How to machine-sew a double-folded hem

A DOUBLE-FOLDED HEM ENCLOSES THE RAW EDGE OF A FABRIC.
IT CAN BE USED FOR HEMMING MANY ITEMS, SUCH AS JEANS, SHIRTS AND HOUSEHOLD LINENS.

YOU WILL NEED

✓ Matching thread
✓ Pins
✓ Tape measure
✓ Long ruler
✓ Sharp scissors
✓ Sewing machine
✓ Iron and ironing board

DIFFICULTY

INTERMEDIATE

METHOD

1

If you're dealing with a section of a garment hem that has come undone, you can compare it to the rest of the hem for consistency.

Press and pin in place, then follow the instructions from Step 4 onwards.

2

If you're completely hemming a garment such as a skirt or trousers, ensure the hem is level before you begin sewing. Try on the garment and pin the hem to the length you'd like it to be (it's best to get someone to help with this).

Stand up straight with the garment on while your helper places a ruler vertically on the floor and measures upwards.

Garments cut on the bias or made from stretchy or loose-woven fabric need to be checked carefully, as they can be quite unstable.

Carefully trim off the unwanted fabric before making a narrow fold (0.5cm – 1cm for the first fold) and then a wider fold (see guidelines in Step 3).

Press and pin the hem in place.

3

Double-folded machine-sewn hems are generally best done on light to medium weight fabrics.

Allow between 0.5cm and 1cm for the first fold and then between 1cm and 5cm for the second.

Make sure the fold at the bottom of the hem is at the level you measured when you tried the garment on.

For a heavy fabric like velvet or wool it’s usually best to hand-sew the hem, or to do a very narrow single folded hem, finishing the edge of the fabric with an overlock or zig zag stitch.

For garments that are flared, it’s best to keep the hem narrow.
Thread the sewing machine with a thread to match the colour of your garment.

Use a straight stitch with a medium to long length.

From the wrong side of the garment, sew around the hem a few millimetres from the folded edge (the raw edge is concealed underneath).

Do a few reverse stitches at the beginning and end of your stitching to secure it. Trim any loose threads.

Press the hem to finish.

**Note:**
If you're hemming a lined garment, you'll need to make the lining a little shorter than the main garment so it doesn't show below the hem line.