg Sønderød, Denmark	Man's shirt	Fentz, p.

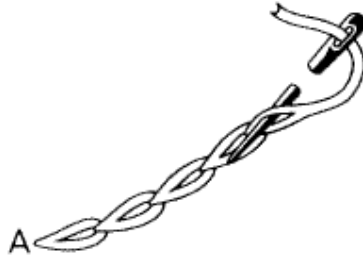
Rolled hem	Viking Era?	York, England	Silk headdress, item #?	Walton, P. Small Finds, p. 320
Rolled hem (stitch type?)	Viking Era?	York, England	16-22 Coppergate No. 1332. Silk headdress	Walton, P. Textile Production NESAS3, p. 70
Rolled hem (stitch type?)	Viking Era?	York, England	5-7 Coppergate No. 651. Silk headdress	Walton, P. Textile Production NESAS3, p. 70
Rolled hem	Viking era, 9th-11th c	Dublin, Co. Cork, Ireland	Typical elements of silk and woolen caps	Heckett, E. Some Silk & Wool Textiles NESAS3, p. 85

Twice-turned hem	Viking era, 9th-11th c	Dublin, Co. Cork, Ireland	Typical elements of silk and woolen caps	Heckett, E. Some Silk & Wool Textiles NESAS3, p. 85
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Upright hem stitch	Viking Era?	York, England	Item 1460b. Ribbon bound-edge on fragment	Walton, P. Small Finds, p. 320
Upright hem stitch	Viking Era?	York, England	Item 1263.	Walton, P. Small Finds, p. 322

Other Stitches found in Archeological finds

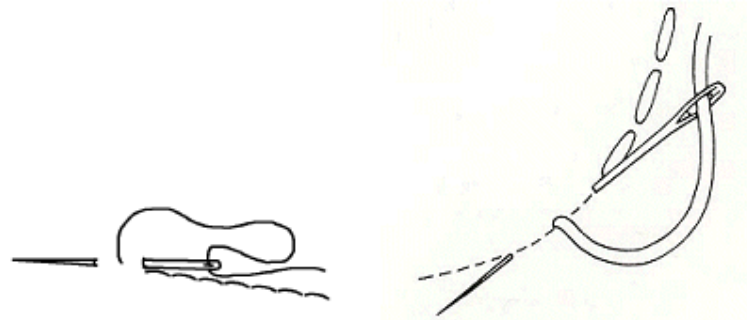
SPLIT STITCH



A popular stitch, split stitch was used in many forms of embroidery including Opus Anglicanum and Heraldic Embroidery. It was used for very fine work, often only using a single strand of silk thread or was done using quite thick threads, such as wool. It was used as an outlining stitch or as a filling stitch.

To Work Split Stitch - Bring the needle through at A and, following the line to be covered, take a small back stitch so that the needle comes up through the working thread, as shown in the diagram. Generally, it is easiest to work this as a two step stitch by making a small stitch, then bringing the needle up through the thread at the half way point.

BACKSTITCH



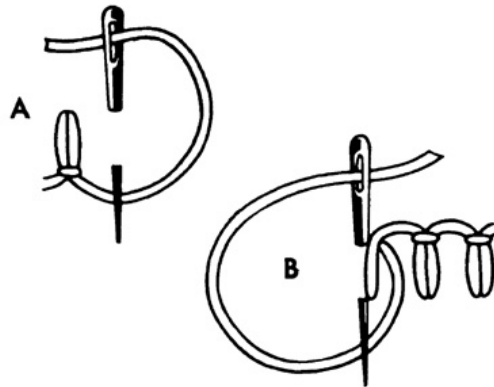
The back stitch tends to be used for seams when a significant amount of elasticity is needed, such as with seams on the bias. The stitch is done similarly to a running stitch, but each stitch backtracks when it comes back up through the fabric, resulting in a looping thread track. On the working side of the fabric, the thread appears in a series of overlapping lines; on the back side, it appears to be a running stitch.

Bring the thread through on the stitch line and then take a small backward stitch through the fabric. Bring the needle through again a little in front of the first stitch, then take another stitch, inserting the needle at the point where it first came through. In blackwork, a single back stitch is usually worked over two threads on a single-thread evenweave. This stitch is used in both counted and free embroidery

Found on:

Back stitch (probably)	Pre-Viking or Viking era	St. Andrew's Parish, Orkney Island, Scotland	Hood. Decorative band sewn to body of hood with "regular" stitches	Henshall, A. Early Textiles, p. 13
Back stitch	11th c	Viborg Sønderø, Denmark	Man's shirt.	Fentz, p. ; Mulvaney, p. 6
Back stitch	General for middle ages	London, England	Used for seams under pressure. No certain evidence of it exists in London examples, but may have been used on bias-cut items such as hose.	Crowfoot et al, p. 156

TWISTED BUTTONHOLE STITCH



Begin on the bottom line as for regular buttonhole stitch and pull the thread through. Holding the thread with your left thumb, insert your needle on the bottom line and take a stitch straight up and alongside the previous stitch. Pull the thread through in an upward motion. You'll see the little loop at the bottom tightens to hold the stitch. Take your thread back down through that little loop. Repeat, and continue along until you've completed your length. Take your thread to the back and finish off.

Twisted buttonhole stitch	Danish bronze age	Osterbolle, Denmark	Fragment	Hald, M. Ancient Danish Textiles, p. 280
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CHAIN STITCH

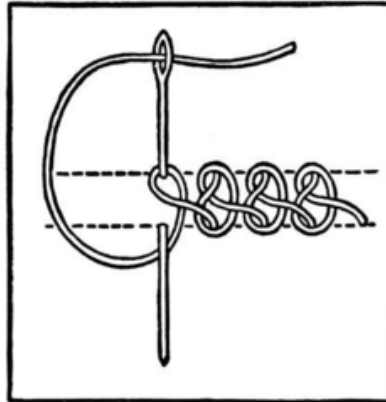


To Work Chain Stitch - Bring the thread up at the top of the line and hold it down with the left thumb. Insert the needle where it last emerged and bring the point out a short distance away. Pull the thread through, keeping the working thread under the needle point.

Chain stitch	Pre-Viking or Viking era	St. Andrew's parish, Orkney Island, Scotland	Hood. Mend under chin – chain stitches in double thread, 5 per inch, at point of weakness, framing an area of darning	Henshall, A. Early Textiles, p. 13
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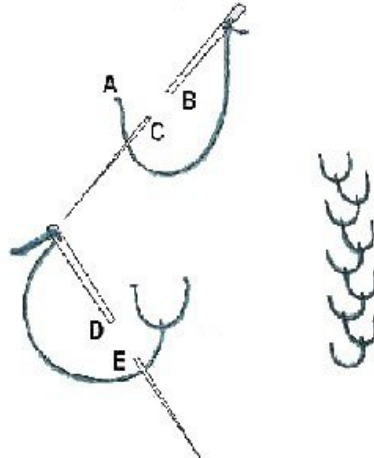
BRAIDING STITCH

Braid stitch rather resembles a fancy braid laid upon the material. It looks best when carried out with a stoutly twisted thread



Braiding stitch	Danish bronze age	Thorsberg Mose, Denmark	Cloth fragment with oversewing in stitch resembling braiding stitch	Hald, M. Ancient Danish Textiles, p. 72
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FEATHER STITCH



Feather stitch or briar stitch: Mark a center line. Make like blanket stitch, slanting the stitches, first from right to left, then from left to right on either side of center.

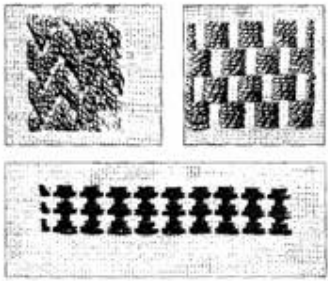
1. Bring thread up at **A**; pull through.
2. Thread below work, insert needle at **B**; scoop out at **C**; pull through.
3. Thread below work, insert needle at **D**; scoop out at **E** (thread below work); pull through.
4. Repeat

Feather stitch	Danish bronze age	Huldremose, Denmark	Checkered skirt	Hald, M. Ancient Danish Textiles, p. 51
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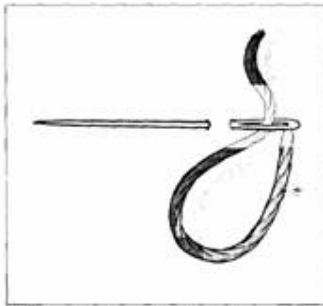
DARNING STITCH

Darning Stitch

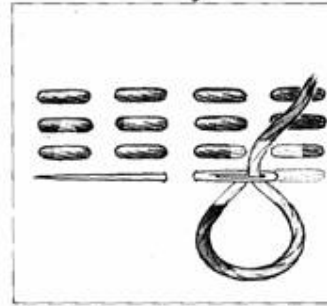
Basting Stitch, Damask Stitch



This long running stitch can be used as a decorative filling stitch by working rows of alternately spaced stitches close together to form geometric, regular, or more randomly spaced patterns.



1 First thread needle in and out of fabric to create single row of horizontal straight stitches. Work from right to left, and keep stitching even.



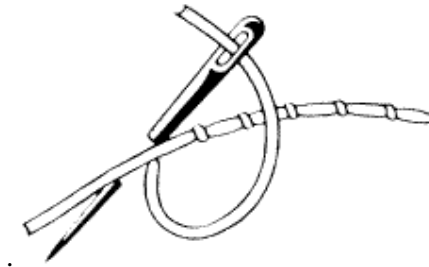
2 To make evenly sized and spaced rows as shown, continue working back and forth along area to be filled, until pattern is completed.

Darning stitch(twill)	Pre-Viking or Viking era	St. Andrew's Parish, Orkney Island, Scotland	Hood. Mending; stitching copies the twill weave in a heavier and darker yarn	Henshall, A. Early Textiles, p. 13
Patch or darn	Pre-Viking or Viking era	St. Andrew's parish, Orkney Island, Scotland	Hood. Mend under chin area in a different fabric, possibly darned in (check text again)	Henshall, A. Early Textiles, p. 13

SURFACE COUCHING

Also known as Couched cord

To Work Surface Couching - Lay down the thread to be couched, and with another thread catch it down with small stitches worked over the top

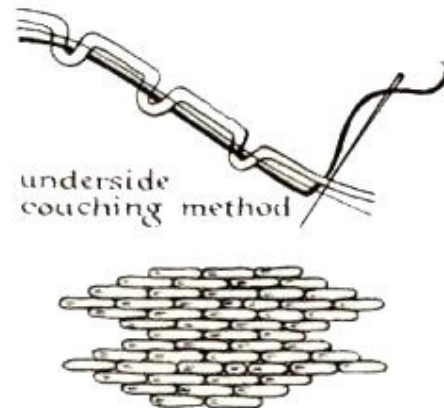


Couched cord	Danish bronze age	Denmark (general)	Reference to skins and textiles	Hald, M. Ancient Danish Textiles, p. 279
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Underside Couching

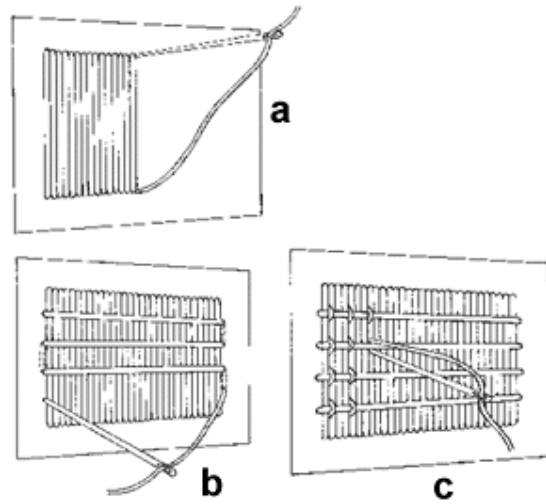
To Work Underside Couching - In the embroidery technique of underside couching, thread (usually gold) is laid on the surface of the ground fabric, couching threads are then passed over it. As each couching stitch is worked over the gold thread, the needle is carefully re-inserted into the hole in the backing fabric that the needle created on the way out. The couching thread is pulled tight and a tiny loop of the gold thread from the surface drops through the hole in the backing fabric to the underside (thus giving the technique its name).

This creates a hinge in the gold thread, allowing the fabric to bend and giving it a great flexibility. Fabric worked with gold thread in underside couching has much more drape than fabric with surface couched gold, thus making it a much better technique for working objects which will be worn, such as ecclesiastical vestments.



Laid and Couched Work

Laid and Couched Work, is a form of embroidery where a thread (usually wool) is laid on a ground fabric (usually wool or linen). This stitch is created by laying a set of ground threads, that work from one side of the pattern to the other (Fig a). Over these threads, in the opposite direction, are laid another set of threads at regular intervals (Fig b). These cross threads are then held down by a series of couching stitches (Fig c). The whole process results in an area completely covered in thread. This technique allows for large areas of pattern to be covered very quickly.



REFERENCES

for Pictures of stitches -

1. **Stitches and Seam Techniques - #134** Seen on 18th Century Garments in Various Museum Collections
2. **Dark Age Stitch Types**

For Information on stitches -

Sewing Stitches Used in Medieval Clothing Compiled by Jennifer L. Carlson
<http://www.personal.utulsa.edu/~Marc-Carlson/cloth/stitches.htm>

historical needlework resources

http://www.medieval.webcon.net.au/technique_stitches.html

Archaeological Sewing by Heather Rose Jones

<http://heatherrosejones.com/archaeologicalsewing/index.html>