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## Considerations for Straw Brim Edges:

1. Determine appropriate edge treatments for style and price point.
2. Hand sewn brim edge or machined edges? Why the difference.
3. Traditional welt folded edge sewn with machine or by hand
1. Ribbon or bias fabric bound edge
  - Machine stitched
  - Hand stitched
2. Rolled edge – depending on style and brim shape
3. Using bias tape folders and sewing machine binders and folders
4. Techniques to manage a sewing machine to gain better control of precision stitching lines
5. Sewing machine (without base plate to cantilever over the edge of a table) (best domestic machines would be Pfaff 1222 or 1229)

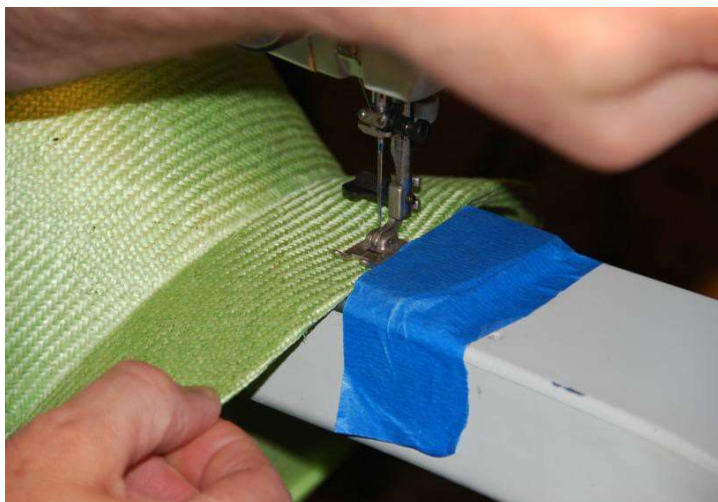
## Brim Edges:

**Create a seam guide for your machine to assist in a straight hem for your straw or felt edges.**

Create a gauge (block/bumper/barrier) tool for your machine for sewing brim edges. Find a piece of cork, plastic or wood that is at least an 1/8 or 1/4 inch high to tape right up against your machine presser foot. This will help to keep your felt or straw edge seam allowance easily consistent. If necessary, make your seam allowance adjustments with the machine needle position selector (left-right-center) if your machine has this option. Make sure your seam allowance is narrow enough to catch your hem on the bottom side. Now your job is to sew the hem, keep your wire in the proper place and make a nice straight even hem. Or purchase an L or T Gauge for your machine shown below.



**NOTE: It is recommended to sew with the top (fashion side) of the brim upright whenever possible. This may seem counterintuitive, but you will get best results if you sew with the brim hem down.**



**Steps for clean crisp sewn straw brim edge:**

- 1. Pinch brim edge flat:** Once the straw hat is removed from the brim carefully pinch the brim edge flat. This helps keep the sewing machine presser foot from making the pinch and flattening which can distort the edge of the brim. Remove straw bulk remainder if needed before pinching the welt edge to get clean access to the punch area.



- 2. Determine your minimum / maximum welt seam allowance:** Look carefully around the brim welt crease and see what the average seam allowance will need to be. Blocking cord grooves are hand cut and not always consistent depth around the brim edge. Determine what your cut line will be to capture  $\frac{3}{8}$  for your welt fold hem. Cut with your scissors held parallel and vertical to the plane of the hat as much as possible. Use only the front  $\frac{1}{2}$  to  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch of your scissor tips and it is best not to cut entirely through the cut every stroke (this short cut-controlled cutting will keep jagged cut lines from forming on your hem). You are working to cut your finished edge and will next sew the hem on the machine. It is quite difficult to cut the straw hem after sewing the straw hem.





3. **Determine wire size and sew:** Fit your wire size and clamp the ends with a joiner. Consider cutting several a few more inches of wire than you think you need. Sew the wire in at your desired seam allowance, typically  $\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{3}{8}$  inch, leaving the back 4-5 inches open. Take the hat out of the machine and adjust the wire to the appropriate dimension and your wire clamp or whatever method you use to manage the wire join, return the brim to the sewing machine and finish stitching the remaining hem.
4. Most people either insert too much wire in the brim fold or not enough and this will create significant distortion.  
*However, there can be useful design advantages to intentionally distort the brim with too much or too little wire so don't rule it out when design appropriate.*
5. Your brim hem is sewn and you shouldn't have to recut. You may need to carefully fix a few places depending on your circumstances.

