

FREE

sew 101 guide

I Want To Learn To Sew



...Now What?

Sew
101™

Creative Ideas from Jo-Ann

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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 that has features you don't think you will 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



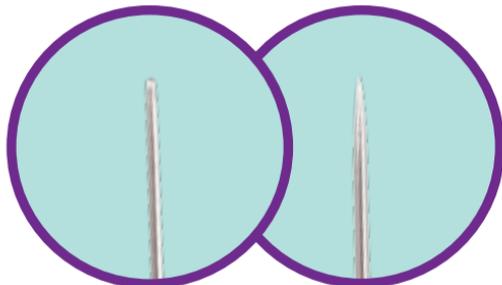
Zig Zag Stitch

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 will make it easy for you to learn to sew correctly.

- 1. Assorted Sewing Machine Needles** – as a general rule of thumb, select the needle size and type to accommodate the thread and material you will use for your project. Replace needles after 6-10 hours of sewing. A dull or bent needle could tear or damage your fabric and ruin your project.



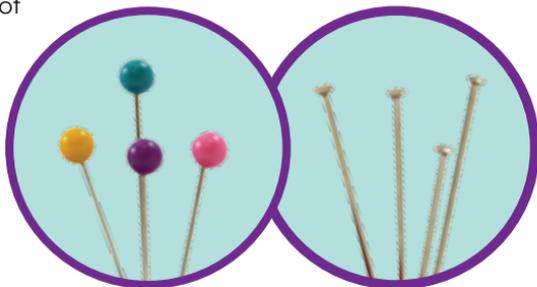
Ballpoint

Universal

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 and work well with knits and stretch fabrics.

- 2. Good Pair Of Scissors** – sharp scissors are a must for sewing. It is wise to never use your fabric scissors to cut paper. It will dull your blades and ruin your scissors for cutting fabric.

- 3. Straight Pins** – there are a lot of different pins out there, but 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, never sew over a pin as it could damage or break your needle and jam up your sewing machine.



Color Ball

Dressmaker

4. **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 different types of pin cushions available, so choose the one that will work best for you.
5. **Tape Measure** – a non-stretch, 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 and stash them around the house and make sure to keep one in your purse.
6. **Marking Tools** – there are many different marking tools available and the choice often comes down to personal preference. Marking pencils or chalk are good options for basic sewing and the marks are fairly easy to remove.
7. **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. Make sure to buy one with a cap so you protect your fingers and materials when not in use.
8. **Elastic Threaders** – there are several different ways to insert elastic into casings, but the Sew 101 Elastic Threaders make the job easier. Two different sizes are included in the package for both $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch and 1-inch width elastics. Simply slide one end of the elastic through the two slots on the threader. Insert the rounded end of the threader into your casing and gently guide it through, pulling as you go. Its shape and size allow the elastic to stay flat as it is gliding through the casing.



Pin Cushion



Tape Measure



Seam Ripper



Elastic Threader

Ready To Sew?

Before you begin a project, practice stitching with your machine. No need to thread your machine, you can draw straight lines 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, letting you check your accuracy.

Once you feel comfortable, try threading your machine and practice stitching on a scrap piece of fabric. It's that easy!

Next, try stitching a seam. Pin two pieces of fabric, right sides together, near the edge. Make sure the pins are placed perpendicular to the edge of the fabric. Place your fabric piece under the needle;

a common seam allowance is $5/8"$, so make sure the fabric edge is lined up on the correct line of your sewing gauge or throat plate (the flat metal piece that the needle goes through). Lower the presser foot, this will keep pressure on the fabric and help move it through the machine at a steady pace. Lower the needle slowly; try moving the hand wheel to lower the needle, making sure to hold on to the thread tails until a couple of stitches are made. Now press the foot pedal and begin sewing the seam. Continue sewing, removing pins as you come to them so you don't accidentally hit 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; you can use the hand wheel to do this. Raise the presser foot, leave the needle down in the fabric. Next, rotate the fabric $\frac{1}{4}$ 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. Once you are comfortable with the basics, you can try your first project. Look for an easy pattern. Pillows, pillowcases and aprons are all good beginner projects. As your confidence builds, you can try a pair of shorts or a skirt.

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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