

# STEP BY STEP

by MORTE

## THE FIVE PANEL

Brace yourself for detailed instructions on how to sew a five paneled cap from scratch. Follow each step and use the video demonstration as reference. If you have never touched a sewing machine before this may not be the best place to start, however it is doable. Remember frustration is progress and mistake is experience.

## SUPPLIES

**Sewing Machine:** Any sewing machine will do. Heavy-duty needles will make it easier to topstitch the brim, however not necessary, if you take your time. If you don't own a machine or know someone who does, a great starter is the JUKI HZL-27Z.

**Iron+ironing board:** Important for pressing your seams open and getting everything nice and crisp. Check your iron settings to see which heat setting is best for different fabrics.

**Fabric:** There are infinite amounts of different choices for fabrics and many ways to get creative. For most of my five panels I've used a combination of twill and printed cotton.

**Interfacing:** Interfacing gives the cap its structure. There are many varieties of varying stiffness. I've found that Pellon Brand Hair Canvas #HC110 works best.

**TIP:** For your first attempt, use muslin fabric instead. Muslin is very cheap and great for practicing before you make the final product.

**Scissors:** Nice and sharp.

**Spray Adhesive:** Found at most fabric stores, used to adhere your caps fabric to the interfacing.

**Thread:** Experiment with different varieties and colors.

**Tailors chalk/marking pencil:** Used to outline pattern

**Single Fold bias tape:** Used to hide excess seam fabric on the inside of your cap. Comes in a variety of colors.

**Eyelets:** Optional, but commonly found on the side of a five panel.

**Seam ripper:** In case you make a mistake while sewing

**Closures:** There are a few different methods to close the back of your cap: snapback, leather clasp, d-rings, or nylon clasps. I use [capsupplyco.com](http://capsupplyco.com) for leather straps, clasps, brims and sweatbands. They offer kits containing supplies for five hats at \$10.

**Brim:** Another item found on [capsupplyco.com](http://capsupplyco.com)

**Sweatband:** Come with the kits I use. However, you could make your own with your fabrics, they are 1" wide so cut a 1.5 x 25" strip and fold over the sides.

After you have all the necessary supplies, print out the pattern pieces with the scale set to 100%. Cut them out and trace onto an unfolded cereal box. Take your time and make sure they are exact. Once you have your pattern pieces you are ready to start cutting!

\* Seam allowance is the amount of space between the edge of the fabric and your stitching line

## CUTTING

- Lay your pattern pieces onto your fabric (right side out\*) and trace.
- Roughly cut around the traced pieces.
- Now lay your interfacing out flat and spray a section with adhesive to lay out your panel pieces. Be careful not to stretch out your pieces while laying them down.

Your panel pieces should now be adhered to the interfacing

- Cut your final pieces out on the line you drew earlier.

**You're now ready to get sewing the main part of your cap.  
Don't worry about the brim for now.**

## SEWING THE PANELS

Note: For all the steps below, you will be sewing your pieces at a seam allowance\* of 1/4"

Also remember to lock in stitch\* whenever you begin and finish sewing

- Pin top panel pieces together and sew together
- Open and press seams with your iron
- Take your front panel lay it (wider side up) on the front your top piece, right sides of the fabric together

\* Locking in a stitch is simply going back a couple stitches and then going forward. This keeps the stitch from coming undone

\* Right side out refers to the outside of the fabric. AKA the fabric that you see on the outer part of the cap. Wrong side means the side that is on the cap.

- Sew your front piece to your two top pieces and press
- Now you're ready to sew in taping, start by placing tape where the top pieces meet the front, make sure the tape is in the center of the seam and, one at a time, stitch along both sides of the tape
- Do the same with your bias tape, going over the front piece's seam
- Take your right side panel and lay it on the front panel, right sides facing, so that the bottom corners match up.
- Slowly stitch the curved side of the panel along the front and top piece. The hat will start to curve and take its shape. It is important to stick to your seam allowance during this step.
- Do the same with the left panel and you should have the shape of the cap complete
- Flip your hat inside-out and press side seams
- Next get your bias tape and sew it over the side seams, starting at the front and on the side closest to the center.
- To finish off this part of your cap, double fold the back opening so no raw edge is showing and sew down, folding as you go.

**Tip:** Sewing the bias tape is one of the more difficult steps and is a very important detail as the stitching is shown outside of the cap. To make it look best, turn your machines stitch length to double what you were using and go very slow. Use your finger as a guide to feel the center of the seam as you sew. If you mess up, take out your stitch with a seam ripper and go again.

- If you want to add eyelets, now is the best time to add them. Cut a small hole where you want to place them, put them through, and use a hammer to flatten the back.

The main part of your cap is now complete!

## BRIM

- Take your brim and trace it's shape onto the fabric twice. You do not need to use interfacing for the brim.
- Cut around one trace precisely and do a rough cut for the other. Leave about an inch of fabric where the brim will meet the hat.
- Lay your precise cut on your rough cut and sew the outside closed. Do not sew the opening.
- Cut the excess fabric and flip inside out.
- Make sure your brim fits in nicely. Take the brim back out, spray the brim with your adhesive, and fit it back into the fabric.
- Now that your brim is firmly inside the fabric, you will sew it closed at the opening. Start at the middle of the brim and sew the opening closed. Stay as close to the brim as possible without sewing into it.
- Next step is to top-stitch the brim. A magnetic sewing guide will make this a lot easier. Turn your stitch length back to its longer setting and evenly stitch around the brim. Repeat this step using your last stitch line as a

**Tip:** When inserting the brim, make sure the excess trim on the inside is all on top of the brim. This makes a clean ridge on the top of your brim.

guide. I will start at a half inch into the brim and make four stitch lines but do what looks best to you.

- Your brim is almost done. Last, make five cuts into the excess fabric of the brim. This allows the brim to fit snug and flat. Do not cut into the brim or over your stitching

## **SWEATBAND**

- Fold sweatband in half and mark the middle.
- Place your sweatband onto the bill, bottom side up, Sew the sweatband onto the brim, barely sewing through the plastic brim. Do not follow seam allowance here just sew close to the edge and keep it even.

**Your brim and sweatband are finished. Now it's time to attach the brim to the hat!**

## **ATTACHING THE BRIM**

- Take your times on these steps as they make or break your hat.
- With the brim facing up, line up the front panel to the middle of the brim, right sides facing each other
- Starting at the middle, stitch along the bottom of your cap as close to the brim as you possibly can. Once you sew the front to the brim, continue sewing the side to the sweatband, keeping the seam allowance. This will take a couple tries to get right.
- Do the same to the other side.

- After you finish, try on the hat in the mirror and see how it looks, pull the back as if it is fastened for now. If the brim is sticking up, you've sewn the front of the hats fabric more than you've sewn the back. Take the stitch out and try again, keeping it as consistent as possible.

## FINISHING

- Your five panel is almost done! How you close up the back will depend on what fasteners you decided to use. With a leather strap, I insert it between the sweatband and cap and fold the excess sweatband in. Then stitch the strap and sweatband. I use a metal closure to hold the strap, cutting a whole for the eyelet and attaching the faster, then hammer it in. Next I sew the excess sweatband into the hat. Find what works best for you.
- Go around the cap and cut any threads hanging loose, try it on and make sure it fits.

**Congratulations, your five panel is now finished!**

Like I said in the beginning don't be upset if your hat doesn't come out perfect the first time. I can almost guarantee you it won't. It took me a solid five attempts before I make on that fit right and looked good. Use up that muslin. Once you get this mastered the possibilities are endless! Experiment with colors, patterns, and different textiles. If you make one using this guide I'd love to see it. Or if you have any questions or problems you run into send me an email.

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Good luck.