



DECORATIVE CORDING

Fabric-wrapped cording is often used to accent or finish seams, to give seams added strength and to add a decorative touch. The styling options of contrasting cording, double welting and jumbo cording give a decorator look to slipcovers, bedspreads, pillows, window treatments and tablecloth hems. Jumbo cording can also be used to make plain, knotted, twisted or braided drapery tie backs.

How To Make Continuous Bias Cording

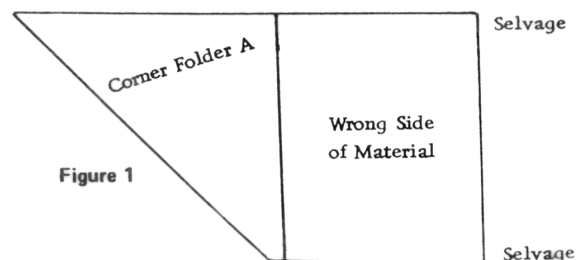
Cotton or polyester cable cord is most often used for this. It's available from fabric and upholstery stores in sizes ranging from 1/8 inch to 1 inch in diameter. Be sure to pre-shrink the cord before you cover it. A cording or zipper foot attachment will help you to stitch close to the cord as you are covering it with fabric. The fabric needs to be cut on a true bias. (This is along the fold line created when a square piece of fabric is folded in half diagonally.) One third yard of material will make about 7 yards of continuous bias that is 1 1/2 inches wide.

When several yards of bias are needed, instead of cutting each strip separately, use the method described here to stitch the fabric into a tubing. This will make it possible to cut the bias in one continuous strip. This will save you time and is particularly useful for larger projects with a great deal of cording.

Fabric-wrapped cording is often used to accent or finish seams, to give seams added strength and to add a decorative touch. Contrast cording, double welting and jumbo cording is also used to add a decorator look to slip covers, bedspreads, pillows, window treatments and tablecloth hems. Jumbo cording is also used to make plain, knotted, twisted or braided drapery tiebacks.

Follow these steps to make the continuous bias fabric strip:

Step 1: Estimate the amount of fabric you'll need in order to have the required number of yards of cording to complete your project. Lay the fabric on a table or other flat surface, placing the lengthwise grain (parallel to selvage edges) running toward you. Then the lower left corner of the fabric to create a bias fold. To do this, bring the lower left corner of the fabric all the way up to the edge of the crosswise grain (see Fig.1).



Step 2: Carefully cut on the diagonal fold. Then place both pieces back in their original position. (See Fig. 2.) Now move edge A over alongside edge B, matching selvages. Place right sides together, matching edges A and B, and stitch in a plain seam. Press the seam open.

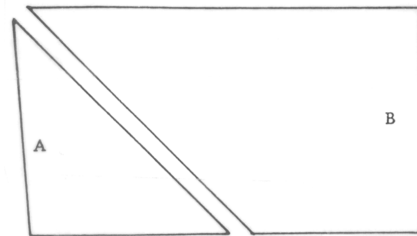


Figure 2

Place the fabric on a flat surface, wrong side of fabric turned up. Carefully measure and mark the bias strips completely across the fabric and parallel to the true bias edge. To do this, measure with a ruler held at right angles from the bias edge and mark with chalk or pencil for each of the width needed. (See Fig. 3.)

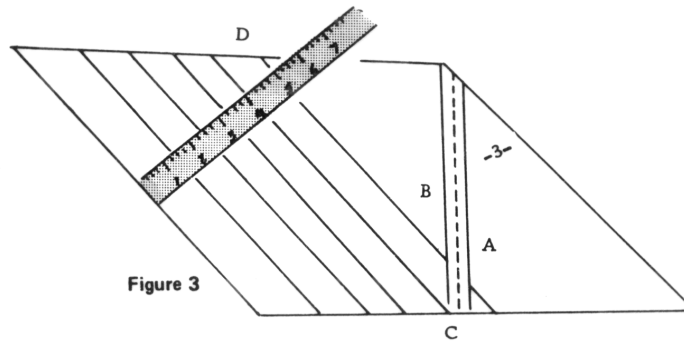


Figure 3

Step 3: The lower edge C is to be stitched to edge D to form a tubing. To do this, bring the left corner of edge C up to the first marked line on edge D. With right sides together, overlap edges $\frac{1}{4}$ inch seam allowance. (That edge and the marked line cross $\frac{1}{4}$ inch from the edge. The first marked line on C will cross the second line on D at $\frac{1}{4}$ inch from the edge, etc.)

Step 4: When edges C and D are correctly pinned together, the piece will form a tube and all marked lines will be continuous. Stitch edges C and D together and press seam open. (See Fig. 4.)

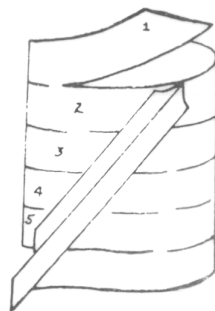


Figure 4

Determining Bias Strip Width

To determine the width of bias strip needed to encase the cording, wrap a piece of fabric around the cord. Cover the cord snugly and pin it. Now measure $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch (one inch for a jumbo cord) from the pin for the seam allowances and mark. Cut along this line, unpin and then lay out flat to determine the total width needed for the bias strips. For smaller cording, such as number 60 or 70, this width measurement is usually $1 \frac{1}{2}$ inch.

Step 5: Cut the continuous bias strip. To do this, start cutting on the line where the bias strip number 1 extends and continue to cut around the tube on the marked lines to form one long bias strip.

Step 6: When ready to cover the cord, lay the cord in the center of the bias strip. Bring one edge of bias strip directly across over cord to opposite edge of bias (wrong sides together). Hold in place with pins set at right angles to cord (Fig. 5). Stitch with matching thread about $\frac{1}{8}$ inch from cord, using the cording foot or zipper foot attachment and long stitches.



Step 7: When joining cord in a finished seam, rip the covering from the cord about 3 inches from each end. This allows about 1½ inch for lapping. Untwist the ends of cord and cut away half of each untwisted end. Lap ends, twist them together, and wrap with fine thread to hold them in place. The lapped cord will then be the same size as the rest of the cord. Stitch ends of the covering in a diagonal seam and press open. Turn covering back over cord and baste.

GATHERED CORDING

Follow directions for continuous bias cording to Step 5. Lay cord in center of bias strip and stitch one end of cording to the wrong side of fabric strip. Then fold the strip around the cording matching raw edges (wrong sides together). Using cording or zipper foot attachment, stitch with matching thread for 6 inches and stop. Raise the presser foot and gently push fabric strip back to end of cording until the fabric is tightly shirred. Continue stitching at 6 inch intervals until cording is shirred to the length desired. When finished, insert a pin through the fabric strip and securely sew cording at the end to prevent the fabric from sliding off the end of the cording.

ENCASED CORDING

Follow directions for continuous bias cording to Step 5. Cut cording two times the finished length. Cut fabric strip 2 inches longer than the finished length. The fabric width should be equal to the cord circumference plus 1 inch. Starting at one end of the cord, fold the bias strip around the cord (right sides together) matching raw edges. Using a zipper foot attachment, stitch loosely from one end of fabric to the other (fabric will stop near the center of the cord). Finish by stitching across the cording about ½ inch from the end of the fabric strip. Hold the cording in your hands. Starting at the center of the cord, pull fabric from covered to uncovered end of the cording. This will turn the fabric right side out and enclose the cord. Cut off the stitched end of fabric and the excess cording. Turn ends to inside and slipstitch closed.

DOUBLE CORDING

Place 5/32 inch cording near the edge (wrong side) of a 3 inch strip of bias fabric. Pin the raw edge over the cording toward the center of the strip, allowing a ½ inch seam allowance to extend beyond the cording. Stitch next to the cording, using a zipper foot attachment. Then place the second cording next to the first. Bring fabric over the second cording to enclose it and turn welting to top side. Stitch between the two cords using the previous stitching line as a guide. (Loosen tension and use zigzag foot to ride on top of the two cords.) Trim excess fabric next to the stitching. This raw edge will be the back of the finished double cording.

Reference: *How to Cover Cushions and Pillows* – HE4-308B, University of Kentucky

Linda R. Adler, M.A.
 Extension Specialist for Home Furnishings
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