

# Exposed Zippers

*Although it lacked a catchy name at the time, Gideon Sundback's "Hookless Fastener" received U.S. patent number 1,060,378 on April 29, 1913.*

The concept of a zipper got its start when an American, Elias Howe, earned a patent in 1851 for his Automatic Continuous Clothing Closure. His idea was ahead of its time, but Howe was so busy with his other inventions (including the sewing machine, which would later make zippers much easier to install) that he never got around to commercializing the radical new type of sliding fastener.

It wasn't until decades later, in 1893, that Whitcomb Judson came up with something he called the Clasp Locker, and later the Judson C-Curity Fastener. Unfortunately, his invention had large teeth that could be tricky to close, and it also tended to come open by itself. As a result it wasn't very popular with the public, even though it was showcased at the 1893 Chicago World's Fair.

The idea might have languished in obscurity and left us all living in a button-down world. But Whitcomb also co-founded the Universal Fastener Co., and that's where things really started coming together for the zipper.

In 1906 the company hired a Swedish electrical engineer named Otto Frederick Gideon Sundback, who had immigrated to the United States. He took Whitcomb's design back to the drawing board and came up with the system of tiny interlocking teeth now known as the zipper.

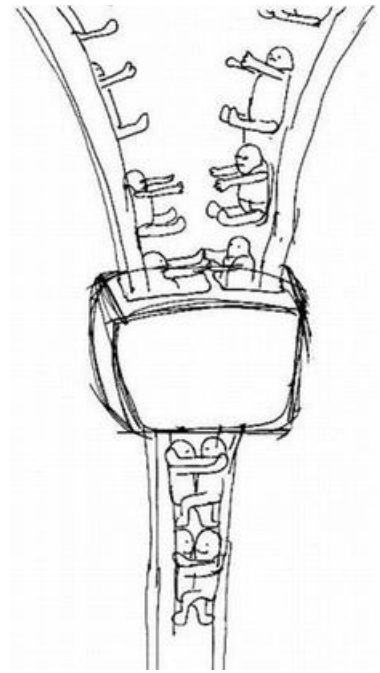
Although it lacked a catchy name at the time, Sundback's early "Hookless Fastener" design was patented on April 29, 1913. He continued to develop it, and eventually patented a much improved version called the Separable Fastener in 1917. (He did some of the development work in St. Catharines, Ont., but there's some question surrounding how much.)

The Lightning Fastener Co. in St. Catharines, of which Sundback was president, started manufacturing the new fastener, but it took another couple of decades to really grab the world's attention.

There is a debate about whether the credit for inventing the zipper should ultimately go to Elias Howe, Whitcomb Judson or Gideon Sundback. While the materials have changed over the years, the basic concept of the zipper is closest to Sundback's Hookless Fastener design, and it's also the one that had the most commercial success.

In honour of the early patent's 100th anniversary, we've pulled together some miscellaneous trivia about the zipper.

**NOTE:** *This is an excerpt from a larger article. The rest of the article can be found at [cbc.ca/news/technology/story/2013/04/26/f-zipper-turns-100.html](http://cbc.ca/news/technology/story/2013/04/26/f-zipper-turns-100.html).*



In spite of everyone thinking that exposed zippers are a “current” trend, exposed zippers show up on many 1930s dress patterns.



Following are examples of exposed zippers, functional or not, from the Michael Kors (left) and Junya Watanabe (right) fall 2013 collections.



And a Sacai jacket (\$1,225) from Barney's



Of course, zippers don't have to be limited to clothing.

You could tattoo one around a scar



..... Or line your pond with one





## Resources

- ❑ Thread Zap II or Perfect End thread burners
- ❑ [etsy.com/shop/ReborneJewelry](https://etsy.com/shop/ReborneJewelry) – Great zipper jewelry for inspiration
- ❑ [ghees.com](https://ghees.com) – Various decorative zippers
- ❑ [sewingworkshop.com](https://sewingworkshop.com) – Decorative Riri zippers
- ❑ [etsy.com/shop/orgXIIIorg](https://etsy.com/shop/orgXIIIorg) – Oversized zippers
- ❑ [etsy.com/shop/PeteAndVeronicas](https://etsy.com/shop/PeteAndVeronicas) – Steampunk jewelry from zippers
- ❑ [urbanthreads.com](https://urbanthreads.com) -- “Zip It Good” embroidery design
- ❑ [zipperstop.com](https://zipperstop.com); [zprz.com](https://zprz.com); [zipperstop.com](https://zipperstop.com), [zippershipper.com](https://zippershipper.com) – Online zipper sources
- ❑ \_\_\_\_\_

## Patterns

- ❑ Sewing Workshop Olive Top from the Alex/Olive pattern
- ❑ Sewing Workshop Zona Jacket with zipper over seam above back pleat
- ❑ Butterick 5816 top with zipper in raglan seam
- ❑ Design and Sew 328/Classy Coat with zippers for buttonhole and pocket closure
- ❑ McCall’s 6656 – Unlined jacket with lower front/back panel
- ❑ Sewing Workshop Joplin Pullover (modified with zipper down front)
- ❑ LJ Designs a la Mode Latte Jacket with painted zipper
- ❑ Silhouette Patterns 212/Kors Zippered Top (ordered custom zipper from [zipperstop.com](https://zipperstop.com))
- ❑ Vogue 8793 – Katherine Tilton T-shirt pattern with zipper trim on collar
- ❑ McCall’s 5252 fleece jacket
- ❑ Shapes Nine Lives Vest lengthened 6”
- ❑ Silhouette Patterns 1912/Samantha’s Double Zipped Collar Jacket (not sampled)
- ❑ \_\_\_\_\_

*Easy Peasy Zipper Pouch Tutorial  
by: zipit*



## Tutorials

- ❑ [zipitzippers.blogspot.com](https://zipitzippers.blogspot.com) – Tutorials include directions on how to make the zipper pouch shown on the right and a description of zipper teeth and coil sizes. It also includes a shopping link to their Etsy store where they sell lots of zippers and zipper pulls.
- ❑ How to sew an exposed zipper by Gertie (Gretchen Hirsch): [coatsandclarksewingsecrets.com/blogcategory/sewing/gertie-the-exposed-zipper-2/](https://coatsandclarksewingsecrets.com/blogcategory/sewing/gertie-the-exposed-zipper-2/) OR [youtube.com/watch?v=Ow-T4SRo03E&feature=youtube](https://youtube.com/watch?v=Ow-T4SRo03E&feature=youtube)
- ❑ [cynthiaguffey.com](https://cynthiaguffey.com) – “Complete Guide to Zippers” and “Unusual Zipper Placements” DVDs are for sale.
- ❑ [trudyjansendesign.com/patterns.htm#cd\\_&\\_dvd](https://trudyjansendesign.com/patterns.htm#cd_&_dvd) – DVD of how to insert zippers is for sale
- ❑ [silhouettepatterns.com/html/media/livestreamchannel/replay\\_10\\_24\\_2011.htm](https://silhouettepatterns.com/html/media/livestreamchannel/replay_10_24_2011.htm) -- Peggy Sagers talks about the Michael Kors scarf in her “Is That Really A Zipper?” Webcast.
- ❑ \_\_\_\_\_