



Sewing For Beginners: -----

LEARN HOW TO SEW

----- with 8 sewing tutorials



Sewing for Beginners: Learn How to Sew with 8 Sewing Tutorials

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Letter from the Editor

Hi Sewists,

I am honestly so excited to be bringing you this amazing collection of how to sew tutorials that are going to help you master all of your sewing basics in no time. Learning to sew can be such a rewarding experience, but it can also be extra stressful. A lot of sewists are self-taught and save a dime by using free sewing resources to teach themselves how to sew. This is why we decided to compile this collection of beginner sewing tutorials in one place. We have a wide range of readers on our site and we wanted to make sure that we are providing the best possible information for anyone who visits our site looking to learn everything they can about sewing. It is such a wonderful and gratifying hobby that we, the editors, want to share it with everyone. *Sewing for Beginners: Learn How to Sew with 8 Sewing Tutorials* is a resource you are going to use time and time again. Even after you master and complete the tutorials in this free sewing eBook, the infographics and must-know information located in the How to Sew: Helpful Resources section (pg. 43) at the end of the book will be a quick go-to guide with any questions you might have.

The creation of this book would not have been possible without the help of the expert sewing designers who lent their skills to help us create a well-rounded set of tutorials that are sure to teach any level of sewist some brand new sewing basics. We love offering hundreds of free sewing patterns, but we love providing resources like the Make Your Own Clothes: How to Make a Pattern tutorial (pg. 37) or the Quick Tips: How to Cut Fabric Perfectly (pg. 14) even more. You use a pattern once or twice. A skill will stay with you for much longer.

You can find additional sewing projects and more at www.AllFreeSewing.com.

Our eBooks, like all our sewing projects, are absolutely FREE to members of our sewing community. Please feel free to share with family and friends and ask them to sign up at our website for our [free e-mail newsletter](#).

Happy Sewing,

Kaylee Pope, Editor of AllFreeSewing

www.AllFreeSewing.com

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Learning to Sew: An Introduction

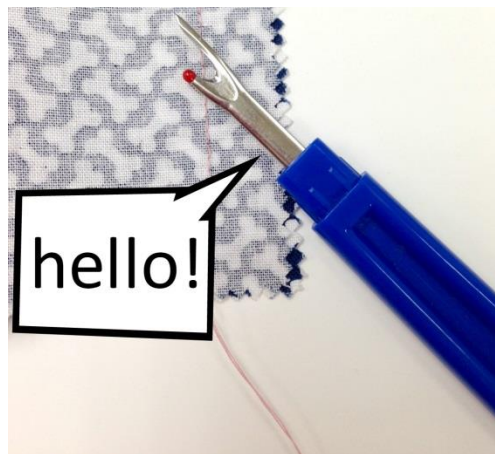
By: [Kaylee Pope, Editor of AllFreeSewing.com](http://KayleePope.com)

Before you start on your sewing journey, welcome to the world of sewing! You are going to love learning how to sew and we hope that this book provides you with the tools, resources, and information that you need to jump headfirst into a life-long hobby that you will absolutely adore for years to come. Learning how to sew and especially how to make your own clothes is going to come in handy. It is also going to take you a while to master this hobby and that's okay. This is a book focuses on teaching you how to sew, not how to be an expert. If a project doesn't turn out, that's okay! How many times did you fall off your bike when you were learning to ride it? Plenty, I'm sure. Just remember, learning how to sew is worth it. Just keep the following 5 things in mind and you will be good to go.

1. Go slow and take your time. You are just learning how to sew, so make sure you read your directions and tutorials fully and give yourself plenty of time. You can't rush art.

2. Your first project is not going to be perfect. Listen, I've been there. I get this gorgeous idea in my head for a project, sit down to make it, and in the end it looks... less than great. Rome was not built in a day and that "twenty-minute" project is probably going to take you three hours.

3. Meet your new best friend, the seam ripper.



4. Practice. Practice. Practice. The more you work at something, the easier it becomes. There's a theory that says it takes 10,000 hours to master any craft, hobby, or art. It might not take you that long, but you are going to have to put some time in.

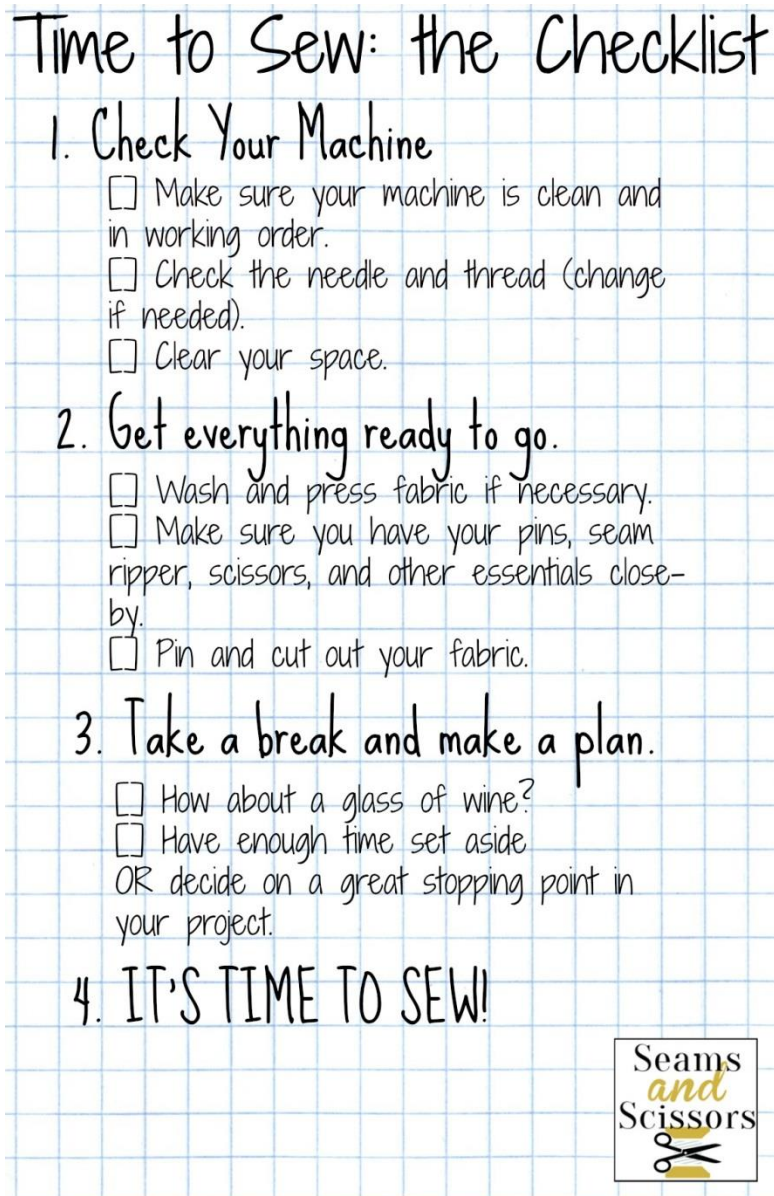
5. If you have questions, just ask! The internet is at your fingertips and there is an expert network of sewists out there ready to help. Find a video if you don't understand something, look through our tutorials on AllFreeSewing, or even ask out active Facebook community.

How to Sew: The Prep Work

Time to Sew: The Checklist


By SeamsandScissors.com

Learning how to sew involves a ton of steps and this eBook is going to make sure you know them all. Before you get started, however, we want to make sure that you are prepared. That is why we have borrowed this handy infographic from our blog, SeamsandScissors.com. Convenient and compact, this list is a great thing to keep around. Once you have made a ton of projects, this will be second nature. But for now, this is a useful guide to look back on.



Time to Sew: the Checklist

1. Check Your Machine
 - Make sure your machine is clean and in working order.
 - Check the needle and thread (change if needed).
 - Clear your space.
2. Get everything ready to go.
 - Wash and press fabric if necessary.
 - Make sure you have your pins, seam ripper, scissors, and other essentials close-by.
 - Pin and cut out your fabric.
3. Take a break and make a plan.
 - How about a glass of wine?
 - Have enough time set aside
 - OR decide on a great stopping point in your project.
4. IT'S TIME TO SEW!



How to Sew: Wash Fabric Before Sewing

By: [Kaylee Pope, Editor of AllFreeSewing.com](#)

Much like many other complicated new skills, learning how to sew means learning what to do before you sew. If you are planning on making a big project, you want to make sure you prepare your fabric, pattern, and machine properly before you start sewing up your project. All of these preparations can seem tedious and boring, but it is very important. You want to give your fabric and projects a fighting chance to be flawless! Just like you scrub down your veggies and wash your space before cooking, you need to learn how to wash fabric before sewing. Unlike washing your clothes and linens, washing fabric is a little more complicated. Since your fabric is still very loose and might unravel, you need to make sure you wash your fabric instead of destroy it! Lucky for you, *How to Sew: Wash Fabric Before Sewing* has everything you need to learn how to wash your fabric.



Should You Wash Your Fabric Before Sewing?

Before you learn how to sew and start exploring the multitude of information out there about how to prepare fabric for sewing, you should know that the debate is still out on whether or not you should wash your fabric before sewing. Many experienced sewists choose not to clean their fabric before sewing, while others absolutely demand that it is mandatory for a great finished product. You need to make your own decision on whether or not to clean your fabric.

This also depends entirely on the type of project you are creating! Some projects might never be washed while others should always have a spin in the machine. A wall-hanging, for example, may never need to be washed and that means there is really no reason to scrub-a-dub it. Clothing, however, is going to have a long life of washing cycles, so you want to make sure this fabric will not bleed or shrink in the machine.

Reasons to Wash Fabric Before Sewing

- **To Remove the Sizing and Chemicals in the Fabric:** Much like the food in television commercials, the fabric on shelves at the fabric store is treated to look even yummier. This means they are soaked in or washed in chemicals that make them look more vibrant and to prevent wrinkling. It can be helpful to remove this, especially if you have sensitive skin!
- **To Prevent Colors from Running Later:** If you are making a project with several colors (like a quilt) pre-washing your fabric means that those colors will not run later when you wash it for the first time.

- **To Destroy Wrinkles:** Just like freshly washed/dried clothing items, freshly clean fabric is practically wrinkle-free. This makes pressing your fabric easier.
- **Avoid Shrinkage Later:** Fabrics like cottons always shrink, so if you are making a garment you want it to fit after the first time you wear it. Washing and drying the fabric like you would the clothing item helps you ensure you are making a piece that will fit.

Reasons to Skip It!

- **Time:** It saves time and resources.
- **Issues with Washing:** Washing your fabric can sometimes go horribly wrong. Fabric frays easily in the dryer and can knot up into a devastating ball! (Pssst. Keep reading for a tip on how to avoid this!)
- **Cutting Your Fabric:** The sizing and chemicals in fabric make the fabric very crisp. This can make cutting precisely a lot easier than softer and washed fabrics.
- **Today's Fabric:** New and quality fabric does not run as much as fabric did five years ago.

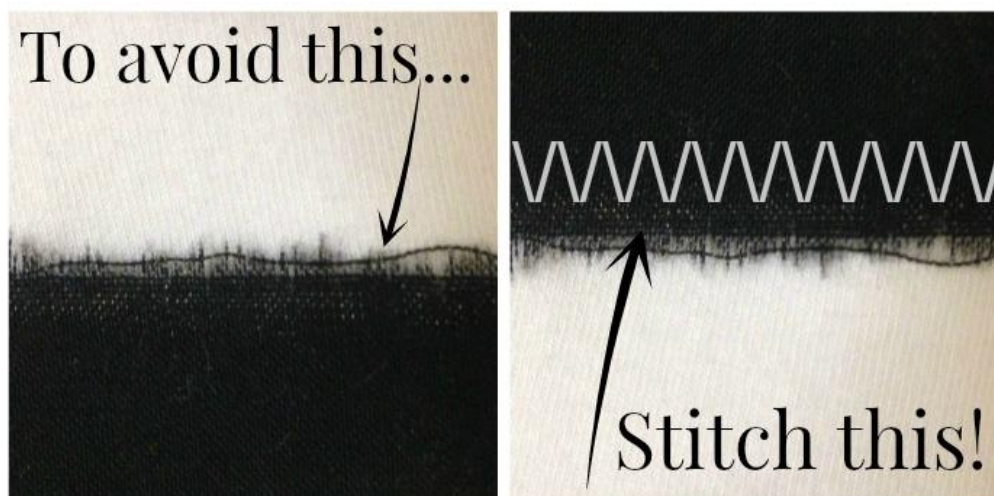
Before Washing Fabric for Sewing

Washing your fabric for sewing can be very easy, but there are steps you should take before jumping in!

1. **Find out how you should be washing your fabric!** Just like clothing items, fabrics need to be washed in all different kinds of ways. You may need to hand wash or dry-clean some fabrics.
2. **Separate your fabrics into darks and lights.** If you have an especially vibrant print, wash it on its own!

Hint: Some sewists add a few drops of white vinegar into this cycle to prevent colors from running.

3. **Hem fabric that might be prone to fraying** with a very loose zig-zag or straight stitch to ensure that you don't lose too many inches to fraying.





How to Wash Fabric

Learning how to wash your fabric is just like learning to wash your clothes. All of the same rules apply!

1. **Use the tips above to prepare your fabric** and be sure to separate your fabric into two piles (lights and darks).
2. **Put your fabric in your machine.** Since this is brand new fabric, you can skip adding the detergent if you would like. The reason you are washing your fabric is mostly to prepare it rather than clean it.
3. **Do you need detergent?** If you are washing fabric that has been sitting in your closet or vintage fabric, you may want to use some soap to remove any dust or musty smell. Just do a sniff test!
4. **Wash your fabric how you would the project** you are making while adhering to the manufacturer's guidelines.
5. **If you are planning on drying your fabric,** dry it just like you would your final product. This is especially true if you are making a garment! You don't want to make something that fits like a glove only to wash it once and have it be uncomfortably small.

Plus! Want more sewing tips and tricks? Check out our blog every Tuesday for a brand new Sewing Tips and Tricks Tuesday.



Sewing for Beginners: How to Press Fabric

By: [Kaylee Pope, Editor of AllFreeSewing.com](#)

After you have learned how to wash your fabric before sewing, you need to learn how to press fabric. If you want to learn how to sew flawless projects then learning how to press your fabric is a big part of that. Without properly prepared materials, projects that are otherwise sewn precisely can turn into a big mess. There is a lot to keep in mind when preparing your fabric, but AllFreeSewing.com is here to ensure that you know everything you need to know before you get started. Give yourself a head start by using this free sewing tutorial to ensure that you give your fabric first class treatment. Happy fabric makes happy projects. *Sewing for Beginners: How to Press Fabric* will teach you the right skills to press your fabric like an expert. Don't worry! It is actually pretty easy.



What to Know Before You Press Your Fabric

Why You Should Press Your Fabric Before Sewing



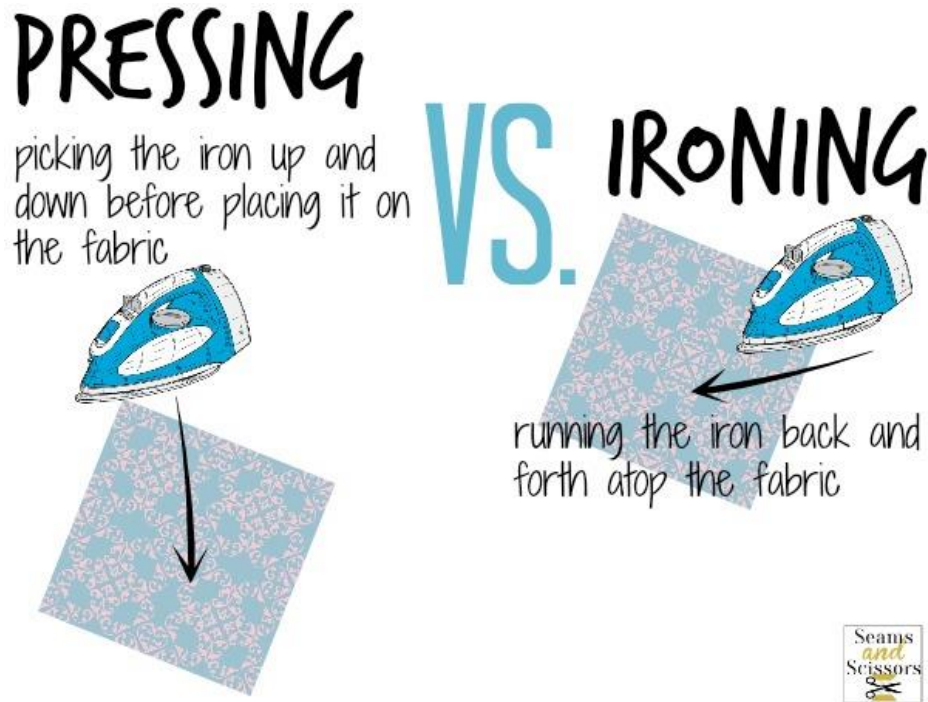
Pressing your fabric before you begin to sew is very important. Your fabric needs to be as flat and as smooth as possible when you sew. Sewing wrinkled or creased fabrics will lead to a continually wrinkled or creased project. You are sewing these flaws into your project and creases in particular can be very hard to remove from a project, especially if the crease is stitched into the final product. Pressing fabric before sewing ensures that these issues do not arise. You can [press your pattern pieces](#), as well, to ensure that you do not cut pieces that are too small due to an unwanted fold or crease.

Why You Shouldn't Iron

We all know how to iron and it might seem intuitive to iron your projects as this is how you remove wrinkles from your already sewn and worn pieces. This is not the case! Ironing your project can make minor changes to your fabric that, while fine on clothing, really can affect the fit and construction of a piece. This is especially true when you are learning how to sew wearables. Since ironing involves sliding the iron over fabric, it can stretch and hold fabric in place in a weird way. Pressing avoids this by smoothing our wrinkles in a much less invasive way. This is especially true of delicate and thinner fabrics.

How to Press vs. How to Iron

The difference between ironing and pressing is entirely in the motion. When you press, you lift the iron up and down. When you iron, you swipe the iron across your fabric in a back and forth or forward motion. The [infographic below from Seams and Scissors](#) explains this perfectly.



How to Press Your Fabric

Before Pressing Your Fabric

1. **Test Your Iron for Heat:** Find a corner of your fabric that you will not be using. Once you heat up your iron, test it on this piece by pressing it down on the “wrong side” or back of the fabric for several seconds. If it works just fine, you are ready to continue. If it leaves a mark, try turning off your iron and letting it cool, before doing this again with a cooler setting. If this doesn’t work, try another setting. If your iron continues to leave marks, you may need to skip pressing for this particular fabric or purchase a new iron!
2. **Test Steam Settings on Your Iron:** Make sure you test the steam setting on your iron, as well. Many fabrics will benefit from this extra feature but some thinner fabrics might be warped by the pressing.



Onto the Pressing!



1. Lay your fabric down on your ironing board or on another flat surface with the wrong side of the fabric facing up.

If you are using a smaller piece just lay the whole thing out. If you are using a large piece, drape it over the edge and slide it over the edge or across your board as you press. If you do not have an ironing board, you can lay a towel out on your table instead.

2. Once you have found the proper setting, it is time to press your fabric.

You do not need to press every inch of the fabric. All you are doing right now is tackling the creases and wrinkles. Find where on the fabric that you need to press.

3. Now take your iron and press down for several seconds on the crease or wrinkle.

This should flatten it out and if this does not work, simply press down again. Make sure you DO NOT press your fabric too long as it may burn. Additionally, make sure you are pressing and not ironing.

4. Do this for the entirety of your fabric's wrinkles and creases.

Once you have finished, immediately lay out your fabric to pin and cut it. Folding or storing your fabric after this may result in new creases.

Quick Tips: How to Cut Fabric Perfectly

By: [Kaylee Pope, Editor of AllFreeSewing.com](https://www.allfreesewing.com)

There is no anxiety sewists dread more than the anxiety that comes when you are snipping away at your precious fabric. The saying “measure twice, cut once” is there for a reason. If you cut your fabric incorrectly, it can ruin a project and it can cost you a ton of money. Fabric is not cheap and if you do not know how to cut fabric properly, it can do some serious damage. It is even harder to learn

how to pin and cut a pattern on fabric. You have to cut your fabric to match your piece, ensure that your print is going the right way, and make sure that you cut the right side facing out. Stressed out yet? Don't worry, sewists. That's why we are here yet again to help you out. *Quick Tips: How to Cut Fabric Perfectly* is going to give you the top 5 things you can do to cut fabric perfectly every single time.



How to Cut Fabric Perfectly

1. Prepare Your Fabric

Make sure your fabric is ready to cut before you even thinking about figuring out how to cut fabric for your projects. That means washing (if you are making a wearable) and pressing your fabric to destroy any wrinkles.



2. Make sure your tools are ready, too!

If you cut fabric with a dull blade or pin it with a dull pin, it is going to do a lot of damage. You want something that will snip the threads in your fabric precisely and not something you have to use by sawing at your fabric.

3. Match your selvages as closely as possible

Oftentimes when you are cutting fabric, your pattern will indicate to fold your fabric in order to trace several pattern pieces at once. Insure that your selvages are aligned perfectly.



Selvage (n.) – the self-finished edge of your fabric aka your best friend when it comes to learning how to cut fabric perfectly!

4. Listen to Your Pattern

This might seem like a no-brainer, but it is so important. Patterns are written and created by experts. They are labeled to give you the best project necessary. Most projects will have directional arrows on them that will indicate the direction of the pattern. Make sure these are parallel to your selvage.



5. **Double Check Before You Do Anything**

So, you have read your pattern, measured your fabric, pinned your pattern, and you are ready to go. The next step is to start cutting, right? NO! Now is the time to double check everything. Lay out your pieces and look them over. Is everything in its place? If so, snip away! If not, good thing you double-checked.

6. **Cut Out Your Fabric**

Cut along the edge of your pinned pattern, trying not to trim too much of the pattern away. You left extra room for a reason. Plus, if your paper pattern is in good shape after cutting you can easily use it again!



MUST-HAVE SEWING TOOLS AND EQUIPMENT

Cutting is a lot easier when you have the right scissors and sewing will be a lot easier when you have all the right equipment. Learn more about the supplies you should start with in [Must-Have Sewing Tools and Equipment](#).



Sewing Tips and Tricks: How to Pin a Pattern

By: [Kaylee Pope, Editor of AllFreeSewing.com](http://www.AllFreeSewing.com)

Beginner sewists are often very excited to make their first sewing project from a store-bought pattern. It is so exciting to purchase a pattern and know what it is going to look like! The professional-quality pieces on the cover are the best motivation you can find. This moment can pass quickly, however, when you learn that you do not know how to pin a pattern. Sewing patterns can be very confusing. They are often covered with confusing lines and marks. For a brand new sewist, these are like hieroglyphics! One of the first steps to learning how to use a sewing pattern is figuring out how to pin a pattern to fabric correctly. *Sewing Tips and Tricks: How to Pin a Pattern* has all the info you need.



How to Pin a Pattern to Cut Fabric

What to Do First

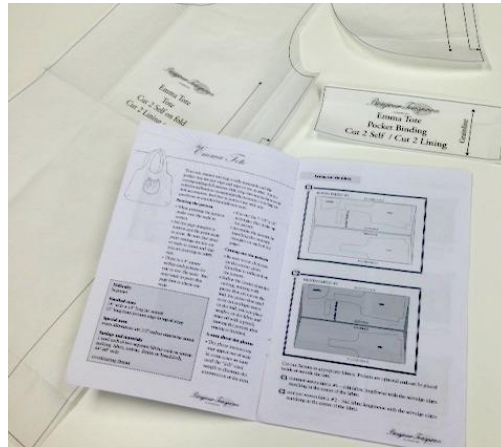
1. Before you pin a pattern to fabric, you need to make sure everything is ready to go. Prepare your fabric and iron your pattern to ensure that your measurements are as precise as possible.
2. Get to know your fabric before you sew. You want to find where the grain is as well as decipher how your fabric will act when you sew it. Does it stretch? Will it shrink?
3. Cut out your pattern from your paper. Make sure when you are doing this that you cut just outside of the line. It is much better to have pieces that are a little too big than too small. This will also allow for some error while cutting your fabric.

How to Pin a Pattern to Fabric

Note: The way you pin your pattern to your fabric depends on what kind of fabric you are pinning. If you are using a delicate fabric, you want to use as few pins as possible or maybe even decide to opt for pattern weights instead. Silk, for example, does not heal well from too many pin pricks.

1. **Gather all of your materials and make sure your space is clean.** You want to pin your fabric on a flat, clean surface.

2. **Read the *FULL* directions to your pattern** before doing anything else. You do not want to miss specific instructions.

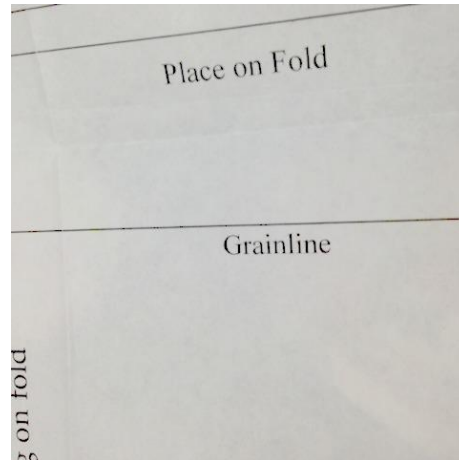


3. **Cut out your pattern.** Leaving a few centimeters along the edges so that you do not lose any part of the pattern/length or size when you pin and sew.



4. **Lay out your fabric.** Most patterns have specific instructions as to how to lay out your fabric. You will often need to layer the fabric in two layers to cut two pattern pieces. Consult your pattern to determine where the sides of the fabric should face.

5. **Your pattern will have an arrow to show you how to follow the grain of the fabric.** The grain of the fabric is the direction the fabric has been weaved. You often want to sew along the strongest part of the fabric which is with the grain.



6. **Pin your pattern!** You will want to pin your fabric in a way that makes it easier to cut. This means you do not want your pins sticking over the edge. You will want to place pins along the long edges. You will not need a ton. All you need is enough to keep your fabric steady while you trace or cut out your pattern. Additionally, make sure to pin at all corners to ensure that you are able to cut these sections out precisely.



How to Pin a Pattern to Sew

Horizontal vs. Vertical Pinning

Sewists pin in all kinds of ways. You need to find the way that works best for you. Many skip the pins all together and use binder clips or pattern weights to trace. If you do want to know how to pin a pattern with pins, you can either pin horizontally or vertically. These two methods look like this.



VERTICAL PINNING



HORIZONTAL PINNING

But Which One Should I Use?

You can really use either method. Both have their pros and cons. Pinning vertically can require less pins and may end up with a more precise project. Horizontal pinning can make the fabric bunch more. Horizontal pinning, however, means that any damage the pins do will be closer to the seam of your project. This means any damage it does will be practically invisible when you wear the garment.

Pinning a Pattern to Sew

In order to pin a pattern to sew, you follow the exact same instructions as when pinning the pattern onto the fabric to cut it out. Do exactly as your pattern tells you, double-checking to make sure that the right sides of the fabric are facing in the right direction.

TIP: Are you using extra-sensitive fabric like silk that tears easily? If so, pin as close to the edge of your fabric as possible. That way your seams will hide the damage!

Learning to Sew: Basic Skills

How to Stitch: Stitching Basics

By: [Deby from So Sew Easy](#)

You've figured out what type of fabric and threads to use, you have a pattern, and you are ready to start sewing. What comes next when you are learning how to sew? Learning the different types of stitches, of course! If you want to learn how to sew, you need to know how to stitch. That is what sewing is all about. New sewists might be a bit confused when they use their machine when it comes to which stitch to use for a particular project or hem. That is why we have asked [Deby Coles from So Sew Easy](#) to lend her expertise when it comes to learning how to stitch when you are sewing and that the difference is between all of those different types of stitches. New sewists are going to love *How to Stitch: Stitching Basics*.



Once you have finished reading this helpful article, you will be ready to sew just about anything you want to sew. Learning how to stitch is one of those basic sewing tips and tricks that is going to come in handy time and time again. When you understand what the different types of stitches are used for and know your stitching basics, you will be on the road to expert sewing.

Stitching Basics

If you have read the earlier article [on getting comfortable and familiar with your sewing machine](#), then you'll now be eager to sew. But running before you can walk is a sure way to stumble and fall flat. Before you dive right in and start on your first sewing project with that beautiful piece of fabric, take the time to become familiar with and practice the stitches that your machine offers.

Start by downloading these [Sewing Machine Practice Sheets](#), or draw up some of your own on regular printer paper. Sewing on paper is easier when you start out than sewing on fabric. You don't even need to use a thread – the needle punches holes in the paper, but using a bright thread is still fun too, especially for children learning to sew.

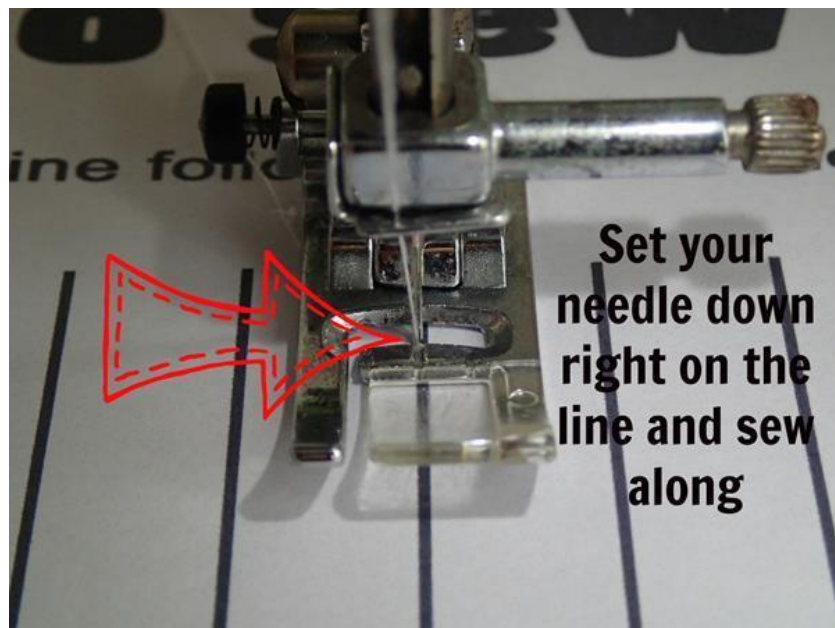


The Regular Straight Stitch

You'll be using this stitch probably 90% of the time. This stitch joins fabric together at the seams and is also used for top stitching seams and adding in decorative stitching lines too to emphasize shape or strengthen a seam. You may also plan to use it for quilting.

But to get a good result in sewing, a certain degree of accuracy with your stitching is essential. For example, if you sew one seam with a $\frac{1}{4}$ inch wide seam allowance and the next with a $\frac{1}{2}$ inch wide seam allowance, when you come to join those two pieces together, they aren't going to fit.

Practice putting your needle down exactly in the right place and sewing straight along one of the printed lines. See if your machine feeds through nice and smoothly or if it pulls just a little one way or the other.



Once you become more confident, try going a little faster. Can you still sew on the line? Some machines have a speed control slider, so set the speed control where you can sew along reasonably quickly but still be accurate.

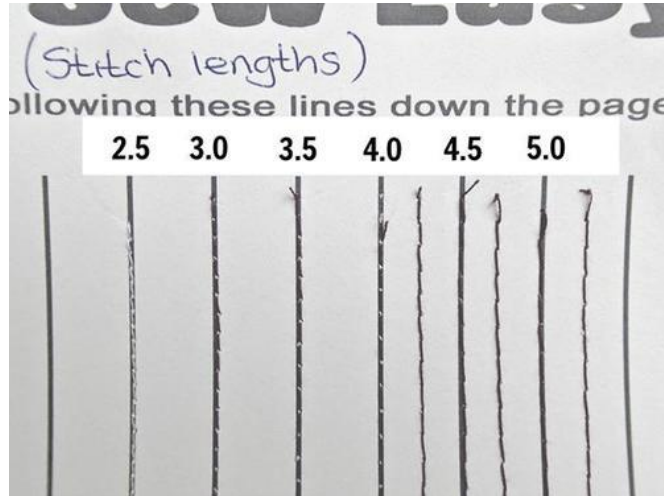
Now it's time to explore some of those stitch options.



LIKE THIS DESIGNER?

Find more of [Deby's free sewing patterns](#) on her [designer profile](#) on AllFreeSewing.com.

You can make a stitch reference chart by increasing or decreasing your stitch length and keeping a record. You might find it easier to stitch between the lines so you can more easily see the length of the stitches. Can you stitch between the lines and still sew straight?



Keep your sheet with the different stitch lengths for reference later on.

The Zig-Zag Stitch

Used in all sorts of ways from neatening the raw edges to applying applique, the zig-zag stitch can vary both in length and in width and is another good stitch to practice. Can you keep your presser foot centered as you sew so that the zig is even on one side and the zag is even on the other? Your presser foot may have a little mark at the center to help you – run this center mark down your stitching line and your zigs and zags will be even.

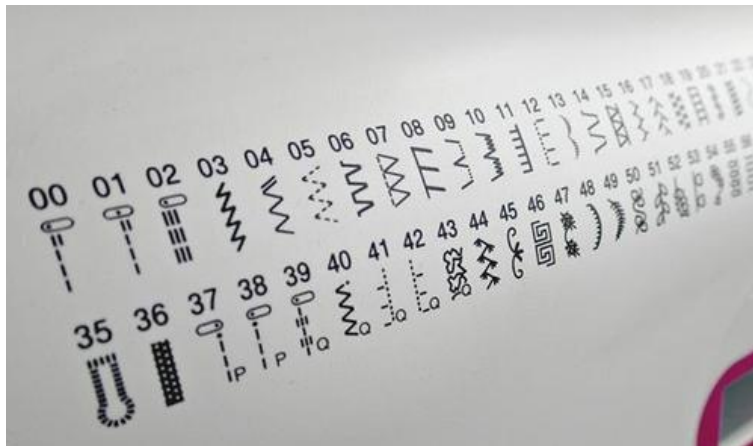


The zig-zag stitch can be varied enormously by changing both the stitch length (how far the fabric travels away from you between stitches) and the stitch width (how wide your zig-zags are across).

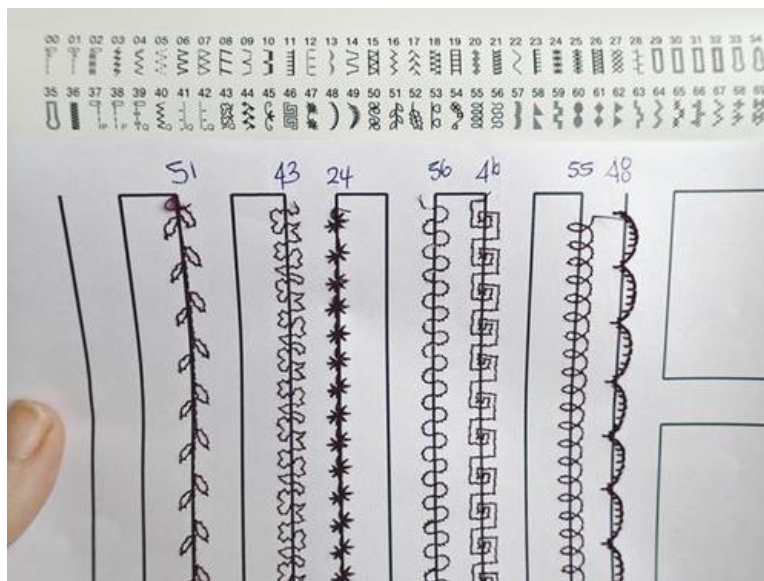
Once you have the hang of it, make a stitch reference chart with both long and short, wide and narrow stitches so that you can refer back to this in the future.

Decorative Stitches

Does your machine come with 70 stitches or more? The chances are that more than 60 of them are your decorative or embroidery stitches. These can be fun to play with, and add a little personal touch to your projects, looking especially nice on quilted projects such as mug rugs and mini quilts, and on bags.



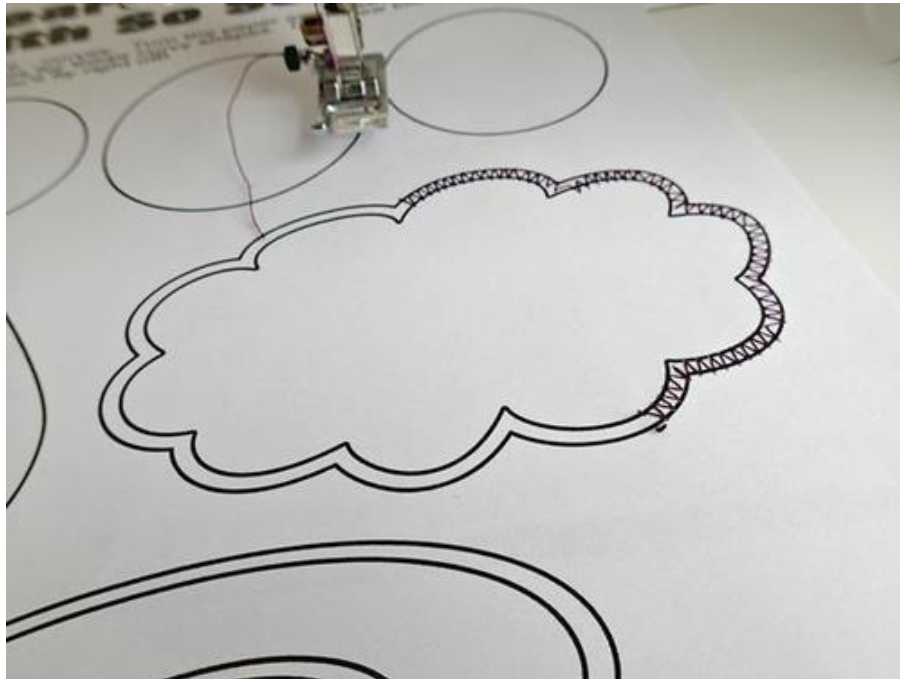
Your practice sheets will make a nice plain background where you can really see the detail of these stitches and keep them for future reference. Mark down your stitch number as you sew. Some of the stitches may also be varied by changing both width and stitch length like you did with the zig-zag stitch. Experiment and have fun, no fabric is being wasted here!



Getting Really Good with Your Stitching

You've come a long way since you took your sewing machine out of the box for the first time. Are you now sewing faster and still sewing accurately? Then it's time to really hone your needle skills to perfection with the advanced pages!

Practice turning corners, sewing around curves and sewing complex shapes. Can you still stay between the lines? Is it easier with the straight stitch or the zig-zag? How do you turn corners with a zig-zag stitch – should your needle be on the left or the right?



Can you gently pivot your work as you sew around those curves and still stay in the lines? And all the while controlling your speed and making sure not to sew through your finger tip! You can? Then congratulations, you've completed the stitching basics and are ready to move on to your first real sewing projects.

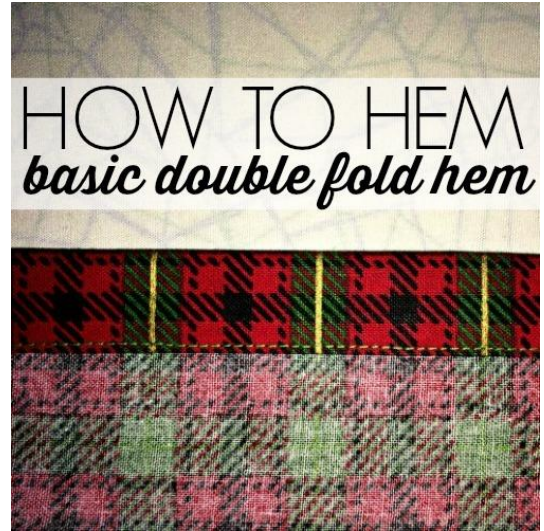
Before you do, remember to give your sewing machine a little clean up and change your needle. Sewing paper is the same as sewing fabric and can leave dust and lint in your machine. Keep your machine clean for best results, less tangles and perfect tension.

How to Hem: Basic Double Fold Hem

By: [Remona from the Stitching Scientist](#)

If you are nearing the end of a project, it is time to learn how to sew a hem to add the finishing touches. Learning how to hem is not only a must-know basic sewing skill, but it can help you fix clothing and adjust them for size. Other than knowing how to use a sewing machine or how to sew by hand, learning how to hem is one of the first things you should learn when you begin to explore sewing for the first time. Just about any project you will be making will need you to hem a portion of it.

Whether it is the bottom of a skirt or the top edge of a tote bag, you are going to need this easy hemming tutorial to finish it! Follow along with this quick tutorial on sewing a hem with [Remona from the Stitching Scientist](#) and learn *How to Hem: Basic Double Fold Hem*.



The double fold hem is probably the hem you will be using the most, especially when it comes to learning how to sew basic and beginner projects. Other sewing projects may require another type of hem. For now, however, all you need to learn is how to hem using the basic double fold hem. It will do the trick for most sewing projects. If you are looking to make hemming easier, consider investing in an iron that will help you press your hems before you start sew them. This will ensure a crisp project.

Basic Double Fold Hem

There are different types of hems: the double fold, the blind hem and rolling hem. In my opinion, the double fold hem is the most beginner-friendly. It is simple and can be applied to almost any project that requires hemming. There are 3 types of double hems: large, medium and small. The size represents the length of the fold in fabric. Each hem, whether large, medium or small starts off with a 1/4" fold in the fabric. The second fold will depend on the preferred size of hem. In this tutorial, we will go through each size with pictures representing a large double fold hem.

Materials:

- Raw edge of fabric (cotton shown in pictures)
- Sewing essentials
- Iron

Instructions:

1. Turn the fabric you want to hem right side out. Fold in the fabric 1/4" from the edge you want to hem and iron down neatly. Use steam if necessary.



2. The next step will depend on the preferred size of the hem. For a large hem, fold down 1.5" from where the first fold ended. For a medium hem, fold down 1". For a small hem, fold down 1/2" from where the first fold ended. Iron down neatly. Here is what the large fold looks like:



3. Next, take the folded fabric to your sewing machine and sew down as close as possible to the edge or bottom of the fold. A few millimeters away from the bottom of the fold works best.



Here is your finished large double fold hem.



Learn to Sew: 5 How to Gather Fabric Tutorials

By: [Emily from Nap-time Creations](#)

When you sit down to learn to sew, eventually you are going to come across a store-bought or free sewing pattern that is going to tell you to gather the fabric on a hem or pocket. Many sewists know exactly how to do this and it is actually pretty easy to learn how to sew a gathered piece. If you are learning to sew, however, little things like this can really confuse you. Since knowing how to gather fabric is a very popular technique and something you are going to come across when you sew, we have decided to ask one of our favorite bloggers, [Emily from Nap-Time Creations](#), to give us the basics on how to gather fabric. If you are looking to make some ruffled fabric or need a gathered fabric tutorial for a project, you will find that information here. Keep reading *Learn to Sew: 5 How to Gather Fabric Tutorials*.

If you are just learning how to sew, this sewing tutorial for beginners is going to come in handy in many of your projects. Gathering fabric is when you use thread or cords to gather your fabric along a seam. This is often used to add an element texture to projects. You will often need to know how to gather fabric when you are adding pockets to wearables and purses. When a project requires you to gather fabric, make sure that it is a fabric that will gather easily. Some fabrics like leather or faux fur are going to be much harder to gather, so keep this in mind when choosing your fabric for a project.

Introduction

I'm so excited to be sharing this post today. I've been thinking about putting something like this together for a while now because I often get asked about this particular technique. Many of my sewing tutorials have a "gather fabric" in the instructions. Today I've put together instructions with five ways to gather fabric to teach you all you need to know about gathering and when to use each various kind.



Serger Gathering with Tight Tension



Gathering on a serger sewing machine is great when you don't need an exact gather. This gathering is done by adjusting the settings on your machine, then just feeding the fabric through. The machine automatically gathers the fabric. You can have some control by adjusting the settings, but if you need certain measurements, this is not the best option.

Machine settings: Differential Feed Set at biggest number {mine was 2} Length Set to biggest number {mine was 4} with these settings my fabric started at 36" and gathered to 19".



Gathering with a Cord

The gathering with a cord method is great for thick or heavy fabric. Often your threads will keep breaking when using method 4 or 5 listed above if the fabric is too heavy. This is one way to still get gathers.



Sewing Machine Settings: With a wide Zig Zag set your sewing machine to width 6 length 5.



1. Place a cord or string about 1/3 inch from the top of your fabric and sew the zig zag over the top. Be careful to NOT sew into the actual cord. You will want this to be able to slip through the stitches and if the needle sticks it, it will be stuck.



2. When you get to the end hold the stitches in one hand and pull the cord (blue here) with the other hand. This will cause the fabric under the first hand to gather.



LIKE THIS DESIGNER?

Find more of [Emily's free sewing patterns](#) on her [designer profile](#) on AllFreeSewing.com.

3. Continue pulling until fabric is the length desired. Smooth out the gathers and then use a basting stitch to hold the gathers in place. Remove the cord and continue with pattern.



Machine Gathering with Tight Tension



Machine Settings: For this method adjust your machine settings to Length 5 Tension 8/9 {more will make it tighter gather, lower will be less}

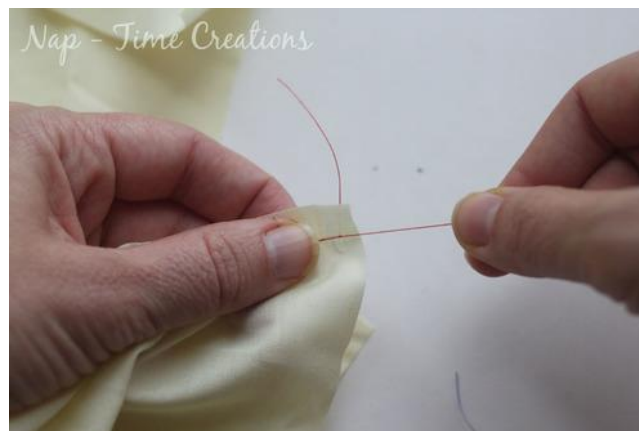
Again this works great if you don't need your fabric to end up an exact length and just want loads and loads of easy gathers! My fabric went from 36" to 8" in seconds with this method. I also love it because the gathers are so even!

Single Thread Quick Gather

Method four is a take on the traditional gathering method, but it's just a bit quicker!



1. Set your stitch length to the longest it will go, mine was 5. Stitch this long basting stitch about 1/3" from the top. Find the bobbin thread (the bottom one) and pull only that thread. Use the other hand to hold the fabric.



2. Pull the gathers until the fabric is the correct length. Tie your threads at both ends so the gathering will stay. Using this method is tricky, the single thread is more likely to break, so be careful when pulling the gathers.



Double Thread Traditional Gather Method

And finally, the most traditional of all the gathering options. This is the same as four, only you add a second basting line before you pull the strings.



1. Make sure when you add the second line of stitches that you **DO NOT** cross the thread. They won't pull properly if crosses. The two lines of stitches must be parallel.



2. Once you have your two lines, find the bottom bobbin thread and grab only those two threads.



3. Pull the threads, while holding the fabric...



4. The gathers will bunch right at the edge... use your fingers to smooth out the gathers until they are even. Tie the threads at each end to hold the gathering.



Make Your Own Clothes: How to Make a Pattern

By: [Remona from the Stitching Scientist](#)

Sewists don't need a lot to succeed. With the right supplies, fabric, and patterns, they are able to create show-stopping pieces that are pretty and functional at the same time. Learning how to make your own clothes can save so much money! But in order to make your own clothes, you need a pattern! While there are free sewing patterns scattered across the web (hello,

AllFreeSewing.com!), they might not always fit you just right. This is why learning how to make a pattern is an invaluable skill.

If you learn how to make your own pattern, you can learn how to make your own clothes and you can make them fit like a glove! It is surprisingly easy to learn how to make a pattern. Keep reading to learn the necessary steps to take to learn how to make your own sewing patterns from one of our favorite bloggers, [Remona Gopaul from The Stitching Scientist](#)! You will be a pattern-making expert in no time when you follow along with *Make Your Own Clothes: How to Make a Pattern*.

Introduction

If you have tried shopping for patterns recently, you know how expensive they can sometimes be. Today, I am going to show you how to draft your own pattern for a versatile top/shirt. For this tutorial you can use an existing loose-fitted top with sleeves to create your own pattern. To create your pattern, you need white craft paper. When buying your paper, ensure that it is heavier than your standard notebook writing sheet. Having somewhat of a heavy paper makes everything easier to manage when you are tracing and cutting. I like using the same rolls of art paper I buy for my kids' art projects. Sometimes, I even use poster paper if I plan on saving my patterns for future use.

Materials for Pattern Drafting

- Large sheet of craft/art paper
- Different color sharpies
- Tape measure
- Ruler
- Scissors



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Find more of [Remona's free sewing patterns](#) on her [designer profile](#) on AllFreeSewing.com.

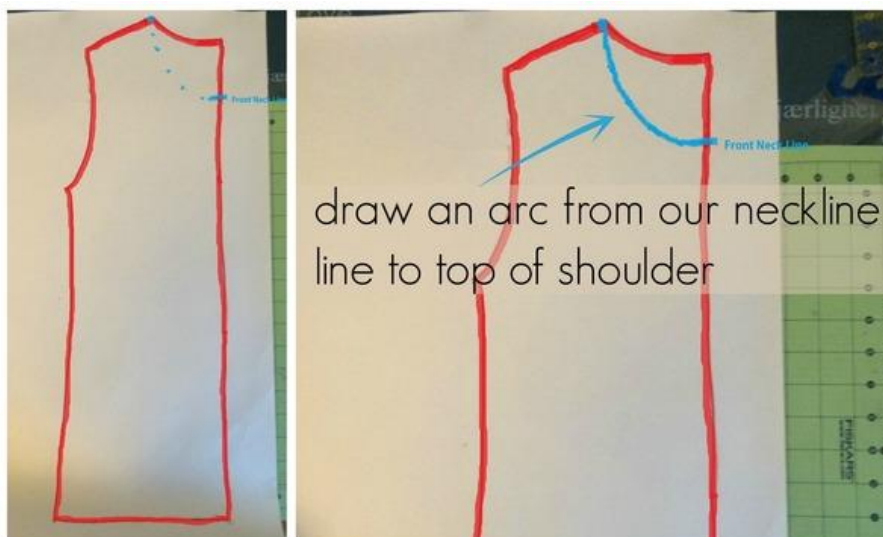


Instructions: Making the Pattern

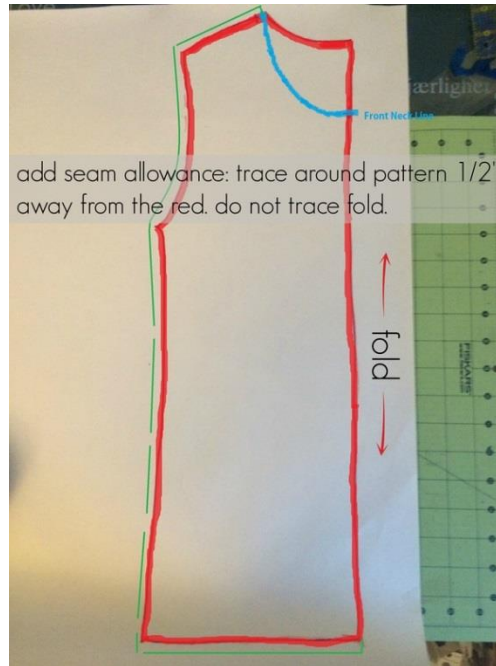
1. Take your large piece of construction paper (I used 20"x 40") and fold in half. Lay your shirt on top of the folder paper as shown below. Fold the sleeve toward the center of the shirt and trace all the way around. Mark a line where your neck line starts on the front of the shirt.



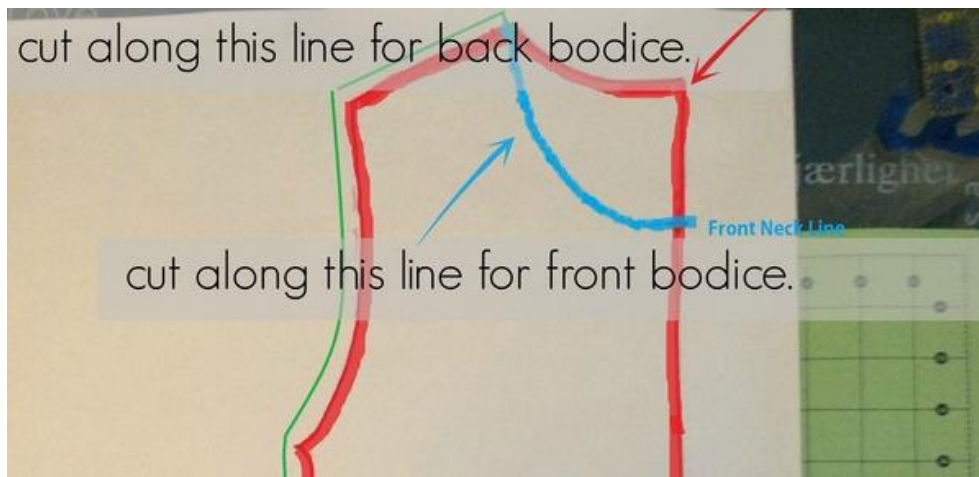
2. Draw an arc from your front neckline to the top of the shoulder.



3. Add seam allowance to the pattern by tracing all around your pattern from step 2 about 1/2" from your original lines. You do not need to trace on the center fold for seam allowance.



4. Since your paper is folded you do not need to trace a separate pattern for your front and back bodice. Cut along the back bodice line as indicated below for the back. Once you finish cutting all the way around, you will have two pieces; the one on the bottom is for the back bodice and the one on the top is for the front bodice. Cut along the blue line on your top piece and you will have your completed front bodice.



5. For the sleeves, you will be doing the same thing as you did for the bodice pieces. Place your sleeve on the folded paper ensuring that the top edges of the sleeve line up with the folded edge of the paper. Mark off the desired length. Trace the inner part of the sleeve toward the underarm.

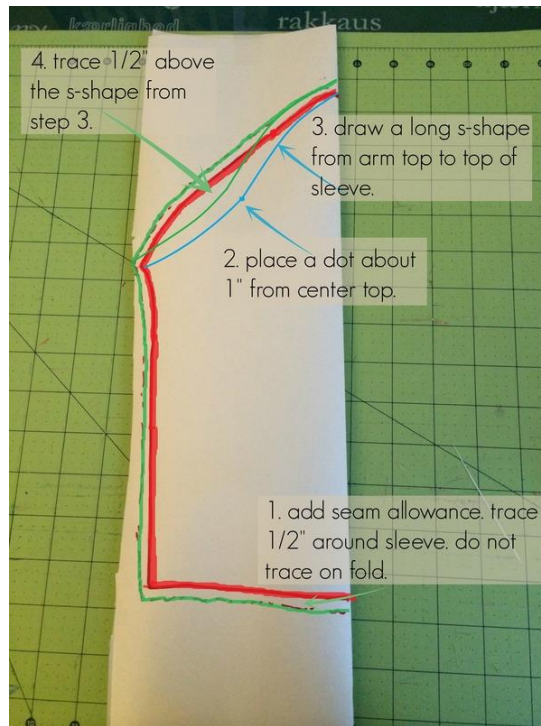


6. Fold the sleeve toward the center of the shirt and trace from the inner arm to the top.



7. Here the fun part of creating your sleeves!

1. Trace about 1/2" all the way around your trace from above for your seam allowance. Do not add seam allowance to the fold.
2. Place a dot about 1" from the center of the sleeve as shown below.
3. Draw a long s-shape from the underarm to the top of the sleeve.
4. Trace about 1/2" from your line created the step above for seam allowance.



8. Cut around your green long s-shape toward the underarm and then follow through all the around on the green line.



You're done!

You now have pieces for your front, back and sleeves.



Here is a shirt, I made using the pattern created in this tutorial.



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Check out the [#CustomFit](#) series and learn [how to sew for your body type](#).



How to Sew: Helpful Resources

What Types of Thread to Use: A Guide

By: [Kaylee Pope, Editor of AllFreeSewing.com](#)

Just like finding the right fabric and the right needle for your patterns, finding out what thread to use is an important step to moving from amateur sewist to smart seamstress. When you truly know your materials well, you can begin to master the art. When it comes to the art of sewing that means knowing your fabric and knowing the types of thread you should be using as you begin to explore more and more sewing projects is going to save you from creating projects to rip or fall apart. Knit or stretchy fabrics, for example, need to be paired with a type of thread that has some give to it or else hems or edges may bunch up or the thread will rip. Luckily, *What Types of Thread to Use: A Guide* is here to give you the low down on sewing thread and where it goes.



The difference between figuring out what type of thread to use and what type of fabric to use really comes down to picking one before the other. If you know what fabric to use, it is actually pretty easy to pair your types of thread with your fabric. Cotton thread, for example, works well with cotton fabric. That's easy enough to remember. Knowing what thread is what, however, is difficult as it is so thin and hard to really pin down on its own. This means it is very important to organize your thread once you've removed it from the packaging.

What Types of Thread to Use: General Rules

- When you are sewing something that is going to need a stretch (knits, spandex) or is a very durable fabric (leather, polyester), a polyester thread is going to be your best bet.
- Cotton pairs best with cotton thread, but keep in mind that thinner cotton threads can break easily and do not come equipped with much stretch.
- The thickness and weight of your thread is important to keep in mind, as well.



Types of Thread: Fabric Guide



WHEN SHOULD
I USE?

cotton thread?

cotton, corduroy, denim,
knit



polyester thread?

corduroy, stretchy knits,
lace, netting, polyester,
spandex



silk thread?

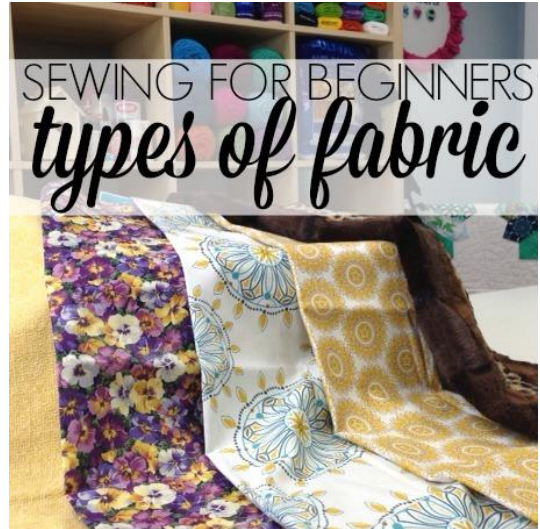
silk



oSewing for Beginners: Types of Fabric

By: [Kaylee Pope, Editor of AllFreeSewing.com](http://www.AllFreeSewing.com)

If you are just learning how to sew, it is time for you to learn about the different types of fabric you can use for your projects. This is especially important when you plan on creating more intense projects like wearables or free sewing patterns that use fancy fabrics that can be harder to work with. The first step to learning how to sew with different types of fabrics is to learn what they are! This is why AllFreeSewing has compiled a glossary of all the types of fabric you might be sewing with! Refer back to list or even print it out to use during your sewing endeavors. *Sewing for Beginners: Types of Fabric* has all the information you need!



Types of Fabric

Blends: Fabric made up of several kinds of fibers. Used for a variety of projects.

Cotton: The most widely-used fabric when it comes to sewing. Excellent for most projects. Comes in a variety of weights and thickness.

Cotton voile: Lightweight and somewhat sheer fabric, perfect for draping.

Cotton Lawn: Comparable to cotton voile, but crisper.

Corduroy: Very thick and ribbed fabric, often used for clothing.

Denim: Heavy-weighted fabric that does not stretch or drape well.

Fur and Faux Fur: Either animal fur or a synthetic fabric created to resemble animal fur, very bulky, can be difficult to work with.

Knit: Comes in a wide variety of weights, stretchy and great for garments.

Lace: Decorative fabric that is see-through. Often harder to work with and can be very delicate. Great for accents.

Netting: Like lace, this fabric is transparent and used for accents.

Polyester: Man-made fabric that is very popular. Low water absorbency. Often used for clothes. Not as popular as it once was.

Silk: Very delicate and light-weight fabric. Very slippery and oftentimes difficult to work with. often used for lining.

Satin: Varies in weight (light to heavy). Similar to silk in appearance and difficulty to work with.

Spandex: Extremely stretchy fabric used to create tight, form-fitting pieces that make moving easier.

What Type of Fabric to Use for Your Sewing Projects

Check out this [helpful infographic from our blog, Seams and Scissors](#), to learn what type of fabric to use for various sewing projects.



Glossary of Sewing Terms

By: [Kristen Auletto, Editor of AllFreeSewing.com](#)

If you are just starting to learn how to sew, you may find yourself stumped by the new, confusing words used frequently in sewing tutorials. Even if you've been sewing for years, you may come across unfamiliar terms now and then. Don't let strange sewing vocabulary keep you from creating adorable and fun sewing projects. Our *Glossary of Sewing Terms* will give you an understanding of every word you need to know to become an expert sewist. From stitches to tools to fabrics, we have it all. The next time you start a new project, make sure to consult our guide for all of your sewing needs.



A

Applique: An embellishment that is sewn or ironed onto another piece of fabric.

Arm scythe: Armhole where the sleeve is sewn.

Awl: Tool used to make holes for an eyelet fabric.

B

Backstitch: Stitch that doubles back on the last stitch that acts to secure seams and mend garments.

Baste: To temporarily hold two pieces of fabric together with long, loose stitches that can easily be removed

Batting: Flattened material, usually cotton or fiberfill, that is usually used as the “fluff” inside quilts or garments.

Bias: The direction diagonal from the direction of the fabric. The stretchiest part of the fabric.

Bias tape: Strips of fabric cut on the bias, often used for binding and facing. It sews neatly around curve and is used commonly in blankets, placemats, bibs, and aprons.

Binding: A strip of fabric used to cover a seam edge or enclose raw edges. Binding creates a neat finish and a decorative touch.

Blanket stitch: A hand stitching technique used for decorative edging and embroidery.

Blend: Fabric made of more than one type of fabric.

Blind hem: Stitch that is not meant to be seen from the right side of the fabric. Usually done by picking up just a few threads of fabric rather than going all the way through.

Block: The individual unit of a quilt.

Bobbin: The spindle or cylinder on which thread is wound in a sewing machine.

Bodice: The part of the garment from shoulder to waist.

Bodkin: Tool used for inserting elastic or cording through a casing.

Bolt: An amount of fabric on a roll or cardboard piece.

Bonding: Joining two pieces of fabric together with a bonding agent or a fabric glue.

Broadcloth: Fabric made from cotton or a blend that is tightly woven and may have slight ridges.

Buttonhole: A cut in the fabric that is bound with stitching and is just big enough for a button to pass through.

C

Capped sleeves: A short sleeve that doesn't extend beyond your underarm.

Casing: Fabric envelopes used to encase elastic, drawstrings, etc. in garments.

Count: Number of warp/weft intersections per inch. The higher the number, the higher the weave.

Cording: A twisted or woven "rope" that is used in piping or as a drawstring. When covered in fabric, it is called piping.

Cut length: Measurement of fabric that allows for hems, pleats, etc.; the length to which the fabric must be cut before beginning to sew.

D

Darn: Repairing a hole by stitching back and forth to fill the hole.

Dart: A v-shaped adjustment to allow for more fullness in the bust or less fullness in other areas

D Ring: A metal or plastic ring shaped like a "D" used in purses, belts, and other projects to accept fabric or other material for a handle or tie closure

E

Edgestitch: A stitch done a scant 1/8 inch from the folded or seamed edge.

Embellishment: Adding special stitches, appliques, or other decorations added to sewing projects.

Embroidery: A decorative topstitching; embellishment of a fabric which creates a design.

Empire waist: A waistline on a garment that is higher than the natural waist.

F

Fat quarter: ¼ of a yard of fabric that is 18 in X 22 in, as opposed to the regular ¼ yard that is 9 in X 45 in.

Feed Dog: The “teeth” of the sewing machine that move the fabric as it is sewn.

Finishing a seam: Preventing a seam from unraveling and adding stability by using certain stitches or tools.

Foot: The part of a sewing machine the presses down on the fabric as it is moved.

Free motion: Machine sewing done with the feed dogs down, moving the fabric freehand.

Fusibles: Fabrics with heat-sensitive adhesive on one side that allows it to bind to another fabric

G

Give: Elasticity or stretch of fabric.

Grain: The direction of the fabric that runs parallel to the selvedge.

Guild: A group of people who discuss and practice sewing.

H

Hem: Finished bottom edge of a garments.

Hemline: Lowest edge of a garment once the hem is sewn.

Hook & eye closure: A closure with a small hook on one side and a loop on the other.

I

Inseam: Vertical seams on pants between the legs.

Interfacing: Sewn-in or fusible fabric used to stabilize the fabric.

L

Lettuce hem: A serged edge that is stretched as it is sewn, resulting in a ruffled edge.

Lining: Fabric that covers the construction details on the inside of the garments.

M

Miter: Slanted seams where two hems meet at a corner. Easy Mitered Corners

Muslin: An inexpensive fabric used to make crafts, back quilts, or make a draft garment.

N

Nonwoven: Fabric that is not made from thread or yarn.

Notion: A term for any item used for sewing other than fabric and the machine.

O

Overcast/overstitching: Stitching over a seam to prevent unraveling.

P

Pattern weights: Weights used to hold down paper patterns instead of pins.

Peplum: A top that has a flared "skirt" waistline.

Piping: A slim piece of bias-cut fabric that covers cording and is inserted into a seam. Used as a decorative trim.

Pins: Pins hold fabric together.

Pleat: A fold in the fabric that is not sewn except on the top edge, providing decorative fullness.

Prewashing: Washing fabric before using it in sewing projects to prevent shrinking.

Press: Using an iron to smooth fabric.

R

Raveling: Giving the edge of the fabric a fringed look by allowing threads to loosen on their own or pulling threads from a tight seam.

Raw Edge: Unfinished, cut edge of fabric.

Rick Rack: Zigzag trim that is used to decorate sewing projects.

Right side: The visible, designed side of the fabric.

Rotary cutter: A sewing tool used to cut fabric. It consists of a round blade that cuts through the fabric by rotating as it is rolled along.

Running stitch: Simple stitch made by running back and forth through the fabric.

S

Scrap buster: A sewing projects that can be made using your leftover fabric scraps.

Seam: When two pieces of fabric are sewn together along a line.

Seam allowance: The fabric between the edge and the stitches.

Seam ripper: Tool with a small hook that can undo a stitch without damaging fabric.

Selvedge: The edge of the fabric which does not fray; should not be included in your cut of fabric.

Serger: A type of sewing machine that stitches a seam, encases the seam with thread, and cuts off excess fabric at the same time. They are great for finishing any seams, especially with knit fabrics.

Set-in Sleeve: A sleeve that is attached separately to the armhole of a garment, rather than as part of the original cut of fabric.

Spool: The holder of thread.

Stash: Collection of fabric.

Straight Stitch: Stitching made with single stitches in a straight line.

T

Tack: A temporary stitch used to hold pieces together, removed after the final stitching.

Tension: Pressure placed on your needle and bobbin thread by your machine.

Top stitch: A row of continuous stitches on the top or “right” side of a garment as a sometimes decorative, sometimes functional feature.

Tracing paper: Paper used with a tracing wheel that has an ink substance on one side that marks on fabric.

Tracing wheel: A device that transfers marks and measurements onto the fabric.

Trim: Embellishments such as rick rack, lace, and cording generally used on the edges of a garment.

U

Underlining: Lining that adds body to an article of clothing.

Understitching: Keeps a facing or lining from rolling onto the right side of a fabric.

W

Walking foot: Foot attachment that allows a machine to sew through several layers of fabric.

Warp: Threads running the length of a given fabric.

Weft: Threads running at a 90 degree angle from the length of the fabric.

Whipstitch: A simple running stitch used to hold two pieces of fabric together.

Wrong side: The side of fabric with no design that usually is not visible when the garment or other project is finished.

Z

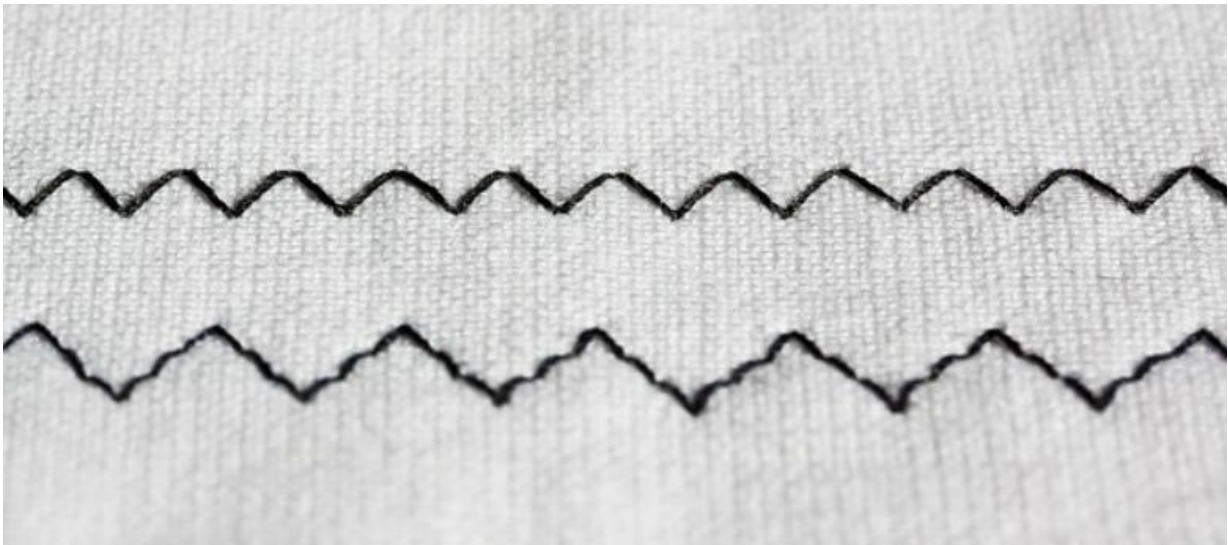
Zigzag stitch: A stitch that goes one way and then the other, which provides a finishing seam or a decorative touch to any garment.



FIND YOUR NEXT SEWING PROJECT

Start out [with](#) one of these [quick and easy free sewing projects](#). There's 32 ideas to choose from in this collection.





A Special Thanks to Our Contributors:

[Deby from So Sew Easy](#)
[Remona from the Stitching Scientist](#)
[Emily from Nap-time Creations](#)
[Kristen Auletto from AllFreeSewing.com](#)
[Seams and Scissors](#)

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