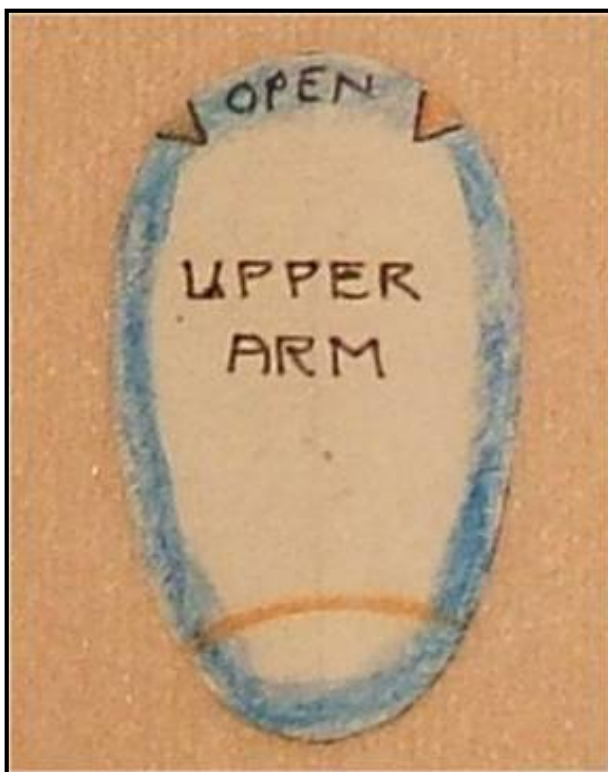


**Bleurette in Cloth!**  
**Online Cloth Doll Class**  
*by Judi Ward*  
 © June, 2005

**Chapter 1**  
**PREPARING YOUR PATTERN and FABRIC...AND...THE LADDER STITCH.**

First let me show you a little trick for those who have a hard time seeing the white Freezer Paper against the light peach fabrics. Simply color around the retraced pieces with a **colored pencil** before you cut all of your pattern pieces out! **DON'T** use a lead pencil for this! Lead pencil marks rub off, smear and get on your fabric. Colored pencils don't. See the picture below that I colored around in blue colored pencil. A dark pink might have been a better choice, but you get the idea.



**A pattern piece colored around with blue colored pencil. NOTE...The little peach colored arch on the pattern is just showing where the half grape will sit in the elbow end of the upper arm. The small, rounded end of the fabric will be pushed down into the concave of the half grape.**

Next, I want to show some **REALLY BIG** pictures of what the "ever famous" and "ever elusive" **LADDER STITCH** looks like. You really need to conquer the execution of the ladder stitch for closing the openings in your dolls. The ladder stitch will close both a straight opening and a curved one. It is very easy to do, though there are those who have just not conquered it, or even tried it.

I always use a quadruple thread for doing it. The stitches don't show at all, but the 4 strands of thread make a stronger closing, and I also don't break the thread while pulling the stitches tight.

**Here is how to do it** . Pull off 2 strands of thread, about 30" long. Thread **2** ends through your sewing needle. Pull the thread half way and tie the **4** ends together with a nice firm knot.

**N**ow, insert your needle under the end of the seam that is to be closed, right in the seam allowance.

**B**ring the needle out on the right side, and then take a small stitch along the seam allowance, **entering and exiting on the right side**. Remember "along the seam allowance", not perpendicular to it. *The **KEY** to making a ladder stitch is that every stitch **Enters and Exits** on the right side of the fabric, **right along the seam allowance**.*

**N**ow, bring your needle across to the other side and take a small stitch, **right along the seam allowance** , **Entering and Exiting** on the right side. ( **NEVER, NEVER**, does your needle enter the fabric from the underside after the stitch with the knot.) It always **enters and exits** on the right side.

**T**here will be a length of thread across the opening. Don't pull it real tight yet. Simply repeat this, going back and forth across the opening about 4 times, and then pull the little "Ladder Stitches" tight, helping the seam edge to the inside with your finger if needed.

**C**ontinue this way to the other end of the opening, then stitch in place right in the seam and lose the ends.

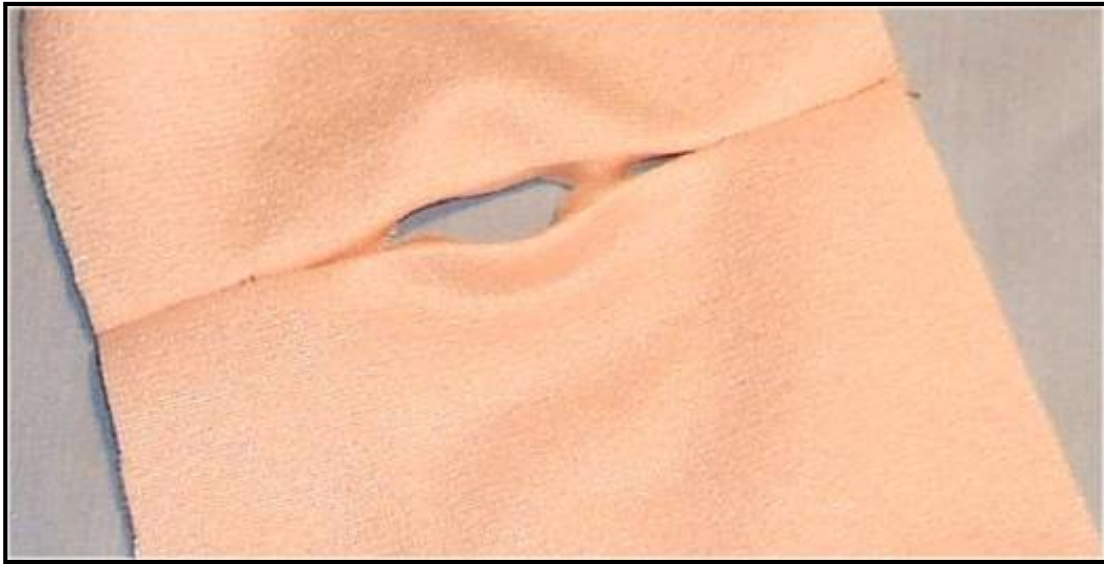
**NOTE...**As you close with a ladder stitch on a doll part, you add a bit of stuffing to make sure the area is filled up. I often add a cotton ball at the tops of legs and arms, as cotton balls don't puff out of the opening, like polyester stuffing does.

**O**nce you do the ladder stitch a few times, you will do it like a pro, without even thinking. **Honest!**

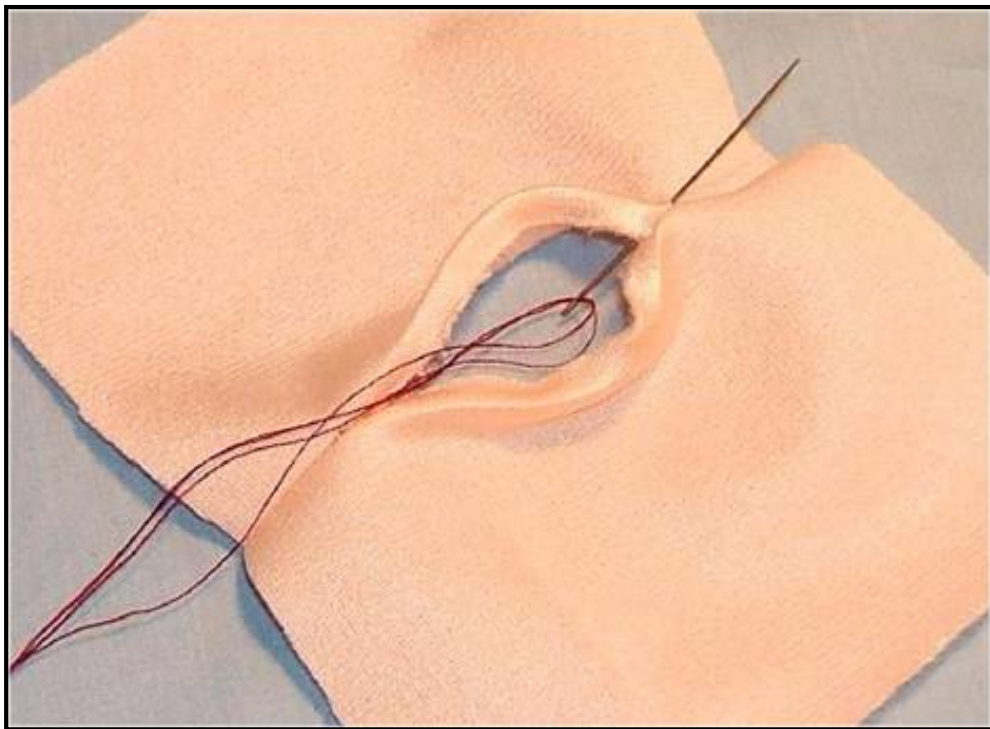
**N**ever again will you have openings with the thread showing and looking messy. No overcast stitches ever again!

**F**ollowing are some pictures using light fabric and dark thread. I hope this helps any who are having trouble with the ladder stitch. Please note that the pictures are really BIG. Much bigger than any opening you will have to close in this doll. Things show that would not show on a doll opening.

**I**f you know how to do the ladder stitch, please just pass over this HUGE tutorial!



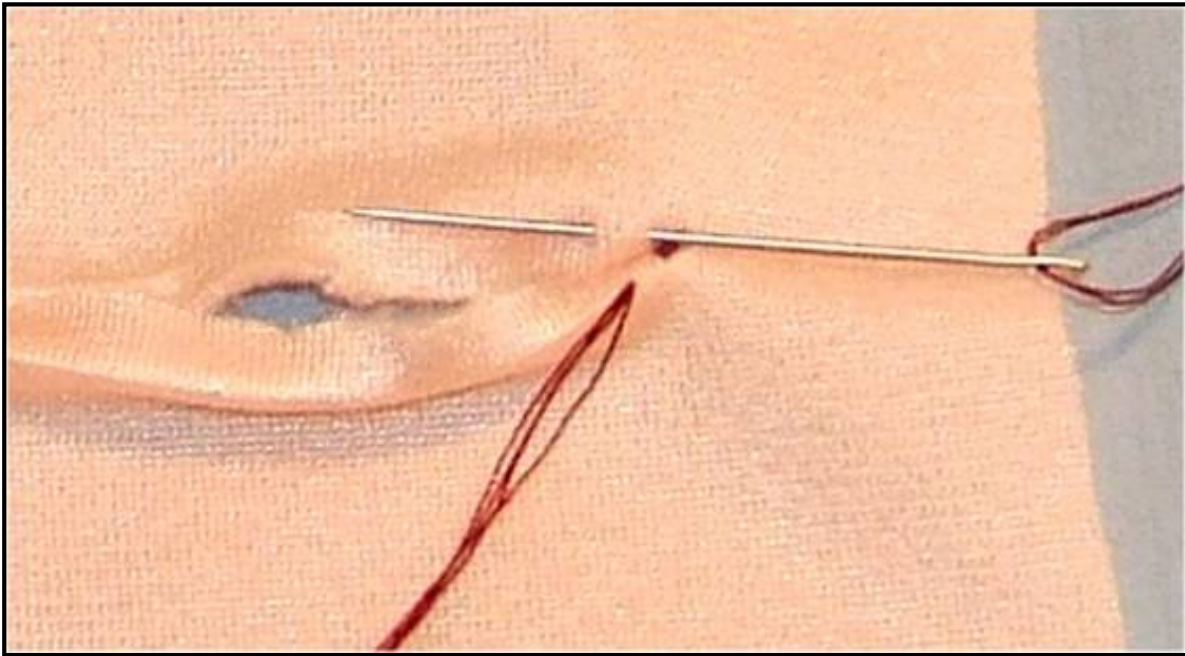
**The opening.**



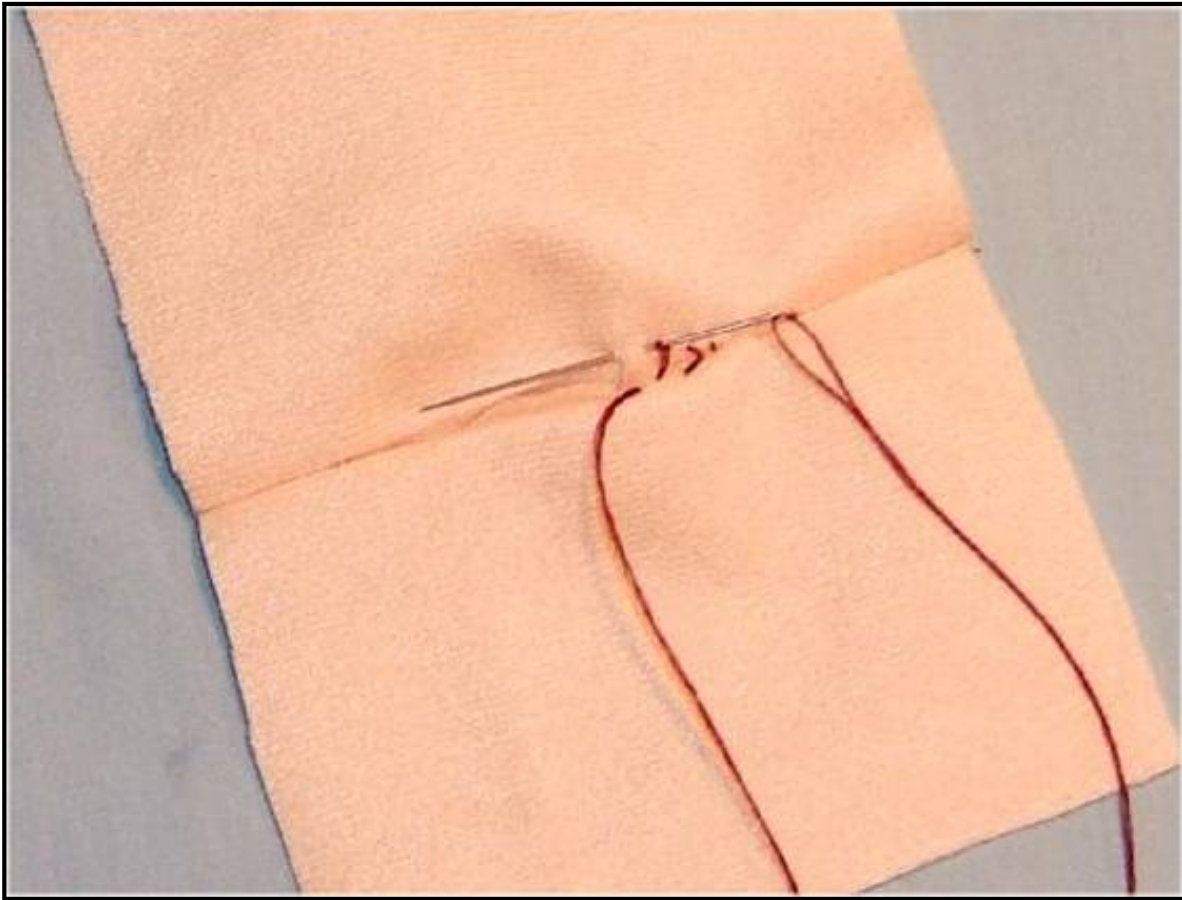
**The first stitch that will put the knot inside in the seam allowance.**



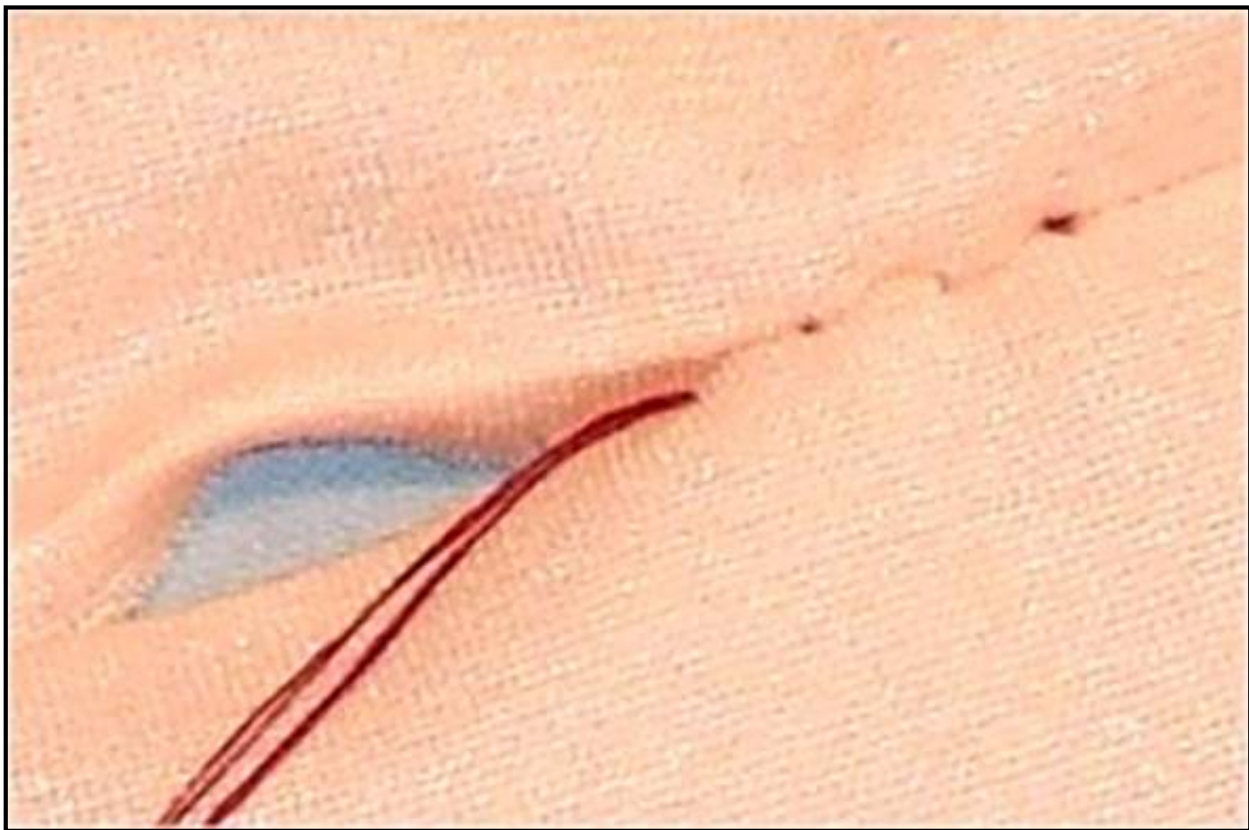
**The first ladder stitch along the seam allowance. Notice that the stitch **Enters and Exits** on the right side.**



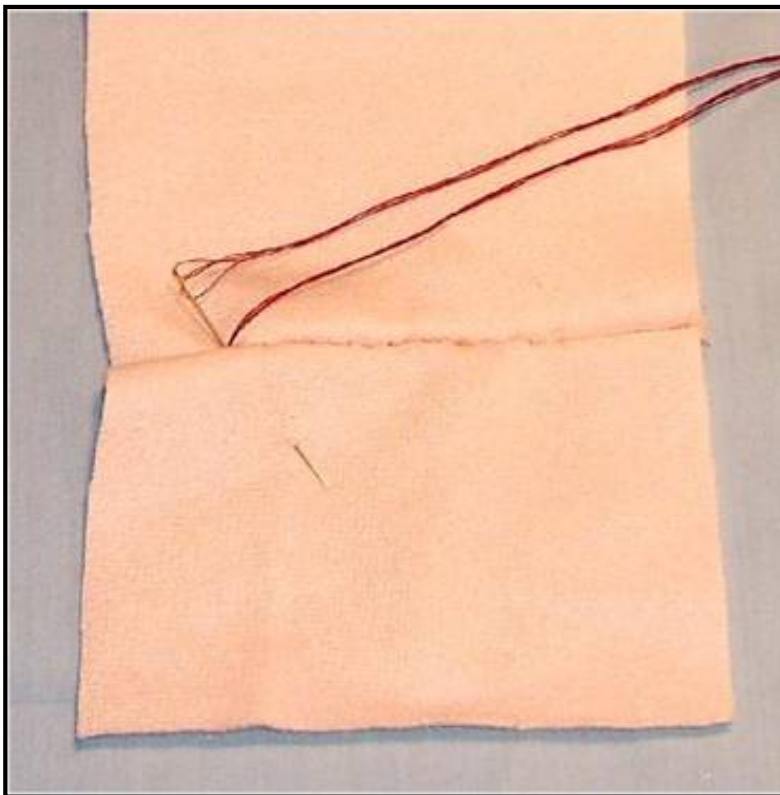
**The second ladder stitch along the seam allowance.**



**A few stitches are taken. Some pulled pretty tight, others not pulled yet.**



**This picture is really BIG! It shows 2 little bits of thread that are not quite tight enough. If the thread matched the fabric these would not even show though.**



**All closed up and the needle exiting away from the seam to lose the ends.**

**I hope this helps. I did it big and with dark thread. With the correct color thread, the ladder stitch will be nearly invisible. It is also more invisible when done on a stuffed item because the stuffing stretches the opening tighter and makes it smooth.**

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