

FREE

sew 101 guide

I Want To Learn To Sew



Sew 101™

...Now What?

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Ready to Sew?

Before you begin a project, practice stitching with the machine. No need to thread the machine; draw straight and curvy lines on a piece of plain paper and sew on the lines. The needle will perforate the paper and leave a trail of small holes, allowing you to check your accuracy. Then try threading the machine and practice stitching on a scrap fabric. It's that easy!

Next, try stitching a seam. Pin two pieces of fabric, right sides together, near the edge. Place the pins perpendicular to the edge of the fabric. Place the fabric under the needle; a common seam allowance is 5/8", so align the fabric edge with the correct line of the sewing gauge or throat plate (the flat metal piece that the needle goes through). Lower the presser foot to keep pressure on the fabric and help move it through the machine at a steady pace. Lower the needle slowly. Move the hand wheel to lower the needle, holding on to the thread tails until a couple stitches are made. Now press the foot pedal and begin sewing the seam. Continue sewing, removing pins as they near the presser foot to avoid hitting one.

TIP: Always start with your needle in the highest position.



Once you master straight seams, try sewing a sharp corner. When you want to turn the corner, lower the needle all the way into the fabric, with the hand wheel. Raise the presser foot, leave the needle down in the fabric. Rotate the fabric a quarter turn, leaving the needle in the down position. Lower the presser foot with the fabric in the new position and continue stitching.

Feeling more confident? It's time to try a simple project. Look for an easy pattern. Pillows, pillow cases and aprons are all good beginner projects. As your confidence builds, you can try a pair of shorts, a skirt or an apron.

Sewing can be fun, relaxing and a way to use those creative juices.



Courtesy of Dritz®

Please read & follow all manufacturers' instructions for all tools & materials used. Provide adult supervision if children participate in this project.
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Trying something new is intimidating to some people. Learning how to sew can be simple if you take it one step at a time and practice, practice, practice!

Buying a Sewing Machine

Most people would agree, this isn't something you do on a daily basis, so it can be overwhelming. Think about what types of items you want to make and how frequently you will use the machine. Don't invest in a machine with features that you won't use.



A good beginner machine should be able to do a straight stitch and a zigzag stitch. Look for machines that will allow you to adjust the stitch length and width as well as the tension. A machine that comes with a zipper foot, buttonhole foot and reverse stitch function would be the perfect way to start.



Straight Stitch

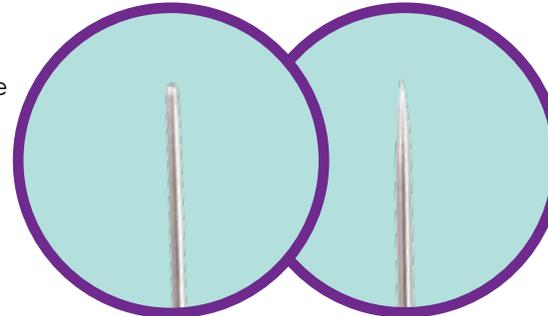
Zigzag Stitch

Read the manual that comes with the machine and familiarize yourself with its many parts and what they do. Soon you will have the knowledge and confidence you need to start sewing.

What Other Supplies Do I Need?

There are many tools and supplies out there to help make sewing easier. Having the correct basic supplies make it easier to learn to sew correctly.

- Assorted Sewing Machine Needles:** As a general rule of thumb, select the needle size and type to accommodate the thread and material to use for the project. Replace needles after 6-10 hours of sewing. A dull or bent needle could tear or damage the fabric and ruin your project. Two of the more popular needle types are Universal and Ballpoint. Universal needles are great all-purpose needles that can be used on most fabrics. Ballpoint needles have a more rounded tip; they work well with knits and stretch fabrics.

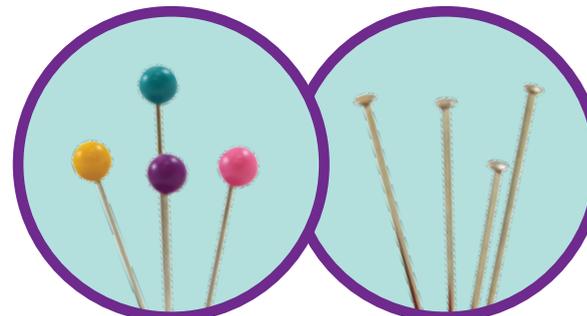


Ballpoint

Universal

- Good Pair Of Scissors:** A sharp pair of scissors is a must for sewing. Make sure to never use fabric scissors to cut paper. It will dull the blades and ruin the scissors for cutting fabric.

- Straight Pins:** There are many types of pins out there. Some good basic pins for general use are Dressmaker and Color Ball. Straight pins are used to hold the fabric pieces together before you stitch. Never sew over a pin; it could damage or break the needle and jam the sewing machine.



Color Ball

Dressmaker

- Pin Cushion:** You'll need a place to store your pins so they are handy. A Pin Cushion is the perfect tool for the job! There are many types of pin cushions, so choose one that will work best for you.



Pin Cushion

- Tape Measure:** A non-stretchable, flexible tape measure will come in very handy. Use it to take body measurements to correctly size patterns or quickly measure an object or space. You can never have too many tape measures, so pick up a couple, stash them around the house and throw one in your purse.



Tape Measure

- Marking Tools:** There are many marking tools available and often the best choice comes down to personal preference. Marking pencils or chalk are good options for basic sewing and the marks are fairly easy to remove.

- Seam Ripper:** A sharp seam ripper can be your best friend! Seam rippers are used to remove unwanted stitches or to open buttonholes. They have a pointed tip that slips easily under your stitches, and a cutting blade in the curve that slices through those unwanted stitches. Buy one with a cap to protect your fingers and materials when not in use.



Seam Ripper