



Machine, needle & thread savvy

- To thread the needle, do not wet the end of the thread. This will cause it to expand. Instead, wet the eye of the needle & capillary action will help the thread go into the eye.
- Universal needles work well on most woven & knit fabrics and cover most sewing situations.
- Stretch needles work well on highly elastic knits like Lycra & synthetic non-wovens such as Ultrasuede®.
- Use ballpoint needles for heavy knits, double knits & synthetic blend interlocks to help prevent runs & snags.
- Topstitching needles have a larger eye for heavy, decorative threads.
- Wedgepoint needles are for leather & vinyls.
- Metafil/Metallica needles, size 80/12 HE, work well with metallic threads, helping prevent breakage of the delicate thread. Size 70/10HE makes smaller holes & works well on organza & fine silk fabrics.
- Needle sizes range from 9(fine) to 18(coarse); the higher the number the thicker the needle. 80/12 on a needle package indicates both European & U.S. measurements; 80 is European and 12 is U.S. The finer & more delicate the fabric & thread and the closer the stitch length, the smaller the needle size should be.
- Most sergers take standard, universal needles, but some require specific needles recommended by the manufacturer. Always check your manual.
- Change the needle before starting new large projects to remind you to use the correct needle for your fabric & thread and avoid using damaged needles that may harm the machine & your fabric.
- Old thread that has been stored on wood or foam spools should be thrown away. Chemicals in these spools weaken the thread, causing repeated breaks.
- Use high quality, tightly wound thread that does not show fuzzy lint when held to the light. Modern sewing machines are highly computerized, and lint from cheaper thread will increase the need for repairs.
- Purchase thread & needles that match your fabric & project.
- Hand quilting thread is for hand sewing & not machine use.
- Serger cone thread is so delicate it should only be used in a serger, where the multiple threads in the overlock stitch create strength.
- Rayon thread is hand-washable and can be pressed with a warm iron on a synthetic setting but it is not a good choice for items that will be washed often or machine dried.
- Polyester thread is the most versatile. It can be machine washed & dried or dry cleaned, is colorfast and has a slight amount of stretch.
- Plug your machine into a power surge protector strip to protect your investment.
- Keep your machine well-maintained and lint-free in all working areas. Have it professionally serviced annually.
- Never sew over pins, which will damage the needle or the machine throat plate.

Sewing Tips and Techniques Cont.

Fabric & sewing tips for garments & costumes

- Follow the pattern envelope for recommended fabric types & widths for your project.
- When buying fabric with a nap (such as corduroy), a one-way design or a plaid, you will need to buy extra fabric to be able to correctly lay out the pattern and match pieces. Follow the nap/one-way design layout in the pattern.
- When working with fabric that no longer has its selvages, pull a thread from each direction to determine the grain line. If the thread breaks and snaps or “pops,” the thread is from the lengthwise grain line. If the thread frays or shreds and then breaks, it is from the crosswise grain line.
- When both sides of a knit fabric look alike, mark with masking tape the side you determine as the wrong side.
- Some fabrics that fray heavily (such as chenille) should not be pre-washed; the resulting lint & threads can damage your home machine. It is preferable to wash when construction is complete & seam edges are secured with an overlock stitch.
- When selecting a fusible web for a garment or costume, check the label to be sure you can sew through it.

Sewing for the home

- Exact measurements are important with vinyl because there is no ease in this fabric. To sew on vinyl, set machine stitch length to almost basting length. Too many stitches will weaken seams in vinyl.
- To sew on vinyl, use a Teflon® foot or a rolling foot to prevent sticking.
- The first time you make a welted cushion or pillow, use the smaller, 1/4" diameter cord because it is easier to work with.
- Place a foam cushion inside a plastic bag for easier insertion into a cushion cover. Slip the plastic out before sewing the cushion shut.
- Extend the life of a cushion by approximately three years by making it reversible.
- Always measure your window, chair or couch carefully and bring the measurements with you to select fabrics.
- When you reupholster furniture, carefully remove old coverings and use them to make a pattern out of Pattern Ease, interfacing or paper.

Skill Level: No experience Needed	
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Due to seasonal nature of project, supplies are available for a limited time only. Please read all instructions prior to beginning; read and follow all manufacturers' instructions for all tools and materials used. Provide adult supervision if children participate in this and all craft projects. Because Jo-Ann Stores, Inc. has no control over the use of materials and tools, nor surroundings, during construction of projects, Jo-Ann Stores, Inc. disclaims any liability for injury, damage or other untoward results. Content of this project sheet is presented in good faith, but no warranty is given, nor results guaranteed. ©2006 Jo-Ann Stores, Inc. All rights reserved. 197-386

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