

2.3.3j Components in fashion and textiles

Components are an integral part of fashion and textile products and serve many purposes:

- Functional – allowing a product to operate or be used.
- Structural – hidden within the product. Without it, the structural integrity of the product would be compromised.
- Aesthetics – visually important, but not critical.

Components fall into the following categories:

- ◇ Threads
- ◇ Fastenings
- ◇ Trims

Threads

A variety of threads exist for different purposes – to sew products together or for decoration; many subtypes exist within these groups.

• Sewing threads

Polyester – a strong thread with some give in it – this is the most common type of sewing thread and will suit most projects. Cotton and silk threads are available for use on each of these fabrics.

A thicker top stitching thread is used on the outside of a product where the stitching becomes a style detail and needs to stand out.

• Embroidery threads

Specialist threads which are much glossier in appearance are used for machine embroidery.

• Conductive threads

Capable of conducting electricity to power a LED for example. Used when integrating electronic devices into textiles.

Fastenings

The following components allow products to be fastened or opened and closed.

All are available as stock forms.

• Zips

Zip types include open ended, closed end, two-way zips and concealed (invisible) zips. Zips should be chosen according to the purpose of the product. Weights vary from heavy duty metal or plastic to very lightweight nylon zips. Zips should suit the weight of the fabric.

• Buttons

Usually used as part of a fastening, but can also be decorative. Buttons are available in different materials – wood, nylon or metal as well as different sizes, shapes, plain, patterned or engraved. Individual buttons can be 3D printed.

• Buckles

Buckles can be plastic, wooden or metal and interact with a strip of fabric to close two edges. Mainly functional, but can add to the aesthetics of a product. Can be 3D printed.

• Velcro

A strong and secure fastening where two sides of different textures interlock together. A versatile fastening especially on children's products.

• Eyelets

Metallic or plastic rings inserted into textiles acting as a fastening when ribbon is threaded through them. Can also be decorative.

• Ties

Could be ribbon, tape or braid that is simply used to tie two pieces of fabric together.

• Press studs (also called poppers)

One side of a press stud simply clicks into the other side – easy to use. Can be stitched in place or embedded into the fabric. Can be plastic or metal.

Trims

• Lace

This is usually a delicate edge trim used as decoration. It can be straight edged or scalloped. Available in different widths and weights.

• Braids

Braids are woven patterned trims used as a decorative border. Braids can be multi-coloured, matt or shiny and in different widths. Ric rac braid is a wavy braid used for decoration.

• Ribbon

Ribbons can be decorative or used as a fastening. Shiny ribbons can be double sided or single. They're available in a variety of colours and widths.

• Tapes

Flat woven tapes are often used as support hidden in seams, particularly on stretch fabrics that are less stable.

• Cords

Available in different thicknesses and colours. They can be covered for use in piping or used as a fastening, for example in a drawstring closure.

• Elastics

Available in various weights, widths and extensibility. Used on waistbands, cuffs, underwear and swimwear to improve fit.

• Boning

Metal or plastic strips inserted into seams to give structure to a product.

• Beads, sequins, diamantés

Available in various shapes, colours and sizes, and can be matt or glossy. They all add a decorative feature to any textile product. Diamantés are fake diamonds.

• LEDs – Light emitting diodes

Small lights that can be integrated into textile fabrics. An electrical charge from a battery travels along a conductive thread to light the LED.