

Turning and Pressing Skinny Straps & Ties

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Do you ever watch those TV hospital shows and think, *'I could do that'*? Maybe not be an actual, real-life doctor. But you could wear a white coat, carry a stethoscope, and yell, *"Get me a C-Spine, Chem 7, and a V-Fib"* I have no idea what any of those terms mean. They're just fun to shout. To get you just a little bit closer to your doctor daydreams, we're here to show you how one of the medical devices you saw Dr. Greene use every week can also be a big help in your sewing room. It's called a hemostat, and it's basically a locking clamp shaped like a long pair of scissors. (Probably what Dr. Greene wanted when he yelled, *"Clamp!"*) A hemostat is extremely useful when you need to turn long, narrow tubes right side out.

We need to give a shout-out to one of our Sew4Home visitors who originally brought this idea to our attention when she was making all the tiny ties on [our crib bumpers project](#).

Don't read this if medical descriptions make you queasy

A hemostat (also called a hemostatic clamp) is a surgical instrument you clamp onto a blood vessel to stop bleeding. It's made to reach into small spaces and easily lock in a closed position. They come in various lengths, from 6" up to 12" or more and you can buy them relatively inexpensively. The idea is to get the **longest, skinniest, locking** pair you can afford. The longer and skinnier it is, the longer the tube you can fit the hemostat down into and turn right side out.

We purchased a good 10" pair from Amazon for under \$6. This is probably *not* the price your local medical center is paying for the surgically sterile kind.

When all the way closed, they really do look just like a pair of scissors – although you can see the grippy ridges along the edges of the pointed ends.



When slightly open, you can see how the locking clamp at the top works.



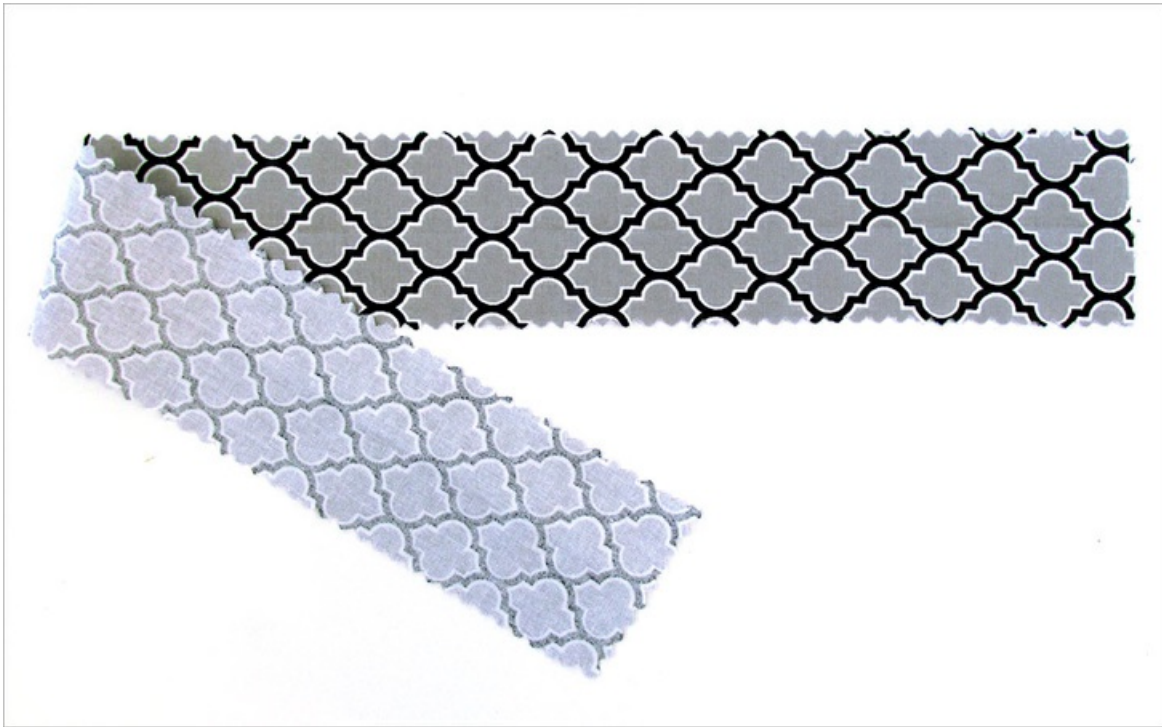
Hemostats are also handy for pulling cording through a drawcord channel/casing for drawstring-type openings.

Turning a tie (or other long tube) right side out

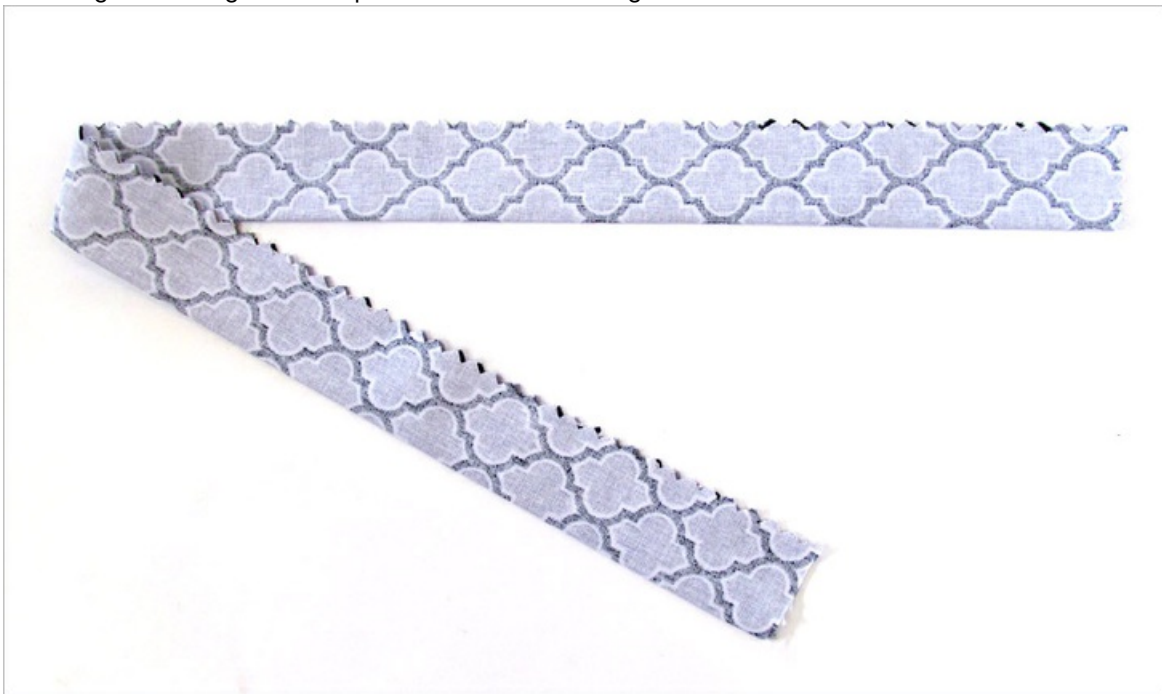
If you sew your own ties, they're wrong side-out when you finish the stitch. Now you have to figure out how to get them right side out. With a bit of careful work and a safety pin, pencil or a chopstick, you can probably get *one* done. But if your project has dozens of ties and they're over 18" long, you're in for quite a time-consuming chore.

For our example, we assumed we were making a basic tie that would be 21" long x 1" wide when fully finished and sewn into place.

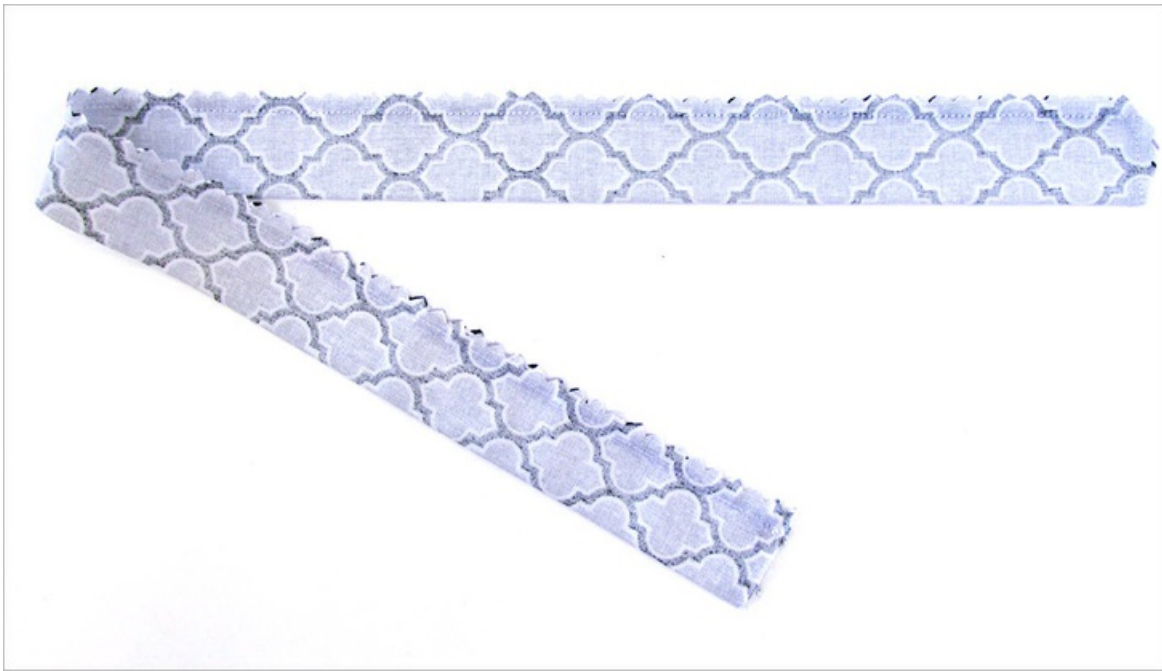
1. Cut out the fabric for your tie, accounting for your seam allowance. We're planning a $\frac{1}{4}$ " seam allowance and used one half of a jelly roll strip for our sample. This makes the starting strip of fabric $21\frac{1}{2}$ " long x $2\frac{1}{2}$ " wide.



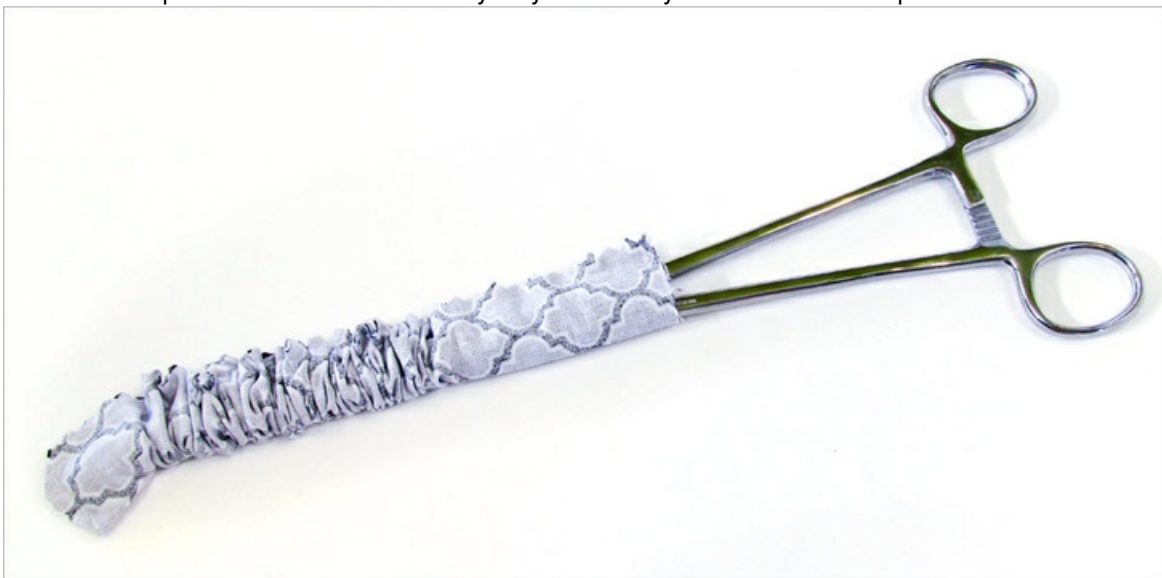
2. Fold it right sides together and press. Now it's 21½" long x 1¼" wide.



3. Using a ¼" seam allowance, stitch across *one* end and along the entire long side, pivoting at the corner. Leave the opposite end open. Clip the corners at the sewn end, making sure not to cut your seam.



4. Slide the open end of the tube over the hemostat. You'll need to bunch it up below the hemostat's hinge to allow the tips to open just a little bit.
5. Keep bunching until the tips of the hemostat's pincers reach the end of the tube. Use your fingernail to push a little fabric between the tips then lock them shut. They only need a tiny bit of fabric to clamp on to.



6. Gently pull the end through the center of the tube.

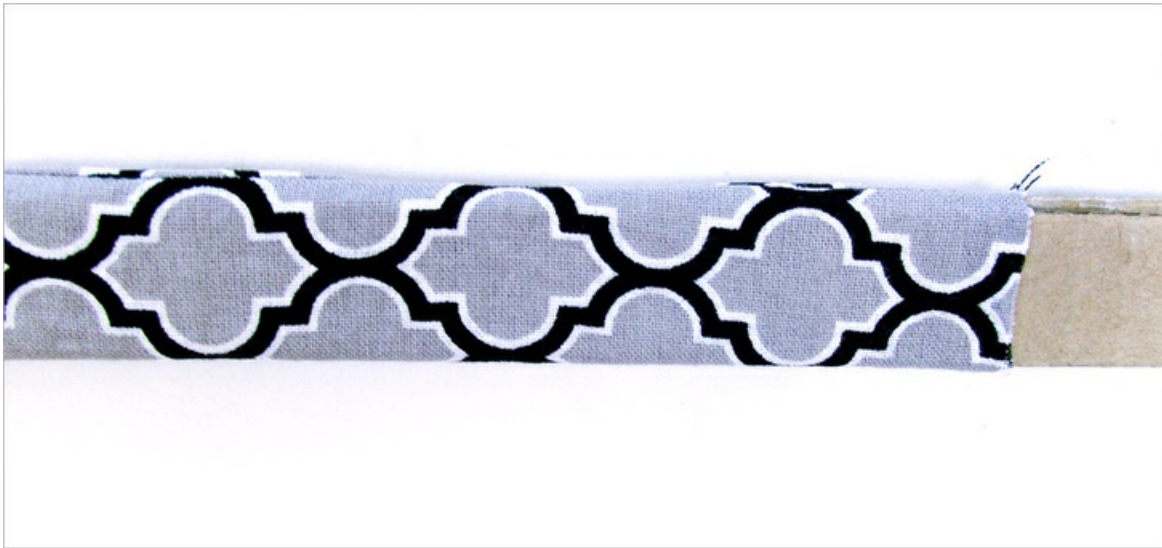


7. Continue pulling until tube is right side out. You can use this technique even with really long tubes; you just keep bunching the fabric as far down as the hemostat will go, then pulling and repeating the action until the entire length is right side out.



Cardboard trick for ironing the sewn tube flat

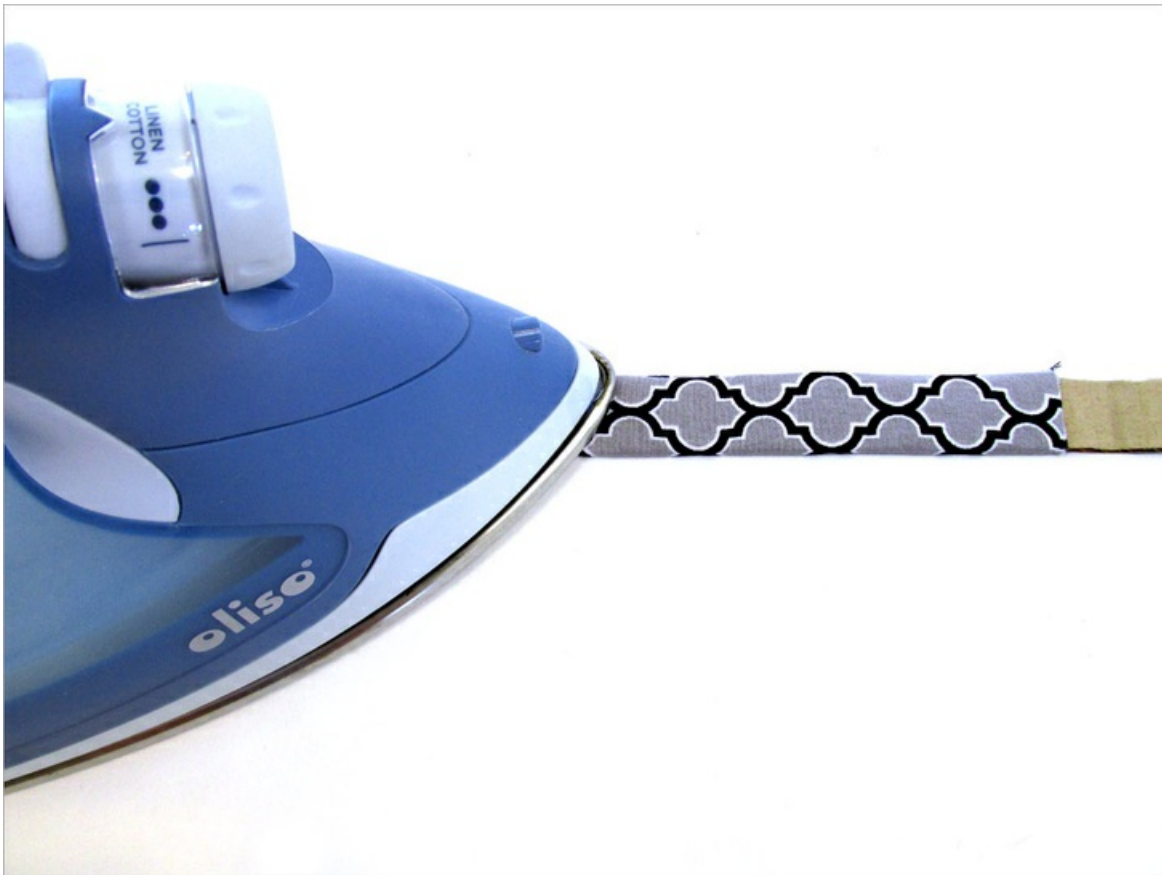
1. Now you need to iron your skinny tie flat. But it doesn't want to lie flat to be ironed. It wants to twist and turn. To stop this, insert a piece of cardboard, or similar stiff board, before you iron. Since our sewn tube is 1" wide, we made our cardboard strip just a little narrower than that.



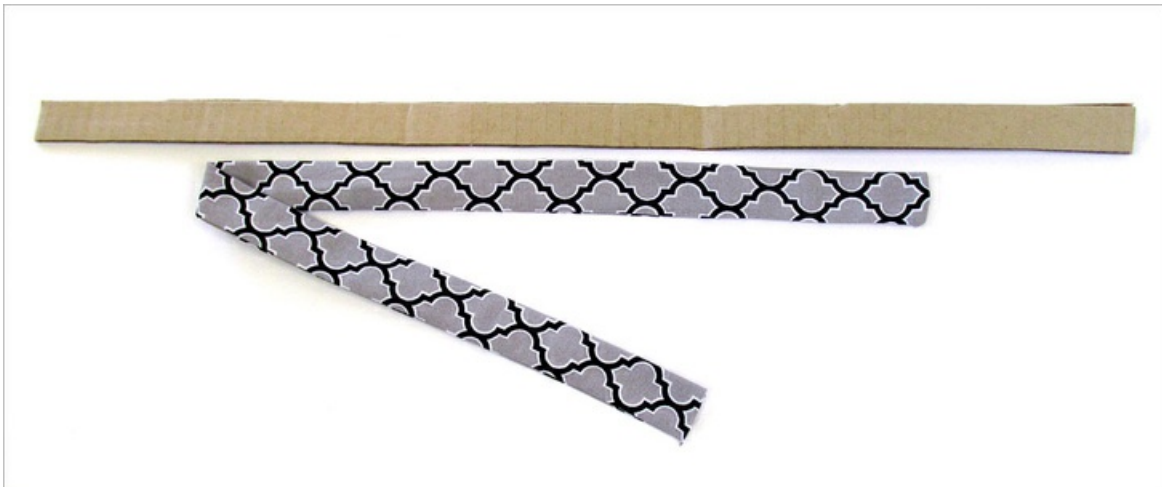
2. We inserted it and can now iron the tube flat without a problem. The stiffness of the cardboard makes it easy to center the seam along the edge, as shown above, or rotated to the back to create a clean front, as shown below.



3. You can press right over the cardboard



4. A fast, easy, perfectly pressed tie ready to sew into your project.

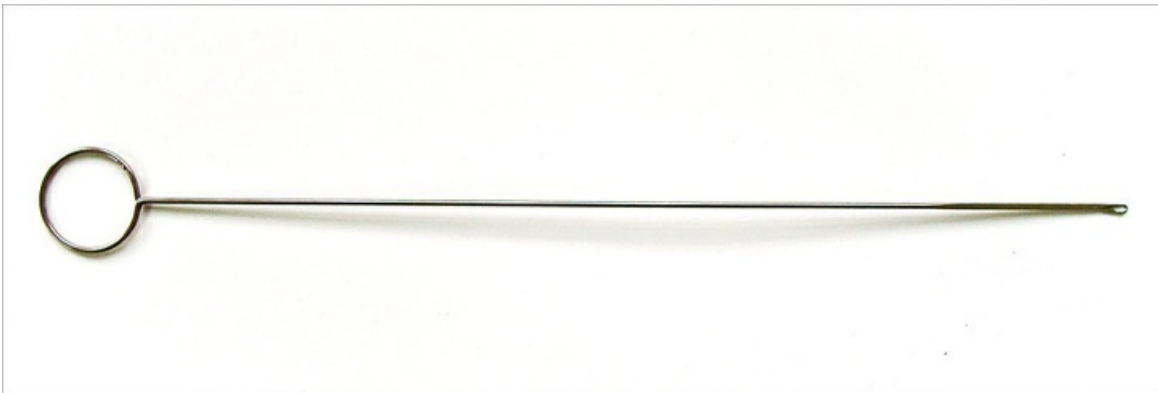


Why don't you just use a loop turner?

Good question. A loop turner is the traditional sewing tool for turning sewn tubes. It's basically a wire with a tiny hook at one end...



... and a round loop at the other to hang onto.



You push the hook to the end of the tube, hook it onto your fabric and pull the tube right side out in the same manner as described above with the hemostat. We have point turner, but it's given us two problems we *didn't* have with the hemostat.

- 1) Sometimes it's hard to get the loop turner's hook to actually hook into the fabric. The hemostat isn't piercing your fabric just grabbing it, which is much easier on all types of fabric.
- 2) The loop turner's hook has a little protector that's supposed to keep it from hooking your fabric as you pull it through. But this doesn't always work, and we've torn fabric during the turning process. There's nothing on the hemostat to catch your fabric.

Sewing Tips & Tricks

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