

choosing the right zipper



Selecting the right zipper for your garment is extremely important not just from an aesthetic point of view but also for application and functionality. A mismatch between the zipper and the garment can cause huge financial and material loss to all involved parties. The manufacturer needs to consider the following aspects when selecting a zipper:

Type of garment- A skirt or an evening dress usually requires an invisible zipper. Jeans use metal zippers while jackets usually fashion plastic zips (moulded or coiled). The type of slider varies from application to application. For example, snow jackets used in extremely cold conditions use rubber pullers on plastic sliders so that the zipper doesn't feel cold when being pulled. Scuba diving suits, on the other hand, use plastic zippers with plastic sliders, rather than metal zippers, since plastic is more durable under those conditions.

Type of fabric- The fabric of the garment is directly related to its application. Fabrics can be broadly divided into light and heavy depending upon their weight. Light fabrics like silk, chiffon and polyester require light zippers. Heavy fabrics like denim, jute, cotton corduroys, lycra blends use heavier zippers capable of withstanding greater stress and strain. Light zippers such as the *invisible zipper* blend with the contours of the garment, making it aesthetically pleasing.

Special processing- Garments go through a series of processes before they are packed for marketing. These processes may include a series of washing cycles, initially to set the shrinkage and later to get a particular finish (stone wash, acid wash, wrinkle-free etc). The manufacturer specifies the test that the zipper needs to pass, which in turn reveals its suitability for use in such a garment.

Strength & performance requirements- Often, the use to which a garment is put and the wear & tear it will undergo are deciding factors in the choice of zipper. For example, a size 3 coil zipper used in a trouser fly will undergo less stress and strain than a size 7 zipper in a factory uniform or outerwear. The classification of zippers by end-use is defined in British Standards BS3084, section 7, table 3.

Fashion requirements- While the above factors are important, fashion usually commands the the zipper type for a garment. The design team chooses the type of the zipper based on its color, finish, performance parameters and appearance on the garment.