



# **YOUR ZIPPER** Is a Reflection of **YOUR BRAND**

Elevate your design by  
choosing the right zipper  
for each project.

**UCAN**  
ZIPPERS

From adding a flash of style to ensuring reliable performance and durability, zippers play a vital part in bringing your ideas to life. Choosing the ideal zipper for a product helps deliver the experience customers expect from your brand.

It's easy to feel overwhelmed by the number of choices and all the terminology. With zippers, the smallest details make a big difference, so you should take the time to think through every aspect of your design.

This guide provides the information needed to confidently select the right zippers for your projects. Whether you're seeking standard, luxury or custom zippers, you'll learn the key considerations to pull together the best solution.

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# ZIPPER TYPE

Every zipper should meet the functional needs of the piece and be balanced with the aesthetic that you're trying to achieve. It makes sense to start by determining the zipper type best suited for your design and purpose.

The biggest differences between zippers are the teeth and the application. We can categorize the teeth into these buckets.

## Nylon Coil

This zipper is made exactly how it's named – a nylon monofilament is coiled to form the teeth, then it's sewn onto the zipper tape to make the final zipper product. It's the zipper of choice in the outdoor and luggage industry for tents, backpacks, suitcases and camping apparel.

Nylon coil zippers feature strong horizontal strength. You've probably stuffed your luggage a bit too much, and the zipper holding the suitcase from exploding is a nylon coil zipper.





## Invisible Zippers

There are two types of invisible zippers – a true invisible zipper, which is most often used in women’s skirts, and a reverse coil or an invisible identical zipper (IIZ). The invisible zipper is sewn into the seam of a skirt to create a clean finish. If you look at one closely, you’ll see pleats on the zipper tape that allow the sewer to sew all the way to the seam line.

The invisible identical zipper, on the other hand, is a regular nylon coil zipper that’s oriented backward to give an invisible look. You can’t sew all the way to the seam because there has to be room for the slider to move. These zippers are helpful when your design calls for a clean finish and you need a bit of a larger gauge than an invisible zipper.

## Plastic Molded

These zippers are made from an acetal polymer that's extruded through a mold to shape the teeth. Since the teeth are perfectly symmetrical, the slider can run in either direction.

Plastic molded zippers are pretty versatile and primarily used on apparel and some handbags. Some people like the chunky look of the zipper teeth and take that into consideration of the design. While the horizontal strength is decent, if one of the zipper teeth breaks over time, it's almost impossible to repair one tooth.





## Metal

Metal zippers are used on items including jeans, handbags and coveralls. They come in a variety of finishes and gauge sizes.

Different industries within apparel making will choose a finish based on how they want the final garment to look. For example, denim makers know that jeans must endure tough environments, so they'll often opt for brass zippers to withstand brutal washes.

Within the metal zipper category are luxury zippers, which often have a high polish and high shine to them. They've gone through much more processing to get the smooth finish that elevates the finish of your design.



A person wearing a bright yellow winter jacket, black gloves, and sunglasses stands in a snowy mountain landscape. The background shows a snow-covered mountain slope with evergreen trees and a ski lift. The sky is blue with light clouds. The person is looking slightly to the right.

# ZIPPER APPLICATION

Consider how people will use the zipper on your product. For example, if you're designing and producing a jacket with a center front zipper, you'll need a separating bottom zipper. For fly-in denim or a jacket pocket, a closed-bottom zipper will suit you fine.

Here are some zipper applications for items you may produce.



## Closed Bottom

Zippers that don't separate at the bottom – used on handbags, ¼ zip shirts, pockets, cosmetic bags, pillows, footwear, skirt and jean/trouser fly, dresses and luggage.





## Separating Bottom

Zippers that separate at the bottom – used on jackets, hoodies, coats and outerwear.

## Two-Way Separating Bottom

Zippers that have a pin and box on the top and bottom (they also have two zipper pulls) – used on ski parkas and sleeping bags.

## Two-Way Closed Bottom

Zippers that are closed on both ends and have two zipper pulls – used on handbags, tents, weekender bags, mattress covers and pillowcases.

## Zippers by the Yard (Long Chain)

If you prefer to build your own zipper, this is for you. Zippers are ordered by gauge and yards. You choose the pulls that correspond with the type of zippers from a zipper collection and, if needed, top and bottom stops.





# ZIPPER GAUGE

In the zipper business, you'll hear things like number 3 or number 5 – that's referring to the size/width of the zipper teeth measured in millimeters. It's written as #3 or #5. A #3 metal zipper would be about 3 mm wide. As the numbers increase, the width of the teeth does so as well.

***Only measure the teeth – don't measure any of the extra tape on the side. It's best to measure the zipper teeth horizontally with the zipper closed.***

You'll need to get an idea of how big you want the teeth to be to meet the functional demand of your piece as well as the aesthetic desires. For handbags, a #5 gauge is the most common for the outside zipper, with a #3 or #4 on the inside pockets. On denim, it's usually a #4, with some instances of a #5 brass.

If you're using a metal zipper, move on to the next section. If you have a nylon coil or plastic molded zipper, skip to the zipper length section.



# ZIPPER FINISH

Zipper finish only applies to metal zippers. Finish options include:

## EVERYDAY METAL ZIPPERS

- Brass
- Nickel
- Antique Brass
- Antique Nickel
- Gunmetal

## G2 LUXURY METAL

- Gold
- Shiny Nickel
- Shiny Gunmetal
- Rose Gold
- Antique Brass
- Antique Nickel
- Matte Gold
- Matte Nickel
- Matte Black
- Multi-Colored

While the finish is mostly for aesthetics, in some situations the type of finish should be considered for the kind of processing the garment will be going through. This is especially true in the denim industry. With all the chemical washes used to achieve a certain finish or look, the type of metal zipper finish should be planned in advance to ensure the zipper survives the garment wash required.

# ZIPPER LENGTH

Measuring zipper length is straightforward but important. Doing it correctly will save you time and heartache.

## Closed Bottom Zippers

You'll always have a tape extension at the top and bottom of the zipper. Only measure from the top stop of the zipper to the bottom stop. The tape extension should not be considered in the measurement, or else your zipper will end up shorter than you want

Measure from top stop to bottom stop



## Separating Bottom Zippers

The tape extension will only be at the top of the zipper. The bottom of the zipper is where you'll find the pin and box. Measure from the top stop down to the pin and box to get the correct measurement for your design.

Measure from top stop to pin and box





# ZIPPER TAPE COLOR

Colors are probably the most subjective part of a zipper part. While you may think that red is red or blue is blue, it's not.

Here's why. Once you've selected your tape color, you have to think about what type of light you approved the color under. Was it fluorescent or white light? Were you outside using sunlight? If so, was it noontime or late afternoon?

***Ask your zipper manufacturer to send you a color card so you can view the colors of zipper tape available. This should be a printed asset because computer monitors and smartphones have too many different color settings that can result in misordered colors.***

When you approve your tape colors, be consistent with the light source used while reviewing colors. Zipper manufacturers often use white light in a controlled environment, unless otherwise specified by a customer.





# ZIPPER QUANTITY

When purchasing wholesale zippers, you'll probably run into minimums. Some zipper companies will impose a quantity minimum, while others may impose a yardage minimum. If you need less than the production minimum, let your manufacturer know – you may be able to request a sample order.

Wondering how many zippers you can get for a yardage minimum? [Check out this calculator](#) to help you determine the right quantity.

# PUT SOME ZIP INTO YOUR BRAND

Zippers are often the last thing on people's mind when developing a product – but they're not a place to take shortcuts. Protect your brand's reputation with high-quality zippers that work every time while meeting your specific budget and needs.



# LET'S TALK ZIPPERS

Tap into UCAN Zippers' 30+ years of experience. Our experts are happy to discuss your zipper requirements and provide a solution tailored to your goals.

[Schedule My Consultation](#)



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