

How to create a Mitered Corner in a hem

verbage & pictures by Shelley Rodgers, 2010

<http://users.value.net/pirate/sewing/miter-a-corner.pdf> Email: pirate@value.net

Why would you want a mitered corner in the first place? Certainly just turning up the hem and stitching it down would be simpler. Ahhhh.... but what happens in the corner? You get a horrid, bulky lump. Ick. A mitered corner is nicely and beautifully flat; a much superior finish.



How NOT to finish a napkin corner.



How a napkin corner SHOULD be finished.

I like to spritz the fabric with Mary Ellen's Best Press. This gives a nice body to the fabric without the disadvantages of starch. This is optional; don't feel that you **need** to do it.

1. Press up 1" along the lower edge. 1" is arbitrary; you can use whatever depth you want. The final hemmed depth will be *one half* of what you initially press.

Since I have pressed up 1", the final hem will be 1/2".



Step 1

2. Unfold the first side.

Press up the same amount on the adjacent side.



Step 2

3. Unfold the second side.

Go back to the first side and press the raw edge so it meets the original fold line.

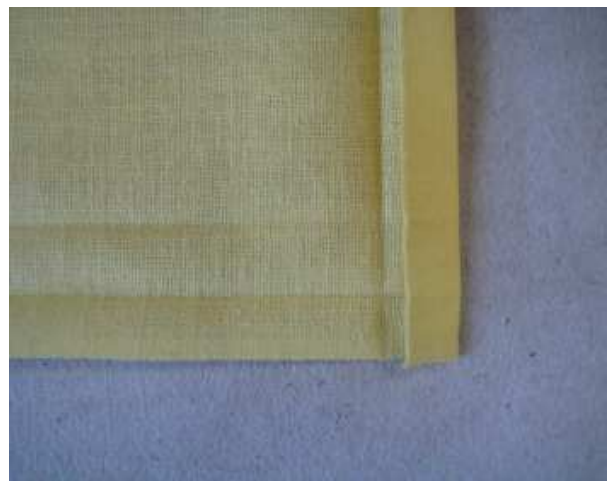


Step 3

4. Unfold the first side (again).

Press the raw edge of the adjacent side so it meets the original fold line.

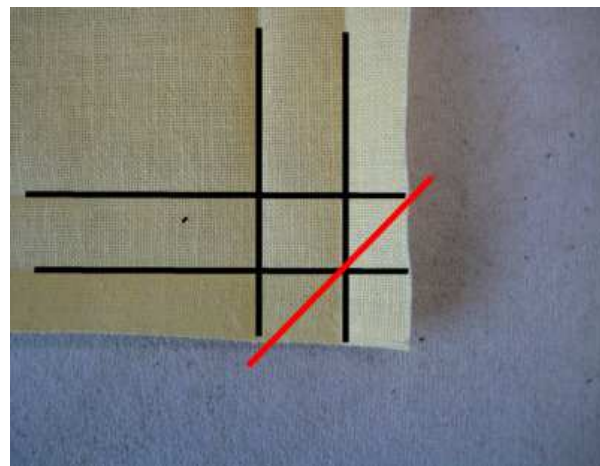
Yes, you can certainly do both folds on one side then do both folds on the other side. It all turns out the same in the end. My mind just likes to do the same step to both sides before moving on to the next fold step. You do it in whichever order you like. (Just don't tell me if you don't do it MY way!)



step 4

5. See how you have a nice grid pressed in? I've drawn black lines where the fold lines are.

See the red line? That's important. You're going to cut on that line. Don't cut anywhere else.



Step 5

6. Were you brave? If you were, the corner will look like the photo.

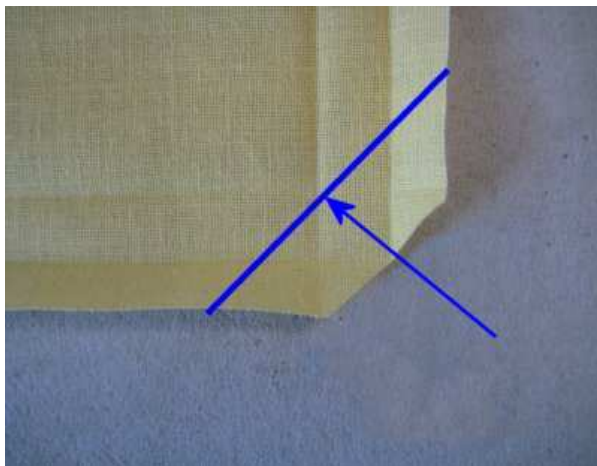
You can throw away the cut-off corner. -)



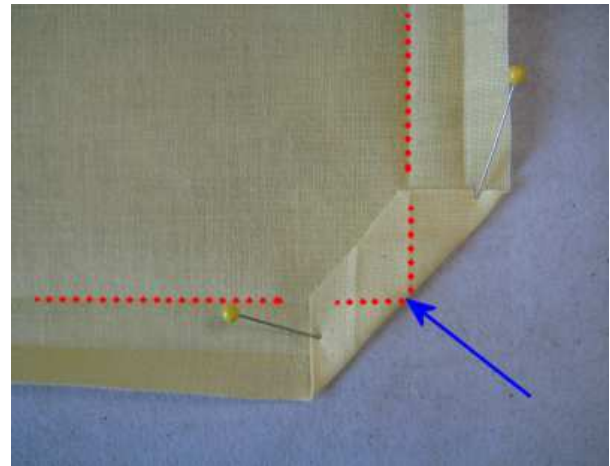
Step 6

7. See the blue line? You're going to FOLD along that line. You will align the fold lines in the corner that you fold up with the fold lines on the napkin. (see the red dotted lines in photo 7b)

In photo 7a, the blue arrow points to an intersection. When you fold the corner up, that intersection will be the outer edge of the corner of the hem. In photo 7b, the blue arrow is pointing to the same intersection/outer corner.



Step 7a



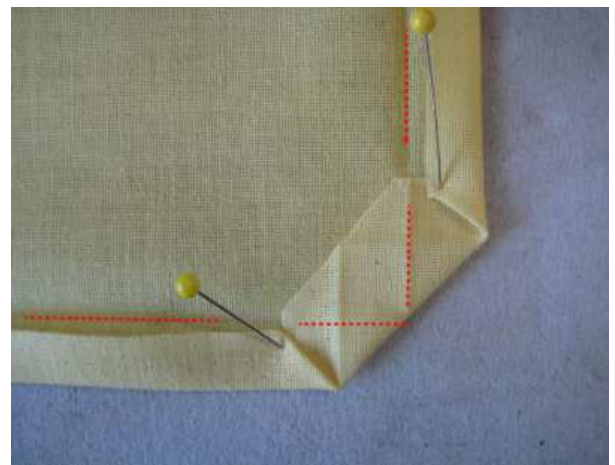
Step 7b

8. Fold each side up to the original pressed line, as shown by the red dotted line. The red dotted lines in photo 8 are the same red dotted lines in photo 7b.

I've put pins in the folded up sides just so the fabric would stay put for the photograph; you don't need to.

Press.

In the next step, you're going to fold along the red dotted lines this will be the final hem line.



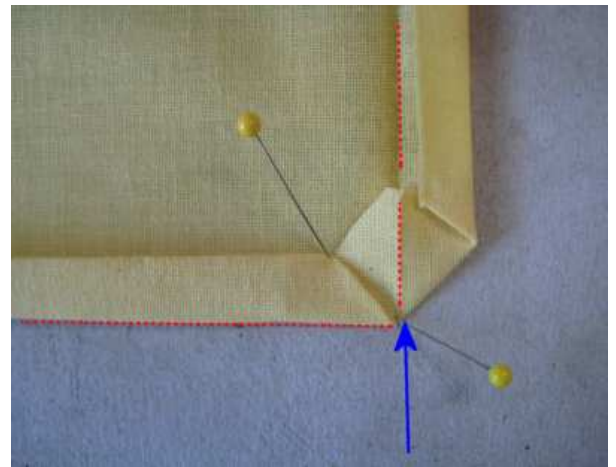
Step 8

9. Here you're going to start the magic! I put a pin at the outer corner of the hem, as indicated by the blue arrow. (This is the same blue arrow as in the previous photos.)

Fold up the lower edge along the red dotted line. The pin in the corner will let you make a very crisp corner.

(The other pin is just there to hold the fabric down for the photograph; the fabric had a tendency to spring up!)

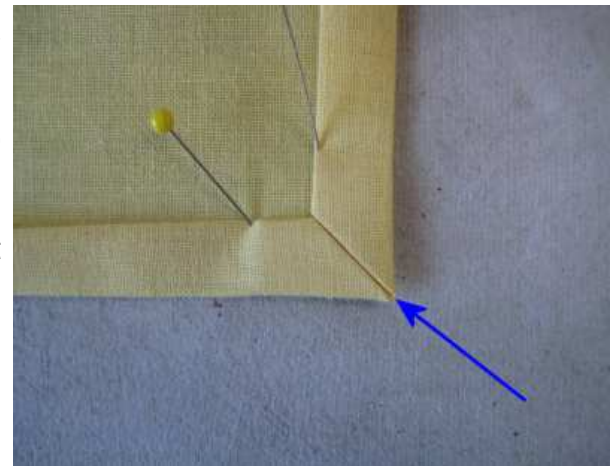
The red dotted line in photo 8 is now at the bottom of the folded edge ... see photo 9.



Step 9

10. Repeat step 9 for the adjacent side. If you've been a VERY good person, eaten all of your vegetables and cleared out the dust bunnies under the bed then you will have a perfectly mitered hem corner as shown by photo 10.

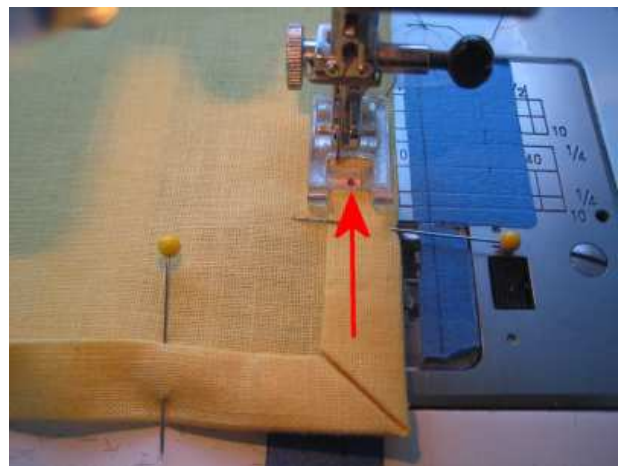
If not, just manipulate the folds until they are! :-) I won't tell.



Step 10

11. When stitching the hem down by machine, I like to use my standard presser foot instead of an adjustable zipper foot. The wider footprint of the standard foot grabs more fabric and helps you maintain better control as you stitch.

To help me stitch very close to the folded edge, I move my needle to the left of center. On the center bar of the presser foot is a small red tic mark ... that indicates the center needle position. I've drawn a red arrow pointing to the center mark. You can clearly see that the needle is to the left of the center mark.

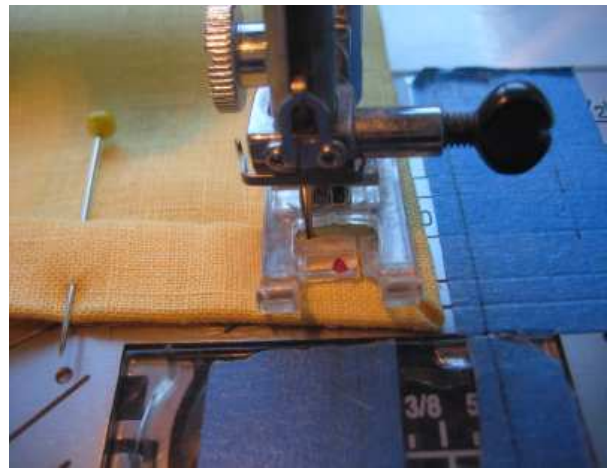


Step 11

12. When I get to the corner, where the adjacent side meets up with the edge I just stitched, I like to end the stitching with the needle just ONE STITCH into the adjacent edge.

I also like to end the line of stitching, with the needle in the DOWN position (that'll help with the pivot you're going to do next).

It's a little difficult to see, but in photo 12, the needle really *is* sunk into the folded edge of the adjacent side.



Step 12

13. Now, with the needle in the down position, pivot the fabric so you can stitch the adjacent side.

I haven't done anything to the needle from step 12; I've just moved the fabric.

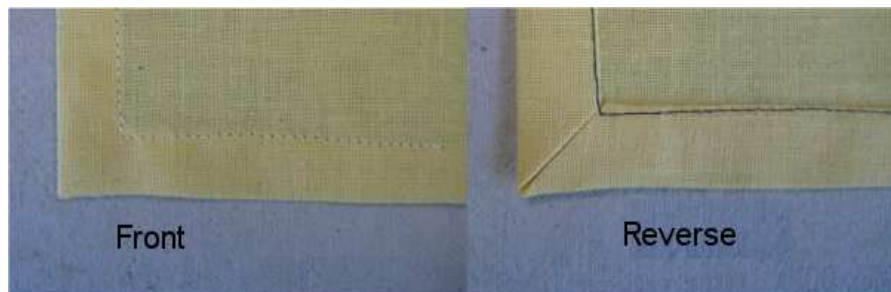
If you look closely, you can see that the needle really is at the edge of the fold line on the side to be stitched.

You can also see that I've done my stitching in black thread. :-) That's so you can SEE it for this tutorial. I like to do this stitching (which is actually on the *reverse* side of the napkin) in matching thread. That way, any slight inconsistencies won't show up. You can certainly use contrasting thread in the bobbin which will end up being on the front of the napkin. Sometimes having that contrast thread on the front lends a nice design touch.



Step 13

14. Here's the finished corner front and reverse. As you can see, the black thread shows that I didn't *exactly* hit the inside corner when I pivoted. But ya know? It doesn't matter. You're going to be stitching in matching thread so it's just not going to show.



Step 14

15. And that's it. Repeat for the other 3 corners. It's not so tough! You can do it! You'll feel mighty smug about having first-rate finished napkins. :-) Pat yourself on the back ya done good! :-)