



How to Sew for starters

An easy guide to sewing stitches

This is an easy, step-by-step guide to how to sew some really useful stitches.

When you've practised the stitches you can have a go at the sewing projects on each page. If you enjoy making the projects why not come back and pick-up some more 'How To...' sheets from the Quilt Museum & Gallery!

What you need to get started:

A needle

Some thread

Fabric Scissors (these are really sharp so always ask a grown-up for help)

Lots of material scraps - cotton or felt is good to start with

Buttons and Beads

What you will learn:

Running stitch

Back stitch

Over-sewing

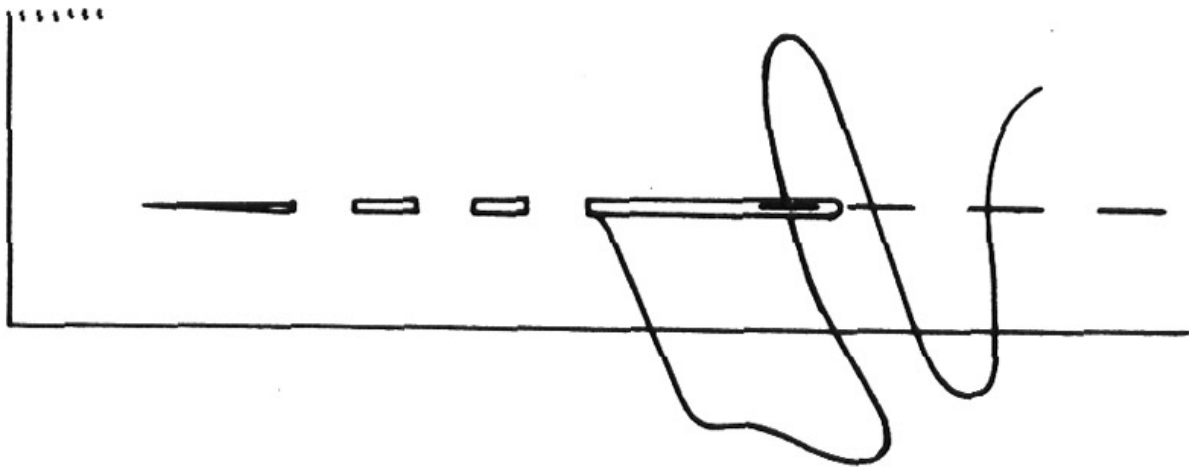
Blanket stitch

Sewing on buttons or beads

How to do a running stitch

This is the easiest stitch to learn. You can use a running stitch for loads of sewing projects.

- First thread your needle with about 30cm of cotton.
- You need to make the starting point of your sewing strong and secure so go over the same stitch about three times before carrying on (this is called a 'repeat stitch').
- Now make running stitches by moving the needle in and out of the material with the needle in an 'up and down and then up again' movement.
- Try to keep your stitches the same length with the same sized space in between.
- When finished, go over the same stitch three times to keep it secure or after the last 'downward' stitch, tie a knot big enough to stop it coming loose.

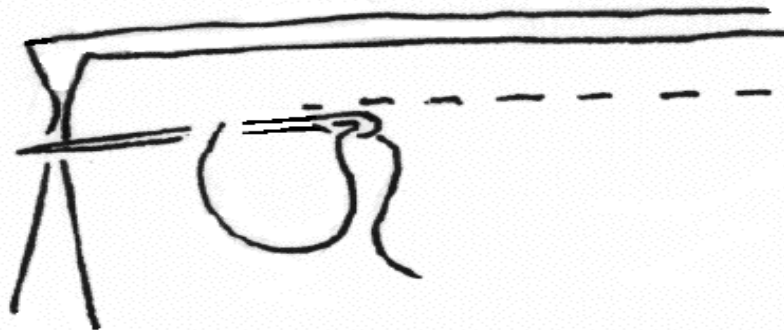


How to do a back stitch

This is almost the same as the running stitch except sometimes you sew backwards!

- Thread your needle with about 30cm of cotton.
- Make your first stitch tight and secure with a repeat stitch. Make sure you finish this with the needle underneath the material.

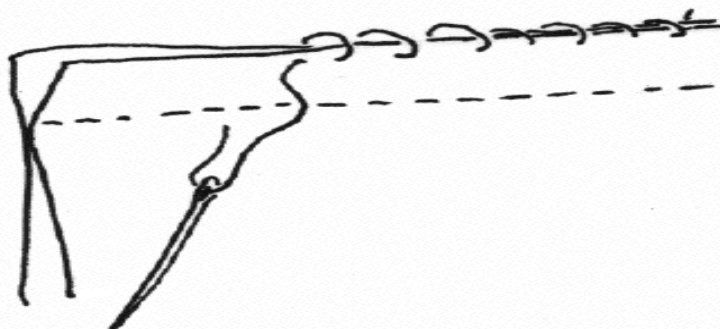
- Move the needle through to the top but leave enough space for an invisible stitch in between.
- Now you need to sew downwards, this time going backwards from your last stitch into the space where the invisible stitch should be. This is the backwards bit!
- Now on the bottom of the material you need to bring the needle up to the top, again leaving enough room for the next invisible stitch.
- Keep back stitching until you feel happy and confident.
- On the last downward stitch secure the thread with a knot or repeat stitch.



How to do over-sewing

Over-sewing is used to sew two pieces of material together, like a glove puppet.

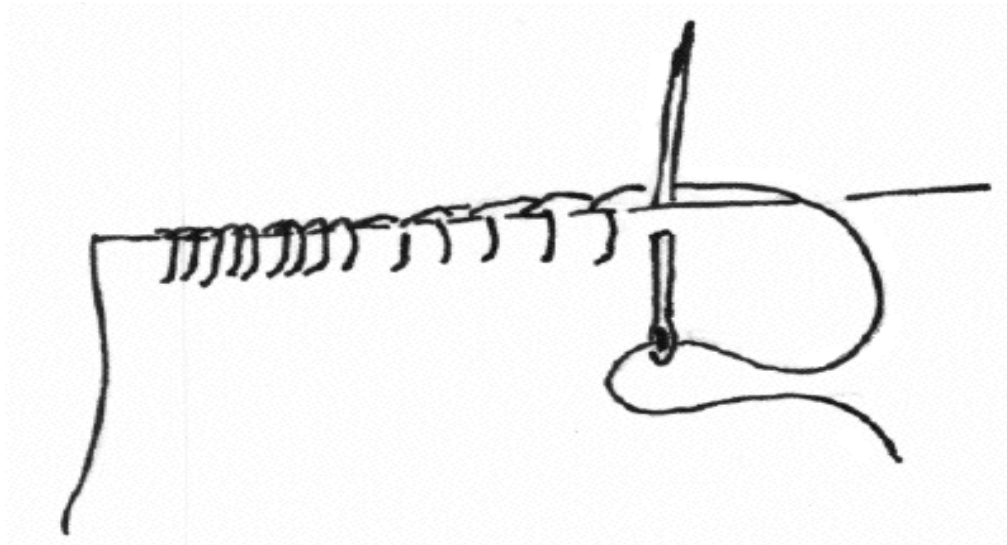
- Thread the needle and do a repeat stitch to make it secure.
- Now stitch into the material and back over the edge to make a loop.
- Keep going - make sure your stitches are the same size and not too close together.
- Don't pull the thread too tight or the material will start to crumple up.
- Make a repeat stitch at the end or tie a knot.



How to do a blanket stitch

This stitch looks really nice when used to tidy-up a messy edge or join two pieces of fabric together.

- Remember: For blanket stitch, always stitch with the edge of the material facing towards you and sew from the left to right side.
- Start by making your thread secure on the back of the material. Sew over the edge and move the needle through the front fabric (making the first 'upwards' bit of the stitch). This is stitch 1.
- For stitch 2 you need to pick a stop a centimetre inside the fabric and slightly to the right. Now sew downwards at this spot. Your stitch will look diagonal.
- Now come up through the fabric and catch the diagonal stitch - this is stitch 3 and it will pull it the whole thing straight and tight.
- Now start again from stitch 1.
- Helpful hint: A straight edge (like the edge of table) will help stop your sewing going wonky!



How to sew on buttons and beads

It's really useful to be able to sew on your buttons if they fall off! In quilting, adding lots of things to your quilt is called 'embellishing'. You can use it in loads of different ways and get all sorts of effects.

- Thread your needle with about 70cm of cotton. Tie the two ends of thread together with a knot.
- Secure the thread in the materials with a repeat stitch.
- Now get your button or bead and pass the needle through one hole. Then loop it through the next hole. Keep going, looping the needle and thread through the different holes until the button is secure. Tie a knot at the back if you need to or do a repeat stitch on the back.
- It's the same for beads, just fewer holes to worry about!

