



# HOW TO GRADE SEAM ALLOWANCES

TUTORIAL

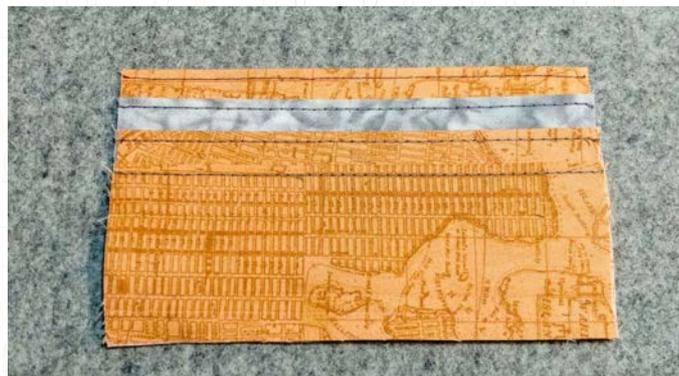
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Grading a seam simply means turning a standard seam allowance into layered tiers of fabric. The result is less bulk, which means a smoother finish from the right side. It's another one of those very basic techniques that can make all the difference in the professional look of your project. It is done by hand, so it can be a bit time consuming based on the length of the seam being trimmed, but it makes a tremendous difference. Bulky, lumpy seams are not very pretty. Crisp, flat seams are best!

Not every seam requires grading, but it can be done on any seam. It is more necessary when working with a) thicker fabrics, b) seams that will be pressed together and to one side rather than flat, or c) seams that will be sandwiched between other layers, such as on card pockets along the top of a bag.

For this tutorial we are going to grade the seams in the card pockets like used in Rozy, Roxy, Jody, Charlie, Rocket Pocket,...

The seam allowance (SA) we are grading in this example are the SA between the top card pocket and the bottom layer of the slip pocket.



Flip the top layer of your card pocket up and away.

Starting with the Seam allowance of the upper layer, trim close to stitching ( $1/8''$ ).



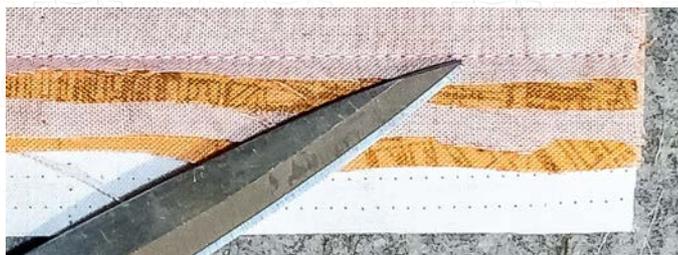
Trim the next layer close to the first trimmed layer but leave the S.A. a bit wider ( $1/4''$ ).



Repeat with the remaining layers until all seams are completely graded. In every layer the SA will



be left a little wider. It is of no importance that your cutting is straight. The whole point of this grading technique is to show as little ridges as possible through the upper layer.



Some people are reluctant to grade because they feel it will weaken the seam. But really, unless your project is something that is going to be laundered day-in-and-day-out, the strength of the graded seam will be fine. And, the results are worth it!



As you can see in this card pocket example, the bottom of the card pockets consist of only 2 layers (the top layer of the top card pocket and the bottom layer of the slip pocket). When pressed down, you will not feel nor see any hard ridges.

And you mastered yourself another great technique that you can use for all your future projects