

10 Learning the Basics

Card 28

Sewing with Twin Needles

Twin needles are special sewing machine needles that allow you to stitch two perfectly parallel rows at the same time.

A twin needle is constructed with two needles mounted on one shaft that will fit most zigzag machines. It is invaluable when topstitching a double row of straight or decorative stitches or when sewing pin tucks and seams on knit fabrics. To sew with a twin needle, use two threads in the upper threading of the machine; a single bobbin thread joins both threads together and forms a "zigzag" configuration on the wrong side.

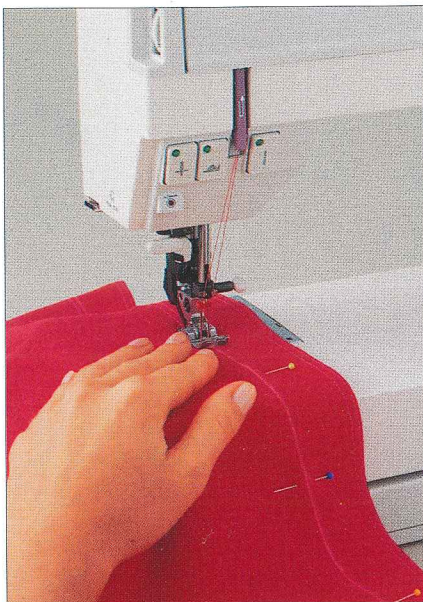
Twin needles are available in sharp points for wovens and in ballpoints for knits. They are usually sold in European sizes, with a lower number representing a finer needle; the number before the slash preceding the needle size represents the distance in millimeters between the two needles. Twin needle sizes for wovens range from 1.6/70 to 6.0/100; for knits, from 2.5/75 to 4.0/75.



When sewing with a twin needle, use two spools of thread, placing one spool on each spool pin. For machines with only one spool pin, wind threads onto two extra bobbins and place both bobbins on the single spool pin. Holding both threads together without tangling them, thread the machine as usual, placing one thread on each side of the tension disc. If there are two thread guides near the needle, separate the threads into the guides. Thread the left needle with the left thread and the right needle with the right thread.

Choose a stitch length that is appropriate for the fabric you are using and test the stitches on two layers of fabric. If you will be stitching curves, use shorter stitches for better control. Before stitching on the actual garment, mark as described at right. Pin and stitch from the right side; sew slowly and remove pins as you sew.

STITCHING WITH TWIN NEEDLES



STITCHING GUIDES

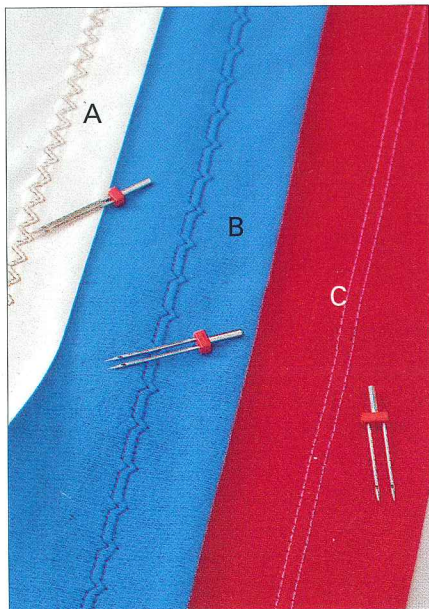
Follow gauge on throat plate to place double stitching rows close to finished edge. For greater distances, mark garment with a sharp piece of tailor's chalk, or create a wider gauge by placing masking tape on flat surface of machine and using its edge as a guide.



STITCHING CORNERS

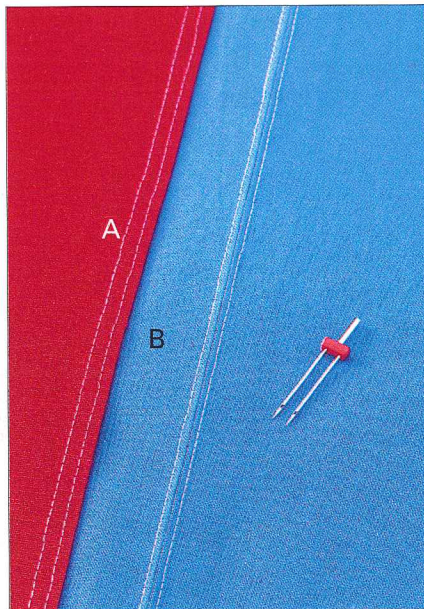
Baste a diagonal line at corner. Stitch along 1 side of corner until right-hand needle reaches basting. With tip of needle touching fabric, raise presser foot and pivot fabric 45°; lower foot and sew 1 stitch; pivot another 45° and continue sewing. For wide-spaced needles, pivot an additional time.

FINISHING WITH TWIN NEEDLES



HEMS

Hems may be sewn with a 3-step zigzag using a twin needle with a $\frac{1}{16}$ -in. spacing (A) or with a blind hemstitch using a twin needle with a $\frac{1}{8}$ -in. spacing (B) or with a straight stitch using a twin needle with a $\frac{3}{16}$ -in. spacing (C).



TOPSTITCHING

A row of twin-needle topstitching may be applied to front edge of a garment (A), or centered over a pressed-open seam so stitching lines lie along each side of seamline (B); use a twin needle with a wide spacing of about $\frac{3}{16}$ in.

TIPS



Decorate garments and home furnishings with twin-needle stitching. Create a simple windowpane check by using different colored threads in the upper tension. Or, sew a striped design by alternating straight and zigzag stitching.