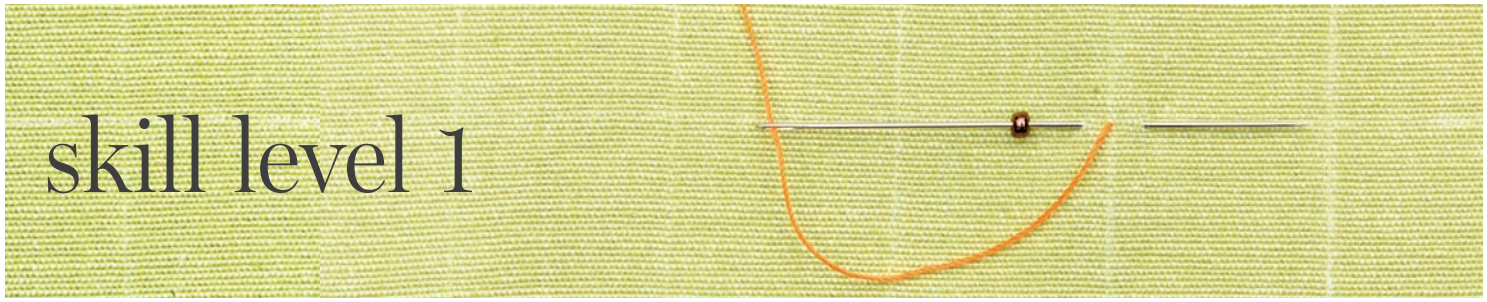
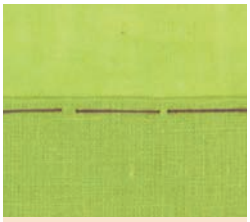
stitch selector

Easily find the stitch you're looking for with this handy guide, which is arranged by skill level and then divided into functional and decorative stitches.



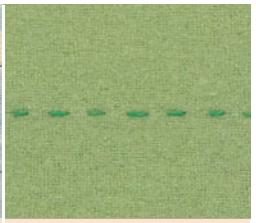
skill level 1

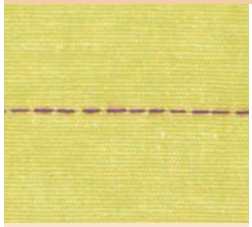
functional stitches


Tacking page 56

Slip tacking page 57

Diagonal tacking page 58


Running stitch page 61

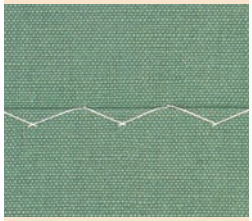

Backstitching page 62

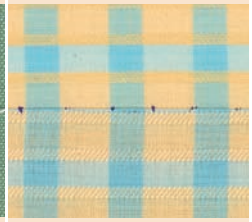
Overcasting page 63

Gathering page 64

Gauging page 65

Oversewing page 66


Herringbone stitch page 67

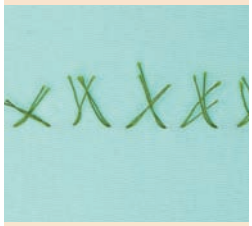

Slip stitch page 69

Serge stitch page 70

Prick stitch page 71

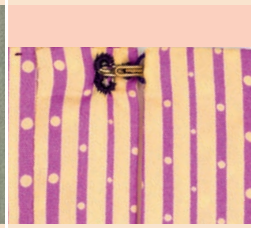
Slip hemming page 73

French tack page 78


Thread marking page 79

Tailor's tack page 80

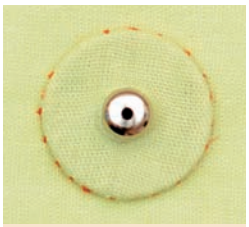
Chain bar tack page 81


Bar tack page 82

Straight tack page 83

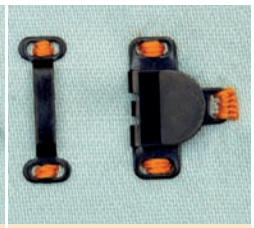
Stab stitch page 84

Press studs page 88



Covered press studs page 89

Hooks and eyes page 90

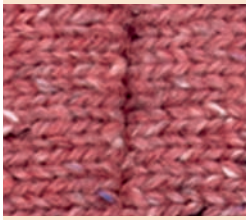


Hooks and bars page 91

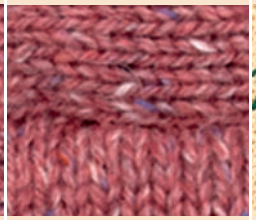
Buttons: two holes page 92

Buttons: four holes page 93

Mattress stitch, seaming rows to rows page 96

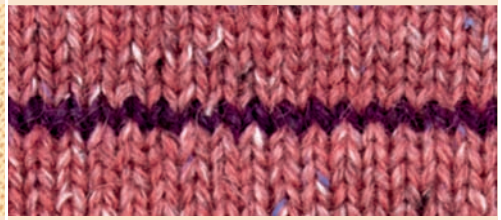


Mattress stitch, seaming stitches to stitches page 97



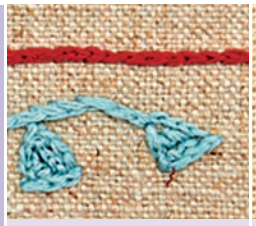
Mattress stitch, seaming stitches to rows page 98

Darning page 101



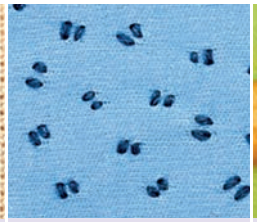
Grafting page 102

decorative stitches



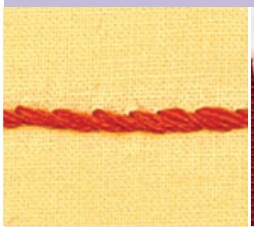
Split stitch page 113

Daisy stitch page 114

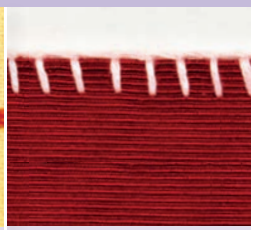


Seed stitch page 115

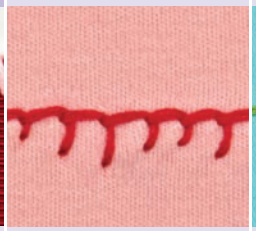
Sheaf stitch page 116



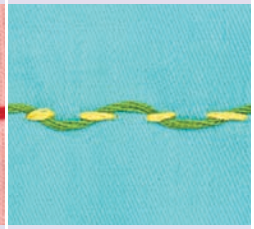
Stem stitch page 117



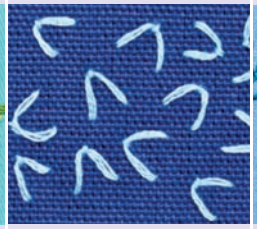
Blanket stitch page 120



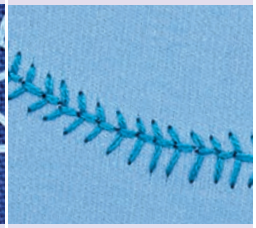
Long and short blanket stitch page 121



Laced running stitch page 123



Fly stitch page 126



Closed fly stitch page 127

Feather stitch page 128

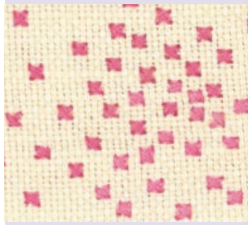
Closed feather stitch page 129

Long-armed feather stitch page 130

Double feather stitch page 131

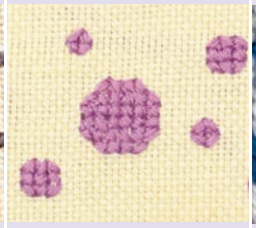
French knots page 132

Brick stitch page 134



Single cross stitch page 136

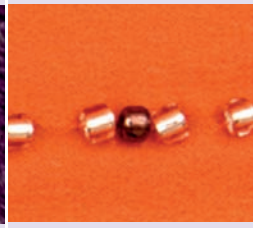
Cross stitch in horizontal rows page 137



Three-quarter cross stitch page 138

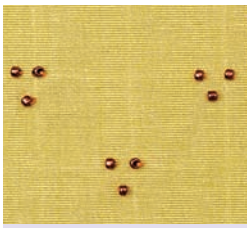
Horizontal swiss darning page 146

Vertical swiss darning page 147

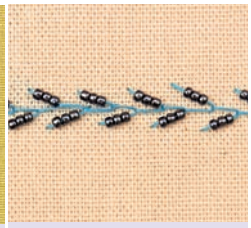


Single beads page 158

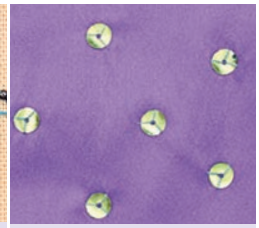
Couching beads page 159



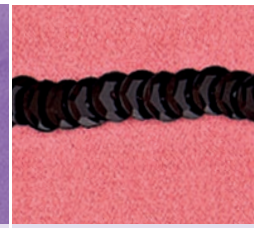
Bead ground stitch page 160



Bead embroidery page 161



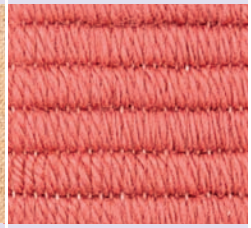
Single sequins page 162



Linear sequins page 163

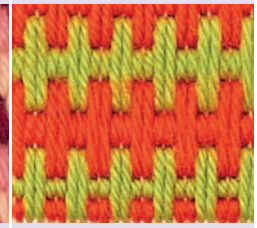
Attaching sequins with beads page 164

Crewel work page 168

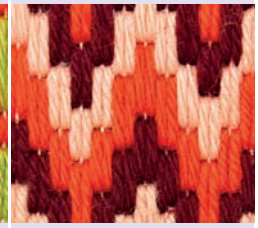


Straight Florentine stitch page 170

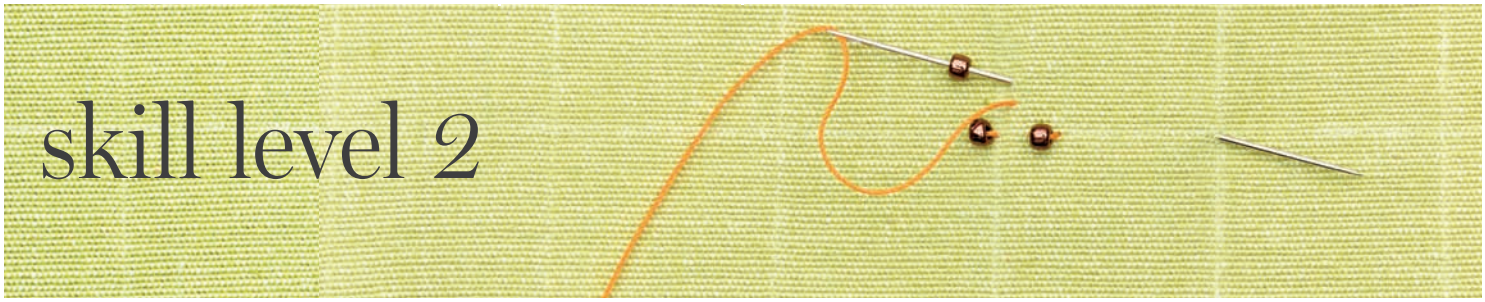
Florentine stitch page 171



Old Florentine stitch page 172



Flame stitch page 173

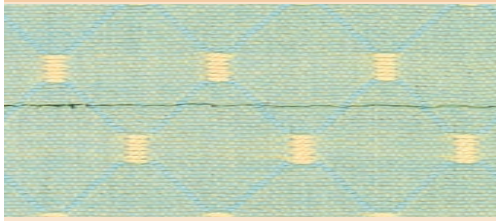


skill level 2

functional stitches

Pad stitch page 59

Locking-in stitch page 60

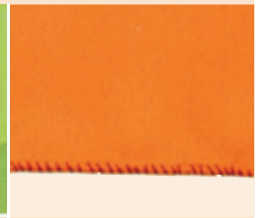


Ladder stitch page 68

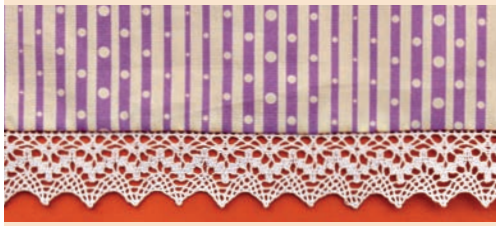
Buttonhole stitch page 72

Roll hemming page 74

Blind hemming page 75

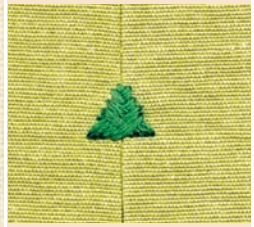


Whipping page 76

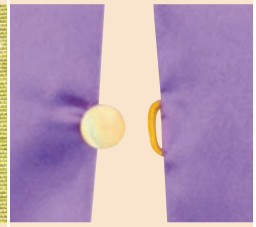


Attaching lace with whipping page 77

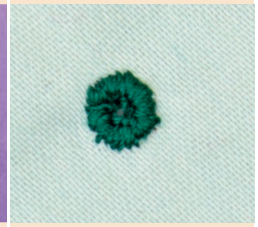
Crow's-foot tack page 85



Arrowhead tack page 86



Buttonhole loop page 94



Eyelet holes page 100

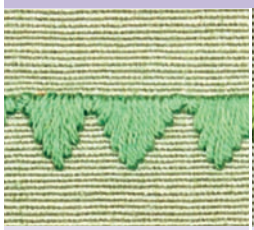
decorative stitches

Chain stitch page 106

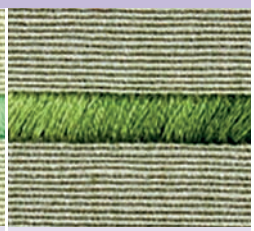
Open chain stitch page 106

Twisted chain stitch page 107

Cable chain stitch page 107



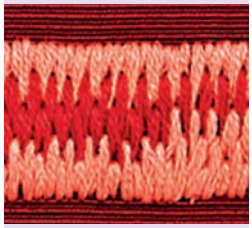
Straight satin stitch page 108



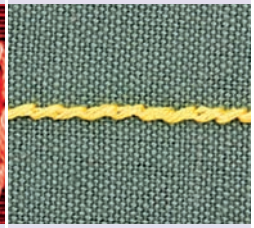
Slanting satin stitch page 109

Padding with satin stitch page 110

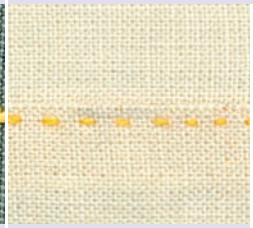
Padding with interfacing and satin stitch page 111



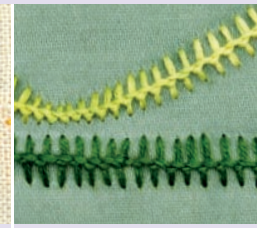
Long and short stitch page 112



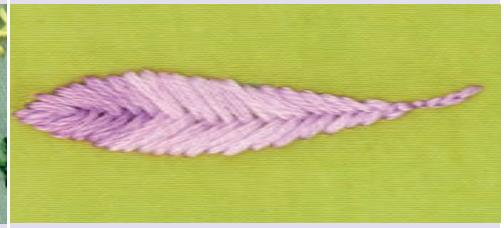
Rope stitch page 118



Saddle stitch page 119



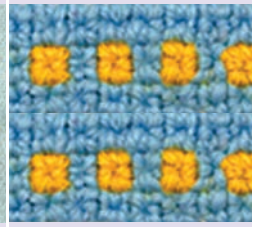
Loop stitch page 122



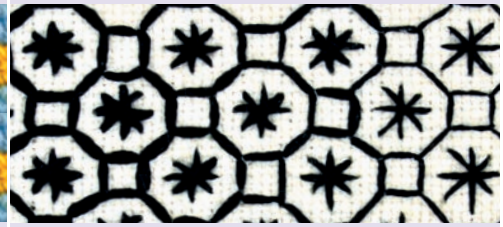
Fishbone stitch page 124

Raised fishbone stitch page 125

Bullion knots page 133

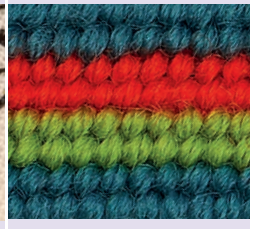


Algerian eye stitch page 135



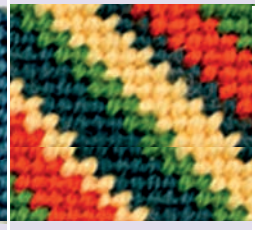
Blackwork, geometric designs page 140

Blackwork, nongeometric designs page 141



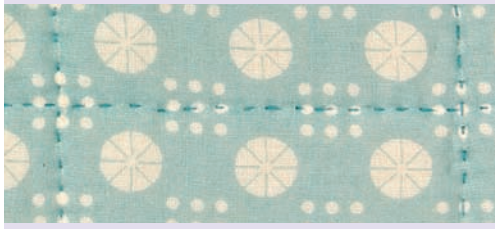
Tent stitch, horizontal rows page 142

Tent stitch, vertical rows page 143

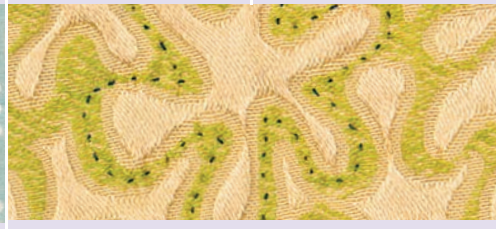


Tent stitch, diagonal rows page 144

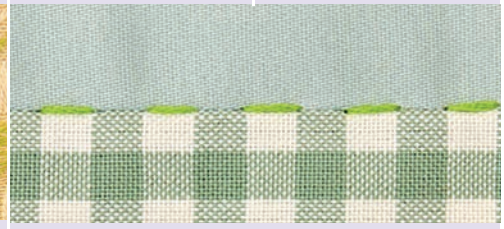
Tent stitch, trammed rows page 145



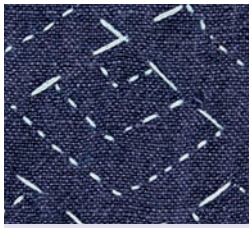
Quilting, rocking method page 150



Quilting, pinprick method page 151

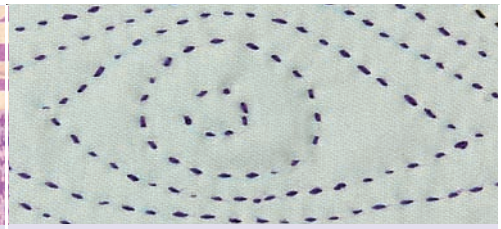


Quilting in the ditch page 152



Sashiko quilting page 153

Outline quilting page 154

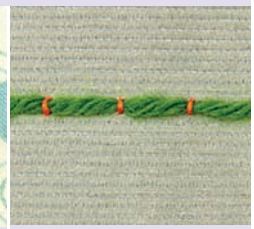


Contour quilting page 155

Trapunto, on plain fabric page 156

Trapunto, on printed fabric page 157

Shisha stitch page 166



Couched lines page 174

Zigzag couching page 175

Couched circles page 176

Couched pendant loops page 177

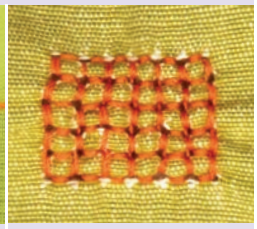
Ribbon embroidery, padded stitch page 178

Ribbon stitch page 179

Ribbon embroidery, stems and leaves page 180

Ribbon embroidery, fly stitch page 180

Turkish stitch page 184



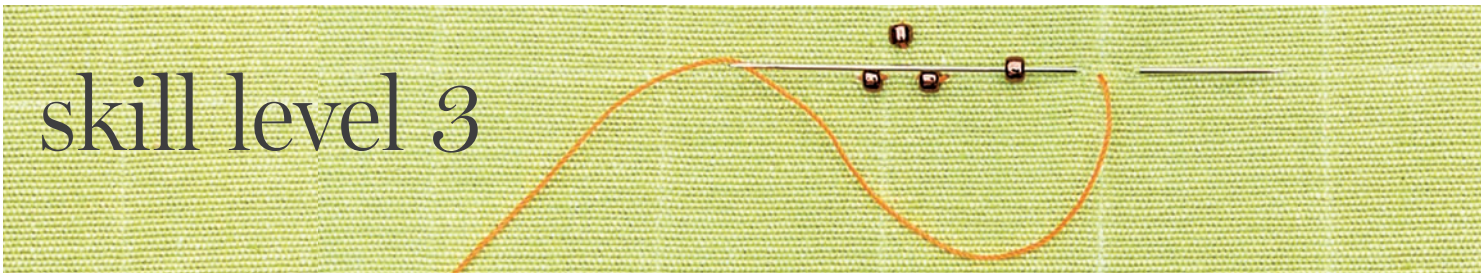
Open groundwork stitch page 185

Circular eye stitch page 206

Norwich stitch page 207

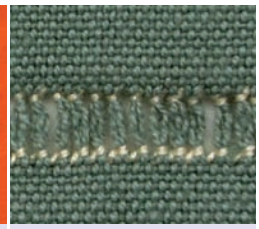
Leaf stitch page 208

skill level 3



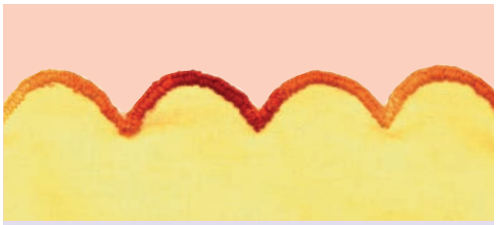
decorative stitches

Italian quilting page 148



Drawn thread work, ladder stitch page 182

Twisted hem stitch page 183

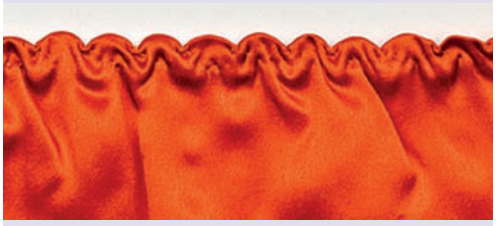


Cutwork edging page 186

Cutwork bars page 187

Cutwork, double buttonhole stitch page 188

Broderie anglaise page 189

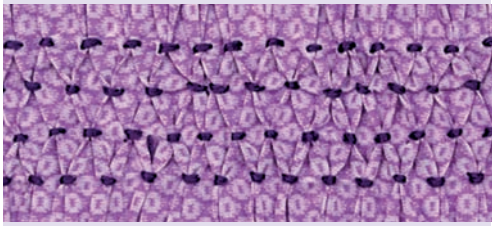


Zigzag shell gathering page 190

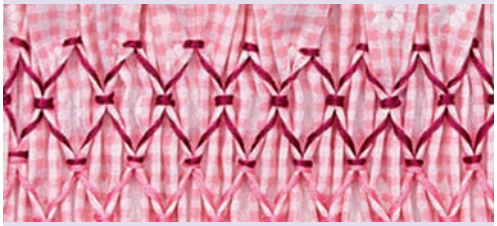
Fishbone stitch shell gathering page 191

Smocking, stem stitch page 192

Smocking, cable stitch page 193



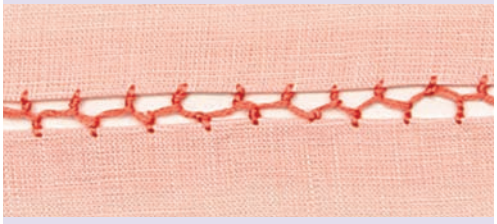
Smocking, English honeycomb stitch page 194



Smocking, American honeycomb stitch page 195

Smocking, chevron stitch page 196

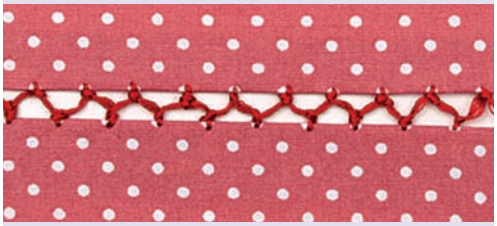
Smocking, trellis stitch page 197



Twisted insertion stitch page 198

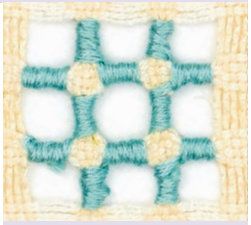
Knotted insertion stitch page 199

Bar insertion stitch page 200



Herringbone insertion stitch page 201

Hardanger, kloster blocks page 202



Hardanger, overcast bars page 203

Hardanger, woven bars page 204

Hardanger, straight loopstitch filling page 205

tacking

Tacking, or basting, is usually a temporary stitch, used to hold fabric in place while fitting a garment or to prevent the fabric from moving or slipping when machining permanently in place. There are different ways of using long and short stitches to gain varying degrees of control of the fabric.

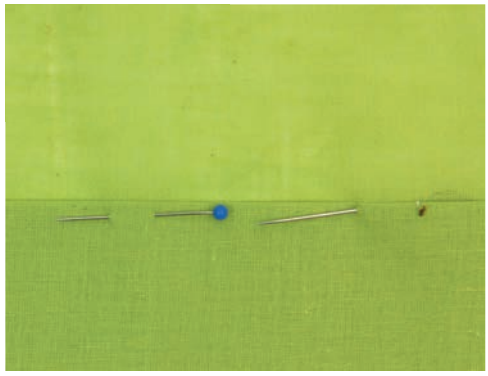
SKILL LEVEL 1

TOOLS AND MATERIALS

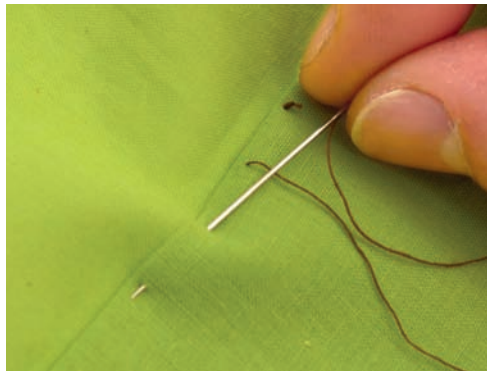
- Needle: use a medium-sized needle appropriate to the fabric and project.
- Thread: use a tacking thread or a weak cotton thread, because this will break easily when the stitches are removed and not tear the fabric.
- Use a thread in a colour that contrasts with the fabric, as it is easiest to see and remove.
- Extras: you will also need pins.

NOTES ON USING THIS STITCH

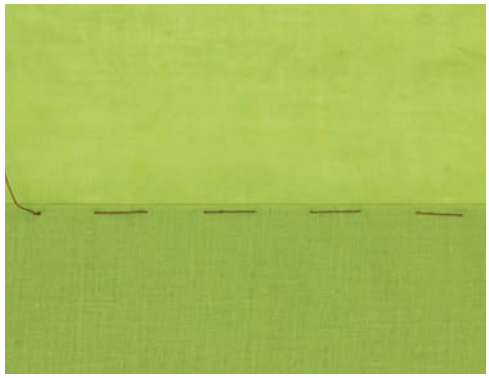
- Use an appropriate stitch length to hold the work in place.
- For tacking seams and hems, use a long and short stitch.
- To hold seams on collars, lapels, facings and so on, roll the edge of the seam between your thumb and fingers to the edge of the fitting line, then pin and tack.
- On stretch fabrics and around tight corners and curves, use small stitches.
- Use a large knot for fastening on, making sure it is visible for when you want to remove the stitching.
- As far as practicable, work with your fabric flat on the table.



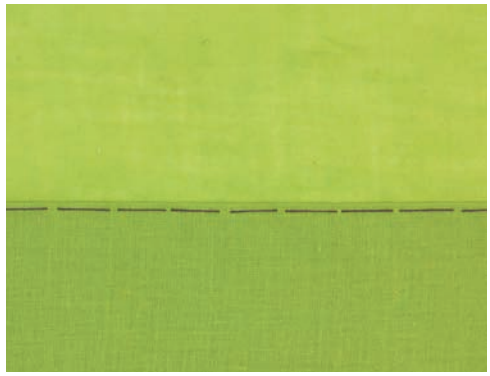
1 Pin the seam in place if required. Secure the thread on the wrong side with a large knot, then bring the needle from the front of the work a stitch length away from the knot.



2 For an even tacking stitch, insert the needle into the fabric a stitch length away from the thread and bring it back through the fabric a stitch length farther along. This is one stitch.



3 Repeat this process, keeping all the stitches and spaces the same length. Fasten off the thread by making a couple of backstitches on top of each other (see page 62) in the same place.

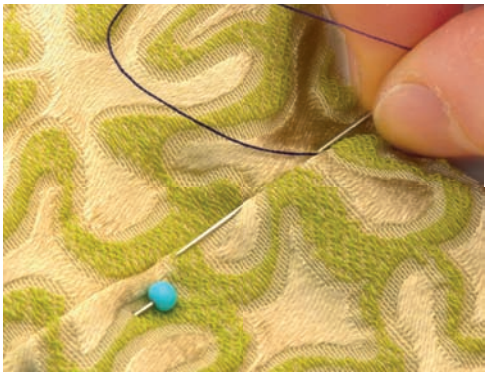


Long and short A long and short stitch variation is good for hems. Insert the needle into the fabric slightly further away from the thread than for even tacking and take up a smaller amount of fabric on the needle.

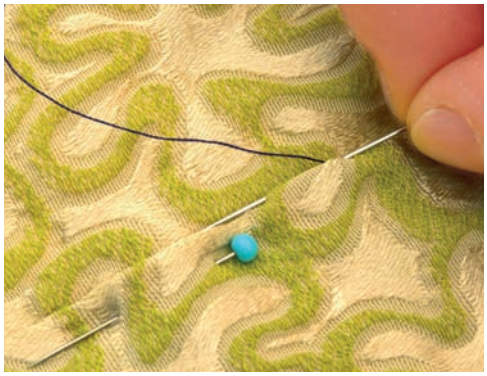
slip tacking

This temporary stitch is worked from the right side of the fabric and is used to match patterned fabric before permanently sewing the seam.

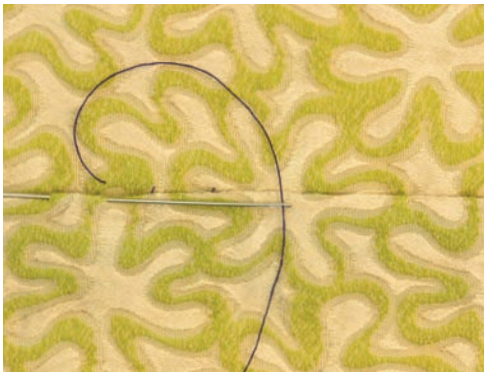
1 Fold one side of the seam under on the line of the seam allowance and slide this folded edge over the other side of the seam until the fabric pattern matches up. Pin in place. Knot the thread and slide the needle under the fold. Bring the needle through on the edge of the fold.



2 Make a stitch of about 12mm (½") into the other side of the seam. After completing the first stitch, insert the needle into the edge of the fold, catching only a few threads, and make another stitch 12mm (½") in length through both layers of fabric.



3 Continue making stitches through the fold of the seam, only taking a few threads right on the fold and taking the needle through both layers.



4 The stitches need to be kept taut, not tight. Small stitches will be seen from the front, while on the reverse, stitches appear as a line of tacking stitches.

SKILL LEVEL 1

TOOLS AND MATERIALS

- Needle: use a medium-sized needle appropriate to the fabric and project.
- Thread: use a tacking thread or a weak cotton thread, because this will break easily when the stitches are removed and not tear the fabric.
- Use a thread in a colour that contrasts with the fabric, as it is easiest to see and remove.
- Extras: you will also need pins.

NOTES ON USING THIS STITCH

- Use for matching seams on curtains.
- Choose this stitch when making garments, for matching stripes and checks.
- Use a large knot for fastening on, making sure it is visible for when you want to remove the stitching.
- As far as practicable, work with your fabric flat on the table.
- Use a stitch length of about 12mm (½") to hold the work securely in place.

diagonal tacking

Diagonal tacking is used to prevent two layers of fabric from slipping. It is often used for holding pleats or gathers in place before they are stitched, and to keep interfacings in tailored garments in position during construction.

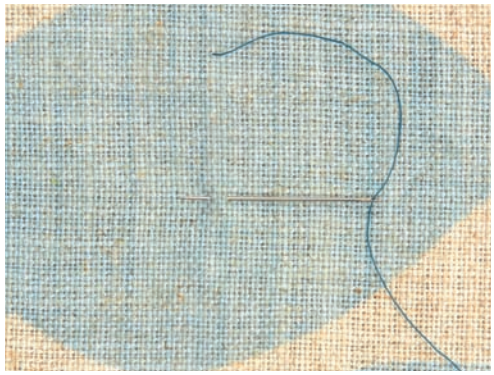
SKILL LEVEL 1

TOOLS AND MATERIALS

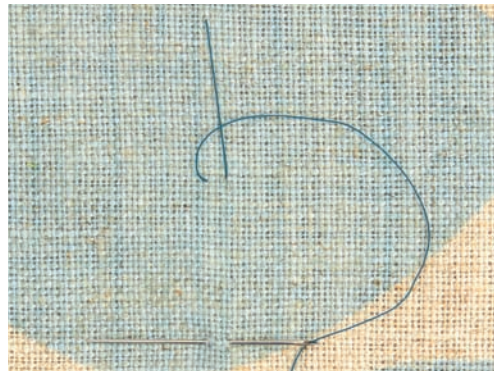
- Needle: use a medium-sized needle appropriate to the fabric and project.
- Thread: use a tacking thread or a weak cotton thread, because this will break easily when the stitches are removed and not tear the fabric.
- Use a thread in a colour that contrasts with the fabric, as it is easiest to see and remove.

NOTES ON USING THIS STITCH

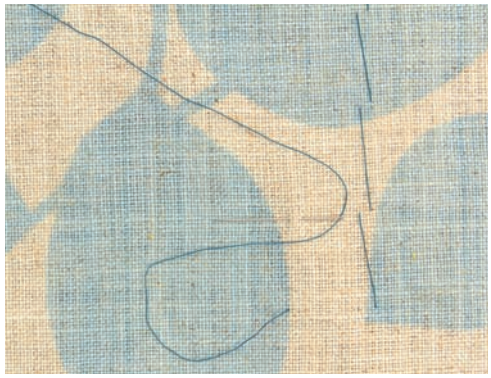
- Use as a temporary stitch when attaching interfacing to lapels and collars.
- Use to hold pleats in place during the construction of garments and during pressing.
- Great for holding linings and underlinings in place during the construction of garments.



1 Place the layers of fabric together, secure the thread on the wrong side of the fabric with a large knot and bring the thread through to the right side at the top right-hand side of the area to be stitched. Bring the needle down by 2.5cm (1") and make a small stitch, through all the layers, from right to left, coming out immediately below where you brought the needle to the right side.



2 Make the next stitch in a line below the first stitch. You will see a diagonal slant on the stitches.



3 Continue in this way until you reach the lower edge of the area to be tacked. Now take your needle to the left of the first line by about 2.5cm (1") and work from the lower edge upwards.

4 Continue stitching in this way until the area has been covered. Fasten off the thread by making a couple of backstitches (see page 62).