

sewing with
nancy

#1704

Serge Ahead



By Nancy Zieman

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When I present seminars around the country, I usually ask, "How many of you are serger owners?" Year by year, the number of hands raised increases. Then I ask a second question: "How many of you really use your serger for more than finishing seams?" Many hands go down.

I think that's unfortunate! The serger has so much potential for doing things other than finishing seams.

In this book, I start with the basics of serging: setting up the machine for basic serger stitches, seaming, using differential feed, and wrapping corners. But there's more!

In addition to learning how to serge a basic 3/4 thread overlock, you'll see how to ease using differential feed, save time with the Ruffling Foot, and get creative with decoratively serged edges.

Next, take the mystery out of serging professional-looking rolled edges and flatlock stitches. Learn how to add an attractive rolled edge to ribbon or sheer fabric. See how to flatlock so either "ladder" or "loop" stitches are visible; then experiment with using the flatlock to blind hem.

Finally, take a look at specialty serger stitches: the cover stitch and the chain stitch. Whether strictly utilitarian or elegantly decorative, these stitches are a definite plus in your serging repertoire.

So get out that serger, and serge ahead with me as we discover the joy of serging.

Serging a 3/4 Thread Overlock



An overlock is the most basic of serger stitches. An overlock stitches a seam, finishes its edges, and trims the seam—all at the same time. It's a definite timesaver! Two looper threads interlock and encase the fabric edge, while one (or two) needle threads secure the opposite edges of the looper threads.

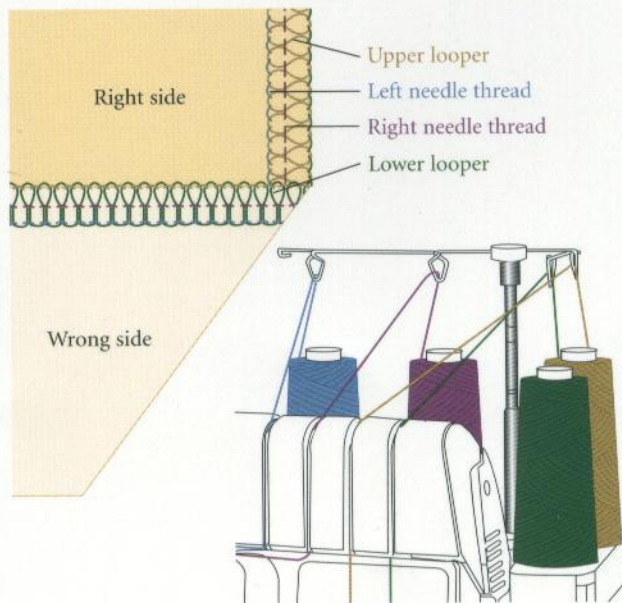
Overlock Basics

1. Thread the machine as indicated in the owner's manual.

- Select appropriate threads.
 - Ply: Traditional all-purpose thread for the sewing machine is three-ply, with three individual strands twisted together to form one thread. Conventional serging thread is two-ply, so only two twisted strands form the thread. A two-ply thread, lighter in weight than a three-ply thread, is important since three or four threads make up a serged overlock stitch.
 - All-purpose serger threads are generally cross-wound on cones. Because the threads pass through the machine at high speeds, they should be of uniform thickness and high strength, with a minimum amount of linting.



- Specialty threads suited for decorative serging are available in a wide range of colors and textures. Heavier threads are best suited for use in loopers, rather than in serger needles.
- Thread the serger. To get a clearer picture of exactly how the serged overlock stitch is produced, thread each of the four positions with a different color of thread. Then serge on a fabric scrap to see exactly where each thread appears.



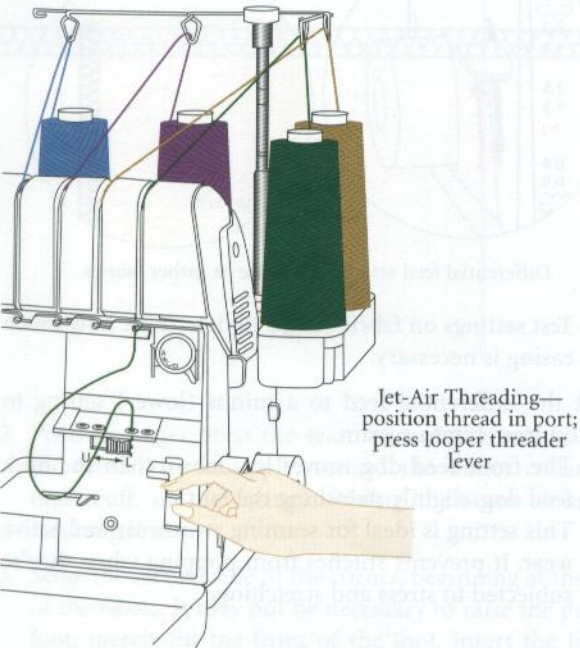


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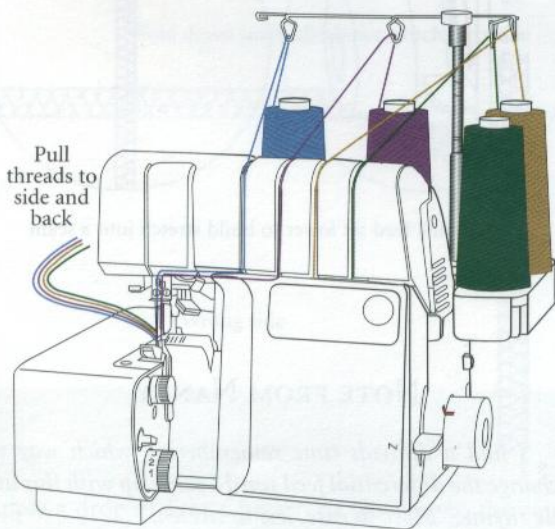
NOTE FROM NANCY

Some machines, for example, Baby Lock®, have a unique “Jet-Air Threading System.” You merely have to position the looper threads in the threading ports and press the threading lever inside the front cover to automatically thread the loopers. Other machines provide a detailed threading sequence specifying the paths and sequence in which each thread must be added. Check your owner’s manual to see what is appropriate for your machine.



Jet-Air Threading—
position thread in port;
press looper threader
lever

- Pull the threads to the side and back of the machine after completing threading.

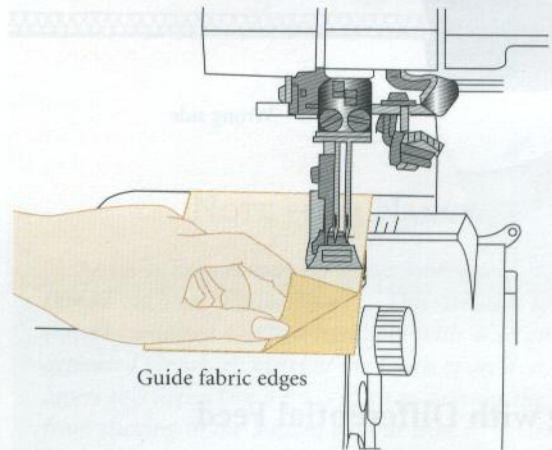
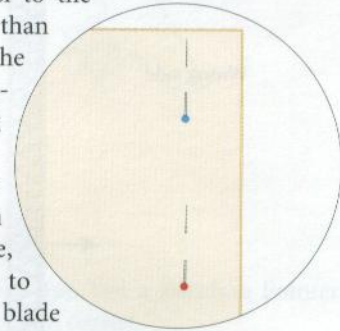


Pull
threads to
side and
back

- Serge on a fabric scrap to ensure threading and settings are correct and the stitch is balanced. Adjust settings as necessary.

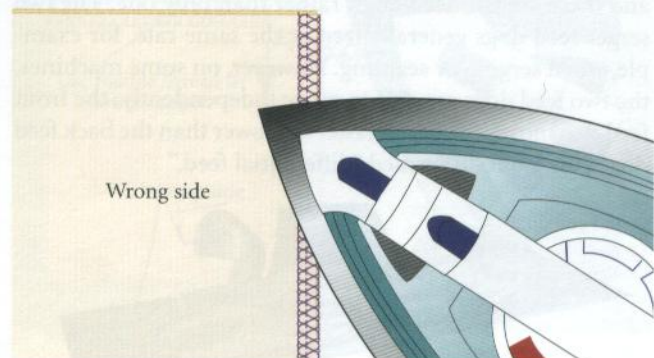
2. Serge an overlock seam.

- Use an overlock to seam lightweight to medium weight woven or knit fabrics, as well as to provide functional or decorative edge finishes.
- Serge the seam.
 - Place pins parallel to the seam edge, rather than at right angles to the edge as is customary for sewing machine stitching. If you forget to remove a pin when you serge, you won’t have to worry about the blade hitting the pin and damaging the cutting surface.
 - Place pins toward the inside of the project, rather than within the seam allowance.
 - It may not be necessary to use as many pins when serging. Fingers can often serve effectively as “pins.”
 - Guide the fabric edges along a mark or guide designating the seam allowance. A serged seam allowance can be $\frac{1}{4}$ ", $\frac{3}{8}$ ", or any desired width. Position the fabric so the needle is positioned the desired distance from the fabric edge.



Guide fabric edges

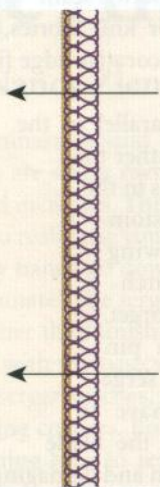
- Press the seam.
 - Press the seam flat, just as it was stitched.



Wrong side

- Press the seam to one side.

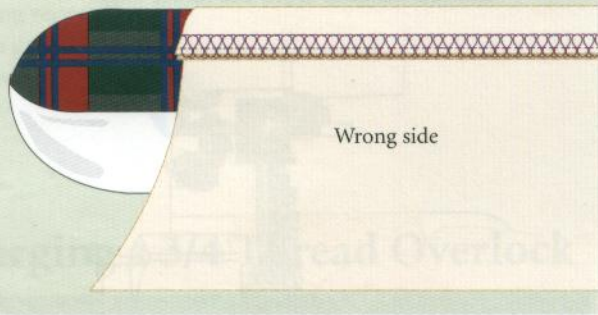
Wrong side



NOTE FROM NANCY

With heavier fabrics, press over a seam roll to prevent the edge of the seam allowance from leaving an imprint on the right side of the fabric.

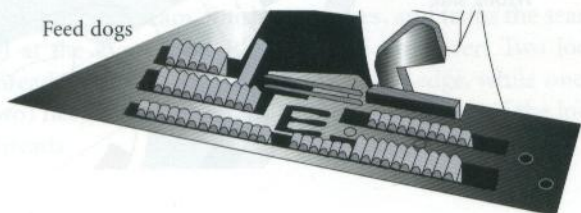
Wrong side



Easing with Differential Feed

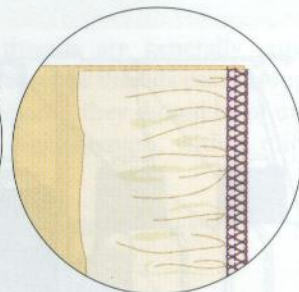
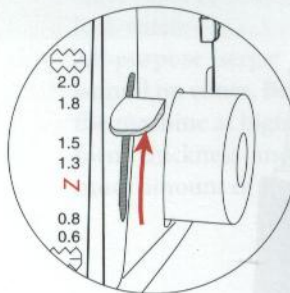
Sewing machines and sergers both have feed dogs. The function of the feed dogs is to grab the fabric and feed it through the machine under the presser foot. Serger feed dogs are generally longer than those for sewing machines, and there are two feed dogs, rather than only one. The two serger feed dogs generally feed at the same rate, for example, when serging or seaming. However, on some machines, the two feed dogs are able to move independently; the front feed dog moves the fabric faster or slower than the back feed dog. This ability is termed “differential feed.”

Feed dogs



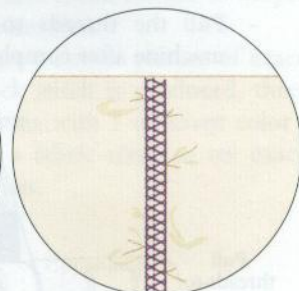
1. Set the differential feed to a plus (higher) setting to ease or gather fabric.

- The front feed dog feeds more fabric than the back feed dog.
- Use the longest stitch length for maximum gathering.
- This setting is appropriate for easing sleeves or gathering an edge, especially on sheer or lightweight fabrics. You'll find lots of applications for easing or gathering on home decorating projects, bridal wear, and evening wear, too.



Differential feed set higher to ease or gather fabrics

- Test settings on fabric scraps to determine how much easing is necessary.
2. Set the differential feed to a minus (lower) setting to build stretch into a seam.
- The front feed dog moves less fabric than the back feed dog, slightly stretching the fabric.
 - This setting is ideal for seaming swimwear and active wear. It prevents stitches from popping when they're subjected to stress and stretching.



Differential feed set lower to build stretch into a seam

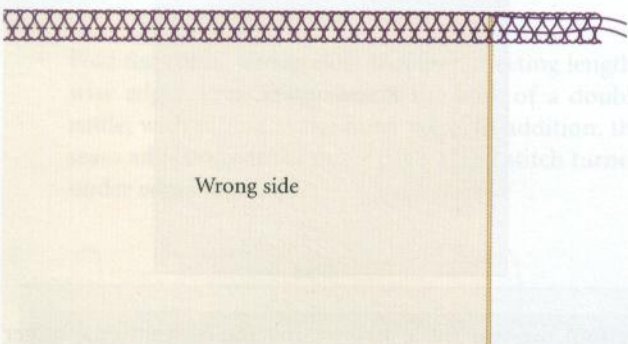
NOTE FROM NANCY

I had a difficult time remembering which way to change the differential feed until I came up with this little rhyme: “More to ease, less to stretch!”

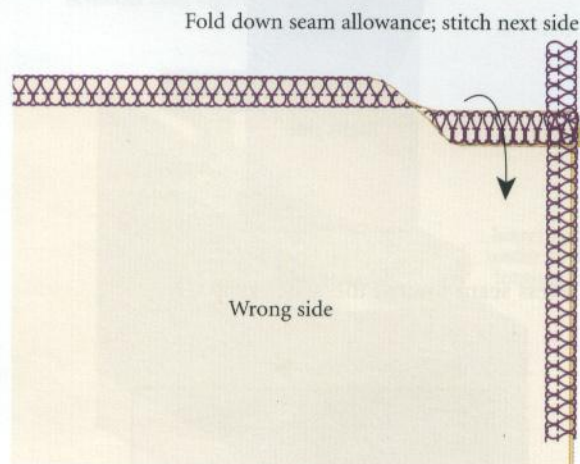
Wrapping Corners

Wrapping corners is one of my favorite techniques with a conventional sewing machine. Wrapped corners eliminate bulk and give smooth, professional looking results. You can effortlessly duplicate the wrapped corner technique on a serger. Wrap corners on collars, cuffs, shirt fronts...you'll find many ways to use this wrapped wonder. It's another way of serging ahead to use that potential tucked away in your machine.

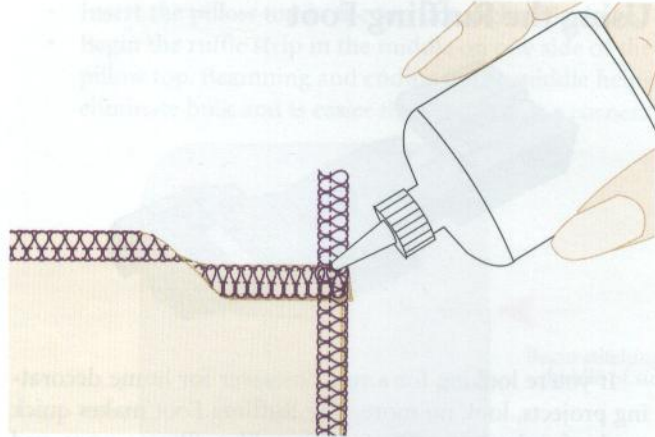
1. Serge one seam of the corner as detailed on page 3, serging off the edge of the fabric.



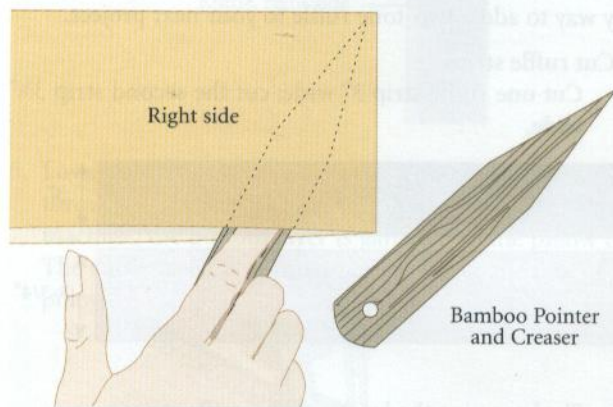
2. Press or finger press the seam toward the underside of the fabric (for example, toward the under collar, the undercuff, or the facing), folding the seam along the stitching line.
3. Serge the second side of the corner, beginning at the fold of the fabric. It may not be necessary to raise the presser foot; merely lift the front of the foot, insert the fabric, and serge, at the same time trimming the excess thread tail from the first seam.



4. Apply a drop of Fray Check™ or No-Fray to the corner to secure the threads; let it dry. Or, press with an iron to hasten drying. Then trim excess thread tails.

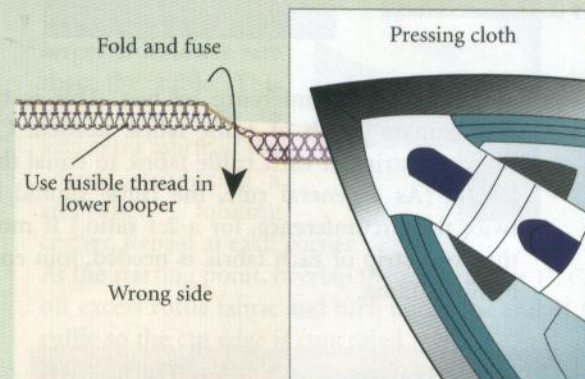


5. Turn the corner right side out. Use a Bamboo Pointer and Creaser to help get a crisp corner.

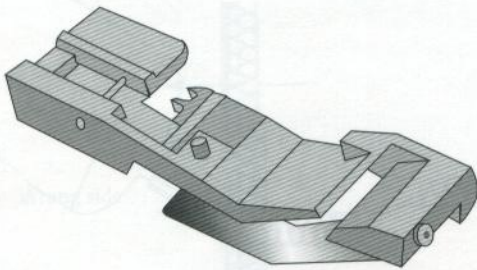


NOTE FROM NANCY

As an option, thread the lower looper with a fusible thread such as ThreadFuse™. This twisted specialty thread combines one synthetic ply with a second heat activated ply which melts at the touch of an iron, fusing layers together. (Use a press cloth to prevent the fusible from sticking to the bottom of your iron.)



Using the Ruffling Foot

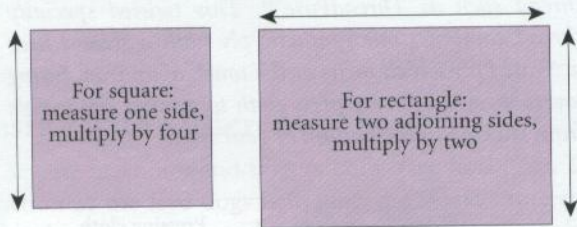


If you're looking for a real timesaver for home decorating projects, look no more. The Ruffling Foot makes quick work of gathering ruffles for things like pillows, swags, and dust ruffles. Eliminate the time ordinarily spent stitching basting stitches and gathering an edge; you'll accomplish more in less time with this unique foot. Here's a fast and easy way to add a two-tone ruffle to your next project.

- 1. Cut ruffle strips.
 - Cut one ruffle strip 3" wide; cut the second strip 3 3/4" wide.



- To determine the length of the ruffle strip:
 - Measure the outer edge of the pillow or item which will have the ruffle. If the item is square, measure one side and multiply by four. If the item is rectangular, measure two adjoining sides and multiply by two. This is the circumference of the item.



- Multiply the circumference by two. This is the approximate length of ruffle fabric needed. Cut sufficient strips of each ruffle fabric to equal that length. (As a general rule, the ruffle should be twice the circumference, for a 2:1 ratio.) If more than one strip of each fabric is needed, join ends before ruffling.

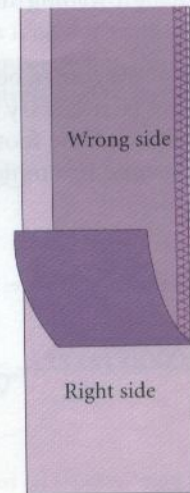
Circumference x 2 = ruffle length

- Test ruffling using fabric scraps before working with the actual fabric. For example, cut a 20" ruffle strip and attach it to a 10" flat strip. If some of the ruffle remains at the end of the 10" strip, the ratio is slightly less than 2:1. If some of the 10" strip remains, the ratio is slightly greater than 2:1. Adjust cut lengths accordingly.

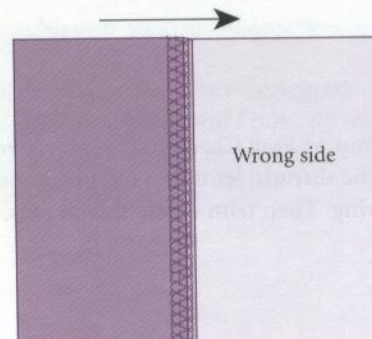
- 2. Round the corners of the pillow top to make it easier to attach the ruffle.



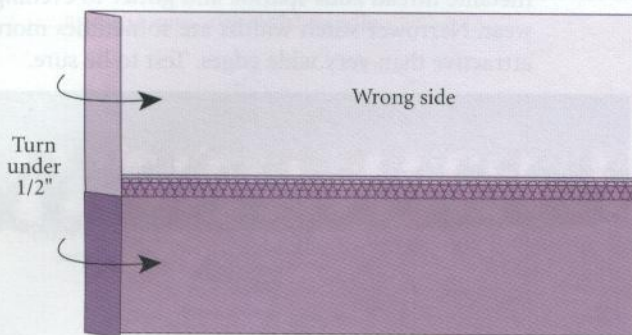
- 3. Join the two ruffle strips using the conventional serger presser foot.
 - Meet lengthwise edges of the two ruffle strips, right sides together. Serge using a traditional four-thread overlock.



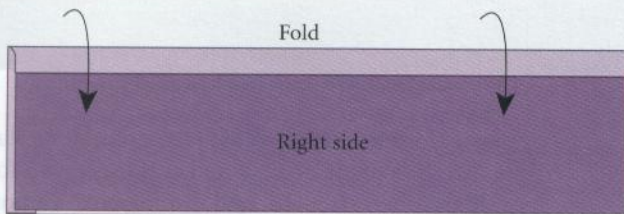
- Press seam toward the wider strip.



- Turn under $\frac{1}{2}$ " at the short edge of the ruffle.

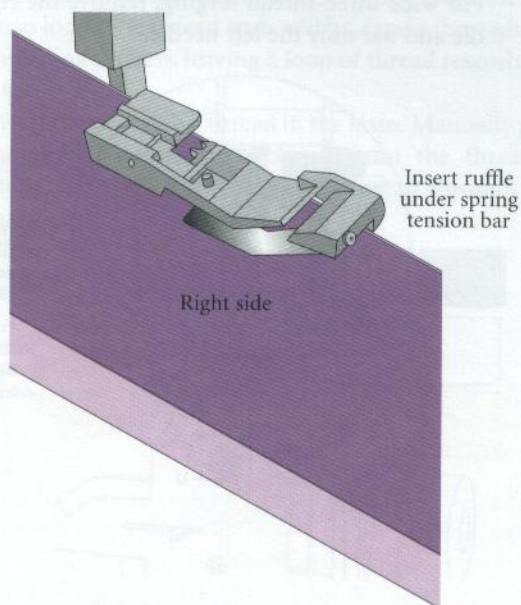


- Fold the ruffle, wrong sides together, meeting length-wise edges. Press. This creates the look of a double ruffle, with piping at the outer edge. In addition, the seam adds body at the outer edge. Hand stitch turned under edges together.

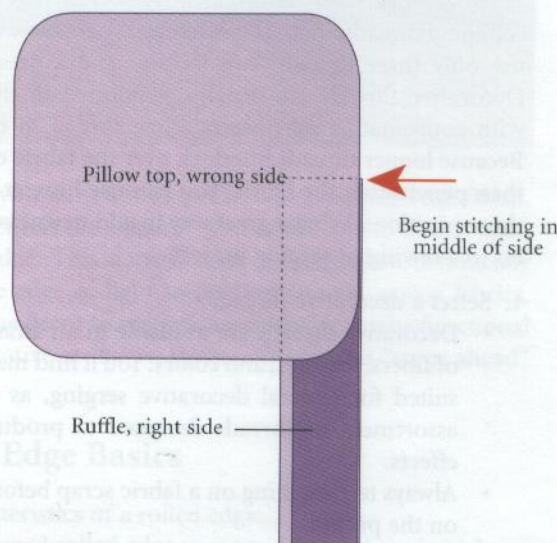


4. Attach the Ruffling Foot; insert the fabrics.

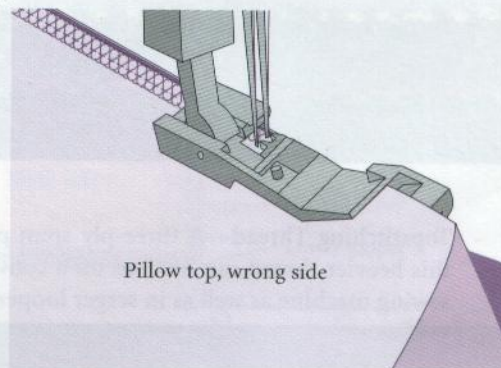
- Raise the presser bar; remove the usual foot and attach the Ruffling Foot. The foot includes two slots through which fabric may be positioned and fed through the machine.
- Raise the needle to its highest position.
- Insert the ruffle in the lower slot, under the spring tension bar, right side up.



- Insert the pillow top in the top slot, right side down.
- Begin the ruffle strip in the middle on one side of the pillow top. Beginning and ending in the middle helps eliminate bulk and is easier than starting at a corner.



5. Lower the Ruffling Foot. Serge, feeding the two fabrics through the machine. As the fabrics feed through the machine, the bottom layer is gathered to the pillow top. The ruffle feeds at approximately double the rate of the pillow.



- As you approach a corner, hold the pillow top taut. Apply tension so the top feeds through the serger at a slower rate than the ruffle. This allows the ruffle to add extra fabric at the corner, producing a smoother looking corner. Repeat at each corner.

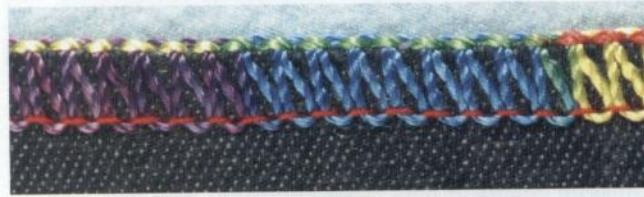


- At the starting point, overlap the ruffle about 1". Clip off excess ruffle fabric and turn under the end of the ruffle so the cut edge is concealed.
- Hand stitch the ruffle ends together to ensure edges are even.

Adding a Decorative Serged Edge

Now that you know the basics of serging, give your creativity free rein and explore some options for adding decorative accents. Easily add a creative serged edge by merely changing threads. Since the stitching is primarily decorative, use only three threads: two loopers and a needle thread. Decorative threads are usually positioned in the loopers, with coordinating all-purpose cone thread in the needle. Because looper threads interlock over the fabric edge rather than penetrating the fabric, you can use heavier threads in those positions. What a great way to add newness and interest to a sewing or serging project.

- 1. Select a decorative thread.
 - Decorative threads are available in an amazing range of fibers, textures, and colors. You'll find many threads suited for general decorative serging, as well as an assortment of threads designed to produce specific effects.
 - Always test stitching on a fabric scrap before stitching on the project.
 - Here's a sampling of some of the decorative threads currently available.
 - Pearl Crown Rayon—This 100% viscose rayon thread, available in both solid and variegated colorations, adds sheen and luster to a serged edge.



- Topstitching Thread—A three-ply spun polyester, this heavier thread can be used on a conventional sewing machine as well as in serger loopers.



- Woolly Nylon—Made of texturized nylon, this thread is super stretchy for serging soft, comfortable seams that require a lot of give and resilience, for example, in swimwear, lingerie, and baby wear. It also creates an attractive rolled edge finish, since it fills out the edge. For even greater coverage, try Woolly Nylon Extra. It provides three times the coverage of Woolly Nylon.



- Glamour—As the name implies, this heavyweight metallic thread adds sparkle and glitter to evening wear. Narrower stitch widths are sometimes more attractive than very wide edges. Test to be sure.



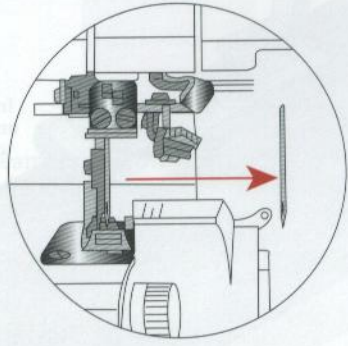
- Serger Success Yarn—A 100% acrylic yarn, this thread provides a soft nonglossy finish. Its nubbier, filled in appearance is ideal for edging baby or fleece projects.



- Sulky® Cotton Thread—This mercerized long staple thread is made of Egyptian cotton, known for its high fiber strength and uniformity. Cotton threads provide a more subtle luster.

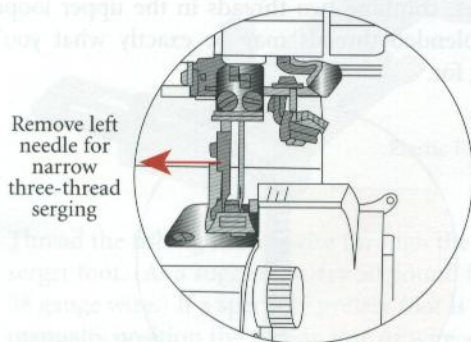


- 2. Determine whether you want the serged edge to be wide or narrow.
 - For wide three-thread serging, remove the right needle and use only the left needle.



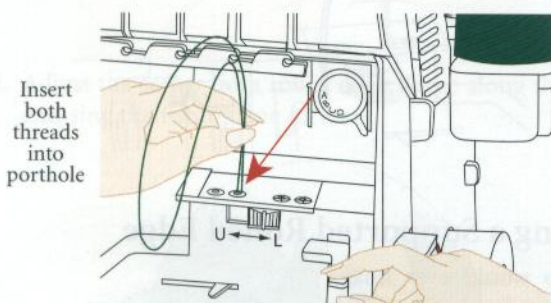
Remove right needle for wide three-thread serging

- For narrow three-thread serging (about half the width of serging with the left needle), remove the left needle and use only the right needle.

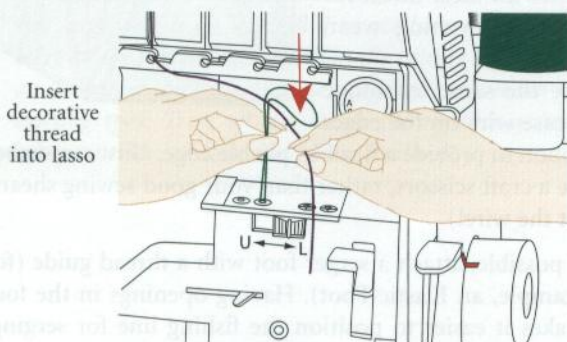


- Be sure to tighten the screw after removing either of the needles.
- The width of decorative stitching can also be modified by adjusting the serger's stitch width setting.

3. Thread the decorative thread with a "lasso." The Baby Lock® jet-air threading machines use the following process. Check your serger instruction manual for a technique appropriate for your machine.
 - Cut a yard of all-purpose serging thread.
 - Meet thread ends; insert both thread ends in the jet-air threading porthole.



- Depress the thread mechanism while holding onto the lasso loop. The thread ends will be drawn through the threading process, leaving a loop of thread resembling a lasso.
- Insert the decorative thread in the lasso. Manually pull the thread ends which extend from the threaded looper, advancing the decorative thread through the machine.



4. Serge as detailed above.

Serging a Rolled Edge

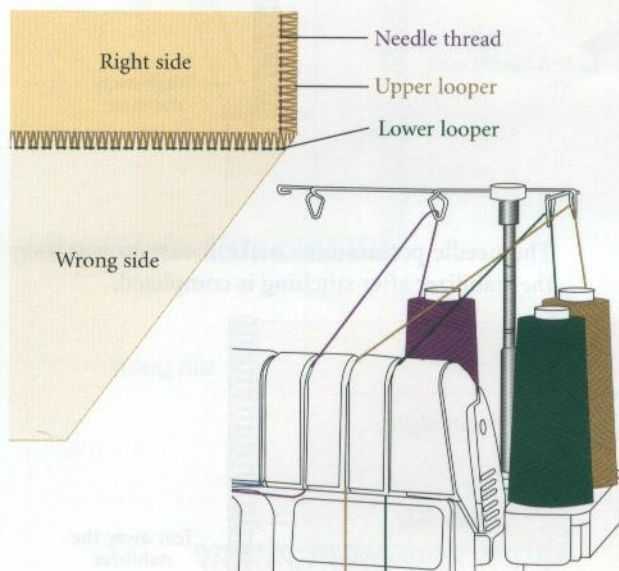


When you want a neat, professional looking edge finish, your serger has the answer—you need look no farther than a rolled edge. This narrow edge is designed to completely encase the edge of light to medium weight woven fabrics. From home décor to apparel, a rolled edge can be functional and decorative at the same time. It's a great "serge ahead" look.

Rolled Edge Basics

1. Characteristics of a rolled edge:

- A serged rolled edge uses two looper threads and one needle thread (usually the right needle).
 - The upper looper thread rolls around and encases the fabric edge. As a general rule, a rolled edge uses about three times as much upper looper thread as needle or lower looper threads.
 - The lower looper thread is barely visible in the completed rolled edge.
 - The needle thread secures the edges of the two looper threads.

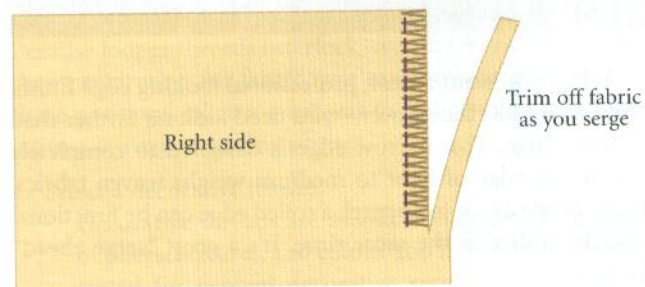


- A rolled edge requires a short stitch length and a narrow stitch width.
- A different presser foot and/or plate are sometimes required for serging a rolled edge. Check your owner's manual to see specific requirements for your machine.
- Some machines require tension or other adjustments. Again, check your owner's manual.

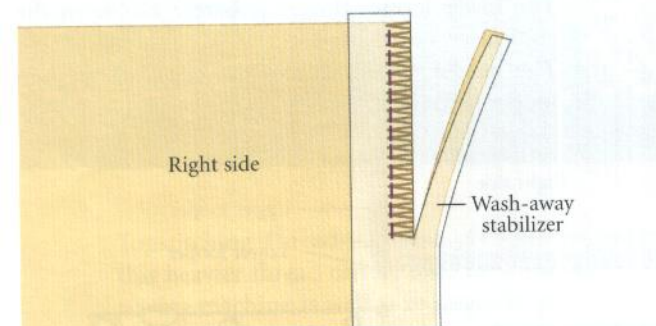
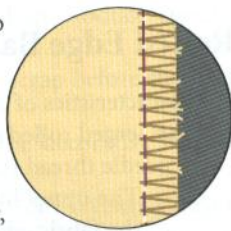
until you're pleased with the stitch.

3. Serging a rolled edge:

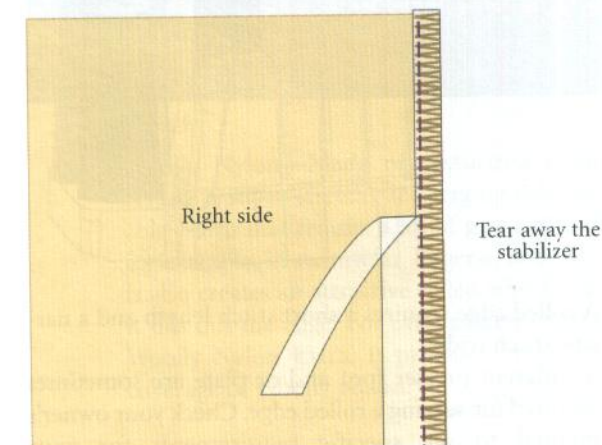
- Set up the machine as indicated.
- For best results, trim off a small amount of fabric as you serge.



- Bits of fibers, often referred to as "pokies," sometimes protrude from a rolled edge, especially on the crosswise grain or on ravel-prone fabrics.
 - To eliminate pokies, place a strip of wash-away stabilizer, such as Avalon by Madeira, on top of the fabric and serge over the stabilizer.

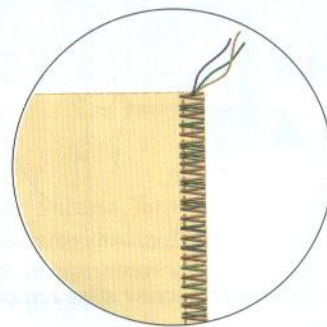


- The needle perforations make it easy to tear away the stabilizer after stitching is completed.

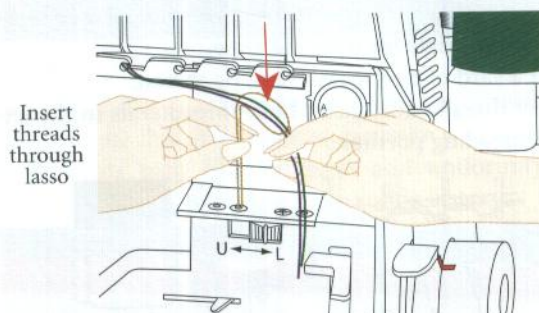


- Remove any remaining stabilizer by spritzing with water.

the coloration, texture, or look you desire. In such instances, combine two threads in the upper looper. These blended threads may be exactly what you're looking for.

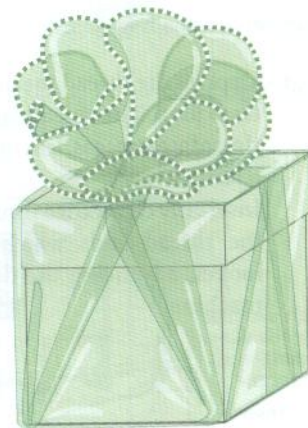


- Use the lasso technique detailed on page 9 (or another technique appropriate for your serger) to thread both threads through the upper looper.



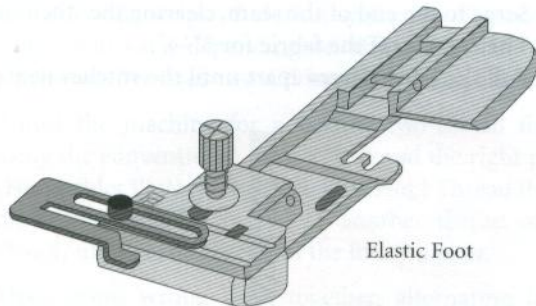
Adding a Supported Rolled Edge

Who would ever imagine that a lovely fabric like chiffon and a fishing tackle box might have something in common? The next time you need a wrap for a special gift consider using chiffon. Then use your serger and fishing line to add support and stability to the edge. It's an ideal finish for bridal and evening wear, too.



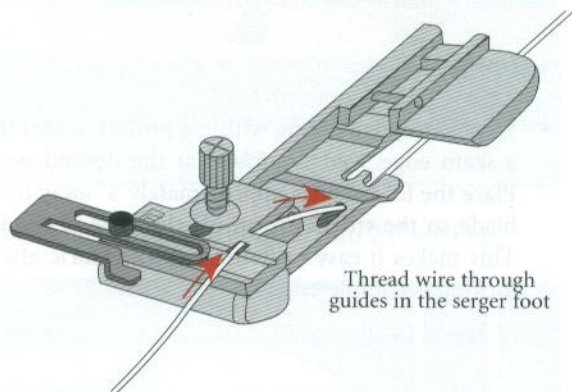
Use the same technique to encase wire on the edges of ribbon to provide a flexible, pliable edge. (Just remember to use a craft scissors, rather than your good sewing shears, to cut the wire!)

1. If possible, attach a serger foot with a thread guide (for example, an Elastic Foot). Having openings in the foot makes it easier to position the fishing line for serging, especially on lightweight fabrics.



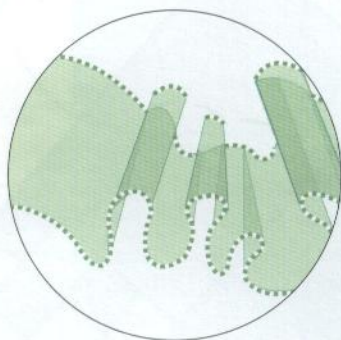
Elastic Foot

2. Thread the fishing line or wire through the guides in the serger foot. (As a suggestion, try 50 pound fishing line or 28 gauge wire.) If a specialty presser foot is not available, manually position the fishing line or wire along the fabric edge.



Thread wire through guides in the serger foot

3. Adjust the serger for a rolled edge. Serge along the edge, encasing the fishing line or wire.



NOTE FROM NANCY

Sometimes it's easier to add the wire or fishing line if you serge over it for a small distance before starting to serge on the fabric. Then position the fishing line or wire on the fabric, and continue serging until you reach the starting spot. Trim off the excess fishing line or wire using a utility scissors, and you're finished!

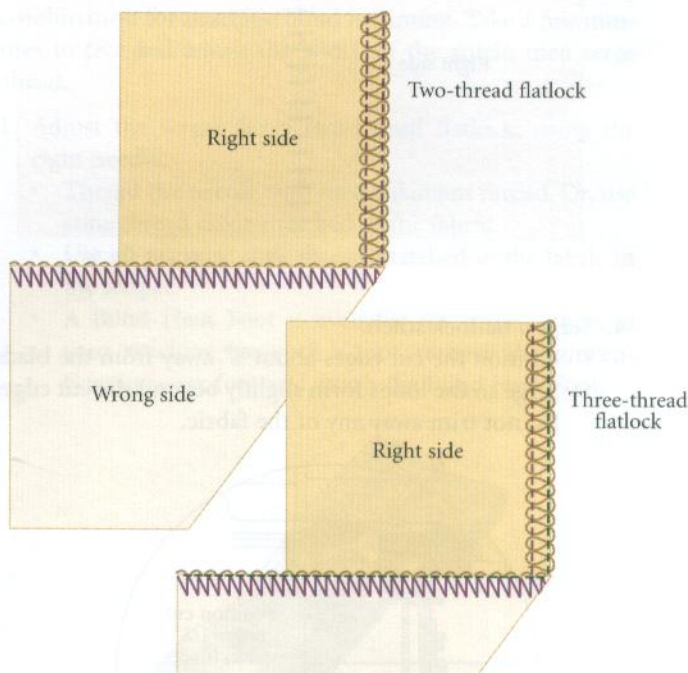
Flatlocking



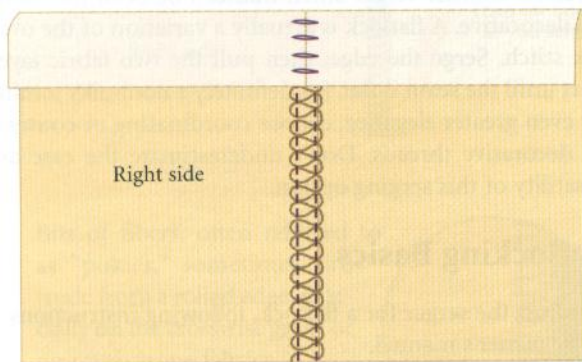
Here's another serger stitch that can be both functional and decorative. A flatlock is actually a variation of the overlock stitch. Serge the edge; then pull the two fabric layers apart until the seam is flat. It's definitely a nonbulky joining. For even greater elegance, choose coordinating or contrasting decorative threads. Don't underestimate the ease and versatility of this serging option.

Flatlocking Basics

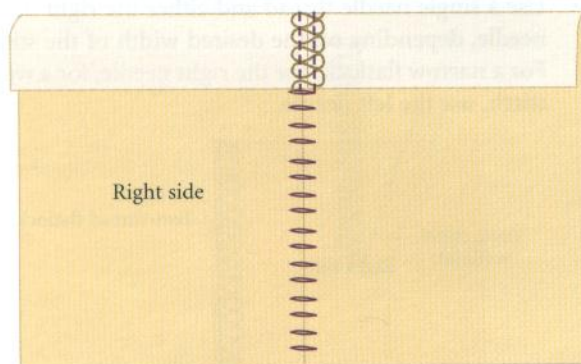
1. Adjust the serger for a flatlock, following instructions in the owner's manual.
 - Some flatlocks use only two threads, while others use three.
 - Thread one looper for a two-thread flatlock. Thread both loopers for a three-thread flatlock.
 - Use a single needle thread and either the right or left needle, depending on the desired width of the stitch. For a narrow flatlock, use the right needle; for a wider stitch, use the left needle.



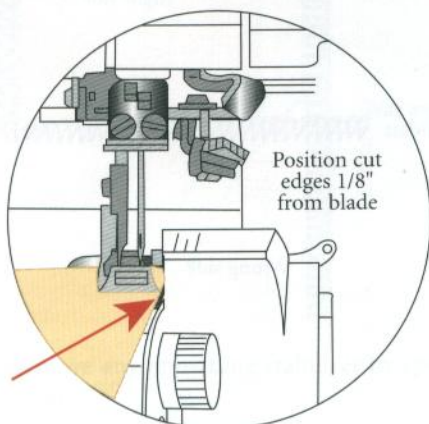
2. Select threads.
 - For flatlocking that is primarily functional, use all-purpose cone threads.
 - For decorative flatlocking, use decorative threads in both the needle and the looper(s).
3. Determine which threads should be visible in the finished project.
 - To have the looper thread(s) visible, serge with wrong sides together.



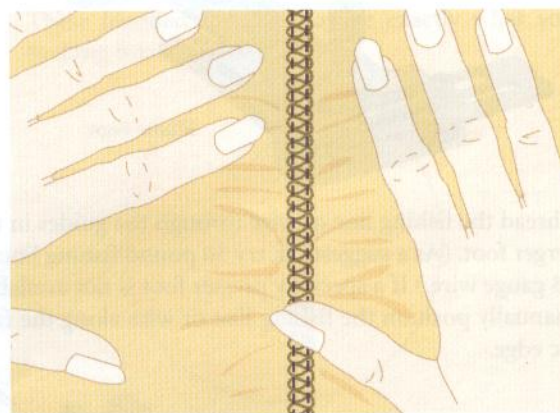
- To have the needle threads visible ("ladder" stitches), serge with right sides together.



4. Serge a flatlock stitch.
 - Position the cut edges about $\frac{1}{8}$ " away from the blade. Serge so the loops form slightly beyond the cut edges. Do not trim away any of the fabric.

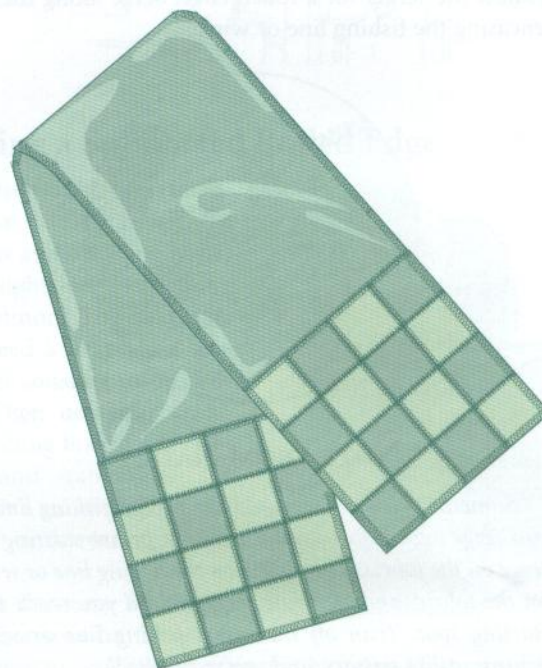


- Serge to the end of the seam, clearing the stitch finger. Then chain off the fabric for 3"—4".
- Pull the fabric layers apart until the stitches lie flat.



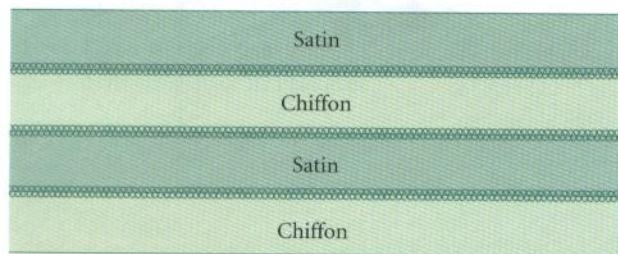
- To position flatlocking within a project, rather than at a seam edge, fold the fabric at the desired position. Place the folded edge approximately $\frac{1}{8}$ " away from the blade so the stitches form off the edge of the fabric. This makes it easy to flatten out the fabric after flatlocking is completed.

Adding Flatlock Patchwork to a Scarf

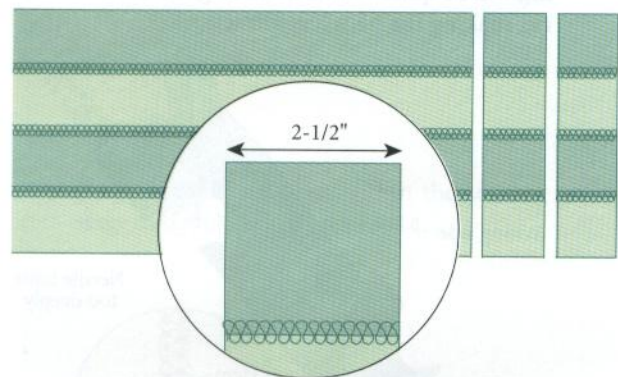


This elegant scarf has pieced patchwork at each end featuring flatlocking options. We adapted a design found in an exclusive boutique, seaming satin and chiffon fabrics with flatlocking, and then flattening the fabrics to display loop or ladder stitches. Decorative threads add to the elegance of the nonbulky seam design.

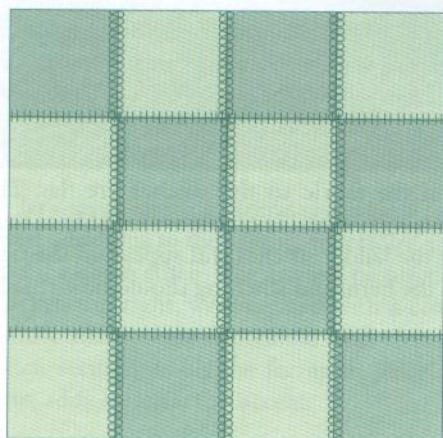
1. Cut $2\frac{1}{2}$ " wide strips of chiffon and satin. (Number and length will vary, depending on the desired amount of patchwork. We used two 45" lengths of each fabric.)
2. Adjust the machine for a narrow two-thread flatlock, using the conventional presser foot and the right needle. (For a wider flatlock, use the left needle.) Thread the needle with a metallic thread or another thread of your choice; use a rayon thread in the lower looper.
3. Meet strips, wrong sides together, alternating fabrics. Flatlock the strips, guiding fabrics about $\frac{1}{8}$ " away from the blade so none of the fabric is trimmed away. Loop stitches will be visible on the right sides of the fabrics.



4. Flatten the strips; subcut them into $2\frac{1}{2}$ " sections.

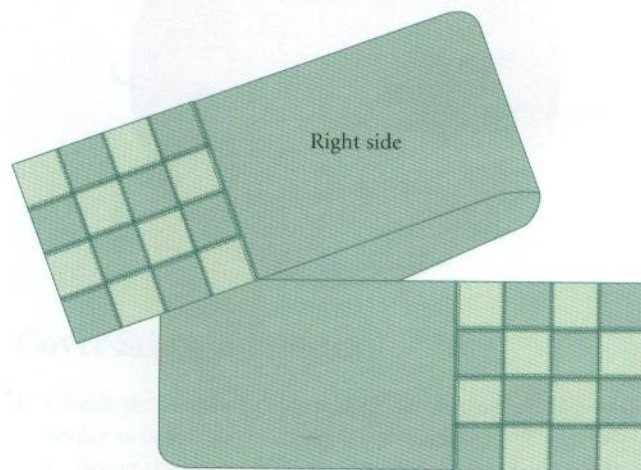


5. Rotate alternate sections 180 degrees to form a patchwork design, meeting a satin section on one strip to a sheer section on the next. Join sections with flatlocking, right sides together. Ladder stitches will be visible on the right sides of the fabrics.



Arrange strips; flatlock with right sides together

6. Join as many sections as needed for each end of the scarf.
7. Cut a satin strip the same width as the patchwork and as long as desired. Flatlock a patchwork section to each end of the satin, right sides together.

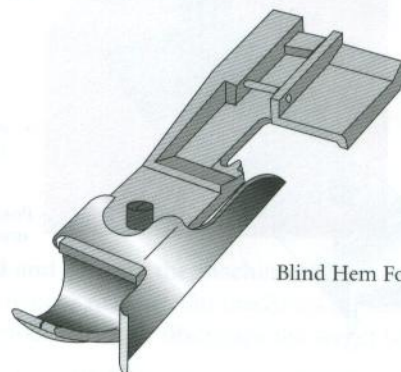


8. Serge around outer edges with an overlock or rolled edge to complete the scarf.

Flatlocking a Blind Hem

The flatlock stitch can go from creative to practical by simply changing the thread. A serger Blind Hem Foot, clear monofilament thread, and a flatlock stitch are a winning combination for machine blind hemming. Take a few minutes to test and adjust the width of the stitch; then serge ahead.

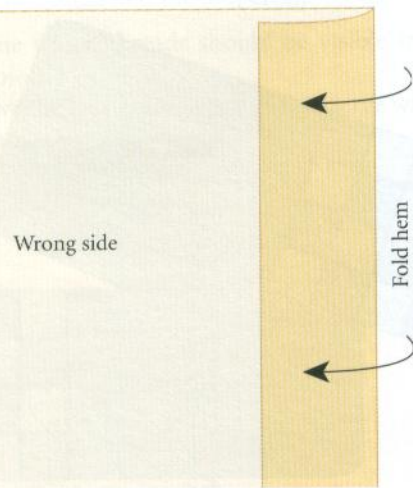
1. Adjust the serger for a two-thread flatlock, using the right needle.
 - Thread the needle with monofilament thread. Or, use cone thread color-matched to the fabric.
 - Use all-purpose cone thread matched to the fabric in the looper.
 - A Blind Hem Foot is available for some sergers. If your machine has such a foot, remove the conventional presser foot and attach the Blind Hem Foot.



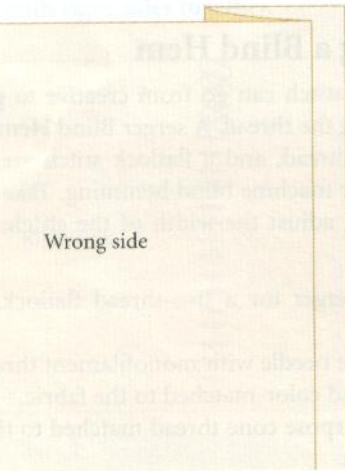
Blind Hem Foot

- Slightly lengthen the stitch length. Not as much thread coverage is needed as for the patchwork.

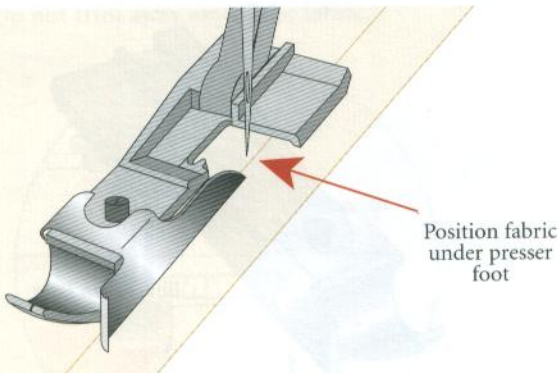
2. Fold up the hemline.



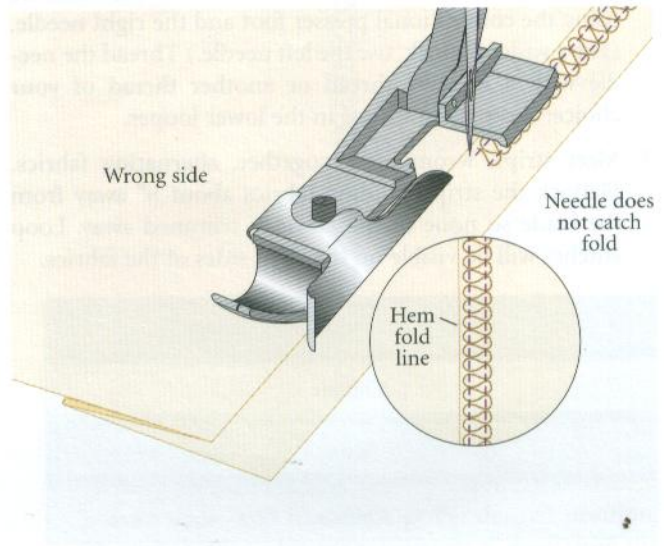
3. Fold back the body of the garment, exposing about 1/2" of the hem allowance.



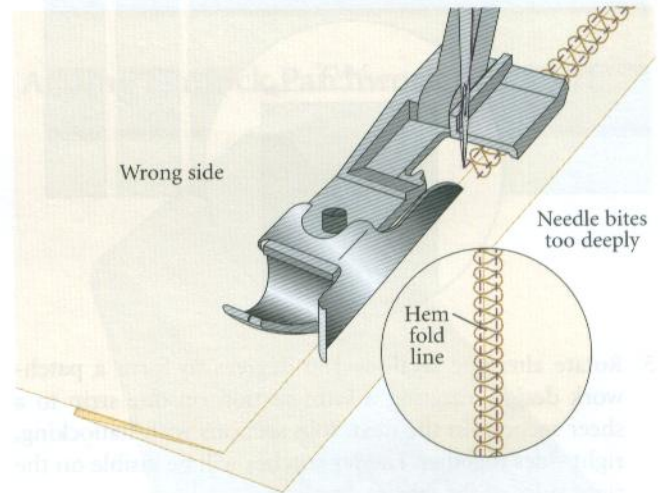
4. Position the fabric under the presser foot and hem the garment.



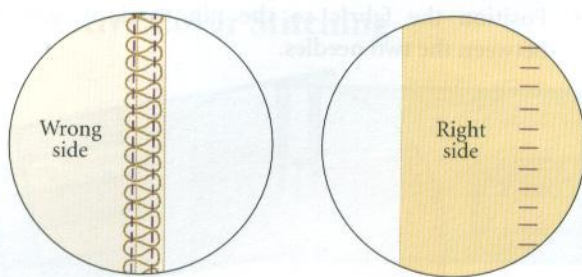
- Check the needle position. The needle should just catch the fold of the fabric.
 - If the needle doesn't catch the fold of the fabric, the hem won't be secured.



- If the needle catches too much of the fabric, stitching will be quite visible on the right side of the fabric, making the hem less attractive.



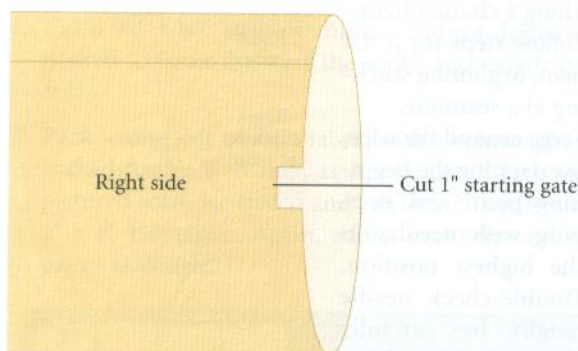
- One way of adjusting where the needle catches the fabric is to loosen the screw on the top of the Blind Hem Foot. Adjust the guide bar so it aligns with the folded edge of the fabric. Tighten the screw.
- Flatlock along the edge.
- Flatten the fabric so the stitches are flat. The loop stitches will be visible on the wrong side of the fabric, while the ladder stitches will appear on the right side. Press the hem, and stitching should be virtually invisible.



Properly adjusted stitch

5. To use a flatlock to hem a circular hem (for example, on a skirt, pants, or top):

- Prepare the hem as indicated above.
- Cut a starting gate about 1" long, trimming away the hem allowance in that area.

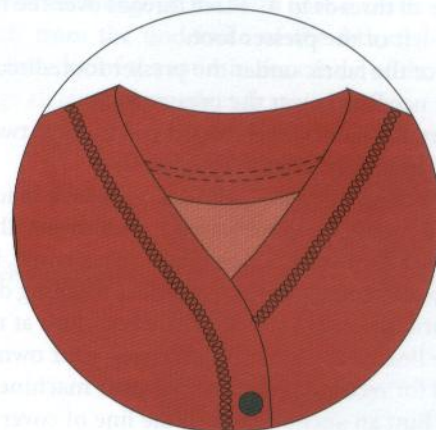


- Position the serger foot within the starting gate and serge as detailed on pages 13–14.

Serging a Cover Stitch

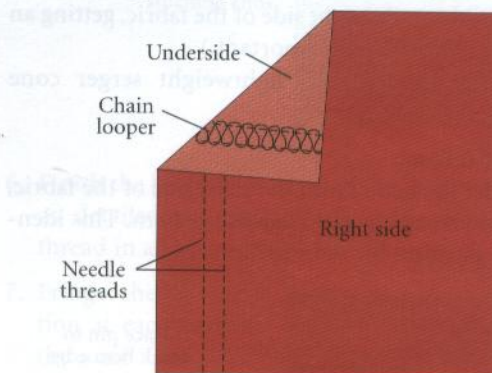


Next, let's serge ahead to some specialty serger stitches. The newest additions to the serging repertoire are the cover stitch and the chain stitch. The accents pictured above and on the jacket, top right, were created with a cover stitch, a serger stitch that's both functional and decorative. The cover stitch securely holds the facing in place, and at the same time, adds an attractive accent.



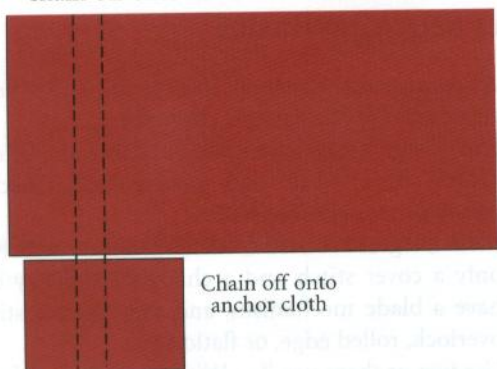
Cover Stitching Basics

1. Check your owner's manual to determine whether your serger is capable of serging a cover stitch.
 - Some sergers now have up to 8–10 threads. Often they can be converted to stitch a cover stitch. Check your owner's manual for specifics.
 - Some sergers are stand-alone machines which stitch only a cover stitch and a chain stitch. They do not have a blade mechanism, and they cannot stitch an overlock, rolled edge, or flatlock.
 - Use two or three needles. With two needles, the stitch simulates a double needle stitch. Using three needles produces three parallel rows of stitches. This stitching will appear on the right side of the fabric provided fabric is right side up during serging.
 - Using the left and right needles produces the widest stitch.
 - Using the center and right needles produces a narrower cover stitch.
 - The chain looper is visible on the underside of the fabric. If you want that portion of the stitch to be visible on the right side of the fabric, serge with the wrong side up.



2. Thread and prepare the machine following instructions in the owner's manual. On machines capable of stitching an overlock, cover or disengage the serger blades.
3. Always test stitching on a scrap before serging on the project.

- Cut all threads to 4". Place threads over the top and to the left of the presser foot.
- Place the fabric under the presser foot, directly below the needles. Lower the presser foot.
- Turn the hand wheel toward you to form two or three stitches. Then start to serge slowly.
- Complete the seam. All basic overlock machines are able to stitch without fabric underneath the presser foot. However, when serging a cover stitch, it's generally recommended that you start stitching directly on fabric and that you use an anchor cloth at the end of the line of stitching. Again, check your owner's manual for recommendations for your machine.
 - Butt an anchor cloth to the line of cover stitching; chain off onto the anchor cloth.



- Clip the threads between the anchor cloth and the project.

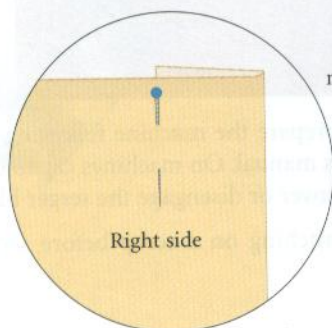
Using the Cover Stitch to Hem and Topstitch

1. Thread the serger.

- Thread the needles with all-purpose thread matched to the fabric. (Often it's difficult to find cone threads that exactly match the fabric. Because these threads will be visible on the right side of the fabric, getting an accurate color match is important.)
- Thread the looper with lightweight serger cone thread.

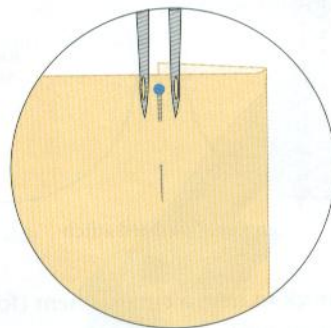
2. Stitching a flat hem:

- Fold under the hem. From the right side of the fabric, place a pin along the top edge of the hem. This identifies the position for the stitching.



Place pin to mark hem edge

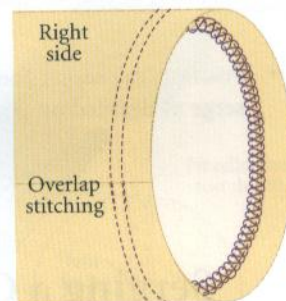
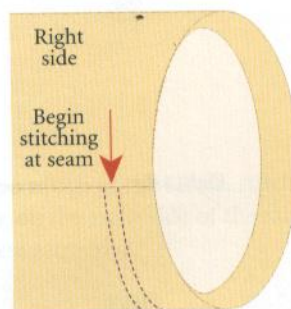
- Position the fabric so the pin mark is centered between the two needles.



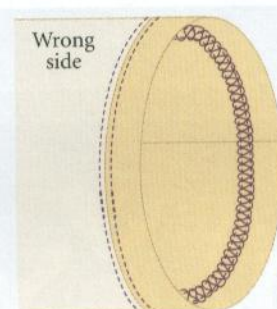
- Remove the pin and serge along the edge, straddling the pin mark position with the needles.

3. Stitching a circular hem:

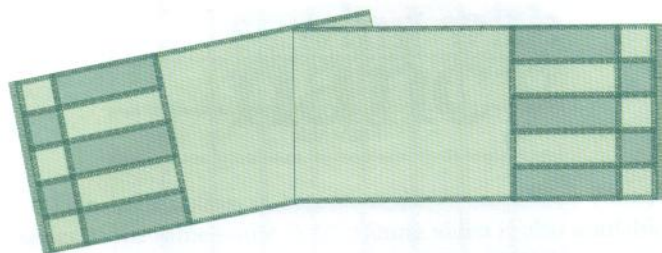
- Follow steps for a flat hem, beginning stitching at a seamline.
- Serge around the edge, overlapping the beginning point and stopping with needles in the highest position. Double-check needle height by carefully reversing the hand wheel until the needles are in highest position.
- Raise the presser foot, firmly grasp the fabric and carefully pull threads from behind to release the tension.
- Clip threads.



- 4. To have the decorative looper visible on the right side of the fabric, serge as above, but serge from the **wrong** side, centering the hem edge between the two needles.

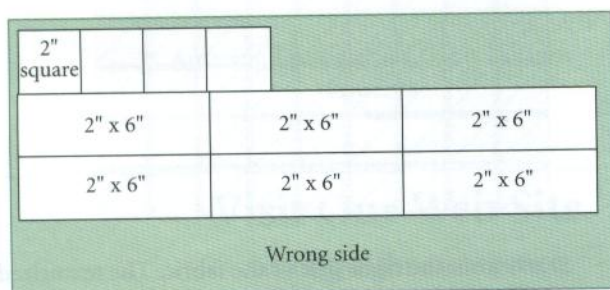


Decorative Cover Stitching

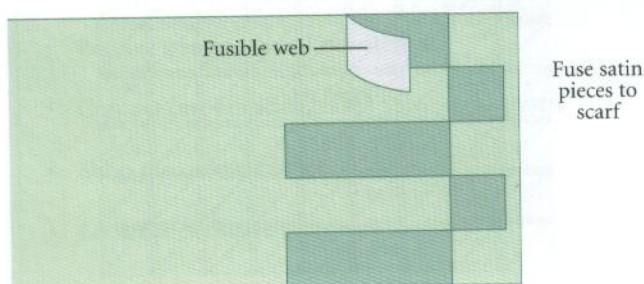


Whether you're working with durable denim or sheer chiffon, your serger really doesn't know the difference—or care! It's practically oblivious to fabric types, and it stitches equally as well on a variety of fabric weights. This chiffon and satin scarf features decorative rayon cover stitch highlights purely as a decorative accent.

1. Cut a 9½" x 60" strip of chiffon. (Adjust dimensions as desired to make the scarf the width and length you prefer.)
2. Back wrong side of satin fabric with a lightweight paper-backed fusible web such as AppliqEase™ Lite. (For the pictured scarf, we traced and cut four 2" squares and six 2" x 6" rectangles. Again, adjust numbers and sizes of pieces as desired.)



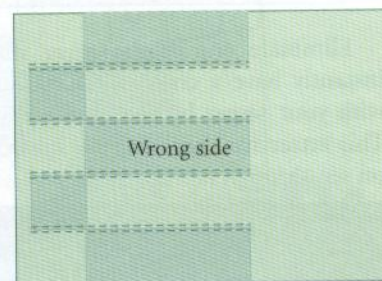
3. Remove paper backing from satin. Arrange squares and rectangles as shown, or create any design you prefer. Position squares ½" from the short ends of the scarf to allow room for fringing the ends of the scarf. Fuse satin in place. It's advisable to cover the satin with a pressing cloth to avoid damaging the surface of the fabric.



4. Adjust machine for a cover stitch, threading the chain looper and the left and right needles with a decorative thread such as rayon embroidery thread. This thread adds luster without a lot of weight.

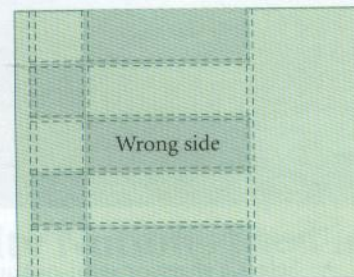
5. Serge over each edge of the satin with a cover stitch.
 - Stitch from the underside of the fabric, positioning the cut edge of the satin in the center of the foot.
 - Serge all lengthwise edges first.

Serge lengthwise edges



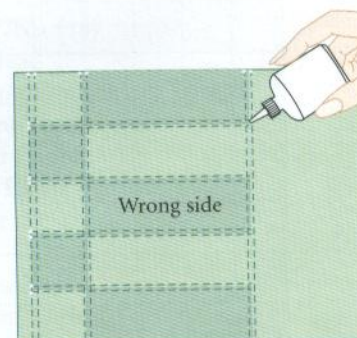
- Next, serge crosswise edges.

Serge crosswise edges

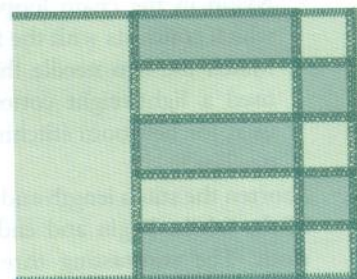


- Raise the needles, making sure they're at the highest position. Lift the presser foot; remove fabric from the serger by firmly grasping the fabric and pulling the threads to the back of the machine.
- Trim thread tails. Apply a drop of seam sealant such as Fray Check™ to each end of the cover stitching.

Apply seam sealant to stitching ends



6. Finish the lengthwise edges of the scarf with a rolled edge as detailed on pages 9–10, using rayon embroidery thread in all positions.
7. Fringe the ½" section at each end of the scarf.



Chain Stitch

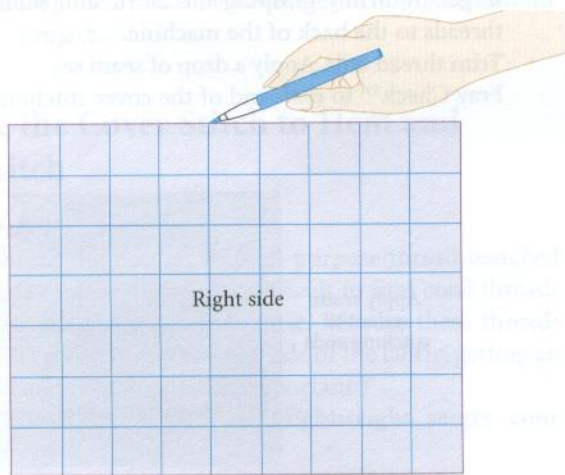


Eliminate one of the cover stitch needles, and you'll instantly have a chain stitch. Create an heirloom project with your serger by combining cover and chain stitching. This attractive keepsake box showcases contrasting thread on see-through fabric.



1. Prepare the fabric.

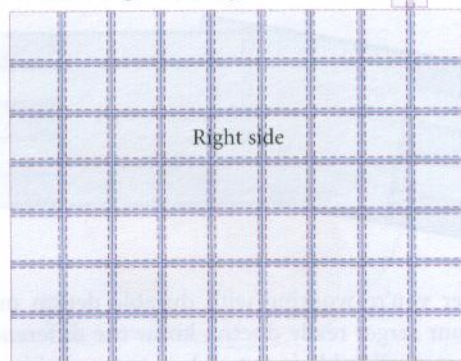
- Select a sheer or semi-opaque fabric such as organza.
- Determine size of fabric needed for the project. Add several inches to both length and width.
- Mark a 1½" grid on the right side of the fabric.



2. Create shadow work using a cover stitch.

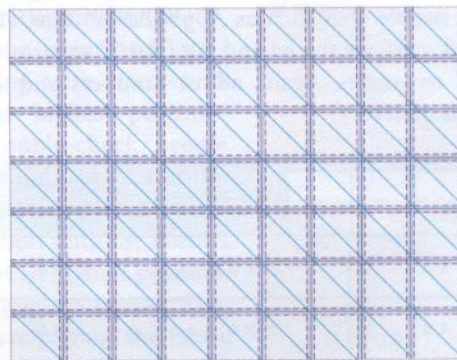
- Adjust the machine for a cover stitch as detailed on page 15.
 - Use a texturized nylon thread such as Woolly Nylon in the chain looper. Select a thread color which contrasts with the fabric.
 - Match the two needle threads to the fabric. (We used a lightweight cotton Cotona thread, often used for heirloom stitching, in the left and center needles.)
- Shorten the stitch length and serge from the right side of the fabric. Begin and end stitching on an anchor cloth. The contrasting thread in the chain looper shadows through the fabric.

Begin stitching on anchor cloth

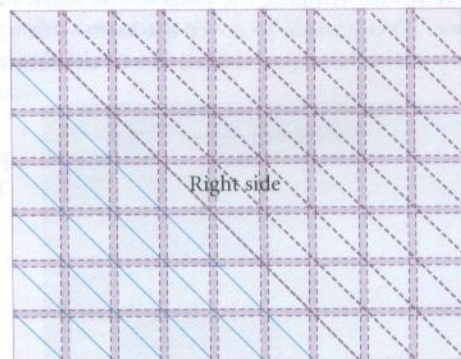


3. Add accents with a chain stitch.

- Remove the left needle; use only the center needle.
- Use decorative thread in the chain looper and thread matching the fabric in the needle.
- Draw diagonal lines from corner to corner through the cover stitched squares. The lines will be parallel to each other.



- Stitch from the right side of the fabric. The texturized Woolly Nylon is visible on the wrong side of the fabric and shadows through the fabric. Or, as an option, stitch from the wrong side of the fabric. In that instance, the Woolly Nylon will be visible on the right side of the fabric.



- ## 4. Add the shadow-stitched fabric to a project of your choice.

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