

## Introduction

The term “butting” means sewing the Start and Finish of a braid together into a complete ring. Butting avoids the stair-step color changes that are often visible on a continuous spiral rug. Although butting requires seams, a butted round appears seamless, because the seams are hidden.

Butting can be used throughout the rug, or a continuous spiral rug can be tapered and ended with one or two butted rows at its border.

## Specific Locations for Butts

*Q: Is there anywhere on the rug that is “best” for butting?*

**A:** Butt loops are often a little less perfect than the rest of your braid. The following recommendations help to minimize the visual impact of any imperfections.

1. Curves are better sites for butts than straight portions of a rug.
2. On a round, butt anywhere, but try not to butt directly over your taper (if there is one).
3. Do not “stack” the butt sites on top of each other unless you have a reason to do so. Move them around the rug.

*Q: What would be a reason to “stack butt sites on top of each other?”*

**A:** Stacking butts should only occur if you are working with a pattern (i.e., zigzag, or diamond) that is 3 to 4 straight braids laced together without increases. This maneuver is often performed when lacing a pattern around a round or curved shape, where a lot of increases must be made in the first row of braid to keep the pattern from being too tight (and thus, not laying flat). The butts for each braid end up in the same spot because of the pattern, and are a reason for “stacked butts.”

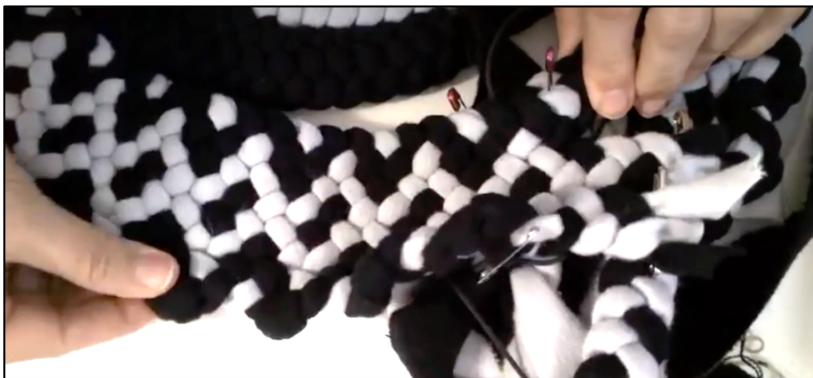
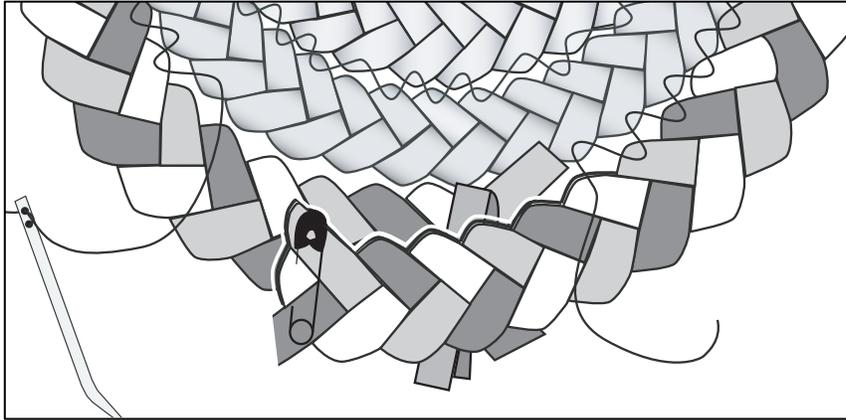


Photo left shows a 4-braid diamond pattern, which has been laced together. All 4 braids will be laced onto the center at once, while making enough increases (skipped loops) to keep the pattern flat. To butt this set of 4 braids, all butts will all occur in the same location and are called “stacked butts.”

## Counting Correctly

There are two ways to figure out where to butt the Start and Finish together:

a) You can butt **“on the rug,”** in which the braid is laced onto the rug, and about 6 inches at the Start and Finish remain unlaced.



6 inches at the Start and Finish remain unlaced. Butting with this method is simply a matter of overlapping the braids and seeing where the loops match up neatly.

b) You can follow a rug pattern that assigns loop counts to each row. In this method, the butt is made **“off the rug,”** and the braids are overlapped for butting at a specific count of either loops or sets (sets = 3 loops).

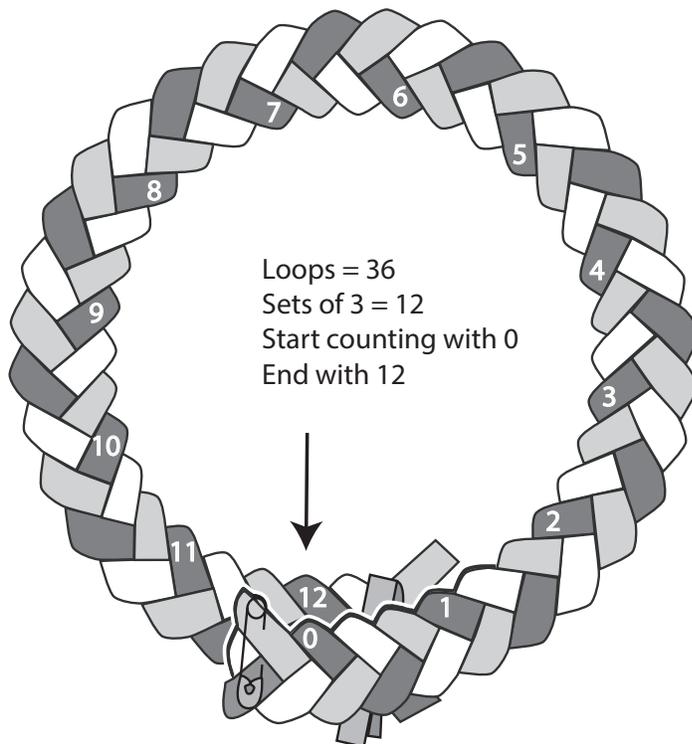


Diagram left shows counting every third loop to reach the number for butting.

When counting loops for a butted row, if the strands are different colors, then just count one color. Divide the number of needed loops by 3, and count the sets.

Start with “zero,” and end with the number of sets needed.

If all three strands are the same color, then you have to count every loop – start with zero, and end with the desired number. Pin zero and the desired number together.

Count on the **Folded Edges** side of the braid for Annie's Fanny.

## Annie's Fanny Butt

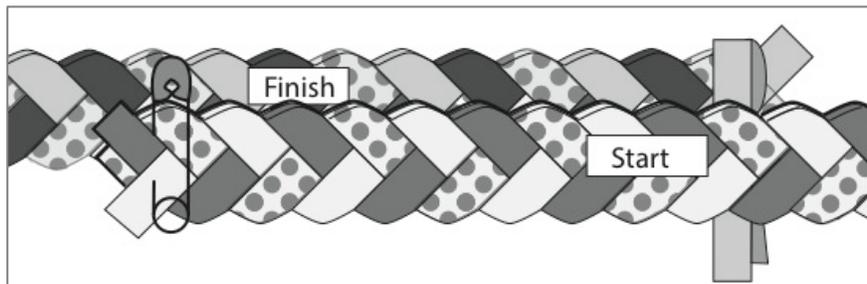
Created by Anne Morton Caldwell in 2015, the Annie's Fanny butt is an excellent method for hiding seams on both front and back. It requires 7 straight loops for butting. It features a method for sewing the diagonal seams with ends that are cut straight across, making the seams easier to sew, especially by machine.

### Supplies Needed

- Start Safety Pin
- Finish Clothespin
- Sewing needle
- Thread to match & also to contrast with strands
- Several large & small safety pins
- Scissors
- Needle-nose pliers or hemostat
- Optional: Long straight pins (corsage pins)

Annie's Fanny Advantages	Annie's Fanny Disadvantages
Hides seams very well	Only works for straight braids
Diagonal seams are easy to sew from ends that are cut straight across	Requires 7 straight loops for the butt
All work (except re-braiding the Start) is done from the front of the rug	Some hand-sewing required (but see comments later for alternatives)
Works with all weights of fabric	

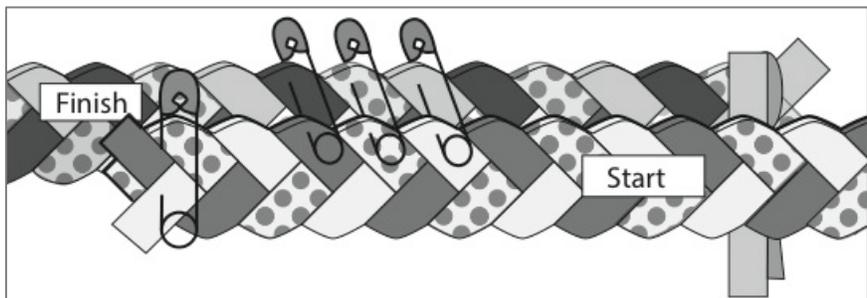
1. Position the braids so that the fronts are facing you, and open folded edges facing upward, with the Start braid to the right and the Finish braid to the left.



Lay the Start on top of the Finish, matching loops.

Pick the 3 loops over which the butt will occur. They should be 3 loops on the top of the braid that are next to each other. The first loop should be at least one loop away from the Start Pin, so that you have enough length for seams. If you have one fabric that frays easily or is stuffed, do not pick this fabric for the middle loop (dots in diagram below).

2. Place large safety pins through the 3 matching loops that will be butted together. These are "Matching Loop pins."

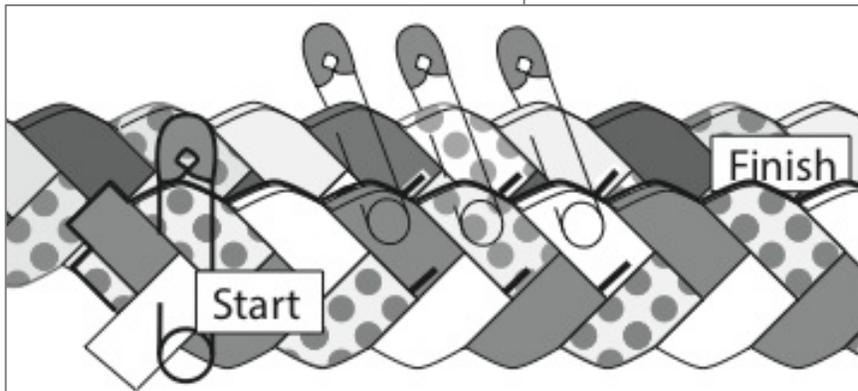
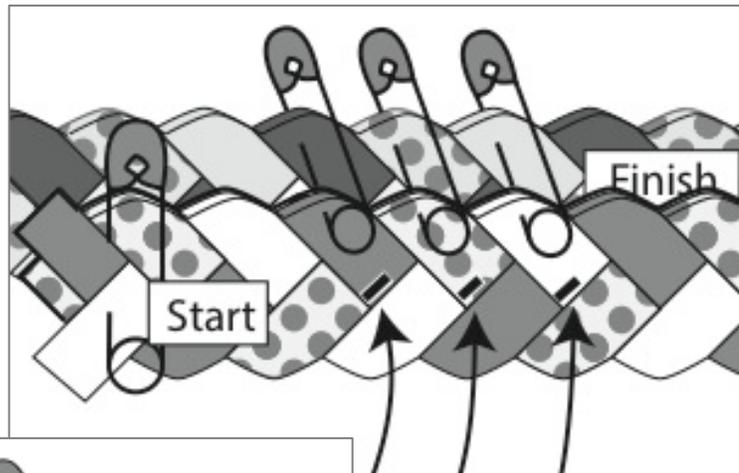
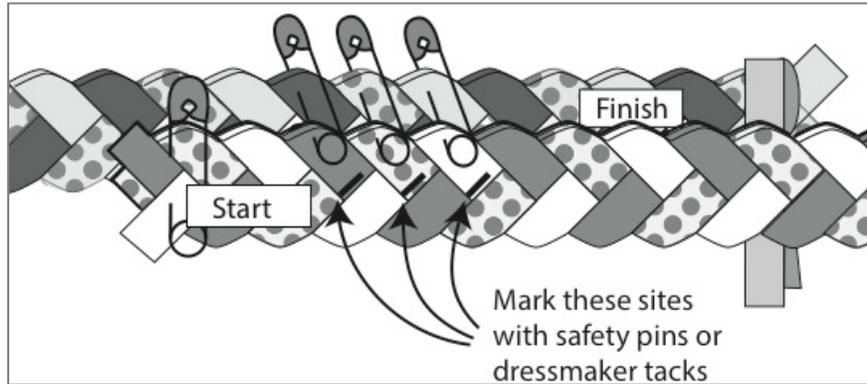


3. On the Start braid, mark each pinned loop at its base, where the dark lines are shown. You can either use dressmaker tacks or safety pins for marking the loops.

**Tip:** *it works best to make these marks at the very bottom of the loops, so that your tacks or pins end up in the center of each strip. See close-up, right.*

Catch only the top layer of fabric with your dressmaker tacks or safety pins as you mark the fabric.

Mark the same sites on the Finish braid.

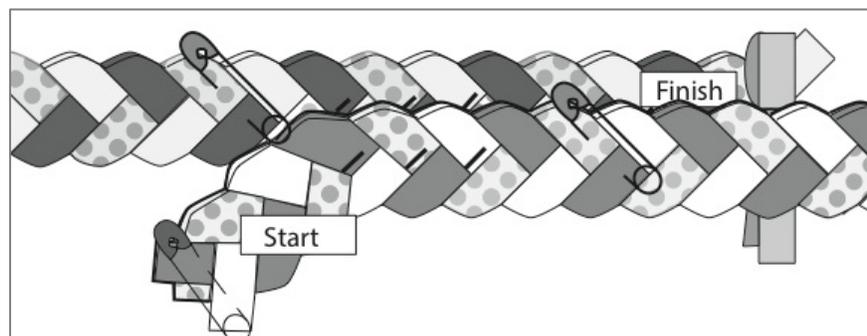


*For instructions on how to make dressmaker tacks, see page 16.*

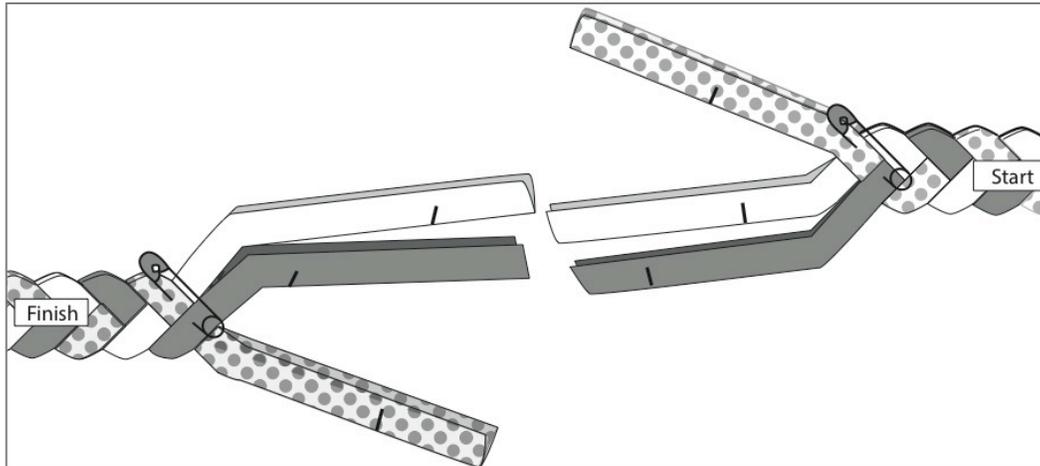
4. Place Stopper Pins through ALL 3 STRANDS on the Start and the Finish. Using the middle marked strand as your guide (dots), place a pin diagonally through all three strands 3 loops to the left on the Finish and 3 loops to the right on the Start.

*Note: the top loop for both Stopper pins is the same fabric as the middle loop (dots here)*

*Also note: Matching Loop pins removed for clarity of diagram.*



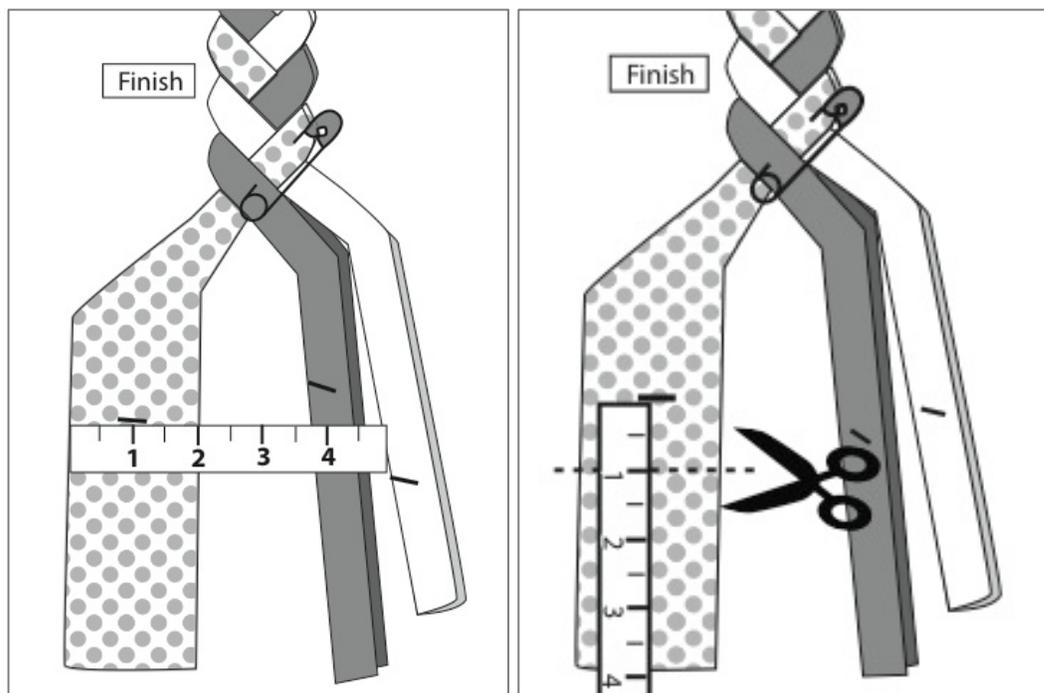
5. Remove Start and Finish Pins, and the 3 Matching Loop pins. Unbraid back to the Stopper Pins.



What you will find is that your dots (middle) strand is pointing upward on the Start, and pointing downward on the Finish. The other 2 strands are parallel.

If the two other strands are not parallel, as shown, then you probably didn't catch all three strands in one of your Stopper pins. Examine them carefully and re-pin.

6. Trim strands on both Start and Finish.

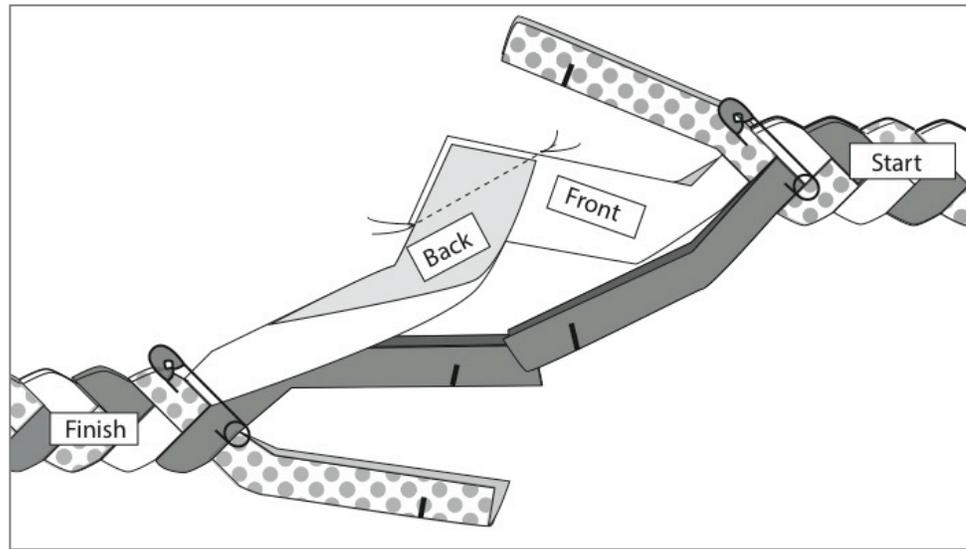


Unfold each strand and lay it right side up. Measure the width of each strand. In diagram above left, the width is 2". Divide the width in half = 1". Add the half-width (1") to the length below the marker pin or tack, and cut straight across (diagram right).

If the marker pin is at an angle, measure from the center of the pinned area.

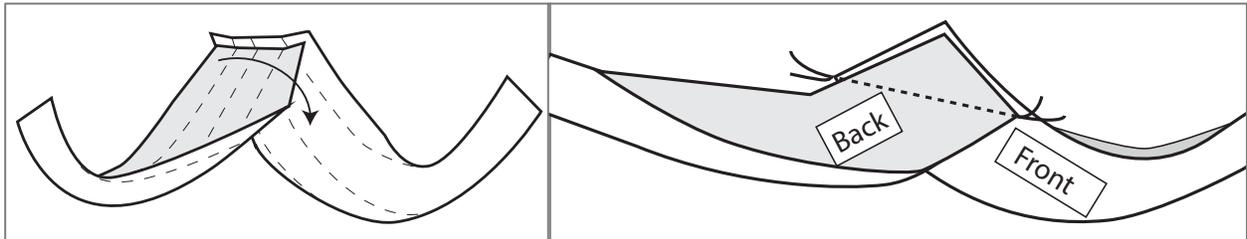
7. Sew the two sets of parallel strands together.

Working with one set of strands at a time, make sure both strands have their folded edges facing upward and are not twisted. Put the cut edges together as they will be when sewn, then arrange the strands so that the right sides are



together. Turn the edges 90° so that a diagonal seam can be sewn (just as you sew on new strips). Pin, and sew twice (if hand sewing: backstitch). Trim seam allowance to 1/8".

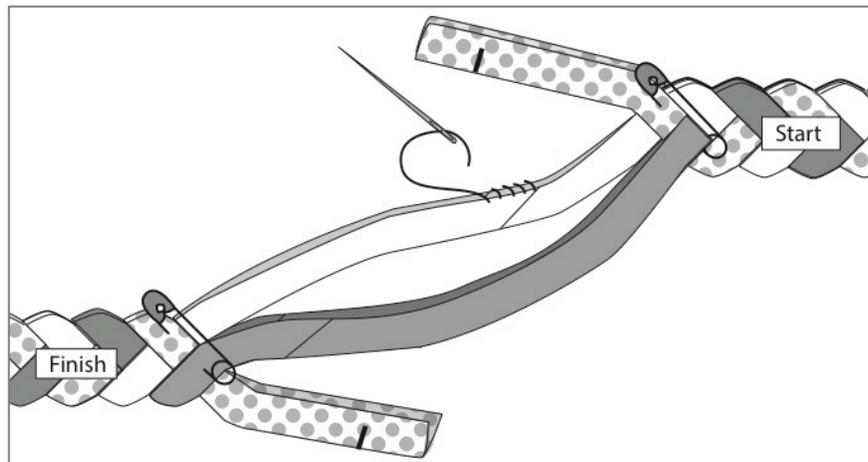
Repeat for the second set of parallel strands (in diagram above, the dark strands).



Above diagrams show close-ups of matching cut ends together, then turning 90° for sewing the diagonal seam.

8. Refold the 2 sewn strips as for braiding, and tuck the folds closed over the seamed area, using matching thread.

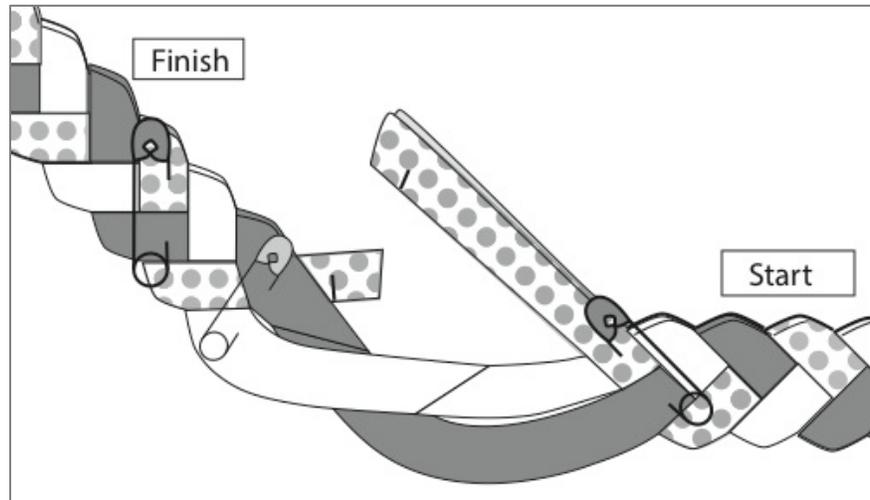
For those of you who are reluctant to hand-sew, you can also use a straight pin (one with a ball head so it's easy to pull out) to close the seamed area for re-braiding.



9. Re-braid, starting from Finish end first. Re-braid firmly but not terribly tightly.

Once the dots (middle) strand ends on the right, braid two more loops (dark then white) and pin in place.

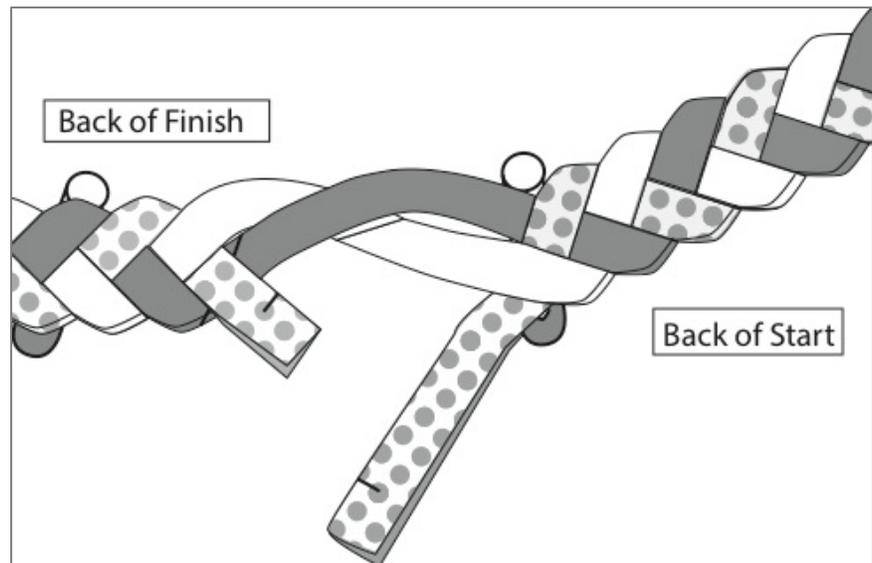
Note that after re-braiding the Finish, the two sewn strands (dark and white) are now crossing each other, and no longer parallel.



10. Turn the braid over to the back, and begin braiding from the Start Stopper Pin, making sure folded edges are to the right.

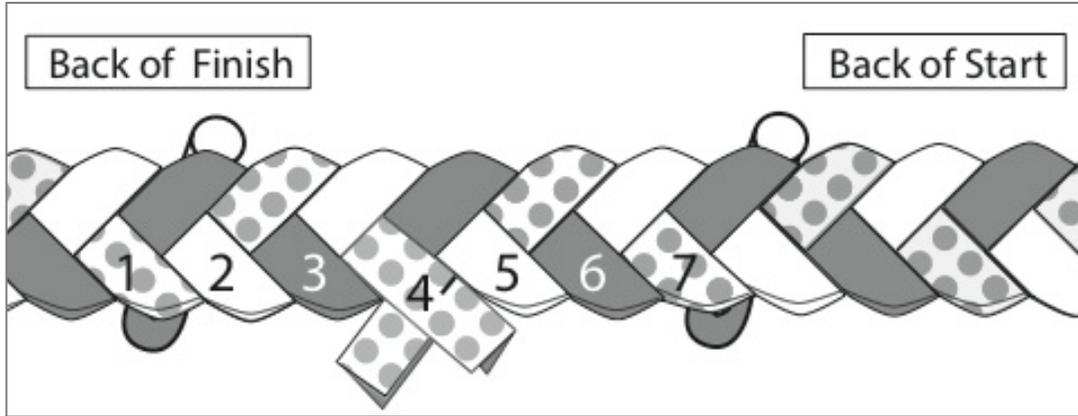
Re-braid firmly but not terribly tightly.

Note in diagram right that the BACKS of the braids are now facing forward. The open folded edges are toward the bottom. All pins are on the other side of the braid.



### 11. Matching up the Middle Strand

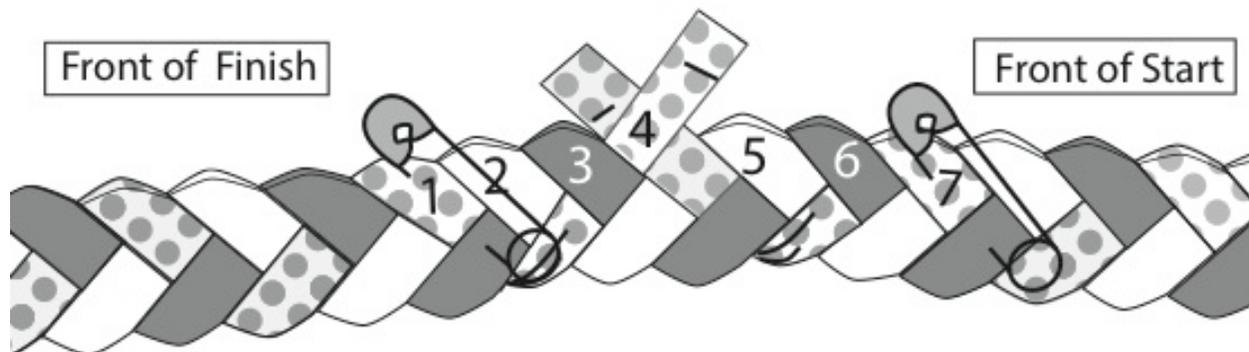
When the strand ends meet on the same side of the braid as loop 4, count from Stopper pin to Stopper pin (including the Stopper Pin loops) and you should have a count of seven loops. Make sure your loop sequence is correct in this 7-loop region.



Make sure your folded edges are oriented properly and not twisted. Match cut ends. Where the cut ends match as if they were already sewn together, place each dot strip so that right sides are together, then turn the strip ends to orient them for a diagonal seam. Pull on each end with a hemostat or pliers to get more length for sewing the seam.

#### *Alternative View: Re-braided Middle Strand Facing Front*

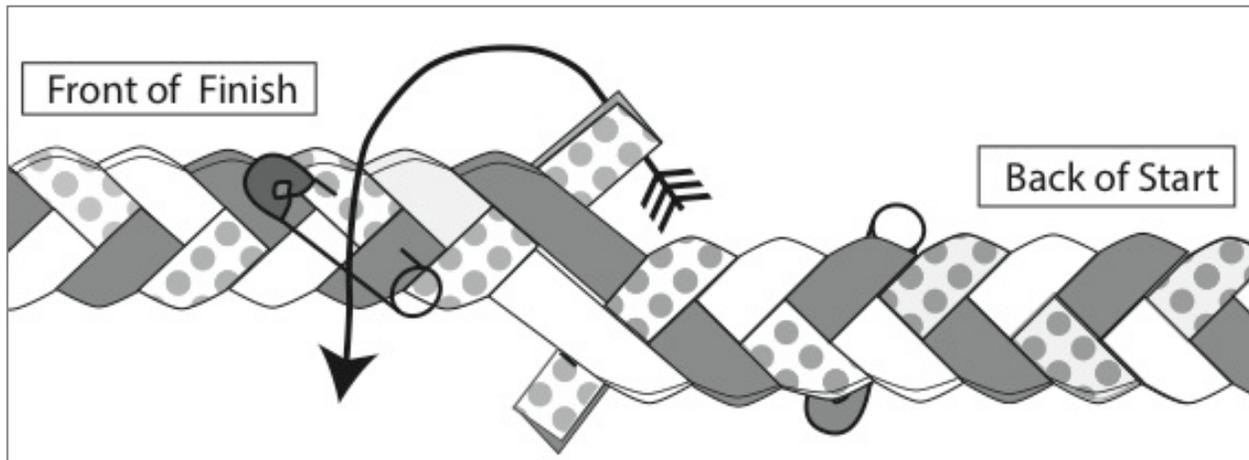
Diagram below shows the view of the re-braided middle strand from the front. Note that the open folded edges are now facing upward, and the Stopper pins are on the front.



Pull on the strands in the direction of the arrows to get enough length to sew the diagonal seam. Pulling the strands distorts the braid, but after sewing the seam, you can restore the loops to their correct position.

**\*\*\*Most Common Re-Braiding Mistake\*\*\***

A common mistake is that, when you turn the braid over to the back so that you can re-braid from the Start end, you don't flip the entire braid over. So you are looking at the *back* of the Start and the *front* of the Finish, and the short ends simply will never match.



*Diagram above shows the most common mistake during re-braiding. As you are re-braiding from the Start, with folded edges downward and the Stopper pins on the other side of the braid, you don't realize that the Finish has twisted to the front.*

*The front of the Finish will have its folded edges upward, while you are braiding on the back of the Start with its folded edges downward.*

*All that is necessary to fix this is to turn the Finish so that the back is facing up, following the direction of the arrow. The strands will naturally match up for sewing.*

*If they don't match up, re-braid more tightly from both ends and try again.*

If you simply turn both sides to the front, usually this simple maneuver is all that is needed to bring the ends together properly for butting. Next time, notice which direction your Stopper Pins are facing: they should both be on the same side of the braid. Also, your folded edges should be on the same side of the braid.

**IF YOUR ENDS DO NOT MATCH UP**

- check that you have both the Start and the Finish facing to the front (or both facing to the back), with open folds on the same side.
- did you start braiding correctly from your Stopper pins, or did you accidentally start braiding incorrectly and your sequence is off?

## 12. Finishing Annie's Fanny:

Pull on the set of strands to get some length to work with. As you pull, keep the open folds oriented in their correct direction. Match ends right sides together. Sew diagonally, trim seam, and re-fold as for braiding. Tack the folds closed over the seamed region.

Work the strand back into the braid so that all loops appear equal. Use needle nose pliers or a hemostat to move the loops to hide the seams. Often only the braider strand has to be readjusted, and there is less manipulation of the strands needed than with other butting methods.

## 11. Butting with All Three Strands the Same Color

When two or three strands are the same color, a butt is more challenging. The potential for making a mistake is greater.

The key to successfully butting same-colored strands is to find a method of *marking* the strands so that they can be re-braided and matched up with the other strand bearing the same mark.

### Some techniques for marking same-colored strands:

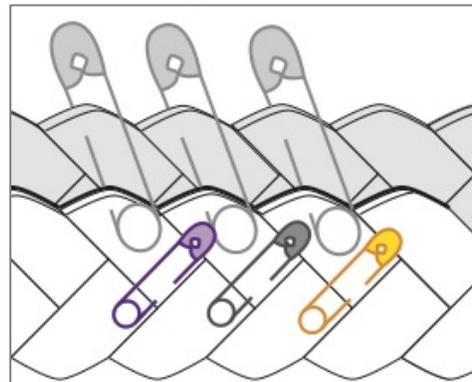
#### a. Different-colored or different-sized safety pins

Almost everyone has both gold and silver safety pins, and everyone has large and small silver pins.

Try to find some differently colored safety pins.

If you are going to distinguish your strand sets by the *size* of the safety pins, make sure the sizes are easily distinguished – really big pins versus really small ones.

If you can't find different pins, you can either double-pin (put one or two small safety pins through the bottom circle of another safety pin), or flag (put a piece of tape around the non-pinning stem of a safety pin) or even dot the heads of safety pins with different colors of nail polish.



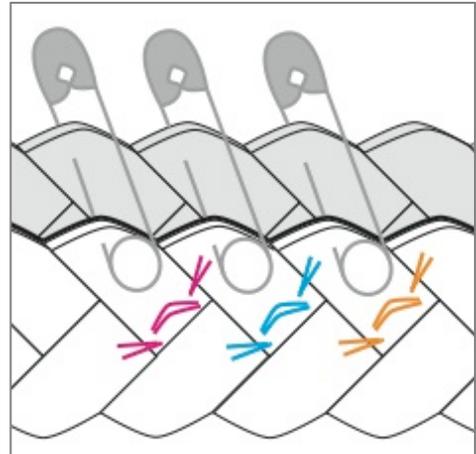
*Start strands marked with different colors of safety pins. Be sure to mark the corresponding Finish strands with the same colors of pins.*

## b. Dressmaker Tacks with Different Thread Colors

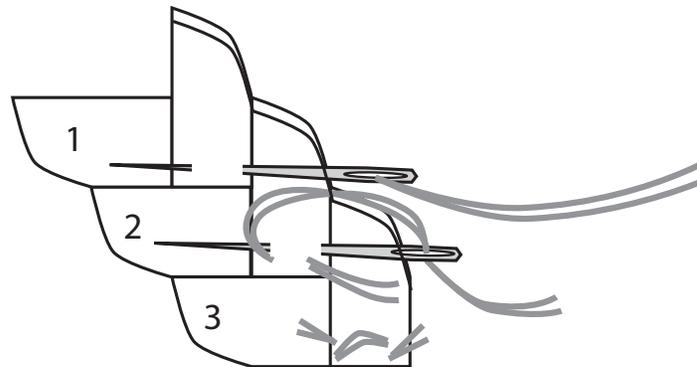
Take three different colors of thread – ones that do not blend in with the strands you are marking.

Take two quick stitches in the same place with doubled thread, and leave the ends about  $\frac{1}{2}$ " long. Some people knot the end before throwing the stitches; some don't. See diagram middle right.

Diagram next page shows how to make dressmaker tacks.



*Start strands marked with different thread colors. Mark the matching finish strands with the same thread colors.*



### Instructions for Making Dressmaker Tacks

1. Using a needle and contrasting doubled thread, stitch through the top layer of fabric at site to be marked. Make the stitch about  $\frac{1}{4}$ " wide. Do not pull the thread all the way through – leave a tail. (Some knot the end, but then it's harder to pull out.)
2. Go through the same site a second time.
3. Trim ends of thread to  $\frac{1}{4}$  to  $\frac{1}{2}$ " long.

Note: just before you sew a seam between two ends, remove the dressmaker's tack by pulling up on the center loop. Keep the strands pinned together when you do this so that you don't get confused. If you sew a seam over the dressmaker's tacks, it is hard to remove because the colored thread is stitched down.

## Annie's Fanny Short Cuts and Tips

Note: these tips are for AFTER you are comfortable with the basic method.

### 1. Short Cut: Only pin the middle set of Matching Strands, not all 3 sets.

What can go wrong: usually the first loop after the Start Pin is where you start counting, and where you start pinning. If you unthinkingly use this loop's color for placing your Stopper Pins (as some other butts do), you can screw up the butt.

If you cut the loops within the braid (see #2), then it's best to use all 3 Matching Loop Pins so that you correctly cut the strands on the back.

### 2. Short Cut: Cut the Start and Finish Strands within the braid, rather than measuring and cutting. (I like this method).

What can go wrong:

a. You are cutting around pins on the Start side, and you can ruin your scissors by trying to cut through a safety pin.

b. You have to make sure your middle matching loop is pinned a little to the left on the Start side, so that you have room to cut.

Where you cut: Cut the pinned *Start Loops as far to the right* as you can. On the *Finish: follow the pinned loops down and to the left* for their next appearance on the smooth side of the braid, and cut across the center of each of these smooth-side loops.

3. **If your fabric is a bit stiff**, such as melton, or thick coat-weight wool, then your strands may not be as pliable as thinner wools. At these times, I place my Stopper Pin on the left (the "Start" braid) *3 more loops outward* from the butting site. It makes sewing the left-most set of the parallel-strand seams a *lot* easier by giving you more room. Your total loop count will be "10" instead of "7."

4. **Pinning my seams for sewing:** I was given some corsage pins that are super long and work perfectly for seams where you don't have a whole lot of length to work with in order to sew the butt seams. They just make the process easier. If you have a couple of long corsage or hat pins, try them out for pinning the parallel strand butt seams.