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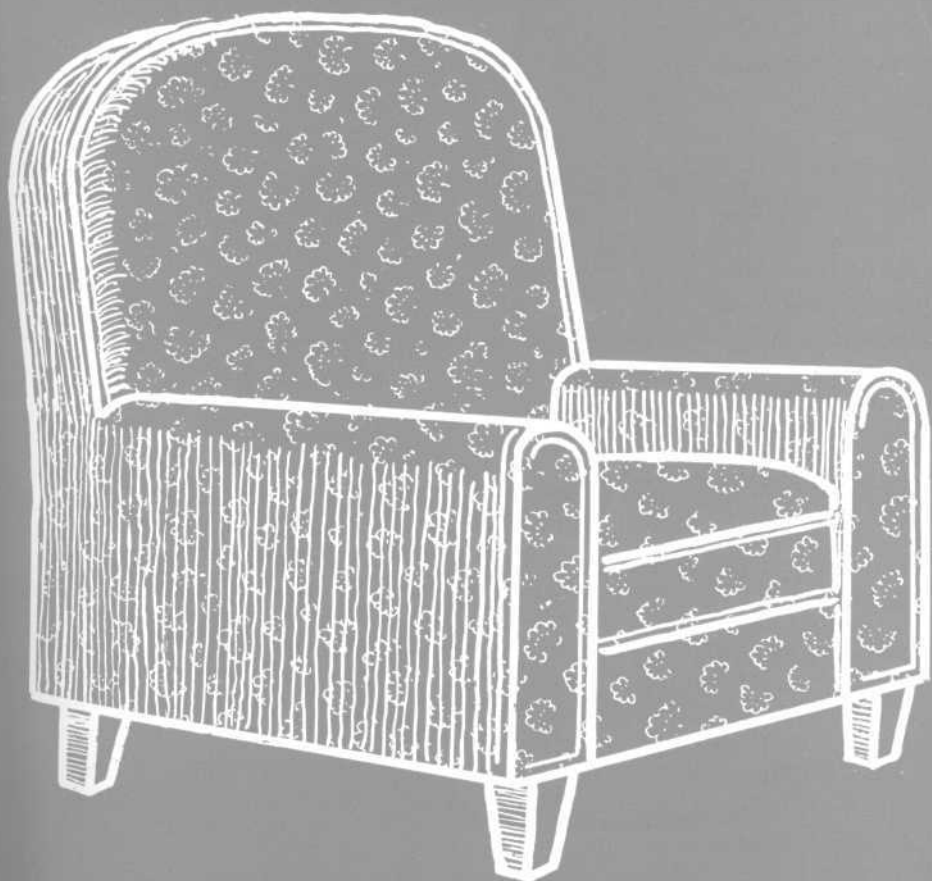
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SIMPLIFIED

SLIP COVERS



CIRCULAR 235

Agricultural Extension Service
University of Arizona, Tucson

Follow These Steps

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*This is a publication of the Agricultural Extension Service, University of Arizona. See your local County Agricultural Agent or Home Demonstration Agent for other farm and home information.

*University of Arizona
College of Agriculture, Agricultural Extension Service
Chas U. Pickrell, Director*

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SIMPLIFIED

SLIP COVERS

*By Grace Ryan
Extension Specialist in Home Management*

Slip covers have long been popular to "dress up" or to protect furniture. Homemakers realize their value but may avoid making them because of construction problems.

There is a simplified method of making slip covers in sections. Such a cover is easier to fit, to make, to launder, and to repair. Each section is a complete unit when finished and has anchoring devices in hard-to-fit places.

Slip covering deserves your best effort. The cover must be trim, tailored, and smart. Not every fabric is suitable to use, and not every type of furniture can be slip-covered.

However, sectional covers with a "custom made" look can be made satisfactorily at home. All you need is a knowledge of basic sewing skills.

Check up on these techniques before you start work. Review

seams, hemming, cording, and piping. You will need to know how to stay-stitch edges which might stretch. Refresh your information about the use of the cording foot on your machine, and the method of attaching a zipper.

Look at the Fabric Picture

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The fiber and fabric picture shifts rapidly. This calls for practical guides to reduce confusion in buying. Here are a few facts:

1. Silk, cotton, and linen are still on the market but these "old standbys" are being modernized and modified considerably.

2. Some man-made fibers are established in the furnishing field. Among them are acetates, nylon, fiberglass, dynel, and orlon.

3. Each old or new fiber has advantages or disadvantages. Each must be judged on use value.

4. Fabric design is important. The present market offers wide choice.

5. Some color problems have been solved among the man-made fibers. Colors are "locked-in" against fading.

6. Vat dyes are still best for standard fibers.

7. Texture of fabrics is vary important. There is wide variety.

Fabrics That Give Service

Certain well-known weaves of fabric make good slip covers. Among them are denim, tweeds, rep, ticking, twills, drapery sateen, antique satins, and damask.

Wrinkle-resistant processes for cottons, plus the improved use of coated finishes have established chintz, gingham, and poplin in the light-weight slip cover class. In addition, a large class of novelty weaves have interesting texture and blends of yarn.

Remember one service rule which applies to any fabric chosen for slip covers: An ideal cover-material must have sufficient weight, enough strong yarns, and a smooth, firm weave to withstand hard wear.

The material for slip covers represents no small investment. Careful selection of fabrics is a must.

Consider more than just the number of dollars a cover may cost. The dollars represent the initial cost only. There are also other

values, such as length of life and the cost of upkeep. No fabric is a "bargain" if it fails to wear well, or clean or launder well.

Rely on Guides in Buying

You cannot "see" all the values in a slip cover fabric. Learn to rely on guides as you shop. These are:

1. Accurate information on the label
2. Brand names
3. Reliable merchants
4. Qualified sales people

If you shop where these guides may be found you will come home more often with "sound buys."

Eyes, Fingers, and Labels Help

Your eyes and fingers will tell about weaves. Check the spacing of threads in fabrics. You can see and feel loose threads which might snag with use. Closely-woven fabrics will stand a great deal of pulling and strain, and will tailor well in contrast to yarns that shift easily.

Labels tell many things which you cannot see or feel. Read what they say about shrinkage. Buy materials with 1 to 2 percent or less shrinkage guarantee.

Study the label for other interesting facts about dyes that resist fading, cloth protected against moth damage and about flame proofing. Labels can tell about wrinkle-resistance and water stains.

A New Vocabulary for the Buyer

Today you may need to brush up on your fabric vocabulary when you shop for slip cover material. You will meet these words on labels, in ads, or as used by the sales person.

Blended Yarns—Mixtures of new or old-and-new fibers creating new and interesting fabrics.

Erifon—A trade name for flame retardant fabrics.

Stazenu Names to tell about

Unidure durable crease re-

Wrinkle-Shed sistance to repeated washings and cleanings.

May mean soil-resistant; mildew-resistant; and ironing ease.

Everglaze—Durably crease-resistant; durable washable luster; soil, spot, mildew resistance.

Sanforized—Shrinkage with 1%.

Sanforset—Permanent control of shrinkage and stretch.

Unifast—Shrinkage within 2%.

Chromespun Color, as a part of

Celoperm the composition of the fiber itself.

A Pattern for You?

Are you clever enough to cut your yardage free hand? Many homemakers do. Some hesitate to cut expensive materials at random.

For the timid, a cloth pattern is the safeguard. It offers opportunity for practice, for alterations and for cutting the real fabric without waste.

If you are a "free hand" cutter, try the block system. You may use more yardage by this method, but you can save time and labor. No formal pattern is needed.

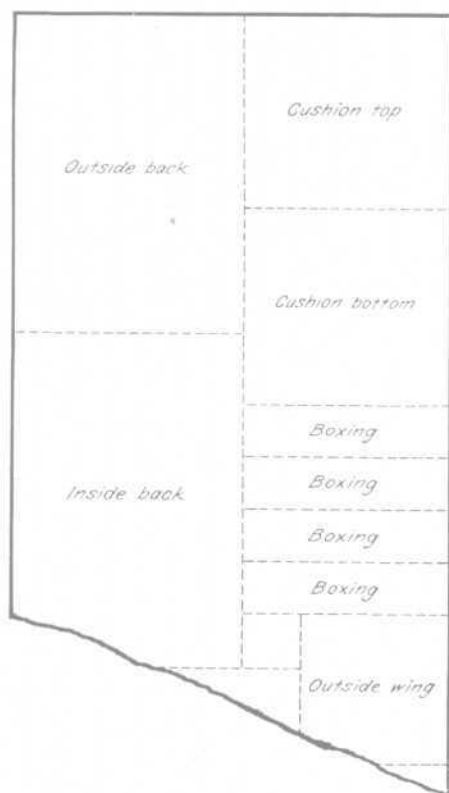
"Blocking" means using sections of material estimated to be of correct size for each of the slip cover parts. They include regulation allowances for length and width. A blocked piece for the inside back would be an example. (See Illustration 1 on next page).

What You'll Need

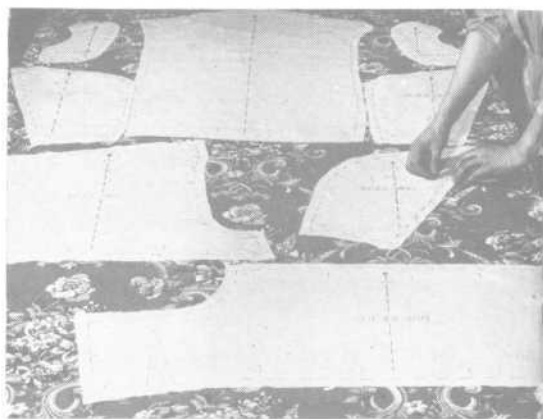
	Average Amount Cording	Binding For Seams
Bedroom chair (loose cushions)	10 yards	8 yards
Davenport	25 yards	15 yards
Arm Chair	12 yards	9 yards
Wing Chair	12 yards	9 yards

Average Yardage Required for Slip Covers

	54" Material	48" Material	36" Material
Average chair	6½ yards	6½ yards	8 yards
Oversized wing or barrel back chair	add 1 yard	add 1 yard	add 1 yard
Flounce or valance	1½ yards	1½ yards	2 yards
Average box couch with valance	8 yards	8 yards	11 yards



1. Suggested blocks for free-hand fitting.



2. Pieces of pattern placed correctly.



3. Marking seam lines.

Illustrations 2 and 3 are guides for pattern users. Safeguard your cutting by remembering a few basic rules.

Place the parts of the pattern on true lengthwise and crosswise threads.

Center the designs or stripes to advantage in parts of the cover.

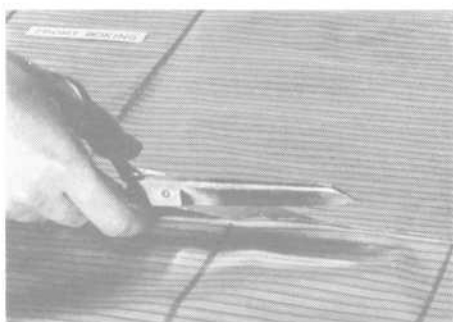
Mark grain lines, vertically and horizontally. Use thread or colored chalk.

Pin pattern pieces securely.

Mark or trace seam lines.

Mark notches for joining.

Illustration 4 indicates the method of cutting for the boxing or bands on cushions.



4. Cutting boxing or bands.

Check Your Furniture

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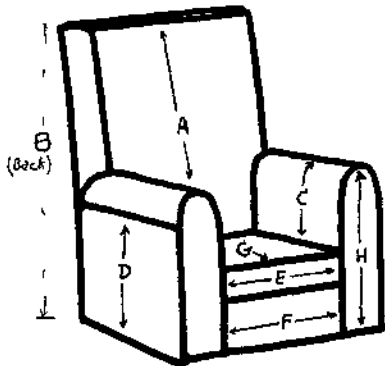
Make needed repairs on furniture before slip covering. This means a check-up of springs, padding, and wood joints.

Remove deep-seated dust and spots which might come through on the new cover. Touch up, repair, or refinish any parts of the wood not to be covered by the fabric.

Estimate Yardage

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Begin by measuring your chair. See Illustration 5.



5. Check measurements carefully as directed in text.

Measurements of length are always with the warp of the fabric. Allowances are:

Seams—Usually 2 inches unless material ravel easily.

Tuck-ins—7 inches at seat base and inside arms.

Hems—1½ inch to be finished 1 inch (outside arm and bottom of back).

Inside Back—(See “A” in Illustration No. 5).

Length—measure from highest point of center back to seat and add 7 inches.

Width—measure across the widest part of back and add 2 inches.

Outside Back—(See “B” in Illustration).

Length—measure from the highest point at the top of the chair to bottom of chair and add 3½ inches.

Width—measure across widest part and add 2 inches.

Inside Arm—(See “C”). Measure for two (left and right).

Length—measure over the widest part of arm from outside seam to seat and add 7 inches.

Width—measure across the widest part of the arm and add 5 inches.

Outside Arm—(See “D”). Measure for two.

Length—measure from under arm seam to lower edge of chair and add 3½ inches.

Width—measure across the widest part of outside arm and add 3 inches.

Upper Front Seat Section—(For chair with cushion). (See “E”).

Depth—measure from seam under cushion to the cording lines along the front of the chair and add 2 inches.

Width—measure across the front of chair, plus 6 inches.

Lower Front Chair Section. (See “F”).

Depth—measure from cording line to bottom of chair and add 2 inches.

Width—measure across the total width of the chair and add 2 inches.

Seat Section (For chair without cushion). (See "G", Illustration 5).

Depth — measure from inside back to cording at bottom front and add 7 inches.

Width — measure across chair, arm to arm, and add 12 inches.

Front Shaped Arm Piece—(See "H"). Measure for two.

Length — measure longest part plus 3 inches.

Width — measure widest part plus 2 inches.

Inside Wing (If used).—Measure for two.

Length — greatest length plus 2 inches.

Width — greatest width plus 3 inches.

Outside Wing (If used).—Measure for two.

Length — greatest length plus 2 inches.

Width — greatest width plus 3 inches.

Cushion — Measure for top and bottom. (See Illustration No. 27, page 15).

Length — measure across longest part plus 2 inches.

Width — measure across widest part plus 2 inches.

Cushion Boxing

Length — distance around cushion plus 2 inches.

Width — measure width plus 2 inches.

Flounce

Length — allow $1\frac{1}{2}$ to 2 times the distance around chair for a gathered flounce. Box pleats require 2 to 3 times the distance.

Tags, Tabs, and Dowels

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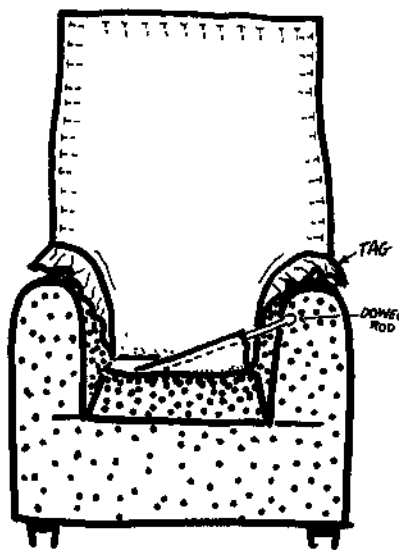
Tags are bias strips used to anchor pieces of the slip cover around curves. An illustration of use would be the curve where a chair arm joins the back of the chair. See Illustration 6.

Tabs are lengthwise strips anchoring the cover at the end of the apron or the side of the seat near the front post or leg of the chair. See Illustration 26, page 15.

Dowels are slender, round strips of wood. Slipped into hems, they will keep the bottom of the inside back, inside arms and seat section in place. Substitute small round curtain rods, or a stiff roll of paper if dowels are not available. See illustration 6.

Tags may be from 8 inches to 10 inches long by 4 inches wide.

Tags are 8 inch by 6 inch rectangle.



6. "Anchors" for simplified covers.

Cut these anchor pieces from scraps of the slip cover material or from muslin or other firm, smooth cotton. Matching materials create a better appearance if not too bulky.

Consider Trimmings

Trimmings add professional touches to slip covers. Among them are novelty braids, cable cord, covered cords, and fringe of all types. All should be washable and cleanable.

Keep trimmings in scale with the piece, simple, and in harmony with the general color and textures used in the room.

Trimmings are accents! Remember this if your chair has good lines to be emphasized. Trimmings usually are not pre-shrunk. Bear this in mind when using them in seams. Be sure to shrink washable trimmings, covered cords, and cording before using!

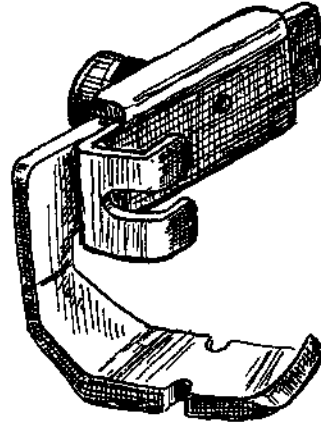
Collect Your Supplies

Slip cover construction is a tailoring job. You will need standard sewing equipment with these additions:

- 8-10 spools heavy duty cotton thread to match fabric.
- Cording foot attachment for your sewing machine.
- Box of heavy pins.
- Safety pins or "tidy-pins" to anchor materials.
- Pencil, crayola, and tailor's chalk.
- A yardstick or square.

- Old sheeting or other lightweight cotton material if you plan to work from a pattern.

- $\frac{1}{4}$ inch doweling (3 pieces), each an inch shorter than space where used.



7. Cording foot.

Make "Anchors"

Prepare tags, tabs, and dowels before you fit the materials. Make tags by hemming each one on 3 sides using a single turn for the hem. This avoids bulky tuck-ins.

Make tabs by doubling the pieces lengthwise. Turn $\frac{1}{4}$ inch on edges on 3 sides and stitch near the folded edges.

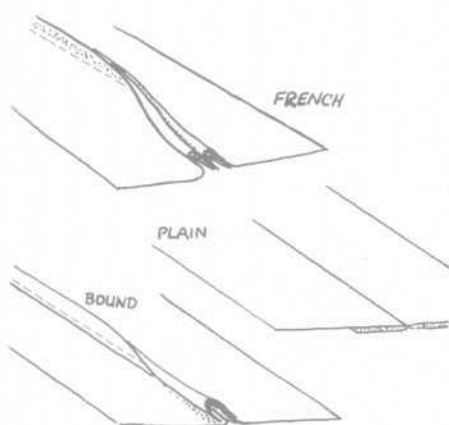
Measure seat size for dowels. These will slip in place more easily if cut one inch shorter than space intended for use. Make hems at the seat edge of the inner-arm pieces and the inside back. A quarter-inch dowel requires a one-inch hem.

Decide on Seams

Select seam finishes suited to materials used, location on chair, appearance of cover, and strength needed at the joining.

Plain Seams

A plain seam presents few problems. Use this type on the "inside lines" of the cover. Such seams are not decorative, but are smooth where smoothness is needed. This is done by clipping almost to the stitching-line around curves. See Illustration 8.



8. Types of seams.

Decorative Seams

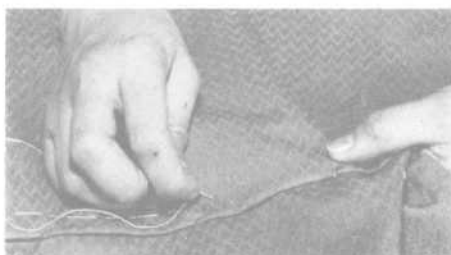
French seams relieve plainness on good structural lines. The rows of stitching add strength. Use them on straight lines of the slip covers. Avoid their use on bulky materials. See Illustration 8.

Corded seams and French seams are decorative. Bound and lap seams also belong in this class, but if they are to be used as decoration, they must be very well done.

Illustrations 9-10-11-12-13 should help the inexperienced worker to insert a cord and finish it with a "professional look."



9. Pinning corded seam.



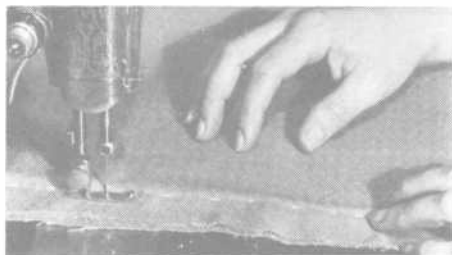
10. Basting corded seam.



11. Setting cord in place.

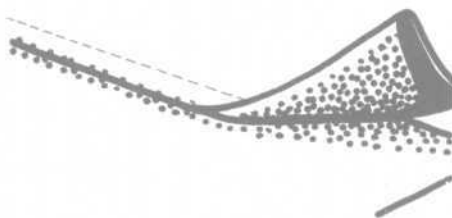


12. Slip-stitching cord.



13. *Final stitching.*

A lap seam is simple and decorative (Illustration 14) as is a seam bound with self-tone or contrasting binding.



14. *Lap seam.*

Experienced workers can handle decorative seams. But remember that the attention focused on the decorative seam also calls attention to either good or poor quality of workmanship.

Parts of the Sectional Slip Cover

The type of your chair determines the number of sections in its slip cover. A simple chair is used in this publication. It requires 5 parts, including a valance if desired.

1. Inside of back, panel (depending on style) and back, in one piece.

2. Three arm pieces, in one—inside, outside, and panel for each arm.

3. Apron, front, and seat, in one.

4. Cushion.

5. A valance, if desired.

Construction is Next

First, decide which type of seam you will use. Then construct each section.

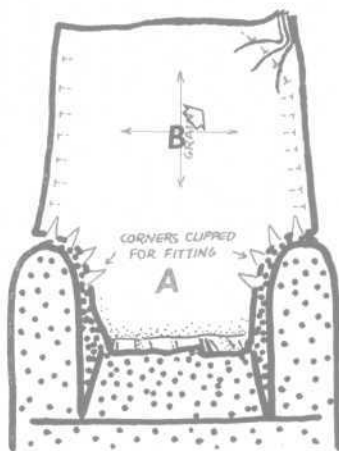
Part I. (Inside back, panel, and outside back).

1. Mark the grain line of the inside back and anchor it with a few pins.

2. Pin-fit this piece. (Illustration 15-A).

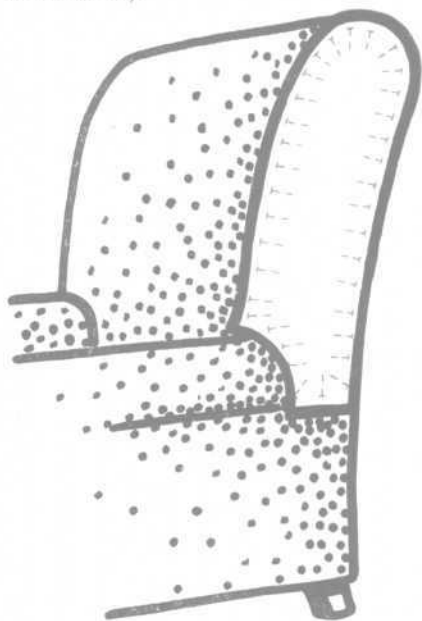
3. Clip the curved areas where the arm joins the back, illustrated at point A, and mark a fitting line.

4. Dispose of fullness along the top by placing a group of small tucks at each side. (Illustration 15-B).



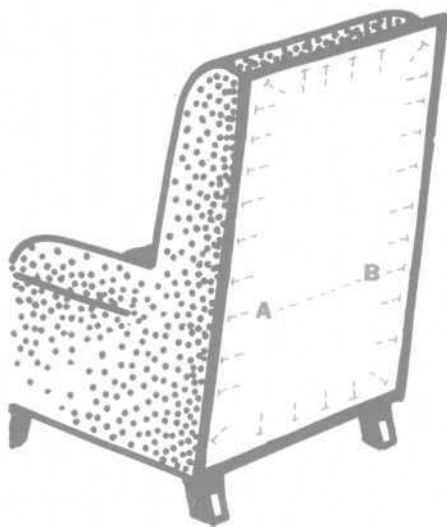
15. *Inside of back in place, Part I.*

5. Pin-fit the arm panel. (Illustration 16).



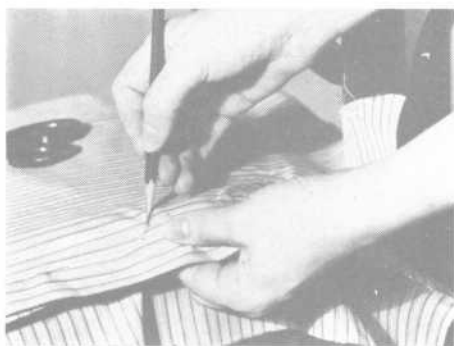
16. Panel pinned in place, Part I.

6. Anchor the outside back, on grain line, and pin-fit the panel and back. (Illustration 17).

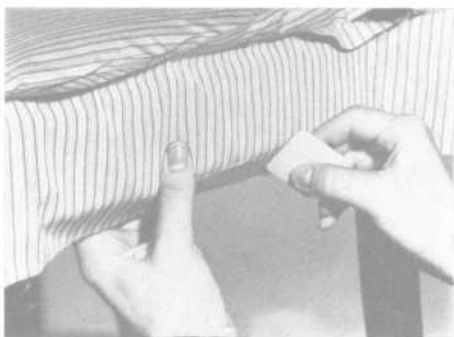


17. Outside back pinned in place, Part I.

7. Mark the fitted and pinned lines with tailor's chalk, crayon, or pencil before removing section from chair. (Illustrations 18 and 19).



18. Marking seam for stitching.



19. Marking for hems.

8. Remove this fitted section. Prepare it for stitching by adjusting pins to straighten lines and remove bulges or unnecessary fullness.

9. Baste bias tags along the marked seam line of the curves around the arm. Double stitch this seam.

10. Stitch remaining seams in the following order:

a—Join front of panels to the inside back. Press.

b—Join outside back to this section from base of one panel across top, and to base of other panel. Press.

Use seam of your choice. If you select corded seams, see illustrations on page 10.

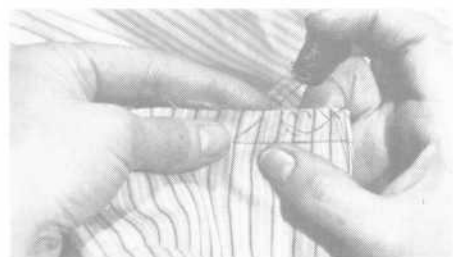
11. Make a 1-inch hem at seat edge of inside back to hold the dowel.

12. Hem the outside back with a hem 1 inch wide if no valance is used.

13. Trim seams. Press and over-cast if materials are loosely woven. Pink other materials or machine-stitch raw edges. (Illustrations 20 and 21).



20. Marking seam for trimming.

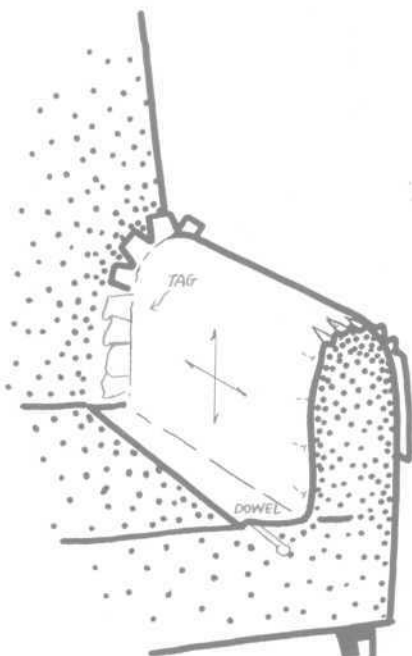


21. Over-casting seam.

Part II. (Inside arm, outside arm and front panel)—a pair for each chair.

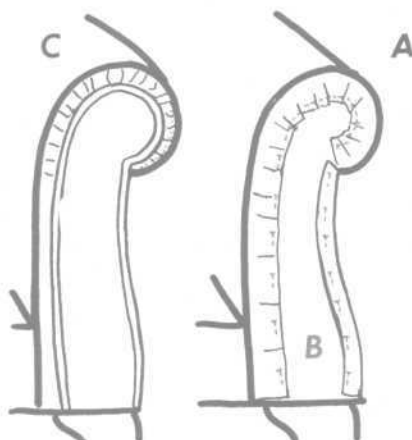
1. Anchor inside arm, on grain line. Pin-fit. Slash curve.

Mark Fitting Line for Curve.
(Illustration 22).



22. Fitting inside arm, Part II.

2. Fit any fullness at panel edge by forming it into small tucks, indicated in Illustration 23-“A”.

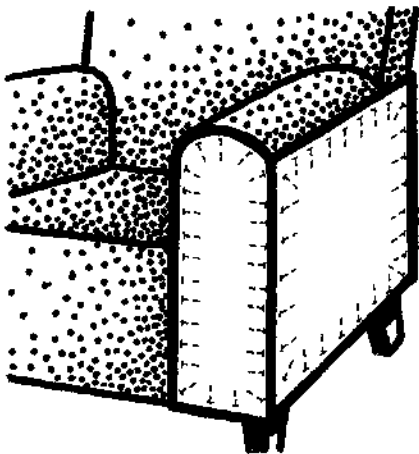


23. Fitting and pinning panel, Part II.

3. Pin-fit the face of the panel. (See "B" in Illustration 23).

4. Cord the front panel (if cording is used elsewhere). (Illustration 23-"C").

5. Pin-fit panel in place. (Illustration 24).



24. Pinned outside arm, Part II.

6. Mark seams, as in Illustrations 18 and 19 (page 12) before removing.

7. Remove the pinned section and prepare it for stitching seams. (Step 8, page 12. Attach tags (Step 9, page 12). (Illustration 22). Double stitch seam holding the tags.

8. Stitch panel in place for each arm. Press.

9. From the 5-inch tuck-in allowance, make a single-turned 1-inch hem to hold the dowel. (Illustration 22, page 13).

10. Join outside arm to inside arm along top seam line.

11. Hem the bottom of outside arm with a 1-inch hem if no valance is used.

12. Hem edges (which will join back) with a single ½-inch turn for a slip-stitch or zipper joining, whichever is desired.

13. Press hems.

Part III. (Front — or apron — and seat).

1. Hem seat section with a single turn, or flat stitch two sides and back edge to prevent raveling.

2. Pin-fit front edge of the seat to top of the apron.

3. Pin tabs in the angles where apron and seat join at seat level. (Illustrations 25 and 26).

4. Mark the pinned edges (as in other sections).

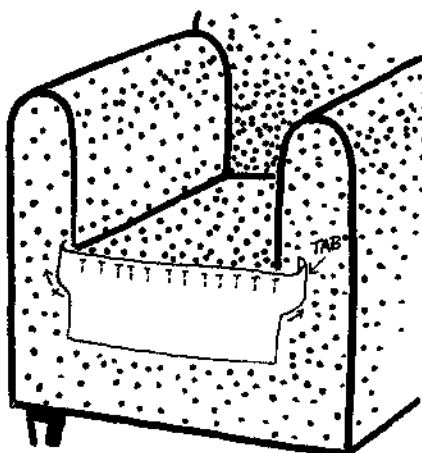
5. Remove and prepare for stitching.

6. Join the seat and apron hem (use cord if desired).

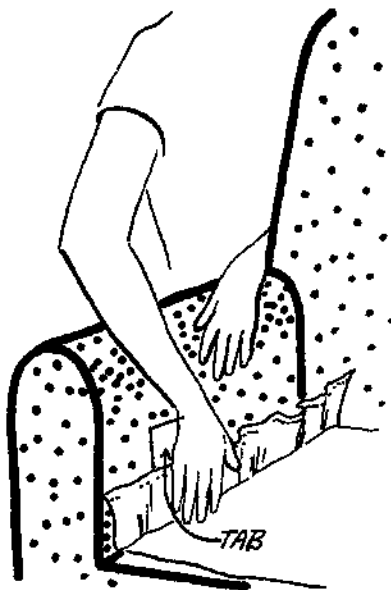
7. Double stitch tabs in place (Illustrations 25 and 26).

8. Press.

Ordinarily the seat edges require no dowels. Dowels in hems on the inside arm and inside back will hold the seat edges in place.



25. Tab on apron front, Part III.



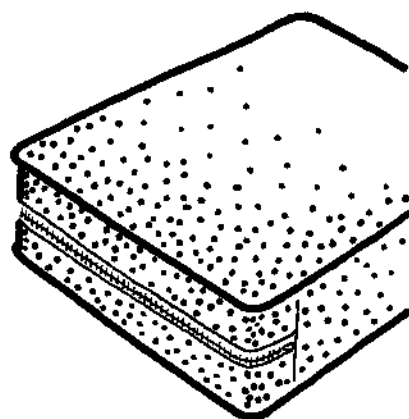
26. *Tabs on seat section, Part III.*

Part IV. (Cushion).

1. Pin top section, along grain line, on cushion with anchor pins.
2. Pin cording along the seam lines. Begin at least 4 inches from a corner at the back.
3. Pin boxing to this corded line on 3 sides. Baste.
4. Repeat the pinning of cord and boxing along seam lines of bottom piece of cushion.
5. Mark, remove, and baste. Slash seams around corners for smooth fitting.
6. Double stitch all seams for strength. Leave ample opening, preferably at back of cushion.
7. Use snap tape or zipper for closing. (Illustration 27).

Part V. (Valance—optional).

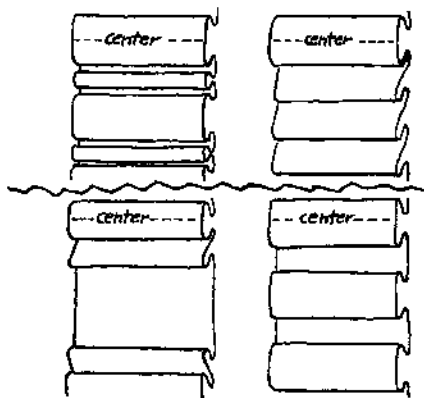
As stated, a valance may be the fifth piece of the cover. The construction and attachment depend on the style of your chair. Snap the valance to the cover, or attach it by



27. *Zippered cushion, Part IV.*

machine to the finished sections, depending upon the areas which require its permanent attachment. Plan for closures accordingly.

Illustration 28 shows standard arrangement of pleats.



28. *Standard arrangement of pleats, Part V.*

Now Assemble the Cover

.....

The order in which you put pieces of the cover on the chair depends upon the style of the furniture. The following routine is sug-

gested for the chair illustrated in this circular.

1. Fit the back on first. Tuck the circle "tags" in at the inner circle of the arm where it joins the back. Leave dowel **free**.

2. "Pull" the arm sections in place over the arm, and tuck in its circle tag." Leave its dowel **free**.

3. Smooth the seat section in and tuck it in at sides and back.

4. Smooth the apron across and tuck the "tabs" in next to the wood post of the arm.

5. Push the dowels in place at the back of the seat and along the inside arm on each side.

6. You now have four points where you may sew, tack, or snap.

a. Across the ends where the apron joins the panel. (Illustration 25, page 14).

b. If the chair is heavy at the shoulders your slip cover may need all the room you can give it for slipping across the top of the back. In that case tack both sides of the back as in Illustration 17-A and B (page 12). For narrow chairs a one-sided opening is large enough.

You can avoid much of the ironing of washed covers if you will pull the slip cover pieces on while they are still damp.

Partial Slip Covers

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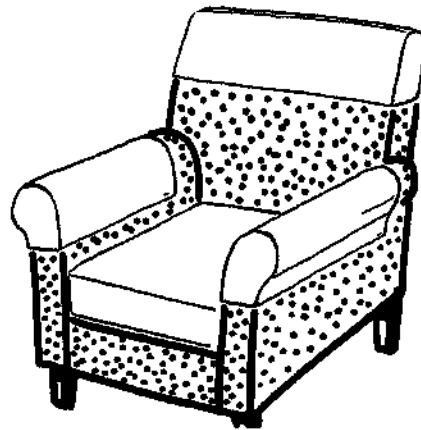
Among the most practical home furnishing items are the partial slip covers. They may be shaped and fitted (Illustration 29) or be of the tie-on variety (Illustration 30).

The chief services of the partial cover are cleanliness and protection of fabric. Such a cover may add color and interest.

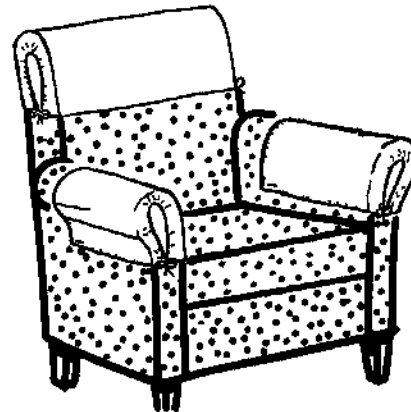
Materials

Suitable washable materials are percale, poplin, pique, novelty cottons, Indian Head, and light-weight denims. However, such covers are in good taste when made of sections of the identical material in which the piece of furniture was upholstered.

Plain colors selected to harmonize with the fabric on the chair, the draperies or floor coverings are satisfactory. Yet stripes and novelty weaves often add a much needed touch to a drab room.



29. Fitted partial slip covers.



30. Tie-on partial slip covers.