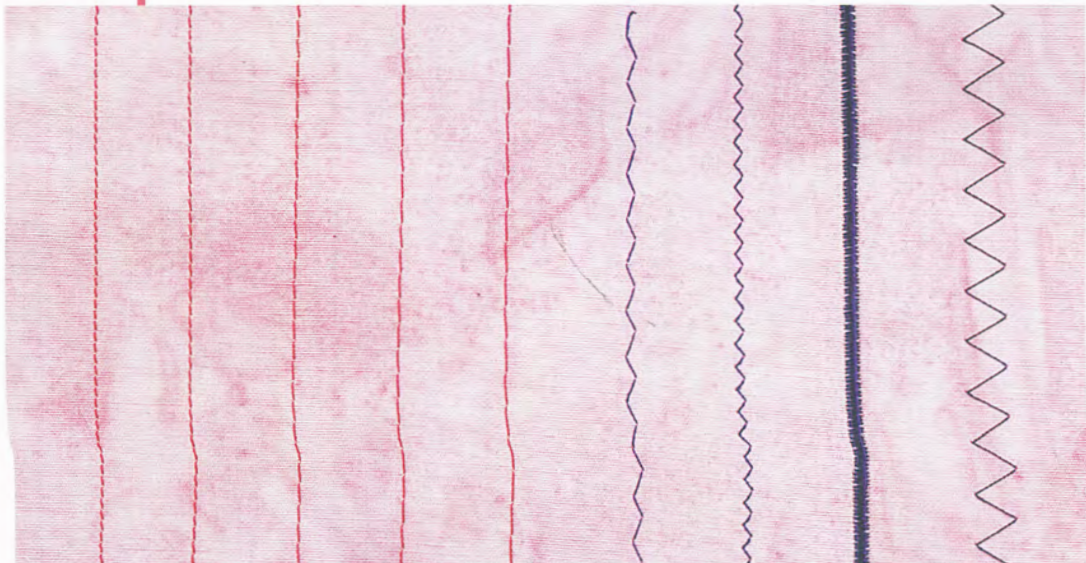


TOP STITCHING

Top stitching is a row of stitches that shows on the outside of a garment, cushion or curtain. It is done on the outside, usually after seams are sewn – often to add a decorative finish. It can be stitched by hand or machine, using threads that match the fabric or form a bright contrast.

Top stitching can also be used for practical purposes, such as holding facings in place, preventing pocket edges from rolling out or providing a quick hemming method. In this case, it usually comprises a single row of stitches in a matching colour, close to the edge, and is also known as edge stitching.

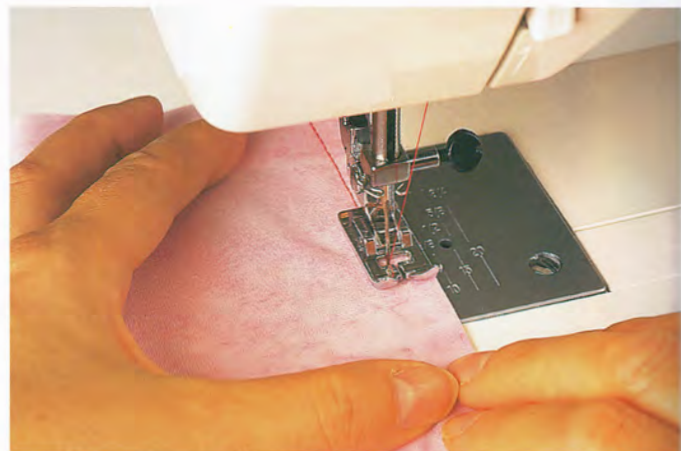
When top stitching serves as embellishment, just about anything goes! Use brightly contrasting colours; thicker, metallic threads; different sizes and types of stitch; any number of rows of stitching – even add ribbons or trims.



TIP: When using thicker, textured thread, wind it on the bobbin instead of the top needle and then place the work face down on the throat plate of the sewing machine.

GETTING STARTED

- Use a slightly longer than normal stitch: 3–3.5 mm (7–9 stitches per in.).
- Always test stitch a sample piece first. Use the same number of layers of the same fabric and interfacing (if to be used), so that the sample is truly representative. Check out different stitch combinations and lengths.
- Reduce the stitch speed on your machine to control stitching more easily.
- To maintain a straight line of stitching, use a fabric guide along the right edge. You can utilize the edge of the foot, varying the distance between the stitching and the edge by altering the needle position (most machines have at least three positions: left, centre and right).
- Line up the fabric edge with the marking on the throat plate and use this as a guide. If your machine doesn't have markings, stick a length of masking tape on the flat bed, with different distances marked.

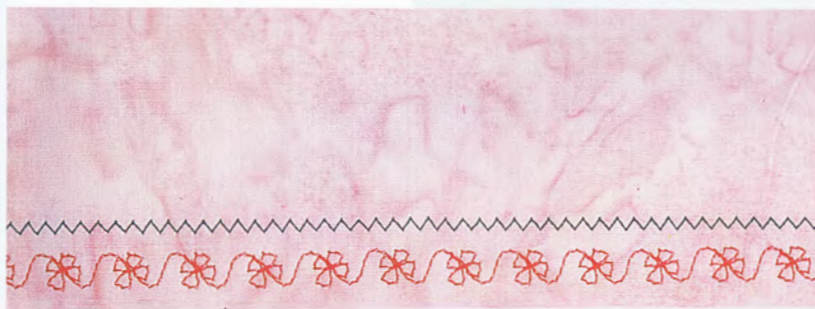
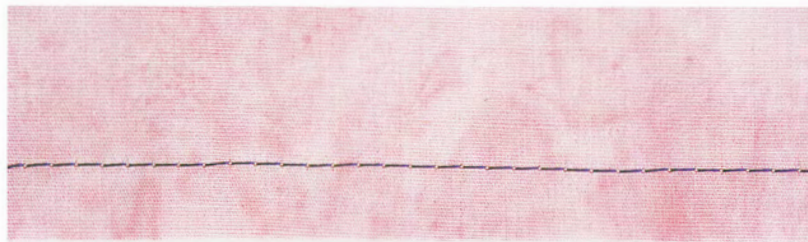


TIP: Always check that the needle will go through the hole in the foot properly by making a stitch by hand, turning the wheel on the right side of the machine.

TYPES OF TOP STITCHING

SINGLE ROW OF STITCHING

► A single row is the easiest method of top stitching. Stitch 3–10 mm ($\frac{1}{8}$ – $\frac{3}{8}$ in.) from the edge, using a stitch that is slightly longer than usual.

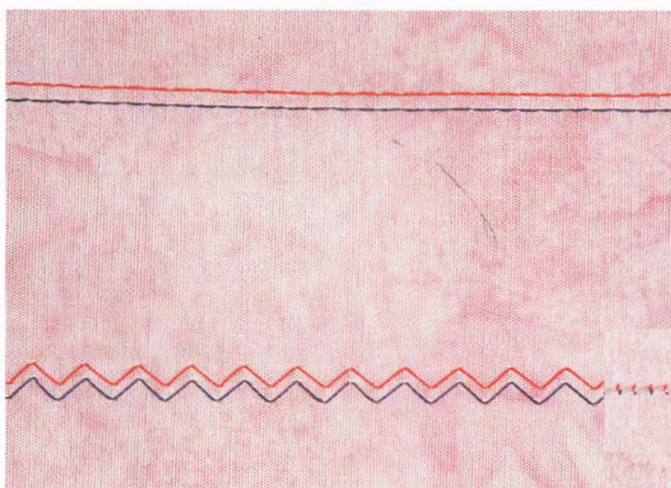


DOUBLE DECORATIVE ROW

◀ Choose straight, zigzag or other stitches on your machine. Try variations on a test piece first, altering stitch length and distance between rows until you are pleased with the result. Stitch the first row approximately 10 mm ($\frac{3}{8}$ in.) from the edge of the fabric. Stitch the second and subsequent rows in the same direction as the first.

TWIN ROWS

► Use a twin needle to stitch two rows at an equal distance. Vary the look by using different-coloured threads in the needles. Add another twin-stitched row of small, closed zigzags. Experiment with the length and width of the stitch to vary the zigzag effect.



▼ A twin needle uses two top threads but only one bobbin thread, so the back of the work looks different.



◀ Add a row or two of decorative top stitching to plain shirts or blouses to give them a new lease on life. Choose contrasting threads and use the edge of the garment as a guide. Remember to sew a test piece first.