

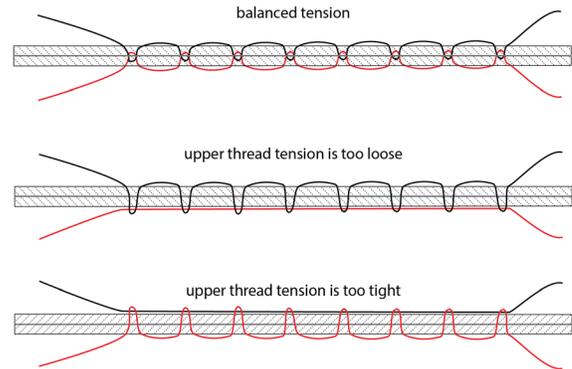


Lesson 2

Tension and Common Stitches

Tension

Generally speaking, you only change the upper thread tension and very seldom the tension on the bobbin.



Common Stitches

1. Straight

Certain to be the stitch you use most often. This is the stitch you use for sewing seams on any non-stretch project. You want to backstitch at the beginning and end of each seam.

2. Zig Zag

A versatile stretchy stitch that you can use decoratively and when sewing stretch materials like knit fabrics (you want to keep your zig zag narrow for the most stretch). Also useful to finish the edges of your seam and keep them from excessive fraying.

3. Tricot, multiple steps zigzag or 3 steps zigzag

An incredibly stretchy and strong zig zag, great for finishing seams and sewing knits.

4. Overlock or Mock Overlock or Overcast

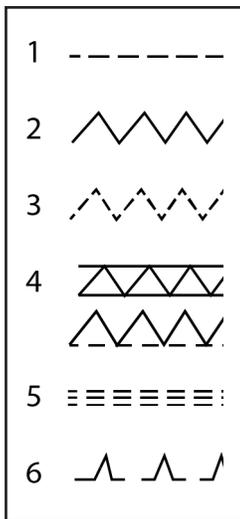
Often used to finish the seam edges, I like to use the mock-overlock stitch to sew knit fabrics that require a lot of stretch. When sewn with a special overcast presser foot, the thread wraps completely around the cut edge of the fabric

5. Straight Stretch Stitch

Used to reinforce seams in stretch and non-stretch fabrics, and for curved seams which take a lot of strain. This stitch is stronger than regular straight stitch because each stitch is sewn three times – forward, backward and forward again.

6. Blind

For creating a nearly invisible hem. Requires a special blind hem presser foot and a specific method for stitch.



Your homework:

- Test the tension on your machine, using two different colors of the thread (one color going through the needle and one in the bobbin) Work with the tension dial to adjust any tension issues you might have.
- Try checking the tension on different weights of fabric. Use this homework page and your manual to help
- Find a largish scrap of fabric (two layers) and practice every stitch on your machine. Now experiment with changing the width and length. Reference your manual to see what the default setting for each stitch is. Spend some time getting to know each one and practice sewing a straight line and with different seam allowances.

For next week:

- Be sure to bring a screw driver (one might have come with your machine) in order to remove the needle plate and a small brush to clean the machine. Look at the needleplate to see what type and size screwdriver you need.