BERNINA OVERLOCKER BASICS WORKBOOK

for BERNINA L 8, L 6, and L 4 Series







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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Overlocker Basics Workbook. Learning to use your new machine and understanding its features will allow you to enjoy it for many years and maximize your creativity. In this workbook, you will learn the essentials to help you be successful with any project.

Your overlocker will speed your sewing, allowing you to produce more in less time. Using the overlocker is faster because it performs several operations (trimming, seaming, and overcasting) at the same time. You will finish your project quickly with professional results.

Even though the workings of the overlocker may appear more complex than a sewing machine, it does not take long to learn the basics. The exercises in this workbook use four, three, and two threads to create overlock, rolled hem, and flatlock stitches.

The series of simple exercises are designed to increase comfort with your machine and expand your serging skills. The exercises focus on the features and stitches most valuable for many serging techniques. You will get the most out of your experience by working through each exercise.

Once you have completed the exercises, attach your sewn samples to the indicated pages or insert the pages into page protectors and store in a 3-ring binder. Keep the workbook as a handy reference tool as you continue to learn how to use your machine in new and creative ways. Have the Stitch Selection Chart for your machine at hand for reference when setting up stitches. If your machine has a touch screen, review the User Manual before starting this course so that you can easily select, set up, adjust, and save stitches.

Instructional video tutorials can be found on the BERNINA International YouTube channel. You will also find serger projects and eBooks on the BERNINA website in the Learn & Create section. Visit the blog, WeAllSew.com, for more ideas and inspiration. The BERNINA Skill Hub, the Big Book of Serging, and the Big Book of Serger Quilting provide more detailed information about different stitches, suggested uses, and project ideas.





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Chapter I

PREPARING TO STITCH

EXERCISE MATERIALS

Fabric

- (15) 8" x 8" squares of firm woven fabric
- (2) 8" x 8" squares of medium weight knit fabric
- (1) 8" x 8" square of fleece or felt
- (1) 2" x 8" rectangle of wash away topper, such as OESD StitcH20

Notions

- (4) spools of serger thread, such as Mettler Seracor (yellow, green, blue, and red)
- Texturized ("woolly") thread, such as WonderFil SoftLoc
- (2) 80/12 ELX needles

Presser Feet

All the exercises can be completed with the standard overlock foot that came with your machine.

Needles

Most BERNINA overlocker models are calibrated for ELx705 needles, however some models may be calibrated for 130/705H needles (L 4 Series machines). The major difference between the two types is that ELX needles have a reinforced blade with grooves in both the front and the back. The slightly rounded point works well with most fabrics.

You can use 130/705H needles with your overlocker in situations where you want a specific style of needle, like Microtex, Jersey, or Topstitch, but you may find you will need to adjust settings like tension and stitch length from the preset or default settings. Refer to your machine manual for the recommended needle type.

MACHINE SETUP

Before beginning the exercises, thread your machine for a 4-thread Overlock, using thread colors to match the colored thread paths on the machine. Review the machine manual or the following video references for your machine included in the playlist linked below.

Overlocker Setup

Machine Maintenance

Keeping your overlocker clean will keep your machine running smoothly and is a crucial component for successful stitches. Serging creates lint, which will build up in the machine, and oil will attract this lint to the moving parts of the machine, so it is important to not over-oil the overlocker. Your machine manual will give you detailed cleaning and oiling instructions. The L 860 and L 890 have a built-in tutorial for machine maintenance in the Tutorial section of the Setup Program.

Make sure your machine is clean and in good working order by reviewing your manual or watching the linked videos.

Overlocker Maintenance

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Chapter II

BALANCED STITCH

UNDERSTANDING THE BALANCED STITCH

Understanding a balanced stitch on the overlocker is the key to successful serging. Use thread colors to match the threading paths to make it easier to identify any imperfections when learning how to serge.

- Left Needle
- Right Needle
- Upper Looper
- Lower Looper

The needle stitches appear along the inside edge of the stitch as straight stitches on the top and "dots" of thread on the back. The looper stitches extend to the edge of the fabric where they interlock with each other. There should be little to no space between the looper stitches and the edge of the fabric. The seam should lie flat without puckering.

Make it a habit to review threading and other settings first when balancing a stitch. A missed thread guide, improperly inserted needle, or setting adjustments can affect the stitch outcome.

Decorative threads and specialty fabrics may require further adjustments.

Refer to the Stitch Balancing Tips chart for stitch adjustment suggestions. Best practice is to adjust one tension at a time in small increments and test sew. The interlocking nature of serger stitch threads means that if one thread is unbalanced, it can imbalance the others. Think of it like a tug of war, when one thread has higher tension, another thread may appear to have a looser tension. The higher the number on the tension dial, the higher the tension. Rolled hem and flatlock stitches are created by raising and lowering different tensions.

SETTINGS TABLE AND ABBREVIATIONS

You will see this table with some exercises. The top row of settings will give guidance on how to setup your machine for the stitch used in the exercise. Use the blank bottom row to record settings specific to your machine as you make your samples. (Fig. 1)

Tension Settings				Machine Settings				
LN	**RN**	**UL**	**LL**	**SL**	**CW**	**DF**	**O/R**	**ULC**
Left Needle	Right Needle	Upper Looper	Lower Looper	Stitch Length	Cutting Width	Differential Feed	Rolled Hem Selection Lever	Upper Looper Converter

Fig. 1

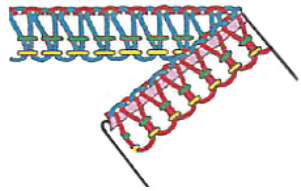
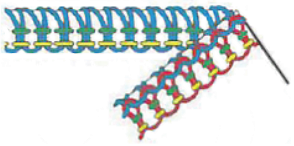
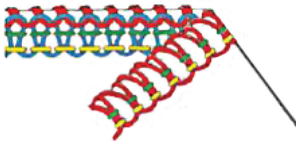
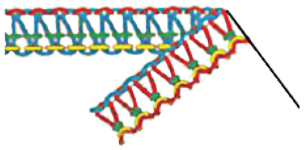
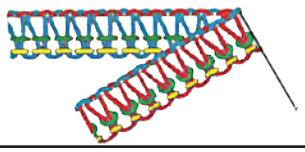
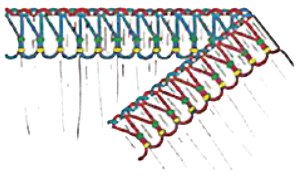
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STITCH BALANCING

The chart below shows examples of unbalanced stitches and how to correct the settings to balance the stitch. When making corrections in the tension settings, increase or decrease the settings as needed. Adjust ½ to 1 number at a time and one tension at a time. Stitch a seam using the new settings and evaluate. Continue in this manner until the stitch is balanced. In general, it is recommended to decrease tensions first. Refer to your machine manual for more details on balancing or optimizing various stitches.

Tip:

If you have a machine with a touch screen, use the Stitch Optimizer for additional help in balancing a stitch.

	**Upper and Lower Loopers - Tight Tension**
	Unbalanced: The looper threads cause the thread to roll at the edge of the fabric and/or the seam allowance is folded inside the stitch.
	Correction: Decrease (lower number) one or both looper tensions until the seam allowance is flat and loopers meet at the edge. Note: This problem might also result from an incorrect cutting width setting.
	**Upper Looper - Loose Tension**
	Unbalanced: The looper threads are not at the edge of the fabric. Upper Looper thread is visible on the back of the fabric and the looper threads are very loose.
	Correction: Make sure the thread is seated in the tension guides. If it is, tighten the Upper Looper thread (higher number).
	**Lower Looper - Loose Tension**
	Unbalanced: The looper threads do not lock on the edge of the fabric. Lower Looper thread is visible on the face of the fabric. The looper threads are very loose.
	Correction: Make sure the thread is seated in the tension guides. If it is, tighten the Lower Looper thread (higher number).
	**Left Needle - Loose Tension**
	Unbalanced: The yellow needle forms loops on the underside of the fabric. The seam is not secure and the yellow thread may show in the seam line.
	Correction: Make sure the yellow thread is seated in the tension guide. If it is, tighten the Left Needle tension (higher number).
	**Right Needle - Loose Tension**
	Unbalanced: The green needle thread forms loops on the underside of the fabric.
	Correction: Make sure the green thread is seated in the tension guide. If it is, tighten the Right Needle tension (higher number).
	**Right and Left Needles - Tight Tension**
	Unbalanced: The green and yellow needle threads are pulled taut, causing puckers in the fabric at the seam line.
	Correction: Make sure the threads are seated in the tension guides or have not double-wrapped around a threading guide. If they have, unwrap or loosen appropriate needle tension (lower number).

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Exercise 1

UNDERSTANDING THREAD TENSIONS

Fabric: (5) 8" x 8" squares of firm woven fabric

Needle: (2) 80/12 ELX needles

Thread: (4) spools of serger thread (yellow, green, blue, red)

Foot: Standard presser foot for the machine



Part One: Balanced 4-thread Overlock Stitch

1. Set the machine for the 4-thread Overlock.
2. Lower the presser foot.
3. Sew a thread chain 2-3" to verify that a chain is being formed. End with the thread chain cut in the thread cutter/clamp on the side of the machine.
4. Fold one piece of fabric in half to 4" x 8".
5. Raise the presser foot or use the Free Hand System and slide the folded edge of the fabric under the foot up to the knife.
6. Stitch along the folded edge, trimming a small amount as you sew for a cleaner edge.
7. Stitch to the end of the fabric and continue sewing until you have a 3-4" thread chain.
8. Cut the thread chain using the thread cutter on the left side of the machine.
9. Examine the stitch formation.
   a. If the stitch is not balanced, review the threading path and verify settings.
   b. If it is still not balanced, review the Stitch Balancing Tips on the previous page.
10. Enter the settings for your machine in the table (Fig. 2).

Tension Settings				Machine Settings				
LN	RN	UL	LL	SL	CW	DF	O/R	ULC
4	4	4	4	2.5 - 3	6	1	O	--

Fig. 2

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Part Two: Adjusting Thread Tensions

The following set of exercises will provide a visual example of how stitches look with various tension issues. The samples will help you understand what happens to a stitch when one of the tensions is increased or decreased. Carefully examine both sides of the stitch when checking for imbalances. **Each sample fabric will have tight and loose tension settings sewn along opposite long edges.**

Upper Looper Tension Too Tight (blue thread) (Fig. 3)

1. Increase the Upper Looper tension to the highest setting of 9.
2. Fold the fabric in half to 4" x 8" and sew, trimming off a small amount of the fold.
3. Look at the stitch. When the Upper Looper tension (blue) is too tight, it pulls the Lower Looper thread (red) over to the right side.
4. Label this stitch "Upper Looper Tension Too Tight".



Fig. 3

Upper Looper Tension Too Loose (blue thread) (Fig. 4)

1. Decrease the Upper Looper tension to the lowest setting of 1 and **sew on the opposite side of the fabric**, trimming a little as you sew.
2. Examine the stitch formation on both sides. When the Upper Looper tension is too low, the blue thread is pulled to the back side of the seam.
3. Label this stitch "Upper Looper Tension Too Loose".
4. Return the Upper Looper setting back to the default of 4.

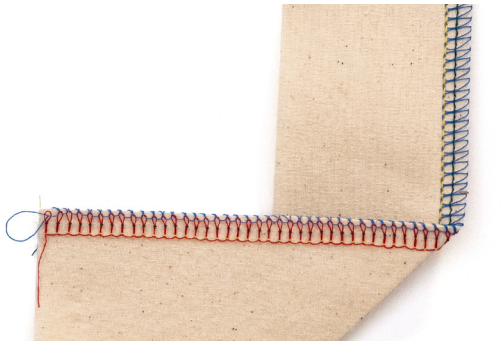


Fig. 4

Lower Looper Tension Too Tight (red thread) (Fig. 5)

1. Increase the Lower Looper tension to the highest setting of 9.
2. Fold the fabric in half to 4" x 8" and sew, trimming off a small amount of the fold.
3. Look at the stitch. When the Lower Looper tension (red) is too tight, the upper thread (blue) is pulled to the back.
4. Label this stitch "Lower Looper Tension Too Tight".

Lower Looper Tension Too Loose (red thread) (Fig. 6)

1. Decrease the Lower Looper tension to the

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Fig. 5

lowest setting of 1 and **sew on the opposite side of the fabric**, trimming a little as you sew.

2. Examine the stitch formation. When the Lower Looper thread (red) is too loose, it is pulled to the front.
3. Label this stitch "Lower Looper Tension Too Loose".
4. Put the Lower Looper setting back to the default of 4.

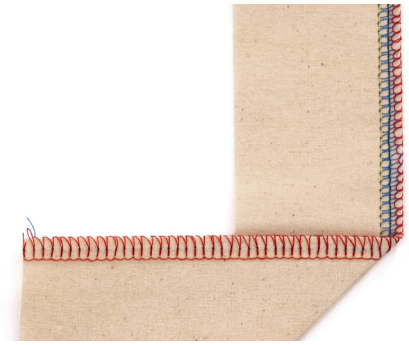


Fig. 6

Right Needle Tension Too Tight (green thread) (Fig. 7)

1. Increase the Right Needle tension to the highest setting of 9.
2. Fold the fabric in half to 4" x 8" and sew, trimming off a small amount of the fold.
3. Look at the stitch. You might have noticed that while you sewed, the fabric wanted to pucker. You may also see a bit of the Lower Looper thread (red) showing up on the edge of the seam. From the back side, you may notice that the Left Needle thread (yellow) is being pulled to look like a loop.
4. Label this stitch "Right Needle Tension Too Tight".

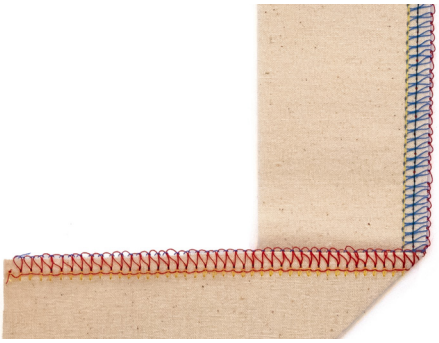


Fig. 7

Right Needle Tension Too Loose (green thread) (Fig. 8)

1. Now adjust the right needle tension setting to the lowest setting of 1 and **sew the seam on the opposite side**, trimming off a little as before.
2. Examine the stitch formation. Notice how you can now see the needle thread (green) making loose loops on the front and back of the fabric.
3. Label this stitch "Right Needle Tension Too Loose".
4. Put the Right Needle tension setting back to the default of 4.

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Fig. 8

Left Needle Tension Too Tight (yellow thread) (Fig. 9)

1. Adjust the Left Needle tension the highest setting of 9.
2. Fold the fabric in half to 4" x 8" and sew, trimming off a small amount of the fold.
3. Look at the stitch. You see some of the red thread show up on the front side of the seam, but also the seam will appear to "tunnel" or scrunch up more when sewing.
4. Label this stitch "Left Needle Tension Too Tight".



Fig. 9

Left Needle Tension Too Loose (yellow thread) (Fig. 10)

1. Now adjust the left needle tension setting to the lowest setting of 1. **Sew the seam on the opposite side**, trimming a little as before.
2. Examine the stitch formation. You will notice that on the back of the seam the yellow thread is being pulled by the loopers.
3. Label this stitch "Left Needle Tension Too Loose".
4. Put the Left Needle tension setting back to the default of 4.



Fig. 10

Balanced Stitch

Now that you have a better understanding of what causes imbalances in the stitch, return to the sample you made in Part One. Adjust as needed to make a balanced stitch.

Tip:

The thread cutter also works as a clamp, keeping your threads in position as you begin the next seam.

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Chapter III

SETTING ADJUSTMENTS

In this chapter you will learn how to customize your stitches, whether you are optimizing a practical stitch or adding a flair of creativity. Total Stitch Control means that you can adjust any setting within a stitch based on your preference or needs.

Stitch Length

Set the stitch length to the default recommended for the stitch and test. For most projects, an overlock stitch length of 2.5 to 3.5 will give good results. As with a sewing machine, there are times that you will want to change the stitch length. It is simple to adjust the length as needed for your project.

The minimum stitch length is 0.8 and the maximum is 4.0 to 4.5, depending upon your model. The "R" on the Stitch Length knob is the recommended stitch length for a rolled hem.

Here are some guidelines to get you started (Fig. 11)

Tip:

You may need to adjust the stitch length to accommodate thicker or thinner threads or different weights of fabric, as well as for decorative effects like gathering or rolled hems.

Stitch Length Guidelines	
Technique	**Stitch Length**
Seaming	2.5 mm
Seam Finish	3 mm - 4.5 mm
Gathering	4 mm - 4.5 mm
Decorative Edging	1 mm - 4.5 mm
Rolled Hem	0.8 mm - 1.5 mm
Attaching Elastic	4 mm - 4.5 mm

Fig. 11

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Exercise 2

STITCH LENGTH

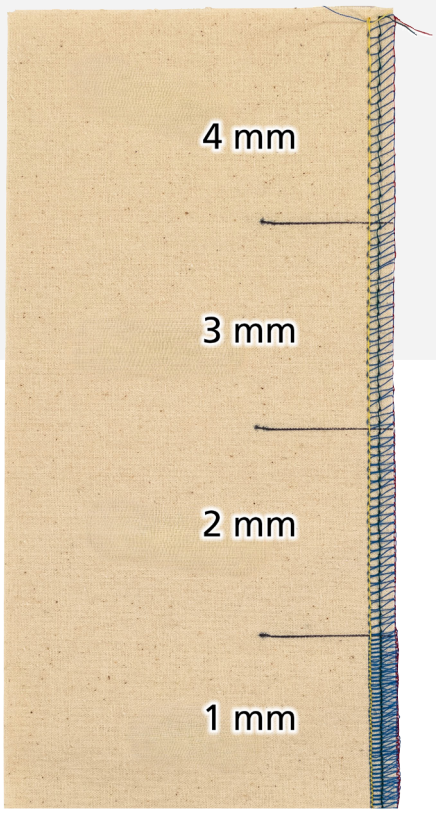
Fabric: (1) 8″ x 8″ square of firm woven fabric

Needle: (2) 80/12 ELX needles

Thread: (4) spools of serger thread (yellow, green, blue, red)

Foot: Standard presser foot for the machine

1. Set the machine for the 4-thread Overlock.
2. Fold the fabric in half to 4″ x 8″.
3. With a fabric marker, divide the fabric into four equal sections along the folded edge. Mark the sections 4 mm, 3 mm, 2 mm, and 1 mm.
4. Set the stitch length to 4 mm.
5. Place the fabric under the foot up to the knife.
6. Sew to the first mark along the folded edge, trimming a small amount.
7. Adjust the stitch length to 3 mm and sew to the second mark.
8. Adjust the stitch length to 2 mm and sew to the third mark.



9. Adjust the stitch length to 1 mm and sew to the end.
10. Return the stitch length to 2.5 mm.
11. Enter your settings in the table below (Fig. 12)

Tension Settings				Machine Settings				
LN	RN	UL	LL	SL	CW	DF	O/R	ULC
4	4	4	4	1 - 4	6	1	O	--

Fig. 12

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Cutting Width

Adjust the cutting width from 5 mm to 9 mm using the Cutting Width dial or knob on the machine. This moves the knife closer to or farther away from the needles, affecting how much of the fabric is trimmed. The default setting is 6 mm, which yields approximately a ¼" finished seam allowance when the left needle is in use.

The left and right needles are 2 mm apart. When using only **the right** needle and a Cutting Width of 6 mm, the finished width is even narrower at 4 mm.

Refer to the chart below (Fig. 13) for seam widths in millimeters and inches.

Cutting Width Settings		
Setting	**Seam Width**	
	Left Needle	**Right Needle**
5	5 mm (1/5")	3 mm (1/8")
6	6 mm (1/4")	4 mm (5/32")
7	7 mm (9/32")	5 mm (1/5")
8	8 mm (5/16")	6 mm (1/4")
9	9 mm (11/32")	7 mm (9/32")

Fig. 13

FEATURE FOCUS

Micro Thread Control

Micro Thread Control (mtc) is a fine tune adjustment that adjusts the amount of space where the looper threads intersect. This allows you to perfect the look of your seams with minimal effort and tension adjustments when the fabric edge tunnels or loops are hanging loose at the fabric edge. It allows you to correct the looper stitch formation with a turn of a dial or position of a lever, depending on the machine model. This adjustment moves the Stitch Finger to the left and right in small (micro) amounts. Adjusting in the positive direction widens the stitch slightly to flatten a seam. Adjusting in the negative direction corrects overhanging looper threads by snugging them up to the fabric edge. This feature has the most impact in cutting width ranges of 4 - 7 mm.



Tip:

Cutting Width adjustments may be helpful to accommodate different weights of fabric, as well as decorative effects. Use this feature along with mtc for optimal results.

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Exercise 3

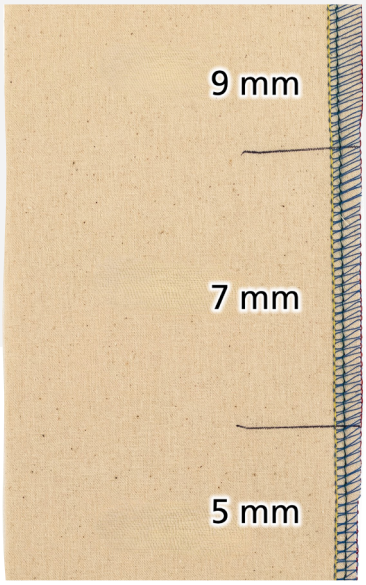
CUTTING WIDTH

Fabric: (1) 8" x 8" square of firm woven fabric

Needle: (2) 80/12 ELX needles

Thread: (4) spools of serger thread (yellow, green, blue, red)

Foot: Standard presser foot for the machine



1. Set the machine for the 4-thread Overlock.
2. Fold the fabric in half to 4" x 8".
3. With a fabric marker, divide the fabric into three equal sections along the folded edge. Label the sections "9 mm", "7 mm", and "5 mm."
4. Adjust the Cutting Width to the widest setting of 9 mm.
5. Place the fabric under the foot up to the knife.
6. Sew to the first mark along the folded edge, trimming a small amount.
7. Reduce the Cutting Width to 7 mm and sew to the second mark.
8. Reduce the Cutting Width to the lowest setting 5 mm and sew to the end.
9. Return the Cutting Width to 6 mm.
10. Enter your settings in the table below (Fig.14).

Tension Settings				Machine Settings				
LN	RN	UL	LL	SL	CW	DF	O/R	ULC
4	4	4	4	2.5 - 3	5 - 9	1	O	--

Fig. 14

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DIFFERENTIAL FEED



Differential Feed is one of the most useful features on an overlocker. There are two sets of feed dogs on the overlocker that move the fabric through the machine. The set in the back moves at a constant distance and rate and is not adjustable. The set in the front is adjustable between 0.7 and 2.

When at the default setting of 1, or neutral (N), both the front and back feed dogs move the same distance. This is the setting for most applications, resulting in flat, even seams.

When the Differential Feed is adjusted to a higher setting (up to 2), the front feed dog travels a further distance, feeding more fabric under the foot during the stitching process. This results in a gathering effect on woven fabrics. An increased Differential Feed is also useful when seaming knits, removing the waviness in the seam that can occur when sewn at the default setting.

When undesired puckering occurs during stitching, reduce the Differential Feed (down to 0.7). Less fabric is fed under the foot, resulting in a flat seam.

The setting of the Differential Feed is dependent on the fabric choice and desired effect. Refer to the following chart (Fig. 15) for general recommendations.

FEATURE FOCUS

Seam Guide

A seam guide is useful for guiding the fabric and trimming edges with a consistent amount. Measure from the left needle when serging a 4-thread Overlock. Measure from the right needle when stitching a narrow seam using only the right needle.



L 4 Seam Guide



L 6 & L 8 Seam Guide

Setting	Effect
2	Gathering or stretching, compensation
1.5	Light gathering
1	Neutral, no effect (Standard)
0.7	Stretching

Fig. 15

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GATHERING WOVEN FABRICS

Quickly gather light to medium weight fabrics by increasing the Differential Feed. Other adjustments include increasing the Stitch Length to 4 - 4.5 mm and increasing both needle tensions. The higher the needle tensions, the more gathered the fabric will be.

The gathering can be adjusted by separating the needle threads at each end of the fabric and pulling from both ends. When working with heavier fabric, sewing long strips, or if you anticipate having to adjust the gathered amount, consider serging over a cord using a cording foot. You can also stitch a second time over a gathered edge to increase the gathering effect.

Use a gathering foot to gather one fabric while sewing to a flat fabric.



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Exercise 4

SEAMING KNIT FABRIC

Fabric: (2) 8" x 8" squares of medium weight knit fabric

Needle: (2) 80/12 ELX needles

Thread: (4) spools of serger thread (yellow, green, blue, red)

Foot: Standard presser foot for the machine



1. Set up machine for the 4-thread Overlock.
2. Fold one fabric in half to 4" x 8".
3. Place the fabric under the foot up to the knife.
4. Stitch along the folded edge, trimming a little as you stitch.
5. Place the seam flat on the table and examine the seam. Is it flat or wavy?
6. Increase the Differential Feed to 1.5.
7. Fold the second fabric in half and repeat.
8. Compare the two seams.
9. Make further adjustments to the Differential Feed as needed until your seam is flat.
10. Enter your settings in the table below (Fig. 15).

Tension Settings				Machine Settings				
LN	RN	UL	LL	SL	CW	DF	O/R	ULC
4	4	4	4	2.5 - 3	6	1 - 1.5	O	--

Fig. 16

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Chapter IV

OVERLOCK STITCH VARIATIONS

Overlock stitches are generally used for construction, finishing seam edges, and decorative finishes.

In addition to a 4-thread Overlock stitch, you can use a single needle or a single looper to make a variety of stitch options from the overlock stitch.

A 4-thread Overlock stitch is best suited as a construction seam when sewing two pieces of fabric together. Use a 3-thread Overlock stitch when finishing edges or as a construction seam when a less bulky stitch is desired. The 2-thread Overlock stitch is a delicate stitch that is good for decorative edge finishes, but not great for a construction seam.

2-THREAD STITCHES

The 2-thread Overlock stitch is a good option for finishing edges. It reduces bulk and uses less thread. It can also have a decorative appearance. One needle and only the lower looper are threaded. The Upper Looper Converter (Fig. 17), which is inserted into the upper looper, brings the lower looper thread to the upper side of the fabric to form a stitch.

The Upper Looper Converter must be used to make 2-thread stitches.

This is inserted into the upper looper and brings the lower thread to the upper side of the fabric to complete any 2-thread stitch. The Upper Looper Converter can be built-in on your machine or a separate part depending on our mode (Fig. 16). Consult your machine manual for how to use this on your machine.



Fig. 17

Needle Handling

Use the Needle Threader/Inserter Tool (Fig. 18) to hold the needle while inserting or removing it from the machine. Loosen the Needle Set Screw to remove the needle and retighten after the needle is removed. A half turn is generally enough to loosen and remove the needle. Some machines may require you to loosen both set screws. Make sure that the top of the needle is visible through the Needle Check Window (Fig. 19) for proper placement of the needle. Use the foam storage pad (Fig. 20) to hold slightly used needles after removal.



Fig. 18

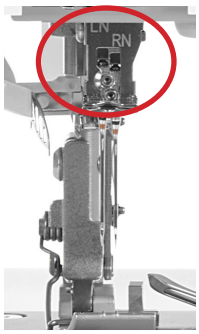


Fig. 19



Fig. 20

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Exercise 5

3-THREAD OVERLOCK NARROW (RN)

Fabric: (1) 8" x 8" square of firm woven fabric

Needle: (1) 80/12 ELX needle

Thread: (3) spools of serger thread (green, blue, red)

Foot: Standard presser foot for the machine



1. Set up machine for the 3-thread Overlock Narrow using the right needle.
2. Clip the left needle thread (yellow) at the spool and remove the thread and left needle.
3. Fold fabric in half to 4" x 8".
4. Stitch along the folded edge, trimming a little as you sew.
5. Enter the stitch settings in the table below (Fig. 21).
6. *Optional:* Sew the same stitch through a single layer of fabric on the opposite side. Compare this stitch as a construction seam and as an edge finish.

Tip:

Always remove thread by clipping at the spool and pulling through the machine in the direction of sewing. Do not pull the thread backward through the machine.

Tension Settings				Machine Settings				
LN	RN	UL	LL	SL	CW	DF	O/R	ULC
--	3.5 - 4	4	4	2.5 - 3	6	1	O	--

Fig. 21

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Chapter V

ROLLED HEM VARIATIONS

The rolled hem is the perfect stitch for finishing edges on light to medium weight fabrics. It can be sewn with two or three threads. A 3-thread rolled hem has a right and wrong side. A 2-thread rolled hem looks the same on the front and back. This is a great stitch for scarves, napkins, lingerie, blouses, and evening wear. Add a contrasting decorative thread for an extra pop of color.

ROLLED HEM SELECTION LEVER

One of the key steps for setting up for rolled hem stitches is disengaging the Rolled Hem Selection Lever. On most machines, this lever sits along the right side of the stitch plate and its position is indicated by an "O", for overlock, or "R" for rolled hem (Fig. 22).



Fig. 22

When the Rolled Hem Selection Lever is set to R, the stitch finger is disengaged. The stitch finger typically sits under the raw edge of the fabric and supports that edge as the loopers wrap the edge. With the stitch finger gone, the edge of the fabric can more easily turn in and create a proper rolled hem.

PICOT STITCH

The picot stitch is a variation of the 3-thread rolled hem. It has a longer stitch length allowing for a more open look to the stitch. This is particularly nice for hemming chiffon and other sheer fabrics.

DECORATIVE ROLLED HEMS

Place decorative thread in the upper looper when stitching a 3-thread rolled hem. Decorative thread is placed in the lower looper for a 2-thread rolled hem because the upper looper is not used and the Upper Looper Converter is in place.

Incorporate fishing line, cording, or wire as you sew the rolled hem to add dimension and shape to the fabric edge.

Lettuce edges are a decorative finish that use a standard rolled hem but decreased Differential Feed setting. The neatly wrapped edge gets stretched as it is sewn and the result is a wavy, frilly edge mostly commonly seen on children's clothes.

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Exercise 6

3-THREAD ROLLED HEM

Fabric: (1) 8" x 8" square of firm woven fabric

Needle: (1) 80/12 ELX needle

Thread: (2) spools of serger thread (green, red), (1) spool texturized thread

Foot: Standard presser foot for the machine



1. Set the machine for the 3-thread Rolled Hem.
2. Remove the upper looper thread (blue) from the machine.
3. Thread the upper looper with texturized thread.
4. Stitch along one edge of the square, trimming a little as you sew.
5. Enter the stitch settings in the table below (Fig. 23).

Tension Settings				Machine Settings				
LN	RN	UL	LL	SL	CW	DF	O/R	ULC
--	3.5 - 4	4	5.5 - 7.5	1 - 1.2	5 - 5.5	1	R	--

Fig. 23

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Exercise 7

PICOT STITCH

Fabric: (1) 8" x 8" square of firm woven fabric

Needle: (1) 80/12 ELX needle

Thread: (2) spools of serger thread (green, red), (1) spool texturized thread

Foot: Standard presser foot for the machine



A longer stitch length, different tension settings, and a slightly wider cutting width differentiates this stitch from the rolled hem. It is perfect for hemming lightweight sheer fabrics such as chiffon.

1. Set up machine for the 3-thread Picot Stitch.
2. Machine is threaded as for Exercise 6.
3. Stitch along one edge of the square, trimming a little as you sew.
4. Enter the stitch settings in the table below (Fig. 24).

Tension Settings				Machine Settings				
LN	RN	UL	LL	SL	CW	DF	O/R	ULC
--	3.5	3.5	5 - 6.5	2.5 - 3	6	1	R	--

Fig. 24

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Chapter VI

FLATLOCK VARIATIONS

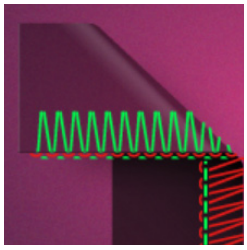
The flatlock stitch is an overlock stitch with altered tension settings that allow the seam to lie flat when pulled open after stitching. This produces a smooth, flexible seam in stretch fabrics. It can make a nice decorative stitch option. When open, there are two sides to the stitch: a ladder side (needle thread) and a loop side (looper thread). Place fabrics right sides together for the ladder side to show on the right side of the fabric. Weave ribbons or yarn under the stitching for further embellishment.

Flatlock stitches can be sewn with two or three threads and can be wide or narrow. The 2-thread Flatlock is commonly used with high stretch fabrics such as activewear and swimwear. But if a seam is going to have lots of stress, consider using a 3-thread flatlock instead.

Tip:

A blind hem can be sewn using a flatlock stitch. The serger advantage is that the raw edge of the hem is finished while the hem is stitched, for efficient sewing.

BLANKET STITCH



This stitch simulates the overcasting stitch found on the edes of blankets, vests, sweaters, and other bulky items. A water soluble stabilizer is placed on top of the fabric and then stitched. Like a flatlock stitch, the seam is opened flat, pulling the needle thread to the top. The stabilizer is rinsed away, and the ladder stitches resemble the blanket stitch that you find on the sewing machine. The blanket stitch can be wide (left needle) or narrow (right needle).

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Exercise 8

2-THREAD FLATLOCK NARROW (RN)

Fabric: (1) 8" x 8" square of firm woven fabric

Needle: (1) 80/12 ELX needle

Thread: (2) spools of serger thread (green, red)

Foot: Standard presser foot for the machine



1. Set up machine for the 2-thread Flatlock Narrow using the right needle.
2. Attach the Upper Looper Converter.
3. Fold the fabric in half to 4" x 8".
4. Stitch along the fold, trimming a little as you go.
5. Pull the layers apart, flattening the fabric.
6. Enter the stitch settings in the table below (Fig. 25).

Tension Settings				Machine Settings				
LN	RN	UL	LL	SL	CW	DF	O/R	ULC
--	2	--	4 - 4.5	2.5 - 3	6	1	O	Yes

Fig. 25

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Exercise 9

2-THREAD BLANKET STITCH NARROW (RN)

Fabric: (1) 8" x 8" square of fleece or felt, (1) 2" x 8" rectangle of wash-away topper

Needle: (1) 80/12 ELX needle

Thread: (2) spools of serger thread (green, red)

Foot: Standard presser foot for the machine



The 2-thread Blanket Stitch is used as an edge finish and while the L 4 Series machines do not include this stitch on their charts, it can be sewn.

1. Set up machine for the 2-thread Blanket Stitch Narrow using the right needle.
2. Attach the Upper Looper Converter.
3. Place the water soluble stabilizer on top of the fabric and under the presser foot. Guide the layers so a small amount of stabilizer and fabric is trimmed as you sew.
4. Carefully pull the stabilizer to the edge of the fabric, pulling the needle threads to the top of the fabric.
5. Wash away the stabilizer.
6. Enter the stitch settings in the table below (Fig. 26).

Tension Settings				Machine Settings				
LN	RN	UL	LL	SL	CW	DF	O/R	ULC
--	2	--	4 - 4.5	4	6	1	O	Yes

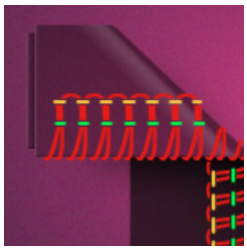
Fig. 26

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SPECIALTY STITCHES

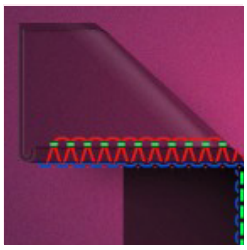
In addition to the those already covered, there are some stitches that are perfect for unique serging situations.

3-THREAD SUPER-STRETCH STITCH



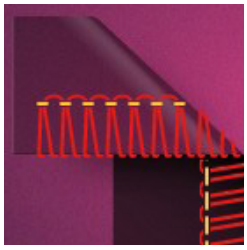
This is a highly elastic seam suitable for activewear, such as swimwear, leotards, etc. It is a strong construction seam because both needles are used. Only the lower looper is used and when threaded with texturized thread, the seam will stretch with the fabric, reducing the chance of popped stitches.

3-THREAD NARROW SEAM



This stitch is appropriate for fine, lightweight, and sheer fabrics. It differs from the 3-thread Overlock Narrow in that the Rolled Hem Selection lever is retracted, and the Cutting Width is adjusted resulting in a slightly rolled edge and a narrower seam allowance.

2-THREAD WRAPPED OVERLOCK



The 2-thread Wrapped Overlock can be wide or narrow. It is a wider finished edge than the rolled hem and reversible.

SIGNATURE STITCHES



Fig. 27

Create your own stitch variations by adjusting tensions as you like. Unique effects can be made by simply adjusting tensions or altering the length and width of your stitch settings. For example, tightening the upper looper and loosening the lower looper of a 3-thread Overlock can create a striped effect on the top of fabric when different colors of decorative threads are used. Testing stitches is important, especially when working with decorative threads. The only limit is your imagination!

For example, to create the Signature Stitch in Fig. 27, the following settings were used:

Tension Settings			
LN	**RN**	**UL**	**LL**
6 - 7	--	8 - 9	3.5 - 4

Machine Settings				
SL	**CW**	**DF**	**O/R**	**ULC**
1.25	6	1	0	--

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DECORATIVE THREADS

Using specialty or decorative threads is a simple way to customize your serger stitches. Texturized threads can create softer seams or more plush, defined edges. Heavy threads add definition or a hand-look to a stitch like the blanket stitch.

When using different types of threads, testing is always encouraged to perfect your stitch. Tension settings will likely need to be made and your stitch may even benefit from using a specialty needle, like a topstitch needle, if threading through the needle paths.

Circumventing the Air Threader Nozzles

Some thick or decorative threads cannot be threaded through the Air Threader Nozzles or do not provide optimal stitch formation when they are threaded in the normal way. The L 8 Series offers the ability to bypass, or circumvent, the Air Threader Nozzles. This reduces the friction on the thread and results in a lower tension on the thread. The thread passes through the Circumvention Thread Guide and then is tied to a thread tail in the air threading pipe. You can find detailed directions and photos in the manual for your L 8 Series machine.

FEATURE FOCUS

Personal Memory

On machines with touch screens, take advantage of the Personal Memory icon and save your stitches to the permanent memory to use again. Name the stitch with the type and weight of thread for easy recall. For machines without touch screens, save your settings in a notebook, along with a sewn sample.

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TECHNIQUES

METHODS FOR SECURING

Because the serger does not do a backstitch like the sewing machine, other methods are used to secure the beginning and ending of seams. It is not necessary to secure a seam that will be crossed with another seam. Options for securing stitches include:

- **Seam sealant:** Use a seam sealant where seams do not cross. Seam sealant works like a glue that secures the end of the stitches in place. To avoid using too much, place a couple of drops on some scrap paper and dab the seam end into the sealant. Trim the thread tail after it is dry.
- **Weave thread tails:** Weave the thread tails into the beginning and ending stitches with a large-eyed tapestry needle.
- **Knot:** Securing the thread tails with a snug, overhead knot will prevent unraveling.
- **Sew over:** Overlock seams can also be secured at the beginning and ending right at the machine with stitches (see Exercise 10).

REMOVING STITCHES

Serger seams are held together by the needle stitches and the looper threads sit on top of the fabric. While it may seem instinctive to cut the looper threads, you need to cut the needle threads instead. Once the needle threads are removed, the looper threads will fall off the seam.

FEATURE FOCUS

Free Hand System

The Free Hand System (or knee lifter) is a time-saving device that lifts the presser foot, allowing you to keep both on hands on the fabric when positioning into place. This extra degree of control is also useful when navigating around corners.



On the L 660, the feed dogs will also drop for smoother movement of the fabric during placement.

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Exercise 10

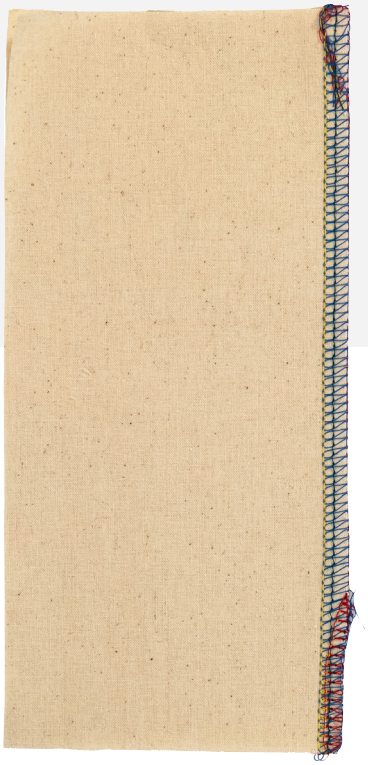
SECURING STITCHES

Fabric: (1) 8" x 8" square of firm woven fabric

Needle: (2) 80/12 ELX needles

Thread: (4) spools of serger thread (yellow, green, blue, red)

Foot: Standard presser foot for the machine



1. Set up machine for the 4-thread Overlock.
2. Sew a 2-3" thread chain without fabric.
3. Fold fabric in half to 4" x 8" and place under the foot in front of the knife.
4. Take 1 or 2 stitches in the fabric trimming off a little of the fold.
5. Lower the needles into the fabric.
6. Raise the presser foot and gently pull the thread chain to the front so that it lies under the foot on top of the seam.
7. Sew over the chain and then pull it under the knife to trim. Continue stitching the seam.
8. At the end of the seam, sew one stitch off the edge of the fabric.
9. Retract the Rolled Hem Selection Lever to release the stitch.
10. Raise the needle and the presser foot.
11. Carefully turn the fabric over so that the lower looper side of the seam is facing up.
12. Place the fabric under the foot so that the first stitch enters the fabric when you begin to sew.
13. Re-engage the Rolled Hem Selection Lever.
14. Lower the foot and sew for about 1", sewing over the previous stitching without cutting.
15. Angle the stitches to chain off the fabric.

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Exercise 11

INSIDE CORNERS

Fabric: (1) 8" x 8" square of firm woven fabric

Needle: (2) 80/12 ELX needles

Thread: (4) spools of serger thread (yellow, green, blue, red)

Foot: Standard presser foot for the machine



Turning corners, whether on the outside or the inside, is easily mastered with a little practice. Inside corners work well for continuous plackets on sleeves and back neck openings.

1. Set up machine for the 4-thread Overlock.
2. Cut an inside corner into the fabric.
3. Snip into the corner about ¼", the width of the stitching.
4. Sew until the knife reaches the end of the cut.
5. Lower the needle into the fabric.
6. Raise the presser foot and carefully straighten the corner, placing the fabric in front of the presser foot.
7. Lower the presser foot and continue sewing in a straight line.

FEATURE FOCUS

Needle Up/Down

Many BERNINA models default to stop with the needles in the highest position. Models with the BERNINA Foot Control with Back-kick function allow you to raise and lower the needle(s) with a press of the heel.

The L 660 will also allow you to set the needles to stop down with a long press on the Back-kick. It will remain set this way until you turn the machine off. On machines with touch screens, the Needle Stop Position can be pre-set and will remain set until you change it.

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Exercise 12

OUTSIDE CORNERS

Fabric: (2) 8" x 8" square of firm woven fabric

Needle: (2) 80/12 ELX needles

Thread: (4) spools of serger thread (yellow, green, blue, red)

Foot: Standard presser foot for the machine

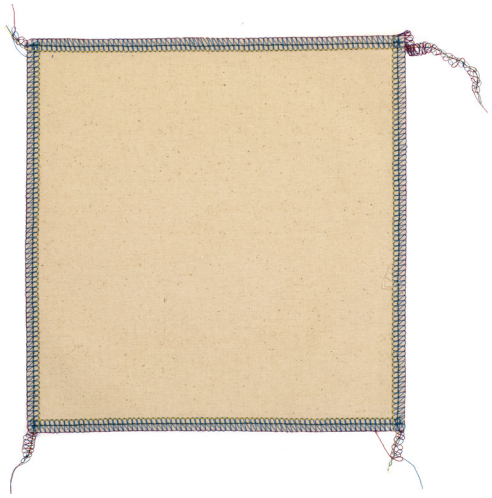


Outside corners can be a decorative or practical finish on a variety of projects.

Sew samples for both Option 1 and Option 2 with a 4-thread Overlock stitch.

Option 1:

1. Sew one edge of the fabric, chaining off the end.
2. Turn and sew down the next side crossing over the previous stitches, trimming them.
3. Repeat until all four sides are sewn.
4. Apply seam sealant to the corners and trim thread tails when dry.



Option 2:

1. Begin at one corner and sew, trimming minimally. Take one stitch off the fabric at the end.
2. Raise the needles.
3. Retract the Rolled Hem Selection Lever to release the stitch.
4. Carefully turn the fabric 90° counterclockwise. Avoid pulling away from the needles too far as that can cause a loop at the beginning of the next stitching.
5. Place the Rolled Hem Selection Lever back in the Overlock position.
6. Place the fabric under the foot next to the knife and drop the needle into the fabric at the top edge of the seam.
7. Lower the presser foot and sew along the next edge.
8. Repeat until all four edges are sewn. The thread tail from the fourth side can be woven into the stitching or secured as in Exercise 10.

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MACHINE REFERENCE INDEX

This workbook encompasses a variety of overlockers, and not all functions and exercises apply to every model. Refer to this reference guide for all the functions and exercises that apply to your specific machine model before beginning.

Please note that the Combo Stitch, Chainstitch, and Coverstitch are covered in a separate book (Coverstitch Basics).

Refer to your machine's Stitch Chart or Touch Screen for specific settings. There is a space at the end of most exercises for you to note the specific settings you used.

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