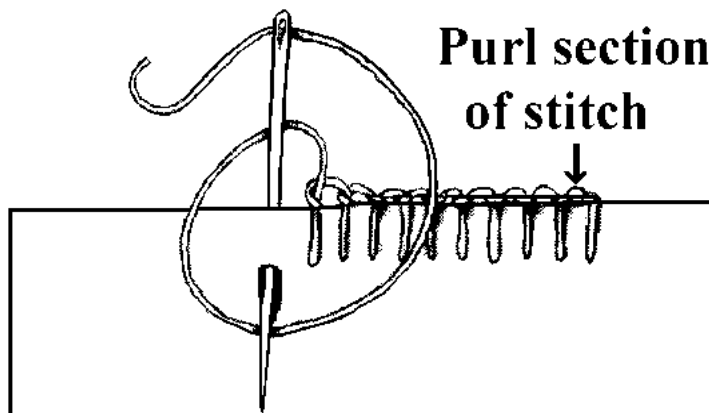


The Buttonhole Stitch

The buttonhole stitch is the **most appropriate stitch** for sewing buttonholes. It is used to prevent fraying of the buttonhole. Since it has a small half-knot at the top of each stitch it is also less likely to unravel if the thread is broken, something that is likely to happen eventually, from use. To get the most strength, it is important to wax the thread before use. The waxing will strengthen the thread and prevent twisting while sewing the buttonhole.

You can sew the buttonhole stitch in any direction. Hold the thread along the top edge of the material, with the end pointing in the direction you are going to sew. Make a loop, with the top of the loop pointing upward. Inserting the needle through the loop, then into the fabric from the wrong side and then through the large loop left on the right side of the material. Tighten your stitch, keeping the purl on top by see-sawing the thread and using your fingernail. The additional stitches are created by arching the thread over the right side opening of the buttonhole in the direction you are sewing, then looping down and back around in the opposite direction you are sewing, through the loop at the top, then through the material from the wrong side about 1/16th of an inch from the last stitch, through the large loop on the right side and then tightening as before. Continue doing this all the way around the buttonhole until done.

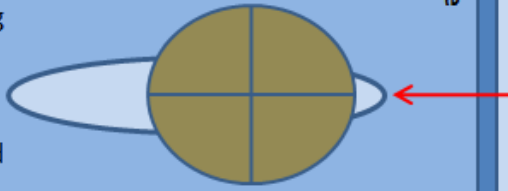


Some hints:

- Practice on a scrap piece of cloth if you haven't a button hole in awhile. This will get you back in practice.
- Each garment is different, so while the stitch is the same the degree of tightness may need to vary; also the distance between stitches and the distance of the stitches from the fabric edge.
- Sew uniformly- equal distances between stitches and equal distances from the fabric edge.
- Start on a buttonhole that is inconspicuous; e.g. a sleeve button hole. As you sew more button holes on the garment each will get better so sew the most visible and conspicuous button holes last. Don't be afraid to tear out an early buttonhole and re-sew it if necessary.
- Remember buttons will be pulling against the stitches. Start sewing at the inside end of the hole and sew around the hole so you end at the inside again. That way the button will be pulling at the outside end of the hole (the middle of the stitching) where the stitching is strongest. See picture below

Top fabric with the buttonhole

Start sewing button hole at this end. Go around the hole and stop here.



Button is pulling against the buttonhole is this direction

Top fabric edge

Underlying fabric to which the button is sewn

Where the button pulls against the hole should be the middle of the stitching where it will be the strongest.