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Quilting



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Quilting





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© 2011 Quarto Publishing Group USA Inc.

This paperback edition published in 2018

First Published in 2011 by Creative Publishing international, an imprint of
The Quarto Group, 100 Cummings Center, Suite 265-D, Beverly, MA 01915, USA.
T (978) 282-9590 F (978) 283-2742
QuartoKnows.com

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10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

ISBN: 978-1-63159-657-5

Digital edition published in 2018
eISBN: 978-1-61059-014-3

Originally found under the following Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
Quilting 101 / Editors of Creative Publishing International.

p. cm.

Includes index.

Summary: "Beginner's guide to quilting, teaches all the basic techniques through easy projects".

ISBN-13: 978-1-58923-573-1 (hard cover)

ISBN-10: 1-58923-573-8 (hard cover)

1. Quilting--Technique. I. Creative Publishing International II. Title: Quilting one hundred and one.

TT835.Q489 2011

746.46--dc22

2010038921

Book Design and Layout: Mighty Media, Inc.

Illustrations: Heather Lambert

Video Script: Cathy Guy

Videographer: Forrest Fox Productions

Printed in China



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How to Use This Book

Welcome to the rewarding world of sewing. Quilting 101 is designed to encourage creativity and instill confidence as you learn to sew and quilt. Easy-to-follow instructions with colorful photographs and illustrations help you build your sewing skills while making quilted home decorating items and accessories that are as useful as they are appealing.

Quilting, once a necessary household activity, is now considered an art form. The color combinations and patterns are limited only by your imagination. Many quilters prefer traditional block patterns, but quilts also can be designed in modern, bold, or whimsical styles to complement any décor. If you're learning to sew, quilting is a great way to hone your skills of cutting, piecing, pressing, and stitching with accuracy. And there's no need to purchase expensive fabrics; you may find a purpose for even the smallest pieces of leftover material.

This book will teach you, step-by-step, how to make great-looking quilted items while you're learning the fundamentals of sewing. The 16 quilting projects provide a sampling of quilt block patterns, techniques, and styles. With each project you'll learn new skills, listed under What You'll Learn.

You will also find tips and explanations throughout the book to help you understand the "why" behind the instructions. And while the projects suggest size and color combinations, the possibilities are endless. Try the variations that accompany some of the projects, or experiment with your own design and fabric choices.

Use the first section of the book to acquaint yourself with the sewing machine and the techniques and supplies you'll need to get started.

Your sewing machine owner's manual is a necessity; refer to it first if you have questions or problems specific to your machine.

Step one of any quilting project is to read the directions thoroughly. Refer to the Quick References for definitions or elaborations on any words or phrases printed **like this** on the page. If the word or phrase is followed by a page number, its reference can be found on the page indicated. At the beginning of every project you will find a list telling you What You'll Need. Read through the information on fabrics before you go shopping so the fabric store will seem a little more user-friendly when you get there.



9 Stitch in the ditch (page 43) on the right side of the quilt, catching the binding on the back of the quilt. Remove the pins as you come to them.

10 Repeat steps 5 to 9 for the lower edge of the quilt. Trim the ends of the upper and lower binding strips even with the edges of the quilt top.

11 Repeat steps 4 to 7 for the sides of the quilt, measuring the quilt top down the middle, from top to bottom, in step 4. Trim the ends of the binding strips to extend $\frac{1}{4}$ " (1.3 cm) beyond the finished edges of the quilt.

12 Wrap and pin the binding around the edge, as in step 8. At each end, fold in the raw edges of the binding. Then fold under the $\frac{1}{4}$ " (1.3 cm) end; press. Finish wrapping and pinning the binding. Stitch the binding as in step 9.



9



10

Quick reference text

Binding a Quilt continued

5 Pin a binding strip on the right side of the upper edge of the quilt, aligning the raw edges of the binding to the raw edge of the quilt top and matching the pin marks. **Insert the pins perpendicular to the raw edges.** The binding will extend 1" (2.5 cm) beyond the quilt at each end.

6 Stitch the binding strip to the quilt $\frac{1}{4}$ " (6 mm) from the raw edges of the binding. **Remove the pins as you come to them.**

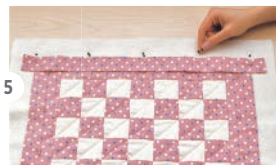
7 Trim off the excess batting and backing $\frac{1}{4}$ " (1.3 cm) from the stitching line.

8 Wrap the binding snugly around the edge of the quilt, covering the stitching line on the back of the quilt. Pin the binding in place from the right side, inserting the pins parallel to the binding in the seam "ditch" and catching the folded edge on the back. For easy removal, insert all the pins so that the heads will be toward you when you are stitching.

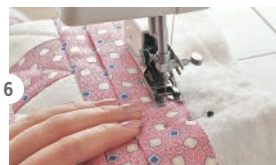
QUICK REFERENCE

Insert the pins perpendicular to the raw edges. This makes it easier to remove them as you sew. The pin heads are near the raw edge where you can grasp them with your right hand. In this position, you are much less likely to stick yourself with a pin as you sew.

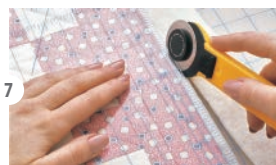
Remove pins as you come to them. As tempting as it may be, don't sew over pins! You may be lucky and save a few seconds, or you could hit a pin and break your needle, costing you much more time in the long run.



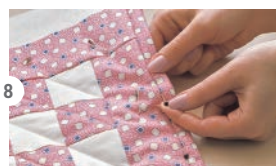
5



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Quick reference

The online videos associated with this book will show you the essential techniques used for quilting. To access the online videos, visit www.creativepub.com/pages/quilting-101. Most of all, have fun with these quilting projects! Enjoy the creative process while you learn new skills.



Quilting Basics

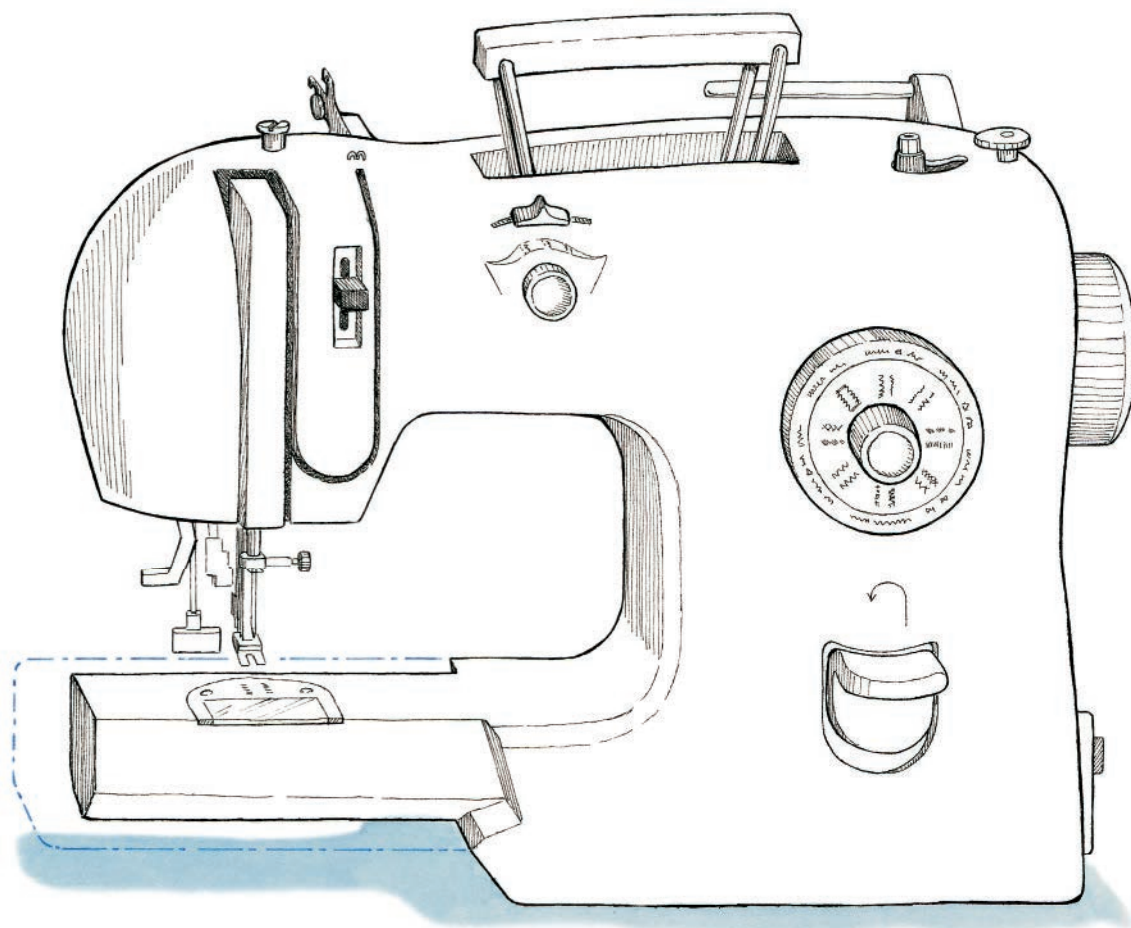
This book is written for the beginning quilter, but not everyone starts from the same place. Some beginners have sewing skills but have never sewn a quilt. Others have never sewn a stitch but quilting is where they want to begin. For someone new to quilting, even a trip to the quilt shop or fabric store can be challenging. Manufacturers can't include all the vital information with their packaging, and there are so many tools and quilting notions to choose from. To give you a firm foundation for learning to quilt, this section teaches you the essentials about your sewing machine, fabrics, sewing and quilting supplies, and specific quilting techniques. If you have never taken a stitch, you will appreciate the detailed information, photos, and illustrations. Even if you have sewing or quilting experience, you are sure to learn some things you didn't know. So settle back, take your time, and jump into the basics.

The Sewing Machine

The principle parts common to all modern sewing machines are shown and listed at right. The parts may look different on your model, and they may have slightly different locations, so open your owner's manual also. If you do not have an owner's manual for your machine, you should be able to get one from a sewing machine dealer who sells your brand. Become familiar with the names of the parts and their functions. As you spend more time sewing, these items will become second nature to you.

If you are buying a new machine, consider how much and what kind of sewing you expect to do. Talk to friends who sew and to sales personnel. Ask for demonstrations, and sew on the machine yourself. Experiment with the various features while sewing on a variety of fabrics, including knits, wovens, light-weights, and denim. Think about the optional features of the machine and which ones you want on yours. Leading sewing machine manufacturers offer a variety of models, including some that are specifically designed for machine quilting. You can, of course, do other kinds of sewing on these machines but they may have special features like a deeper bed to accommodate bulky layers for quilting, specialized feed systems, special presser feet for sewing accurate seams, and automatic stitch regulators to ensure even quilting stitches. Many dealers offer free sewing lessons with the purchase of a machine. Take advantage! These lessons will be geared to your particular brand and model of sewing machine.





These parts are common to all sewing machines, but their position and design differs. Use your manual to help you learn where these parts are, what these parts do, and how to use them:

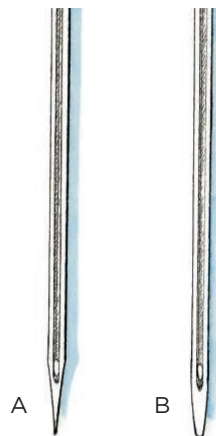
Bobbin
 Bobbin case
 Bobbin winder spindle
 Bobbin winder tension
 Buttonhole knob
 Detachable machine bed
 Feed dogs
 Feed dog control
 General-purpose presser foot
 Handwheel
 Light switch
 Needle clamp
 Presser foot lifter

Presser foot pressure control
 Spool pins
 Stitch pattern selector
 Stitch length selector
 Stitch width selector
 Take-up lever
 Top tension control
 Top tension discs
 Thread cutter
 Thread guides
 Throat plate
 Variable speed switch

Machine Accessories

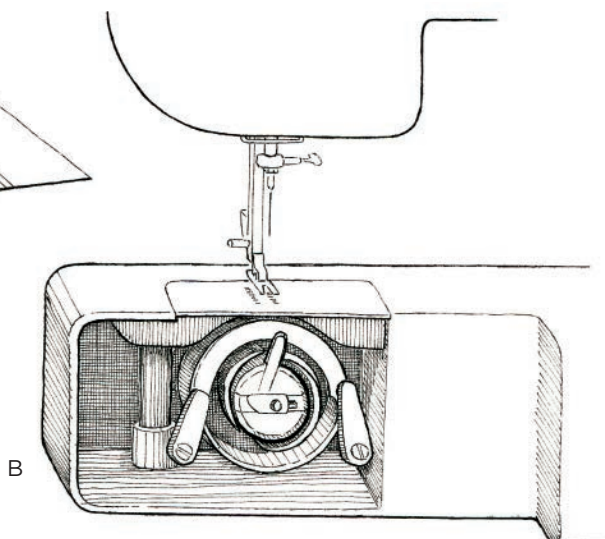
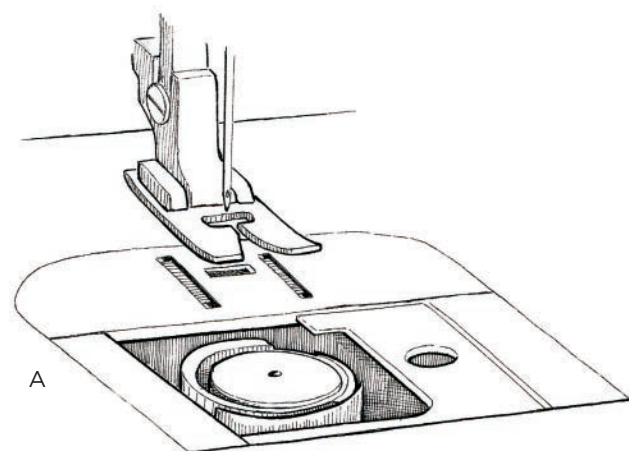
Sewing Machine Needles

Sewing machine needles come in a variety of styles and sizes. The correct needle choice depends mostly on the fabric you have selected. Sharp points (A), used for woven fabrics, are designed to pierce the fabric. Ballpoints (B) are designed to slip between the loops of knit fabric rather than pierce and possibly damage the fabric. Universal points are designed to work on both woven and knitted fabrics. The size of the needle is designated by a number, generally given in both European (60, 70, 80, 90, 100, 110) and American (9, 11, 12, 14, 16, 18) numbering systems. Use size 11/70 or 12/80 needles for medium-weight fabrics. A larger number means the needle is thicker and that it is appropriate for use with heavier fabrics and heavier threads.



Bobbins

Stitches are made by locking the upper thread with a lower thread, carried on a bobbin. Always use bobbins in the correct style and size for your machine. Bobbin thread tension is controlled by a spring on the bobbin case, which may be built in (A) or removable (B).

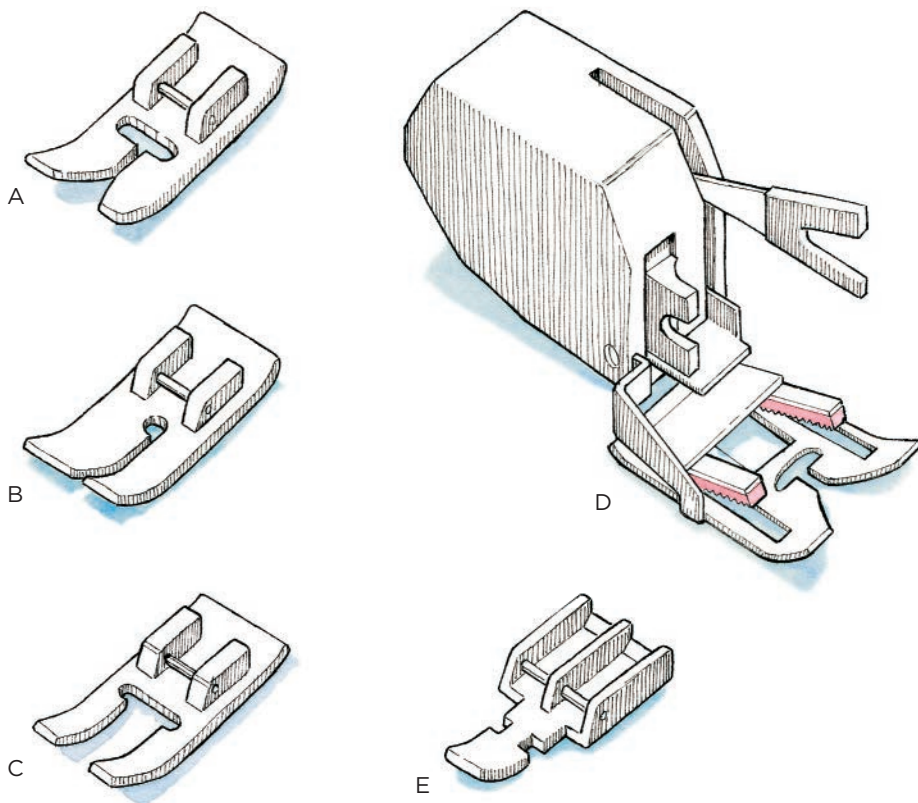


TIP Though needle style and size are usually indicated in some way on the needle, it is often difficult to see without a magnifying glass, and you most likely will not remember what needle is in the machine. As an easy reminder, when you finish a sewing session, leave a fabric swatch from your current project under the presser foot.

Presser Feet

Every sewing machine comes with accessories for specialized tasks. More can be purchased as you develop your interest and skills. Your machine manual or dealer can show you what accessories are available and will explain how to use them to get the best results.

A general-purpose foot (A), probably the one you will use most often, has a wide opening to accommodate the side-to-side movement of the needle in all types of utility (nondecorative) stitches. It is also suitable for most straight stitching. A quarter-inch presser foot (B) aligns to the edge of the fabric to sew perfect $\frac{1}{4}$ " (6 mm) seams, just right for piecing quilt blocks. A special-purpose or embroidery foot (C) has a grooved bottom that allows the foot to ride smoothly over decorative stitches or raised cords. Some styles have a wide space between the toes; others are clear plastic, allowing you to see your work more clearly. A walking foot (D) feeds top and bottom layers at equal rates, allowing you to more easily match patterns or stitch bulky layers, as in quilted projects. A zipper foot (E) is used to insert zippers or to stitch any seam that has more bulk on one side than the other. For some sewing machines, the zipper foot is stationary, requiring you to move the needle position to the right or left. For other styles, the position of the zipper foot itself is adjustable.



Getting Ready to Sew

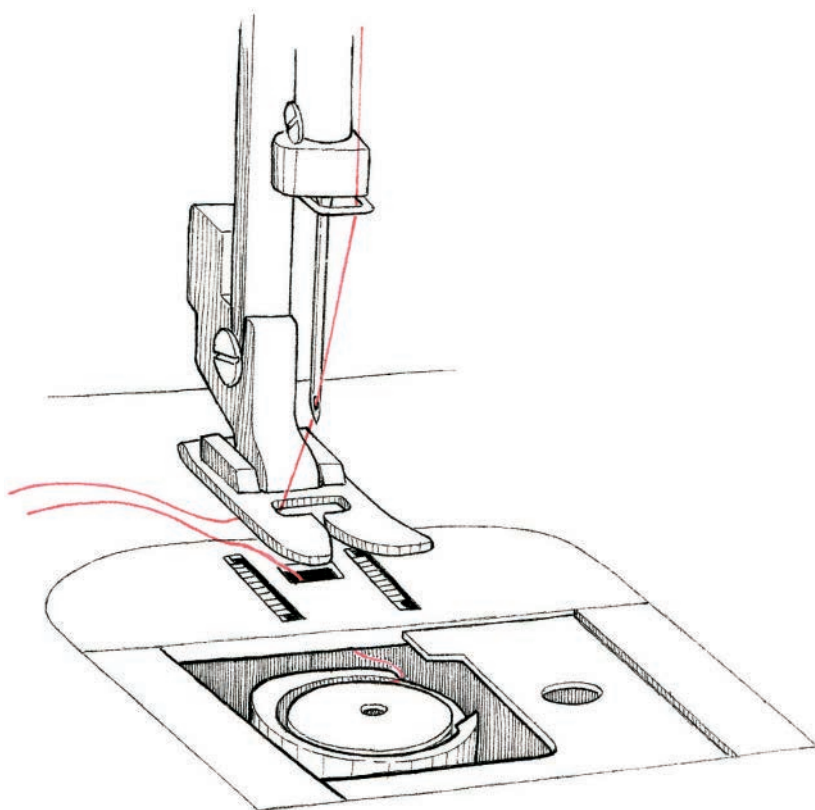
Simple tasks of inserting the needle, winding the bobbin, and threading the machine have tremendous influence on the stitch quality and performance of your machine. Use this guide as a general reference, but refer to your owner's manual for instructions specific to your machine.

Inserting the Needle

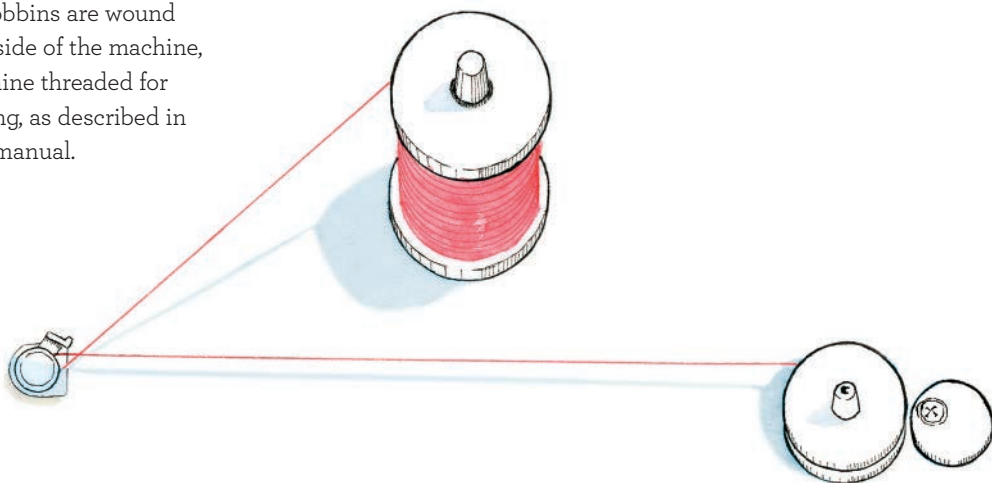
Loosen the needle clamp. After selecting the appropriate needle for your project (page 10), insert it into the machine as high as it will go. The grooved side of the needle faces forward if your bobbin gets inserted from the front or top; it faces to the left if your bobbin gets inserted on the left. Tighten the clamp securely.

Winding the Bobbin

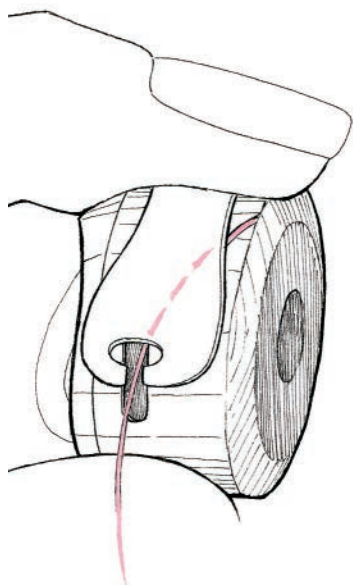
If the bobbin case is built in, the bobbin is wound in place with the machine fully threaded as if to sew (page 14).



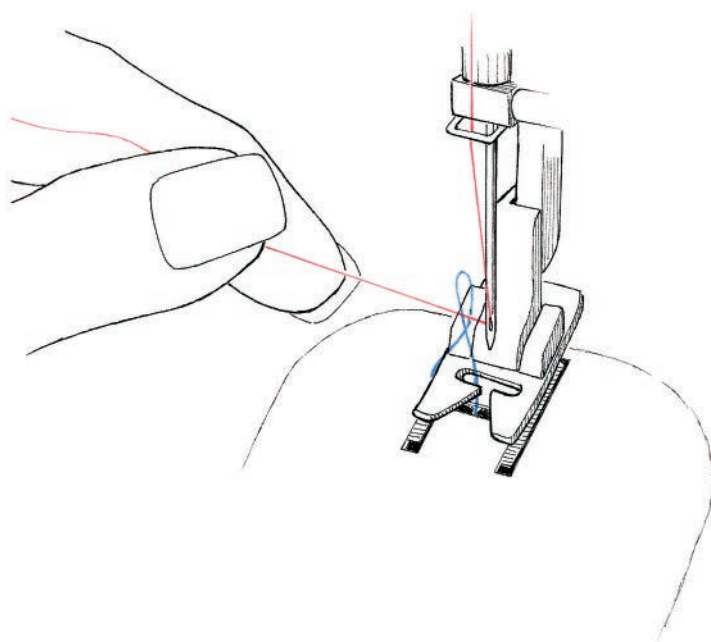
Removable bobbins are wound on the top or side of the machine, with the machine threaded for bobbin winding, as described in your owner's manual.



Bobbin thread must be drawn through the bobbin case tension spring. For wind-in-place bobbins, this happens automatically when you wind the bobbin, but you must do it manually when you insert a bobbin that already has thread on it.



After inserting the bobbin and threading the machine (page 14), you need to draw the bobbin thread to the top. Hold the needle thread while turning the handwheel toward you one full turn. As the needle goes down, the top thread interlocks with the bobbin thread and brings it up through the needle hole. Pull both threads together under the presser foot and off to the side or back.



Threading the Machine

Because every sewing machine is different, the threading procedure for your machine may differ slightly from the one shown here. Once again, it is important to refer to your owner's manual. Every upper thread guide adds a little tension to the thread as it winds its way to the needle. Missing one of them can make a big difference in the quality of your stitches.

1 Set the thread spool on the spindle. For a vertical spindle, position the spool so that it will turn clockwise as you sew. If the spindle is horizontal, the spool is held in place with an end cap. If your spool has a small cut in one end for minding the thread, position the spool with that end to the right.

TIP If the spool is new and has paper labels covering the holes, poke them in, completely uncovering the holes, to allow the spool to turn freely.

Unless your machine has a self-winding bobbin, you will want to wind the bobbin (page 13) before threading the machine.

2 Pull thread to the left and through the first thread guide

3 Draw thread through the tension guide.

TIP It is very important to have the presser foot lever up when threading the machine because the tension discs are then open. If the presser foot is down and the discs are closed, the thread will not slide between the discs, and your stitches will not make you happy.

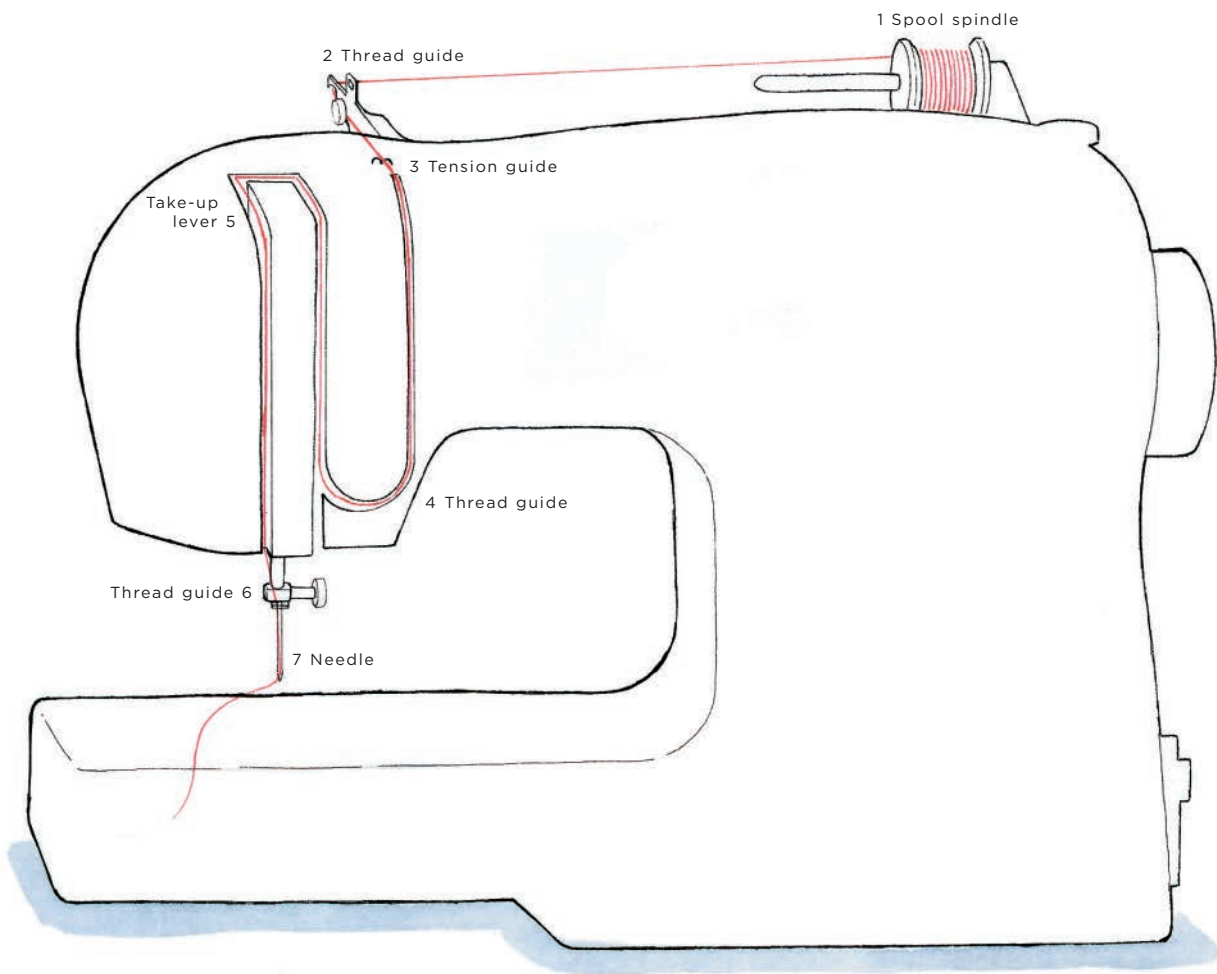
4 Draw thread through the next thread guide.

5 Insert thread through the take-up lever.

6 Draw the thread through the remaining thread guides.

7 Thread the needle. Most needles are threaded from front to back; some, from left to right.





How to Balance Tension

Your machine forms stitches by interlocking the bobbin thread with the needle thread. Every time the needle goes down into the fabric, a sharp hook catches the needle thread and wraps the bobbin thread around it. Imagine this little tug-of-war. If the needle thread tension is “stronger” than the bobbin thread tension, the needle thread pulls the bobbin thread through to the top. If the bobbin thread tension is “stronger,” it pulls the needle thread through to the bottom. When the tensions are evenly balanced, the stitch will lock exactly halfway between the top and bottom of the layers being sewn, which is right where you want it.

Some machines have “self-adjusting tension,” meaning the machine automatically adjusts its tension with every fabric you sew. For machines that do not have this feature, you may have to adjust the needle thread tension slightly as you sew different fabrics.

Testing the Tension

1 Thread your machine and insert the bobbin, using two very different colors of thread, neither of which matches the fabric. Cut an 8" (20.5 cm) square of a smooth, mediumweight fabric. Fold the fabric in half diagonally, and place it under the presser foot so the fold aligns to your $\frac{1}{2}$ " (1.3 cm) seam guide. Lower the presser foot and set your stitch length at ten stitches per inch or 2.5 mm long.

2 Stitch a line across the fabric, stitching $\frac{1}{2}$ " (1.3 cm) from the diagonal fold. Remove the fabric from the machine. Inspect your stitching line from both sides. If your tension is evenly balanced, you will see only one color on each side. If you see both thread colors on the top side of your sample, the needle tension is tighter than the bobbin tension. If you see both thread colors on the back side of your sample, the bobbin tension is tighter than the needle tension.

