

Basic Sewing Supply List and Stitch Guide

Hand Sewing & General Supplies

Needles:

- What do the numbers mean?
The larger the number the smaller the needle (like gauge in metal/wire)
- What do the names mean?

The names of a needle generally refers to the job for which it was originally intended. You do not always have to use a needle for its intended job. E.g. I use millinery needles in size 10 and 12 to hand sew, because I have large hands and the needles are longer than sharps the standard hand sewing needle.

Pins:

- Pin cushions
- Selecting pins; Lots of people like plastic headed pins, but if you work with heat, which is likely in costuming, you'll end up with melted plastic. Good quality metal pins (I prefer silk pins for their fineness) are the best.
- Magnet yes at some point you will drop a bunch of pins and/or needles on the floor. This is the best way to find and pick them up!

Cutting Tools:

You cannot use just any scissors to cut fabric. Sewing requires very sharp scissors. Any scissors that you select for sewing should not be used for any other purpose. As always buy the best you can afford.

- Sewing scissors/shears buy ones with "bent" or offset handles.
- Embroidery Scissors: Small with fine points for clipping/cutting in small areas (button holes)
- Rotary Cutters: **DANGER** these can & will cut you. They can cut up to 6 layers of fabric at once. They are convenient and quick, but should not be used by unsupervised kids or tired cosplayers!
- Seam Ripper: the best way to take out a seam we promise

Thread:

Your thread should have approximately the same fiber content as your garment. If you are planning to dye your garment, this is especially important, or you may find that your thread is a different color than your finished piece.

Color matching: Unless you are top stitching, the thread does not have to match exactly. For stage work, I buy only, black, white, navy and tan thread colors. Black for all dark fabrics, white for all very light fabrics, navy for all cool tone medium fabrics, and tan for all warm tone medium fabrics.

Marking Tools

- Chalk: rollers, tailor's chalk, pencils (chalk rollers and tailor's chalk are our favorites, they mark well and remove completely)
- Fabric markers: caution these don't always come out as easily as advertised
- Pencil: regular 2B pencil will mark a lot

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- Marker: only use where it won't be seen, watch out for bleed through
- White or yellow gel pens great on the wrong side of dark fabrics.

Iron.

Yes you need an iron! You can sometime find great ones at thrift stores and garage sales, just ask if they work. You can get Iron cleaner to spruce it up.

- Pressing vs. Ironing
 - Pressing requires pressure; flattening opening a seam or setting a crease.
 - Ironing removes wrinkles.
- Steam iron
- Pressing cloths any cloth will do
 - Protects fabric
 - Protects Iron (residue from products like fusible web)

Measuring:

- Measuring tape
- Ruler (gridded in the quilting aisle are really nice)
- Hip curve (dressmaker's curve) for alterations

Extras but not necessary to start.

- Awl
- Hole punch
- Pinking shears
- Grommet setter
- Fray check/clear nail polish
- Bees wax (for strengthening thread)

Machine Sewing:

You will need all of the same supplies as for hand sewing, plus the following

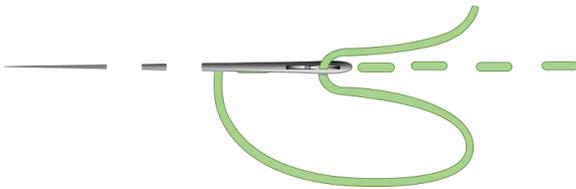
- A Sewing Machine, preferably one that does both straight and zigzag stitches
- Machine Needles
- Specialty needles: If you are sewing specialty fabrics, denim, leather/pleather etc. you will need special using regular needles will possibly ruin your machine.
- Seam guide (magnetic only if you have a non-computerize machine) this is especially helpful if you are just learning to sew, it helps keep your seam allowance consistent. Tape also works
- Bobbins and & bobbin storage

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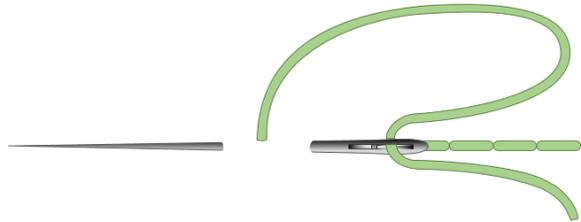
Hand sewing Stitches

The following are some basic stitches for garment sewing

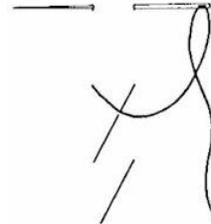
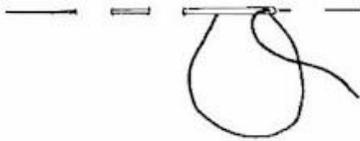
Running Stitches - short, even stitches used for seaming, tucking, gathering. Look for my tutorial on the Japanese method of running stitch.



Backstitch - strong, versatile use for seams, topstitching, zippers. Go in touching the end of the previous stitch, come out a stitch length beyond your thread

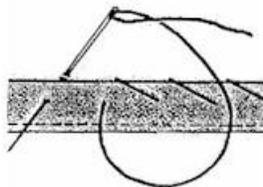


Basting – long stitches used to temporarily hold together two or more layers of fabric



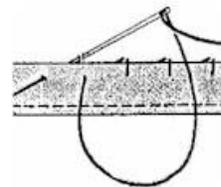
Hemming Stitches

Slanted hem stitch quick but not always strong



Slanted Hem Stitch

Straight hem stitch: quick but not always good on curves



Straight Hem Stitch

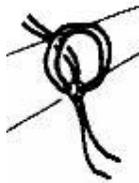
Ladder or Slipstitch - nearly invisible stitch

Catch Hem Stitch my favorite, not as quick but very adaptable and durable

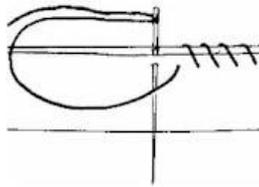
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Tailor Tacks - used to transfer pattern marking to fabric



Whipstitch - overcast stitch used to join two edges



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About Needles:

This is an old chart, but still useful as a reference for selecting needles and thread. Remember the lower the number the thicker the needle similar to wire or piercing gages.

Thick needles are harder to push through fabric. I prefer to sew with a size 10 needle but a 9 is good for most beginners. I sew with a size 12 for very fine work, but most people have trouble threading a 12.

Selecting the correct needle. The finer the fabric the finer the needle. Delicate fabrics need finer needles or you will leave holes in your fabric. On the other hand thin needles are not sturdy enough to sew through heavy fabrics like denim or twill. Some materials like vinyl and leather must be sewn with specialty needles

General hand sewing needles are called Sharps they are medium length needle with a rounded eye that is relatively easy to thread. As a person with large hands, I like to work with milliner's needles (sometimes called milliner's straws they are a longer needle than a sharp but in size 9-12 are fine enough for most sewing.

Between's are short needles intended primarily for quilting, they are generally used with a thimble, but their short length allow for very short stitches.

Size:	Usage	Machine Equivalent	
5 or Larger	Heavy or dense fabric like duck, canvas, denim or ticking		
6-7 Medium	Buttons, some upholstery fabrics, wool or medium to heavy weight fabric		
8-9 Medium fine	Medium to light weight fabrics : top weight, quilting cotton, muslin, percale		
10-12 Fine	Light weight to delicate fabrics, lawn, voile, batiste, organza.		

Threads for sewing:

Dual duty: Cotton wrapped polyester available in a wide range of colors if needed.

Mercerized cotton: Strengthened cotton (my favorite) more limited color choices

Quilting Cotton: a heavier, stiffer cotton in a moderate range of colors not a heavy as heavy weight, but meant to take wear.

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Heavy Duty: available in a narrow range of colors, these are meant to take very heavy pull and wear, for things like buttons or areas of heavy tension.

Parts of a costume:

Torso:

Neck/Collar: how is the neckline finished? Does it have a collar, if so what is the style, if you don't have experience with shaping necklines finding a pattern with a correct one will be important. It is easy to overestimate a neck opening.

Bodice: the portion of a garment that covers the torso usually ending at the waist. You need to look at the style lines of the bodice and chose a pattern that matches that style as closely as possible (even if the lower half of the costume is different

Sleeve: There are three major sleeve styles with variations on each:

Kimono: includes kimono sleeve, batwing sleeves, and dolman sleeves all are wide where they attach at the body, the dolman and batwing narrow at the wrist.

Set in sleeve: think of your standard dress shirt or t-shirt sleeve. This style can include puffs and wide or slim styling in the sleeve. Some also have the arm seam on the under arm side or on the back of the arm.

Raglan sleeve: this sleeve connects to the bodice/neckline diagonally and in most cases forms part of the neckline. The saddle sleeve crosses into the upper chest before joining the neckline. These give a smooth shoulder but a very distinct diagonal line at the seam in the front and back.

Skirt/Pants

Skirt Styles:

Trouser/Pant

Facings the inside finishing of a garment opening in a lined or unlined garment. In an unlined garment the facing helps give a finished edge on any inner area that might also be visible. In a lined garment the facing also provides the anchor point where the lining joins the main garment.

Types of shoulder seams: in costuming it is especially important to pay attention to they type of shoulder seam/sleeve that your garment needs.

- Set in Sleeve
- Raglan Sleeve
- Kimono Sleeve
- Dolman Sleeve

Fit

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Is your garment Tight, average fit, lose or baggy this will affect the type of pattern you will need and possibly the fabrics you use.

How a garment is shaped to a body:

Seamlines, darts, gussetts, gathering, pleating,