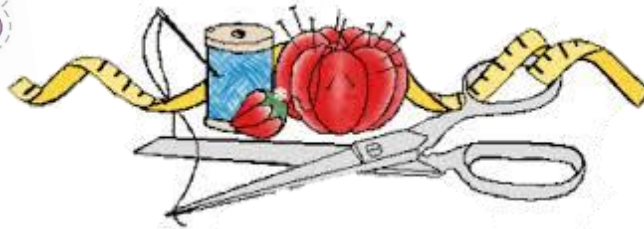


Aunty Eileen's Sewing Adventure



GETTING STARTED



SEWING MACHINE

Your sewing machine should be in good working order (recently serviced by a technician within the last 12 months---cleaned, oiled and tested). A sewing machine (whether a MANUAL or COMPUTERIZED model) with the basic stitches and a few basic "Presser Feet" is all you need, if you are a beginner sewist.



- Keep your machine in tip-top condition. Clean and oil every 8 to 10 hours of sewing. Check your manual. Do not have beverages by your sewing machine, and keep the sewing machine away from direct sunlight and windows. Cover with a towel or cloth and not plastic covers, which hold in moisture.
- A serger is a plus. But, I would invest in a good sewing machine first.

Sewing machines can do a zigzag stitch or a simulated serger stitch on most models, to finish the edges of all seams. But, once you use a serger, you'll wonder how you ever did without one!

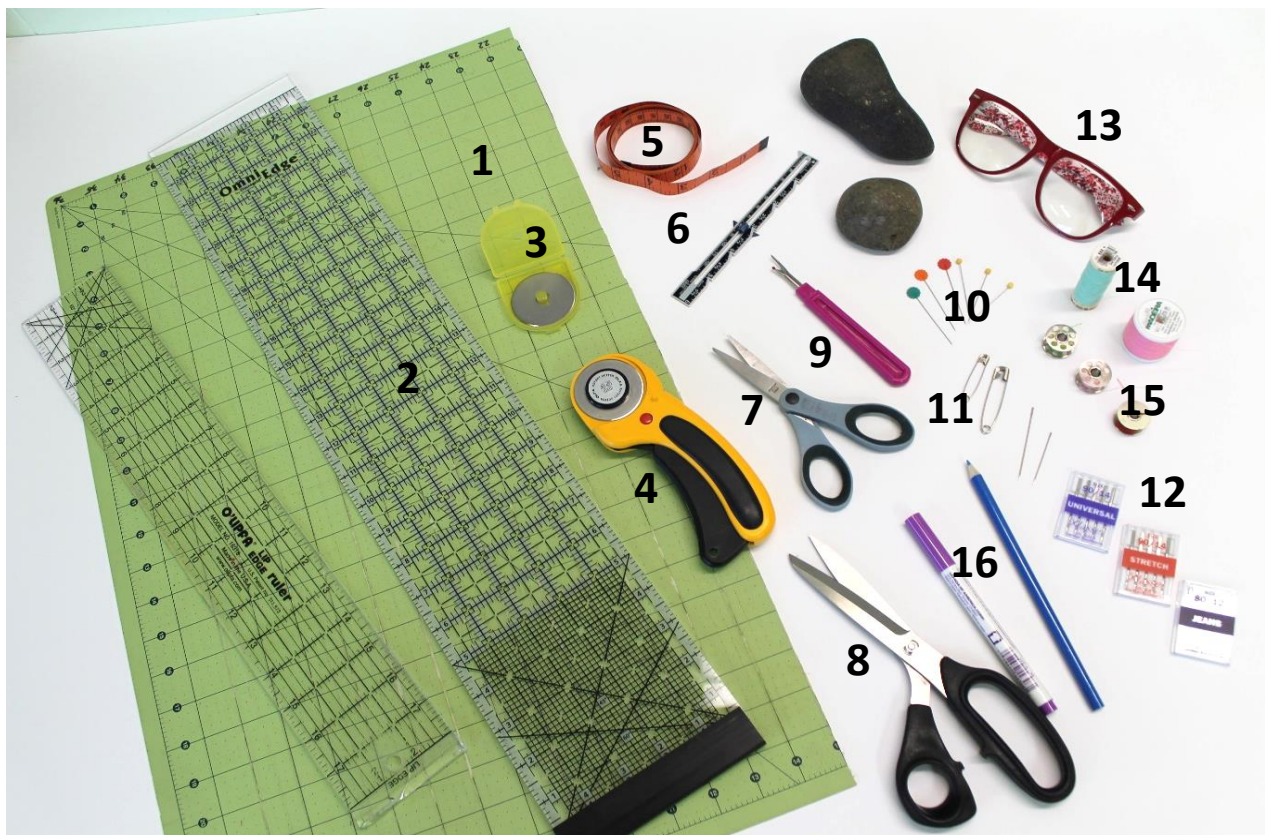
THE SEWING MACHINE IS NOT A TOY. DO NOT LET CHILDREN TOUCH IT OR PLAY WITH ITS KNOBS OR BUTTONS. I know of someone whose grandchild inserted an object into the hole of the "Foot control" cord, which had to be removed by a technician. My sewing machines are my **BABIES**, so I handle them with TLC (Tender Loving Care). I'd use discretion about "loaning" my machine, which is like loaning my car. Will they be responsible for any damages or repairs?

BASIC SEWING SUPPLIES

- 8" or 9" bent handle fabric shears (Fiskars, Gingher, etc.) Left-handed scissors are available.
- 5" scissors for clipping threads (Blunt tip is fine)
- 60" tape measure
- Large seam ripper ("reverse sewing tool")
- 6" sewing gauge (ruler with sliding tab)
- Ballhead quilting pins or flower pins



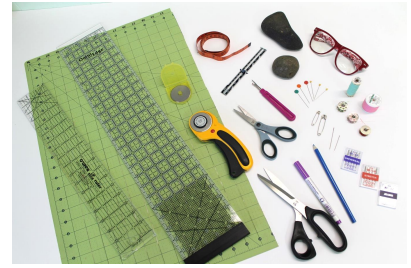
DESCRIPTION OF SUPPLIES and TOOLS OF THE TRADE - # 1- 16



Numbered items in photo above corresponds with listing on pages 3 – 5.

1. CUTTING MAT –

Basic size is 24" X 36". They are also available in smaller or larger sizes.) They are used specifically for cutting with a rotary cutter and special rulers, because the mats are "self-healing". Mats are sold with grid printed on both sides so flip it over when one side becomes worn. Clean mat with a soapy scrubby. Wipe with a clean, damp cloth.



2. **RULERS** - 5" X 24" Ruler, and 3" X 18" are two good starter sizes. Also available in 6" X 24", 6 1/2" X 13", and 7" X 14". STRIP cutting ruler (square shape) is nice to use when cutting many strips.

3. **REPLACEMENT BLADES** - Replace blade when it gets dull, and skips cutting. Discard used blades in the proper receptacle.

4. **45mm ROTARY CUTTER** - This is my size preference. Makes cutting faster and more accurate. Also available in smaller or larger sizes. With practice, you can cut curves. Be sure to close the blade when you set it down for safety sake.

(Photos on how to cut fabric – right and left handed person)

5. **TAPE MEASURES** - 60" (all-purpose) or 120"(quilts)

6. **SEWING GAUGE** - 6" ruler with sliding tab for measuring 6" or less.

7. **THREAD CLIPPERS** - 5" scissors for clipping threads as you sew. Blunt tip is best.

8. **FABRIC SCISSORS** w/ bent handle (8" or 9"). Fiskars, Gingher, etc.

9. **LARGE SEAM RIPPER** - also known as the "REVERSE SEWING TOOL". *MAKE IT YOUR FRIEND!* To remove threads, use Scotch tape or a large pencil eraser.

10. PINS - BALLHEAD PINS: SHORT - 1" For pinning backing fabric to cutting board, sliding sideways (to get ready to layer quilt). MEDIUM - 1 1/2", LARGE - Quilting Pins - 1 3/4" (BEST!) FLOWER PINS 2" - Use to pin pattern when using a ROTARY CUTTER. A ruler will lay flat on the pin.

TIP - When pinning a project, I like to pin the edges with the "Ballhead" sticking out, about 3 to 4" apart. I also use "rocks" or other weighted objects to lay on a pattern instead of pinning.

11. SAFETY PINS - Large 2" size or Medium 1 1/2" size (bent quilting pins) - for pinning all layers of the quilt together.

12. SEWING MACHINE NEEDLES - 80 OR 90 SHARPS for woven fabrics. If I need a sharper needle, I use a 80 or 90 JEANS needle for hemming jeans or for sewing my screen bags. If you are sewing on stretch fabric, use a BALLPOINT needle 70 (lightweight fabric) 80 or 90 for medium weight. Discard broken needles, especially the tip, in a "pill container, rather than the trash can. Be sure to MOVE your needle to the RIGHT or LEFT needle position if sewing with a ZIPPER FOOT, otherwise you will break a needle. Should you accidentally "sew" your finger, try not to get blood on your project! **JOKE!** (Use Hydrogen Peroxide after removing the needle by hand or tweezers).

If it is impossible to remove, go to the ER and have it removed by a Physician). **YOU ARE NOW AN ELITE MEMBER OF THE "WORLDWIDE SEW THE FINGER CLUB."** If you get any "blood" on your project, rinse it immediately with cold water. I use a drop of Hand Soap on the area and wash together and rinse in cold water.

SEWING REQUIRES YOUR UTMOST ATTENTION AND CONCENTRATION. BUT, HAVE A GOOD TIME while being creative.

STOP SEWING IF YOU'RE DISTRACTED; such as kid's calling or fighting, telephone or doorbell rings, burning smell coming from the kitchen or rushing to finish a project. STOP, take a deep breath and "Take 5!"

13. EYEGLASSES - Wear them while sewing, even if they're just clear ones; a safety measure just in case a needle should break.



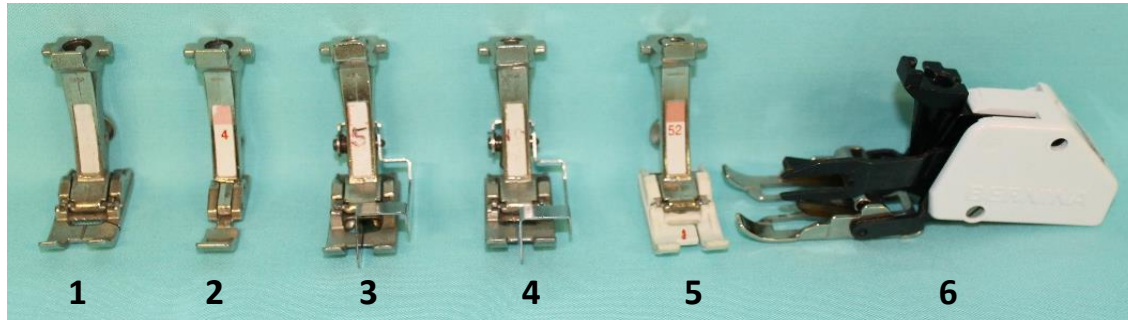
14. THREAD - I usually use METTLER, MADERA, OR GUTERMANN, although there are many other excellent brands. I also use 100% Polyester (Sew and Quilt thread) or 100% cotton thread. Thread has a shelf life of 10 years. Use old thread (from Grandma) for basting only, if you can't part with it.

TIP - When sewing pieces together for a quilt top (referred to as "piecing", I use a Medium Gray shade or use up the thread of already wound bobbins. I usually MATCH the thread color whenever it is visible on the right side of the project. When quilting, I use colors to match the top and backing fabrics, or variegated (multi-colored) thread for the top.

15. BOBBINS - Use bobbins for your MAKE & MODEL sewing machine. Do not wind a bobbin onto one that already has thread. REMOVE thread first. Make sure that the bobbin is properly wound and not loose. Follow sewing machine manual. Have a minimum of 12 bobbins. Fill the basic colors to the max, then other colors can be half-full or less, depending on what you are sewing (a hem, garment, or quilt).

16. MARKING TOOLS - Peel-Off CHINA MARKERS (Mark only on the wrong side of fabric), ERASABLE Fabric Marker, or WATER SOLUBLE marking pencil.

BASIC "PRESSER FEET" FOR VARIOUS SEWING NEEDS



1. STANDARD FOOT - for straight or zigzag stitching (decorative stitches).
2. ZIPPER FOOT - Smallest foot (1/2 the size of the Standard foot)
3. EDGE-STITCH FOOT - Helps to guide your sewing right on the edge or further in from the edge by moving your needle position. Especially great for beginner sewists, making their work look professional.
4. BLIND HEM FOOT - For hemming dress pants, and clothing that is more than casual wear. The ROLL HEM FOOT is used for fabrics that are sheer, rayons, stretch, etc.
5. VINYL FOOT - Use for sewing projects with clear vinyl, oil cloth, or other fabric that are slick and smooth, to allow the foot to glide over work. **TIP:** Put a little "masking tape" under a regular foot if a Vinyl foot is not available.
6. WALKING FOOT or EVEN FEED FOOT - Necessary for sewing projects with batting, or sewing areas that is slippery and tends to shift. I use this foot when sewing a waistband, collar, stretch fabrics, etc.

THREADING THE SEWING MACHINE - Using quality thread keeps the lint build up to a minimum. Most sewing machines today have an "Automatic needle threader. Otherwise, small, handheld, "needle threaders" are available. Cut your thread diagonally before threading and hold the thread 1/2" from the end. Place a "white, plastic, bread thing" behind the needle to help you to be better able to see the needle hole.

We Grandmas need all the help we can get! Be sure the machine is threaded properly, especially at the tension area, and that the thread goes in the needle from front to back. DO NOT have your foot on the FOOT CONTROL while threading the needle, for obvious reasons!

IRONING VERSUS PRESSING - IRONING IS MOVING THE IRON FROM SIDE TO SIDE. PRESSING IS LIFTING THE IRON UP AND DOWN (when pressing interfacing). I usually press my fabrics to remove creases before cutting. Cheap or expensive iron? Irons which are under \$20 are fine if they are "steam" irons. All the extras are not necessary, unless you prefer having those extra features, such as: Auto off, larger size and weightier, etc. I use a steam iron with distilled or filtered water for almost all my pressing needs, especially cottons. Steam will only work on the higher settings. Be sure you are matching the temperature to the type of fabric.

APPLIQUE PRESSING SHEET - This is a specialty fabric sheet used to protect your iron, ironing board and project from any fusible material. Lay the Applique Pressing Sheet (APS) on the ironing board, then, lay your fabric (wrong side up), and fusible side of interfacing (the rough side) to the wrong side of fabric. If the fusible side comes off during ironing, it will be on the APS and can be scraped off. You could also use the APS on top as well as underneath the project. **DO NOT USE STEAM WHEN USING THE APS.**

TO WASH OR NOT WASH FABRICS, BEFORE CUTTING - I think it's a matter of preference. I personally like the fabric to be fresh and new when I begin. Sometimes the fabric loses its luster or brightness when washed and dried, but when using good, quality fabric, this doesn't usually happen. Plus, good fabric will have a longer life. I would be sure to pre-wash colors like red, black or navy blue by soaking it in warm water with a little detergent for a couple hours. Check to see if the color "bleeds." Rinse till water becomes clear. If the fabric is too large for a container, then use your washing machine. Line dry or use a dryer that is on a gentle cycle. Press fabric and you are ready to cut.

By pre-washing these colors, you will be sure that they do not bleed onto lighter colors on your project. I usually use 100% cotton fabric and occasionally a bit of cotton/poly in the same project. Always wash finished projects such as tote bags, quilt, etc.) in COLD WATER and a gentle cycle and line dry or tumble dry in a dryer. If there is any shrinkage, it will be minimal.

TROUBLE-SHOOTING for poor quality stitches (thread bunches up, tension unbalanced, thread cuts)

- Make sure you have TURNED ON machine, checking all connections - Is it plugged in all the way in the machine and wall?
- Check TOP THREADING (especially by tension area) and BOBBIN INSERTION. Learn this well or follow your manual a few times.
- Check that THREAD is suitable for fabric. There are so many different types of thread - quilting thread, embroidery thread, top - stitching thread, silk thread, rayon thread, cotton-covered/polyester thread, and 100% cotton or polyester thread which I usually use for all my crafts and quilting projects.
- Check the TENSION of the machine. For normal sewing with 2 layers of cotton fabric set your tension between 3 to 5 setting (4 being the norm). Loosen to 3 for machine quilting. Tighten to 6 or 7 when using TOP STITCHING thread when hemming jeans.
- Check the STITCH LENGTH of the machine. The "higher" the number, the longer the stitch. Set your machine to 2.5 for normal sewing and 5 for gathering or basting.
- NEEDLES - Make sure that the needle was inserted properly, the "flat side" of the needle facing the back and pushed all the way up, then tighten. Use a "new" needle when you begin a new project like a quilt. Make sure that the needle is not blunt, has a burr, or is bent. You can usually tell by the sound, or it snags the fabric as you sew. Remember that the LIFE OF A NEEDLE is about 10 hours of sewing. Always have a variety of needle sizes and types for different fabrics.

TEST YOUR STITCHING BEFORE YOU BEGIN YOUR PROJECT. Sew with 2 pieces of medium weight fabric.

THIS MAY BE THE FIRST DAY OF SEWING FOR MANY YEARS TO COME WITH CREATIVITY, ENJOYMENT AND PURE PLEASURE!

SEW, SHALL WE GET STARTED? LET'S DO IT!