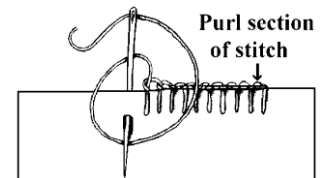


## INSTRUCTIONS FOR HAND SEWN BUTTON HOLES

Button holes of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century were typically at least 1.5 times the diameter of the button. The more formal or high end the garment, the longer the buttonhole stitching is to a maximum of 3x the button diameter.

1. Using a button hole chisel and mallet, cut the button hole along the button hole line on the fabric about 1/8" longer than the button diameter. Ensure you cut completely through all layers of the fabric. An exacto knife to cut the fabric may also be used. Cut towards the center of the buttonhole from each end of the buttonhole.
2. Wax about an arm's length of thread and thread your needle. Do not double the thread.
3. Whip stitch the edges of the buttonhole together to hold the layers of fabric together. 10 -12 stiches per inch. These stitches will be left in place and covered by the final buttonhole stitching.
4. Make a full counter-clockwise circle with the thread.
5. Push the tip of the needle from the inside of the buttonhole cut through the fabric and interfacing, exiting 3or 4 threads wide. It should end just at the whips stich depth.
6. Progress along the buttonhole at approximately 12 stitches per inch. The stitches should be even looking.
7. If you are doing closed work on long style button holes: stitch just past the end of the button hole cut (an extra 2 stitches), then continue with the button hole stich, catching only the top fabric.
8. Make a bar tack by making a single running stich the length of the completed button hole stich (outside to outside), make 3-4 passes to complete the bar tack.
9. Cover the bar tack with buttonhole stitching, starting at the finished side working towards the un-stitched side.
10. At the end of the bar tack, push the needle down through the top of the fabric, rotate the work piece around to work on the other side of the button hole; bring the needle up right at the edge of the fabric, pull the thread tight.
11. Repeat the remaining long side of the button as you did the first.
12. Repeat the bar tack and overstitching as before.
13. At the end of the second bar tack, push the needle through along the length of the bar tack, deep in the fabric layers (but not coming out the backside of the fabric) and exiting the needle between the last over stitches.
14. Pull the thread tight and trim with scissors.



Use a straight pin across the end of the button hole – this keep you from accidentally cutting beyond the intended buttonhole length.

Practice your stitching by making 2 or 3 layers of scrap cloth about 2 to 3 inches square. Whip stitch around each raw edge. Buttle hole stich along each raw edge. You can practice “closed work” stitching across from the buttonhole stitching.

Make your thread loop counter clockwise if you are sewing from right to left.

Make your thread loop clockwise if you are sewing from left to right.

Until you are good at gaging your stich width, I have found it easier to leave the bar tacks until last, so the bar tack matches the buttonhole stich width.

When sewing wool, a straight pin can be set to define the width of your stitch and keep them even.

Videos detailing period button holes from Fort Ticonderoga.

- Basic button hole stitching - [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ladhbfRI6\\_0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ladhbfRI6_0)
- Long work button holes and lining technique - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QhFproKcDU8>

Tutorial from Burnley & Towbridge:

- Button holes - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jLkoKRwQYfi&feature=youtu.be>

