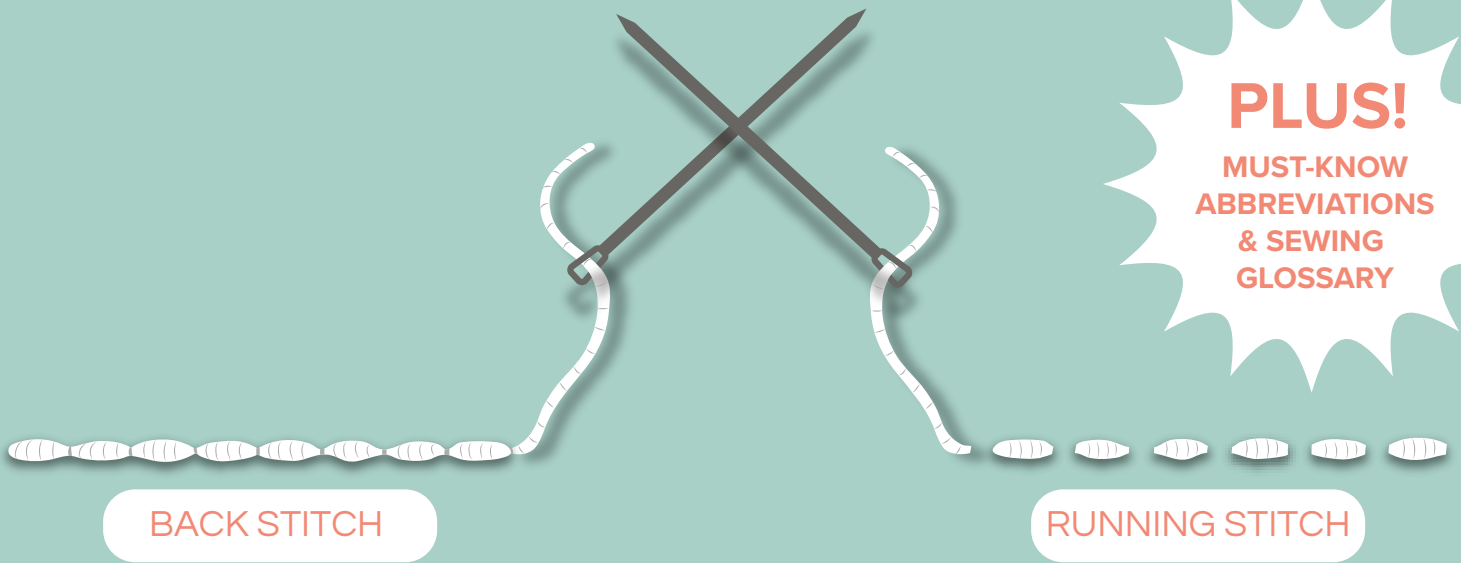
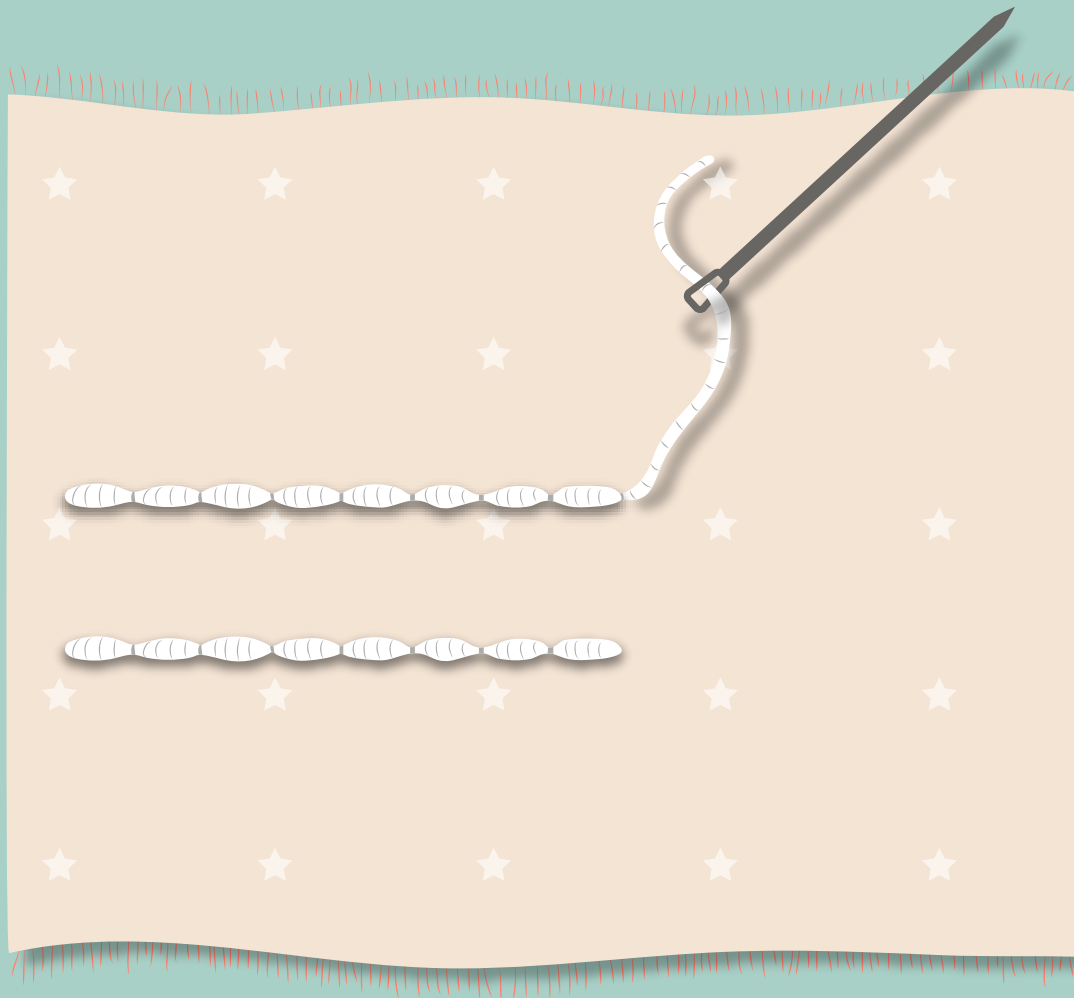




7 Basic Stitches Every Sewist Needs to Know



Back Stitch



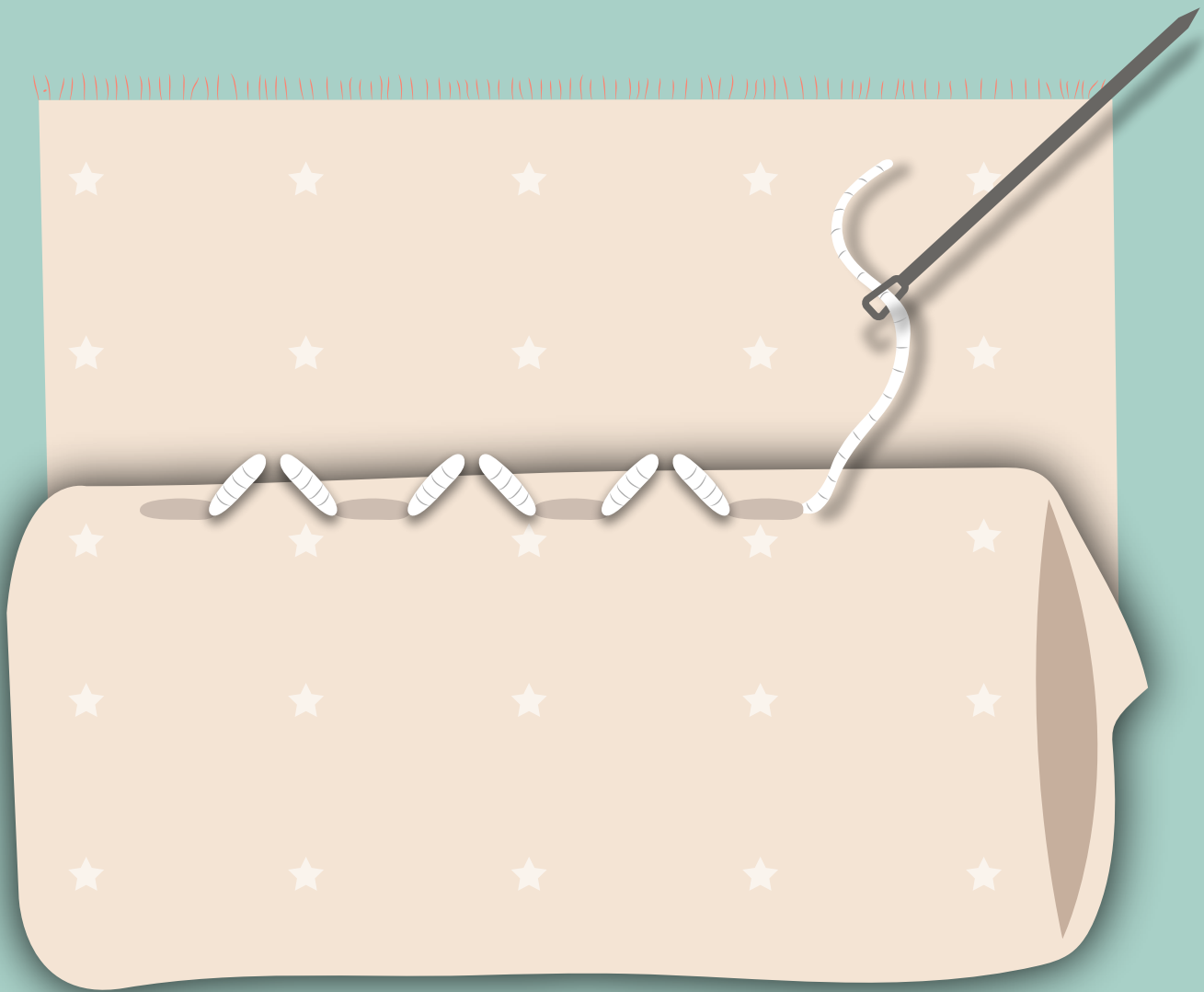
Back Stitch or backstitch is one of the strongest stitches you can hand sew. It creates a nice, permanent seam and is relatively simple to master. To do the back stitch, bring your needle up through the fabric about a stitch's length away from where the seam starts, then down again at the beginning point of the seam. Next, come up again with your needle a stitch's length away from the last stitch, then go down at the end of the last stitch. This motion is what gives the back stitch its appropriate name—you need to go “back” to the previous stitch in order to execute it.

Blanket Stitch



The blanket stitch is a popular technique used to reinforce the edge of any thick material or to seam two pieces of fabric together. The result is a neat, decorative stitch that is ideal for finishing off the edges of unhemmed blankets. Sometimes called the cable stitch or crochet stitch, the blanket stitch is one you will want to have in your sewing toolbox. To complete it, thread your needle and make a knot in one of the tails. Start on the right side of your fabric and bring the threaded needle up from the back so the knot will be hidden. Pull the thread all the way through; then take the thread around to the back of the fabric and go through the same hole once again starting from the back of the fabric. Pull the thread until you have a loose loop. Thread your needle through the loop and pull tight. Move a stitch-width down your fabric and come in through the back again. Pull through until you have a loose loop; then thread your needle through the loop again and pull tight. Repeat the process until your edging is complete.

Blind Hem Stitch



The blind hem stitch is used to create a professional finish on hems. When done correctly, the stitches are nearly invisible on the right side of the hem. To complete the blind hem stitch, start working on the wrong side of the fabric and come up near the upper edge of the folded hem.

Make a small stitch as you sink the needle down and back up through the back of the fabric. Smaller stitches mean they're less likely to show on the finished result. Keep going through the folded hem, dipping the needle down and back up to make a stitch that is roughly 1/2 inch long.

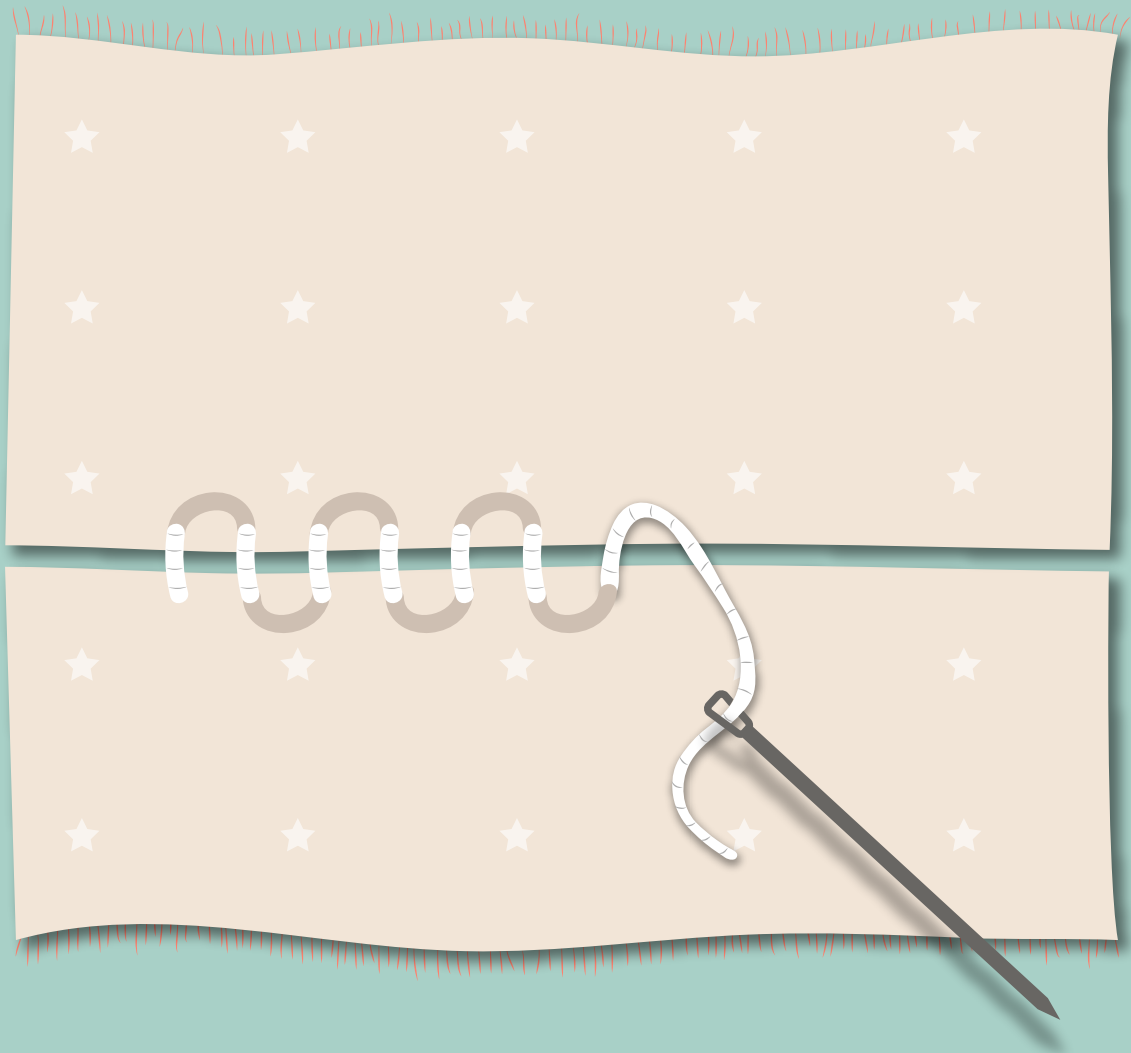
Repeat these two steps, making small stitches through the outside of the item and longer ones on the inside folded hem.

Catch Stitch



The catch stitch (sometimes referred to as the herringbone stitch) is ideal for heavier fabrics, when sewing a hem or with garments that have some stretch to them. Unlike other stitches, it is worked from left to right. Because the stitches will be visible (versus hidden between layers of fabric), the catch stitch is usually used in areas that are covered by a lining. On the right side of the fabric, this stitch creates two lines of tiny horizontal stitches, while on the opposite side, it makes longer crisscrossed stitches. To create this stitch, bring your needle up through the back of the fabric near the edge on the lower-left side. To the right side of this, and on a diagonal, make a right-to-left stitch and pull taut. Make another small stitch (right to left) on a diagonal on the bottom half and pull taut. Repeat, alternating the top line of the fabric and bottom line until you make it all the way across the hem.

Ladder Stitch



If you are looking for an invisible line to close seams, this is your stitch. The ladder stitch, also called the slip stitch, is worked from the right side where two folded edges need to come together in an invisible seam, e.g., a pillow or sewn toy. To make the ladder stitch, bring the needle up to the right side of the fabric on one of the folded edges. Your knot will be hidden inside the seam once you pull everything tight at the end. Next, directly across from where your needle just came out, go through the opposite folded edge, then come back out a stitch-length away. Repeat this method, going back and forth on each side of the seam until you make it to the end of the area you are seaming together. Pull your thread tightly and watch the seams come together in an invisible seam.

Running Stitch



This is one of the first stitches you will learn as a beginner. The running stitch, also known as the straight stitch, is an essential stitch used in sewing and embroidery. It is ideal for sewing seams, for hand quilting and especially useful for felt projects. To make the running stitch, hold the layers of fabric together and bring the needle up through the fabric, then go back down. Repeat this technique at even distances— and that’s it! The stitches may be of varying length. For more security, keep your stitches smaller. If you are using this technique to baste two pieces together, use longer stitches so they are easier to remove.

Whip Stitch



The whip stitch is a common way to sew together two pieces of fabric with flat edges. Also known as the overcast stitch or edge stitch, the whip stitch is also perfect for finishing seams so they don't fray. To make the whip stitch, bring the needle up through the fabric and loop it around the edge of the fabric. Then, come back up again. With this stitch, it is important to always bring your needle from the back to the front so the thread can wrap around the edges of the fabric as intended.

Sewing and Quilting Glossary

Have you ever wondered what sewing and quilting jargon means? Check out this glossary of all the terms you need to know without any extra researching. Sewing is bolded in **black**, whereas quilting is **orange**. By Kristen Auletto and Jessica Nichols. Edited by Mary Campbell.

- A Applique:** An embellishment that is sewn or ironed onto another piece of fabric.
- Arm Scythe:** Armhole where the sleeve is sewn.
- Art Quilt:** A quilt intended to be viewed as art. Art quilts may combine many different fiber art techniques, including piecework, applique, fabric painting, and embroidery.
- Attic Window Quilt Pattern:** A quilt pattern that uses an optical illusion to make it seem as if you're looking at each quilt block through a window.
- Awl:** Tool used to make holes for an eyelet fabric.
- B Backing:** The bottom layer of fabric in a quilt. Quilt backing is usually one piece of fabric, but it can also be pieced or embellished.
- Backstitch:** Stitch that doubles back on the last stitch and acts to secure seams and mend garments.
- Bargello Quilt Pattern:** A quilt pattern using many tiny strips or squares of different-colored fabric to create a wavy design.
- Basket Quilt Pattern:** A traditional quilt block pattern that looks like a basket.
- Baste:** To temporarily hold two pieces of fabric together with long, loose stitches that can easily be removed.
- Basting:** Securing the quilt sandwich of backing, batting, and top together before quilting the quilt. Basting can be done using quilting pins, a running stitch, or spray starch.
- Batting:** Flattened material, usually cotton or fiberfill, that is usually used as the "fluff" inside quilts or garments. In quilting, this is cotton pressed flat as the middle layer of a quilt.
- Bias:** The direction diagonal from the direction of the fabric. The stretchiest part of the fabric.
- Bias Tape:** Strips of fabric cut on the bias, often used for binding and facing. It sews neatly around a curve and is used commonly in blankets, placemats, bibs, and aprons.
- Binding:** A strip of fabric used to cover a seam edge or enclose raw edges. Binding creates a neat finish and a decorative touch. In quilting, this is the method of finishing a quilt by sewing a thin strip of fabric around the entire circumference of the quilt.
- Blanket Stitch:** A hand stitching technique used for decorative edging and embroidery.
- Blend:** Fabric made of more than one type of fabric.
- Blind Hem:** Stitch that is not meant to be seen from the right side of the fabric. Usually done by picking up just a few threads of fabric rather than going all the way through.

Block: The individual unit of a quilt. One unit of a quilt top. Quilt blocks are generally square and measure about one square foot, but they can vary greatly. Traditional quilt block patterns make up the foundations of many quilt patterns.

BOM (Block of the Month): A type of quilt pattern in which the quilter makes a new quilt block each month. After several months to a year, the quilter will have made enough blocks to create an entire quilt top. Pattern designers and publishers often publish only one block per month until the pattern is completed.

Bobbin: The spindle or cylinder on which thread is wound in a sewing machine.

Bodice: The part of the garment from shoulder to waist.

Bodkin: Tool used for inserting elastic or cording through a casing.

Bolt: An amount of fabric on a roll or cardboard piece.

Bonding: Joining two pieces of fabric together with a bonding agent or a fabric glue.

Border: Strips of fabric, usually in one color or fabric, running along all four sides of a quilt. Borders are usually solid, but can sometimes be pieced to add interest.

Bow Tie Quilt Pattern: A classic quilt block pattern that looks like a bow tie.

Broadcloth: Fabric made from cotton or a blend that is tightly woven and may have slight ridges.

Buttonhole: A cut in the fabric that is bound with stitching and is just big enough for a button to pass through.

C Capped Sleeves: A short sleeve that doesn't extend beyond your underarm.

Casing: Fabric envelopes used to encase elastic, drawstrings, etc. in garments.

Cathedral Window Quilt Pattern: A complicated traditional quilt pattern in which fabric is folded and stitched into intricate designs to create a three-dimensional look. There are many ways to achieve a similar look without using the complicated folding technique.

Chain Piecing: A method of stitching pieces of fabric together for a quilt. The seamstress stitches pieces in a continuous chain, without stopping the sewing machine. Once the "chain" has been pieced, the quilter clips threads between each unit. This piecing method saves time and thread. Watch a video on chain piecing for patchwork quilts.

Charm Pack: A package of coordinated pre-cut fabrics, generally from the same fabric collection, cut in 5" squares.

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Coin Quilt: A classic quilt pattern, sometimes referred to as a Chinese coin quilt, consisting of rectangular pieces of fabric arranged in “stacks.”

Cording: A twisted or woven “rope” that is used in piping or as a drawstring. When covered in fabric, it is called piping.

Count: Number of warp/weft intersections per inch. The higher the number, the higher the weave.

Crazy Quilt: A patchwork quilt made from various sizes, colors, and types of fabric in a somewhat haphazard way. This first became popular in the Victorian era. They are often embellished with elaborate and colorful embroidery along the seams.

Cut Length: Measurement of fabric that allows for hems, pleats, etc.; the length to which the fabric must be cut before beginning to sew.

D Darn: Repairing a hole by stitching back and forth to fill it.

Dart: A V-shaped adjustment to allow for more fullness in the bust or less fullness in other areas.

Design Wall: A wall or folding screen covered with batting or felt that is used to lay out fabrics and blocks for a quilt, before stitching them together. The fabrics will either temporarily stick to the batting or can be pinned to the batting. Design walls are used to try different layouts.

Disappearing Nine Patch Quilt Pattern: A common quilt block pattern made by cutting up a nine patch into four quarters, shuffling them into different positions, and then re-piecing them into blocks. This can also be referred to as a magic nine patch.

Double Wedding Ring Quilt Pattern: A vintage quilt pattern of interlocking rings that was popular in the 1930s.

Dresden Plate: These are circular appliques, made by piecing together a ring of petal shapes. You then applique a circle to the center.

D Ring: A metal or plastic ring shaped like a “D” used in purses, belts, and other projects to accept fabric or other material for a handle or tie closure.

Drunkard’s Path Quilt Pattern: A classic quilt block pattern with curved piecing. The basic unit of a drunkard’s path quilt pattern consists of a quarter circle, set inside a square. These units can be arranged differently to create several designs and layouts.

E Edgestitch: A stitch done a scant 1/8 inch from the folded or seamed edge.

Embellishment: Adding special stitches, appliques, or other decorations added to sewing projects.

Embroidery: A decorative topstitching; embellishment of a fabric which creates a design.

Empire Waist: A waistline on a garment that is higher than the natural waist.

English Paper Piecing: A distinct type of paper piecing (not to be confused with regular paper piecing or foundation piecing). Using this method, templates are cut to the desired size of the finished piece and then traced onto the fabric, adding a small seam allowance. Once the fabric is cut out, the template is placed in the center of the fabric, and the fabric is stitched around the template, with the seam allowances folded over the template. The shape is then pressed with an iron to set the folds, and the template is removed and reused.

F Fat Quarter: 1/4 of a yard of fabric that is 18 in x 22 in, as opposed to the regular 1/4 yard that is 9 in x 45 in.

Feed Dog: The “teeth” of the sewing machine that move the fabric as it is sewn.

Finishing a Seam: Preventing a seam from unraveling and adding stability by using certain stitches or tools.

Flying Geese: A common unit of patchwork made by piecing two triangles onto the sides of a larger triangle to create a rectangular piece of patchwork.

Foot: The part of a sewing machine that presses down on the fabric as it is moved.

Foundation Piecing: A method of piecing in which pieces of fabric are sewn directly onto a piece of foundation fabric.

Four Patch: A simple quilt block made by piecing together four squares of fabric.

Free Motion (AKA free-motion quilting): Machine sewing done with the feed dogs down, moving the fabric free-hand.

Friendship Star Quilt Pattern: A quilt block pattern that looks like a four-pointed star.

Fusible: Fabrics with heat-sensitive adhesive on one side that allows it to bind to another fabric.

Fusible Applique: A method of applique using fusible interfacing to adhere the applique to the background fabric. It is also referred to as iron-on applique.

Fusible Web: A paper-backed adhesive used to fuse two pieces of fabric together. Common brands include Steam-a-Seam and Heat n’ Bond.

Fussy Cut: To cut a printed fabric so that you get a specific image from the print centered on the shape you cut out.

Sewing and Quilting Glossary

G Give: Elasticity or stretch of the fabric.

Grain: The direction of the fabric that runs parallel to the selvage/selvedge.

Guild: A group of people who discuss and practice sewing.

H Hand Applique: A method of applique that involves stitching the applique to the background fabric by hand. This is often done with embroidery floss when using heavier fabrics like felt. Needle-turn applique is a specific method of hand applique in which the quilter turns the edges of the applique under with each stitch.

Hem: The finished bottom edge of a garment.

Hemline: Lowest edge of a garment once the hem is sewn.

Hook & Eye Closure: A closure with a small hook on one side and a loop on the other.

Honey Bun: A coordinated bundle of fabric strips, each of which measures 1.5" x 44." Honey buns are sold by Moda Fabrics and often contain fabrics from the same collection.

Hourglass Quilt Pattern: A simple patchwork quilt pattern in which each unit looks like an hourglass. The hourglass units are typically pieced together using quarter-square triangles. Double hourglass blocks are also common.

Half-Square Triangle (HST): A quilt block pattern or quilt pattern that is made by stitching together two triangle pieces. This is one of the most common shapes used in patchwork.

I Inseam: Vertical seams on pants between the legs.

Interfacing: Sewn-in or fusible fabric used to stabilize the fabric.

Irish Chain Quilt Pattern: A classic quilt pattern, characterized by diagonal "chains" of squares that match up only at the corner points. Double Irish chain quilts, involving two parallel chains of squares, are also common.

J Jelly Roll: A coordinated bundle of fabric strips, each of which measures 2.5" x 44." Jelly rolls are sold by Moda Fabrics and often contain fabrics from the same collection. Check out our list of 15 Free Jelly Roll Quilt Patterns for ideas of ways to use jelly rolls.

L Label: A small square of fabric sewn to the back of the quilt that lists the quilter's name and the date the quilt was made. The label can also include a name for the quilt, the pattern name, or the recipient of the quilt.

Landscape Quilt: An art quilt depicting a natural scene.

Layer Cake: A coordinated package of fabric squares, measuring 10" x 10". Fabrics in a layer cake are often from the same collection. These pre-cut packages may also be referred to as 10" charm packs.

Layout: The arrangement of blocks or pieced units in a quilt top. The same blocks can be laid out in different arrangements for completely different looks.

LeMoyné Star Quilt Pattern: A distinctive, eight-pointed star block, also known as a star flower.

Lettuce Hem: A serged edge that is stretched as it is sewn, resulting in a ruffled edge.

Lining: Fabric that covers the construction details on the inside of the garments.

Log Cabin Quilt Pattern: One of the most common and popular types of quilt blocks, which is made by arranging strips of fabric concentrically around a square. Log cabin blocks are traditionally made with all dark strips in one half of the block and all light strips in the other half. Some common log cabin quilt layouts, or settings, are Sunshine & Shadows, Barn Raising, and Furrows.

Longarm Quilting: Quilting done by a professional quilter with a special longarm quilting machine.

M Medallion Quilt: A quilt layout that does not involve a grid of blocks, but instead a series of decorative borders around a central block or panel.

Miter: Slanted seams where two hems meet at a corner.

Mug Rug: A small quilt, usually less than 12" x 12," which is somewhere between a coaster and a placemat. These decorative quilts are generally meant to be used with a mug of coffee or tea.

Muslin: An inexpensive fabric used to make crafts, back quilts, or make a draft garment.

N Nine Patch Quilt Pattern: A simple quilt block or quilt pattern made from nine squares, arranged in a 3 x 3 grid.

Nonwoven: Fabric that is not made from thread or yarn.

Notion: A term for any item used for sewing other than fabric and the machine.

O Overcast/over-stitching: Stitching over a seam to prevent unraveling.

P Panel Quilt: A quilt made primarily with a pre-printed fabric panel. Generally, fabric panels are large pieces of fabric printed with an image, picture, or scene. They are intended to be used whole and not cut up for patchwork.

Paper Piecing: A method of patchwork quilting in which small pieces of fabric are sewn to a paper template. After the pieced block is finished, the paper is ripped away from the seams. This method allows for very precise angles and corners, and it is similar to foundation piecing.

Pattern weights: Weights used to hold down paper patterns instead of pins.

Sewing and Quilting Glossary

Peplum: A top that has a flared “skirt” waistline.

Photo Quilt: A quilt made with squares of fabric that have had photographs printed or transferred onto them.

Piecework: A method of sewing small pieces of fabric together to create geometric designs. This method is used in creating the majority of quilt tops and is also known as patchwork. This method differs from applique in that the pieces of fabric are sewn together with seams on the back side, rather than being sewn on top of each other.

Pins: Pins hold fabric together.

Pinwheel Quilt Pattern: A common quilt block pattern in which triangles are arranged in a pinwheel pattern.

Piping: A slim piece of bias-cut fabric that covers cording and is inserted into a seam. Used as a decorative trim.

Pleat: A fold in the fabric that is not sewn except on the top edge, providing decorative fullness.

Prairie Points: Strips of small folded triangles that are used as quilt borders or embellishments on seams within a quilt. Prairie points are made by using a unique method of cutting and folding a strip of fabric.

Prewashing: Washing fabric before using it in sewing projects to prevent shrinking. Prewashing also ensures that dyes will not bleed in later washings.

Press: Using an iron to smooth fabric.

Primitive Quilt Pattern: A style of quilt pattern that is characterized by a rustic, unsophisticated feel and muted colors.

Q Quilt As You Go: Any method of quilting which involves sandwiching pieces of the backing, batting, and top individually, rather than making the whole quilt top and then sandwiching it in with the batting and backing. Common quilt-as-you-go methods include rag quilting and strip quilting.

Quilt Sandwich: The layering of quilt backing, batting, and quilt top that is quilted together as one in the last steps of making a quilt.

R Rag Quilt Pattern: A method of piecework that involves exposed seams to produce a “ragged” effect. Rag quilts are made by quilting individual blocks of backing, batting, and top fabric together and then sewing the individual blocks together with seams turned towards the tops of the blocks.

Rail Fence Quilt Pattern: A common quilt pattern made with striped blocks oriented in different directions. Each striped block generally has a specific order of colors. The blocks can be arranged to create zigzag patterns, basketweave patterns, and more.

Raveling: Giving the edge of the fabric a fringed look by allowing threads to loosen on their own or pulling threads from a tight seam.

Raw Edge: The unfinished, cut edge of fabric.

Reverse Applique: A method of applique in which the applique fabric is sewn to the back of the background fabric. The background fabric is then cut out inside the applique shape to reveal the fabric underneath.

Rickrack/ricrac: Zigzag trim that is used to decorate sewing projects.

Right Side: The visible, designed side of the fabric.

Rotary Cutter: A sewing tool used to cut fabric. It consists of a round blade that cuts through the fabric by rotating as it is rolled along.

Running Stitch: Simple stitch made by running back and forth through the fabric.

S Sampler Quilt: A block quilt that uses a different block pattern in each block.

Sashing: Strips of fabric sewn between the blocks and rows of a quilt.

Scrapbuster/stashbuster: Sewing projects that can be made using your leftover fabric scraps.

Scrap Quilt Pattern: A quilt pattern that can be made with leftover scraps of fabric from other quilts and sewing projects. Scrap quilt patterns do not require quilters to purchase new fabric in any specific yardage.

Self-Healing Mat: A rubber mat used with a rotary cutter to protect cutting surfaces. Self-healing mats are often printed with gridlines for easy measuring and cutting.

Selvage/selvedge: The edge of the fabric which does not fray. It should not be included in your cut of fabric. Generally selvages are white and printed with the name of the fabric and other information.

Seam: When two pieces of fabric are sewn together along a line.

Seam Allowance: The fabric between the edge and the stitches.

Seam Ripper: Tool with a small hook that can undo a stitch without damaging fabric.

Seminole Patchwork: A method of patchwork in which thin rows of pieced fabric are sewn together on the diagonal to create a patterned strip.

Serger: A type of sewing machine that stitches a seam, encases the seam with thread, and cuts off excess fabric at the same time. They are great for finishing any seams, especially with knit fabrics.

Sewing and Quilting Glossary

Set-in Sleeve: A sleeve that is attached separately to the armhole of a garment, rather than as part of the original cut of fabric.

Snowball Quilt Block: A quilt block pattern in which a triangle is sewn to each of the four corners of a fabric square to create an octagon that resembles a “snowball.”

Spool: This is the holder of thread.

Spool Quilt Block Pattern: A quilt block pattern that looks like a spool of thread.

Star Quilt Pattern: Any quilt pattern that involves star shapes.

Stash: A collection of fabric.

Straight Stitch: Stitching made with single stitches in a straight line.

Stitch in the Ditch: Stitching in the existing patchwork seams of a quilt top when quilting a quilt. Stitching in the ditch is used to emphasize patchwork patterns by making the seams stand out more.

String Quilting: A method of scrap quilting in which small strips of fabric, or “strings,” are sewn diagonally into a square. Because of the direction of the diagonal strings, string blocks can be sewn together to create interesting layouts.

T Table Topper: A small square quilt used to decorate a table. Table toppers are similar to table runners, but they are better suited to square or round tables.

Tack: A temporary stitch used to hold pieces together, which is removed after the final stitching.

Tension: Pressure placed on your needle and bobbin thread by your machine.

Tied Quilt: A quilt that is quilted together using small, square knots at regular intervals, as opposed to being quilted. Tying is a traditional method of securing a quilt sandwich. The resulting quilts are sometimes referred to as comforters rather than quilts because of the lack of actual quilting.

Top: The top layer of a quilt. The quilt top is generally pieced. It is the side meant to be displayed rather than turned towards a wall or mattress.

Topstitch: A row of continuous stitches on the top or “right” side of a garment as a sometimes decorative, sometimes functional feature.

Tracing Paper: Paper used with a tracing wheel that has an ink substance on one side that marks on fabric.

Tracing Wheel: A device that transfers marks and measurements onto the fabric.

Trapunto: An Italian method of quilting in which specific shapes are delineated on a quilt with stitching. Thick yarn or cotton is then stuffed into the shape between the top and the batting using a needle. This puffs up the shape, giving the quilt a three-dimensional texture.

Trim: Embellishments such as rickrack, lace, and cording generally used on the edges of a garment.

T-Shirt Quilt: A patchwork quilt made by sewing squares of old t-shirts together. This type of quilt is also referred to as a memory quilt because it preserves the memories from old t-shirts. These quilts are often made from a collection of t-shirts from a specific school or sports team.

Tumbler Quilt Pattern: A quilt pattern pieced with trapezoid-shaped fabric.

Twister Quilt Pattern: A quilt pattern in which the quilter pieces four patches and then “twists” a square ruler or template to cut a square out of the four patches. The resulting square is then used as a block in a twister quilt.

U Underlining: Lining that adds body to an article of clothing.

Understitching: This keeps a facing or lining from rolling onto the right side of the fabric.

W Walking Foot: Foot attachment that allows a machine to sew through several layers of fabric.

Warp: Threads running the length of a given fabric.

Weft: Threads running at a 90-degree angle from the length of the fabric.

Whipstitch: A simple running stitch used to hold two pieces of fabric together.

Whole Cloth Quilt: A quilt in which the top is neither pieced nor appliqued, but rather is a whole, unaltered piece of fabric. Whole quilts primarily showcase elaborate free motion designs.

WOF (Width of Fabric): An abbreviation used in quilt patterns that means “width of fabric.” Generally fabric is sold at a 44” width or, less commonly, a 60” width.

Wonky: A style of patchwork in which fabrics are cut at imprecise angles and sewn together at unusual angles. The resulting block is simply trimmed to the requisite size to be included in a quilt. This style of quilting is also referred to as liberated piecing or improvisational piecing.

Wrong Side: The side of the fabric with no design that usually is not visible when the garment or other project is finished.

Sewing and Quilting Glossary

Y Yo – yo: A fabric embellishment made by cutting a circle of fabric, stitching around the edges with a running stitch, and then pulling the threads so that the fabric gathers in. The yo-yo is then pressed to set the flat, circular shape. Yo-yos can be used to embellish quilting and sewing projects, or they can be stitched together to create an interesting bedspread or coverlet.

Y-Seams: Seams in which three different seams and three different fabrics meet at one point. The seams will run in a Y-shape. These seams are difficult to make and take special care.

Z Zigzag Stitch: A stitch that goes one way and then the other, which provides a finishing seam or a decorative touch to any garment.