BERNINA COVERSTITCH BASICS WORKBOOK

for BERNINA L 890 and L 620







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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Coverstitch Basics Workbook. This workbook includes chain- and coverstitches, as well as the combo stitches. 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 combo/coverstitch machine will speed up your sewing in many ways, allowing you to create more in less time. You will finish your project quickly with professional results.

Even though the workings of the machine may appear more complex than a sewing machine, it does not take long to learn the basics.

The series of simple exercises are designed to make you comfortable with your machine and expand your serging skills. The exercises are directed toward the features and stitches most valuable for many serging techniques. You will get the most out of your experience by working through each exercise, and sew at your own pace.

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. You may wish to laminate a copy that will be readily available when needed. Review your machine 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, for more ideas and inspiration. The Big Book of Serging and 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

- (7) 8" x 8" squares of firm woven fabric
- (1) 2" x 20" strip of light weight soft woven fabric

Notions

- Combo Machine: (5) spools of serger thread, such as Mettler Seracor (yellow, green, blue, red, and purple)
- Coverstitch Machine: (4) spools of serger thread, such as Mettler Seracor (yellow, green, blue, and purple)
- (2) spools of 12 weight cotton thread in two colors of choice, such as WonderFil Spagetti
- (3) 80/12 ELX needles specific for machine model
- External thread stand (optional; see Exercise 8 on Thread Blending)

Presser Feet

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

MACHINE SETUP

Before beginning the exercises, thread your machine for a 5-thread combo stitch (combo machines) or a 4-thread coverstitch (coverstitch machines), using thread colors to match the colored thread paths on the machine. Review the manual and/or the following video references for your machine.

Combo & Coverstitch Setup

Machine Maintenance

Keeping your overlocker clean will keep your machine running smoothly and is a crucial component for successful stitches. Your machine manual will give you detailed cleaning and oiling instructions. The L 890 has 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.

Combo & Coverstitch Maintenance

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SETTINGS TABLES / ABBREVIATIONS

You will see this table (Fig. 1) with the combo stitch exercise with recommendations for the following stitch settings.

Chain/Cover Tension Settings			
LC	**CC**	**RC**	**CL**
Left Cover Needle	Center Cover Needle	Right Cover Needle	Chain Looper
Overlock Tension Settings			
LN	**RN**	**UL**	**LL**
Left Overlock Needle	Right Ovelock Needle	Upper Looper	Lower Looper
Machine Settings			
SL	**DF**	**CW**	**ULC**
Stitch Length	Differential Feed	Cutting Width	Upper Looper Converter

Fig. 1

You will see this table (Fig. 2) with the cover- and chainstitch exercises.

Tension Settings			
LC	**CC**	**RC**	**CL**
Left Cover Needle	Center Cover Needle	Right Cover Needle	Chain Looper
Machine Settings			
SL		**DF**	
Stitch Length		Differential Feed	

Fig. 2

In the charts provided alongside each exercise, one row in the table will show the recommended settings for the stitch used in that exercise. There is an additional, blank row to record settings specific to your machine as you make your samples.

STITCH BALANCING TIPS

It is recommended to test sew your stitch before applying it to your project. The needle stitches should look like straight lines on the top and dots of thread on the back. The chain looper thread forms a connecting waved line on the bottom side of the stitch. The seam should lie flat.

When making corrections in the tension settings, increase or decrease as needed. Adjust 1/2 to 1 number at a time and one tension at a time. Stitch a seam using the new settings and evaluate. In general, it is recommended to decrease tensions first. The stitch length may also need to be increased or decreased for a perfect stitch. Continue in this manner until the stitch is balanced.

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.

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Chapter II

COMBO STITCH

WHAT IS A COMBO STITCH?

The combo stitch is often used in garment construction. It is a combination of a chainstitch and an overlock stitch. Sometimes, this stitch is called a 5-thread safety stitch.

Overlock machines that are classified as "combo" can create this stitch because they sew both overlock and chain-/coverstitches. Four or five threads are used, depending on whether you are sewing a 2- or 3-thread overlock stitch along the fabric edge.

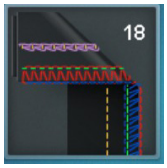
The combo stitch is a strong seam and wider than a standard overlock seam. The width of the overlock part of the stitch can be wide or narrow, depending on whether the right or left overlock needle is used. The right cover needle is generally used for the chainstitch part of the seam.



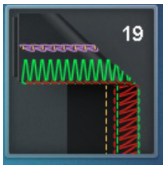
Example Combo Stitches



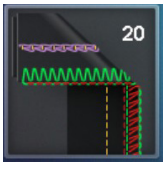
3-thread Overlock Wide (LN)
+ Chainstitch (RN)



3-thread Overlock Narrow (RN)
+ Chainstitch (RN)



2-thread Overlock Wide (LN)
+ Chainstitch (RN)



2-thread Overlock Narrow (RN)
+ Chainstitch (RN)

Tip:

The combo stitch can also be made in a 2-step fashion using an overlock machine and a coverstitch machine. First, sew the seam with a chainstitch on the coverstitch machine. Then finish the edges on the overlock machine.

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Exercise 1

COMBO STITCH

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

Needle: (2) 80/12 ELX needles

Thread: (5) spools of serger thread (yellow, green, blue, red, purple)

Foot: Standard overlock/combo presser foot for the machine



1. Set the machine for the 3-thread Overlock Narrow (RN) + Chainstitch #18.
2. Fold the fabric in half to 4″ x 8″.
3. Place the fabric with the fold along the knife and the fabric just under the needles to start.
4. Lower the presser foot.
5. Stitch, guiding along the knife.
6. Stitch to the end of the fabric and continue sewing until you have a 3-4″ chain of thread.
7. Cut the thread chain using the thread cutter on the left side of the machine. This also works as a clamp, keeping your threads in position as you begin the next seam.
8. Enter your settings in the table to the right (Fig. 3).

Chain/Cover Tension Settings			
LC	CC	RC	CL
--	--	3.3	1.5

Overlock Tension Settings			
LN	RN	UL	LL
--	4	4	4

Machine Settings			
SL	DF	CW	ULC
3	1	6	--

Fig. 3

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MACHINE CONVERSION



Fig. 4

A combo machine is set up differently for overlock stitching and chain-/coverstitching. In overlock mode, the knife is up, the upper looper comes above the stitch plate, and the needles are positioned close to the knife. In coverstitch mode, the needle positions are changed, the upper looper is locked down, and the knife is lowered. The knife cover is also replaced with a flat insert or coverstitch cover. It may seem intimidating at first to make these changes, but it will become easier the more you do it. Refer to your manual for specific instructions for your model.

CONVERTING TO COVERSTITCH

The following steps will walk you through the process of converting your combo machine from a combo or overlock stitch to a coverstitch.

1. Select 4-thread Coverstitch 6 mm LC-CC-RC #21.
2. Lift the presser foot.
3. Clip and remove threads from the needles, Upper Looper, and Lower Looper.
4. Change the presser foot to the Standard Coverstitch Foot #C13.
5. Remove the right overlock needle.
6. Insert needles in the coverstitch positions (LC, CC, RC).
7. Lower the knife.
8. Set the Cutting Width to 5.
9. Remove the Knife Cover and attach the Coverstitch Insert (Fig. 3).
10. Deactivate the Upper Looper.

Tip:

Deactivating the upper looper is a two-part action: first, turning a small knob and then pressing on the Foot Control. Do not move the knob after the Upper Looper is locked down.

11. Check that the Rolled Hem Selection Lever is set to O.
12. Thread the LC, CC, and RC needles with yellow, green, and blue thread. Note that the threading path is different from the overlock needle threading path.

FEATURE FOCUS

Touch Screen with Tutorials

If your machine has a touch screen with animated tutorials, follow the step-by-step instructions to convert your machine.

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Chapter IV

ESSENTIAL COVER- & CHAINSTITCHES



COVERSTITCH VARIATIONS

The coverstitch can be stitched in a variety of ways. A wide coverstitch (6 mm) uses the LC and RC needles. The CC needle may also be used. A narrow coverstitch (3 mm) uses the CC needle and either the LC or RC needle. The needles make straight stitching on the top of the fabric and the chain looper forms the looped stitch on the bottom of the fabric. The coverstitch has practical uses, such as hemming and seaming. You may also use this stitch with different accessories, such as to create belt loops or stitch down ribbon. Decorative effects, such as plaid, can also be stitched using different colors of thread in the needles and looper.

CHAINSTITCH VARIATIONS

The chainstitch is formed with one needle thread in any of the coverstitch positions and the chain looper. It looks like a sewing machine straight stitch on the top and a looped chain on the back. It has both practical and decorative uses.

SECURING YOUR STITCHES

When sewing a cover- or chainstitch, it is best practice to begin and end with your needles in fabric. The stitch will automatically secure at the start but to secure at the end of your stitch, you must make sure that the needle threads are pulled to the back (looper side) of the stitch.

FEATURE FOCUS

CS Lock Tool



The CS Lock Tool makes it easy to remove fabric from the machine after stitching a coverstitch. Simply raise the presser foot and slip the hook of the tool around the needle threads between the bottom of the foot and the top of the fabric. Pull the needle threads toward you and cut. Then pull your project back. The needle threads will go to the back of the project and secure automatically with the chain looper.

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STITCH REMOVAL

Removing a cover- or chainstitch is a simple process. Begin at the end of the seam and remove the needle thread from the last few stitches. Then turn the fabric over and pull on the chain looper thread. It should easily pull away. The coverstitch is removed in the same way.

Tip:

To ensure that the looper thread covers the raw edge of a hem, use the guidelines on the Coverstitch Insert. For example, press a 1" hem and then guide the folded edge of your fabric along the 1" mark on the insert. Needle tension adjustments may be necessary if the left needle sews through a single layer of fabric and the right needle sews through two layers.

FEATURE FOCUS

Seam Guide

A seam guide can ensure stitch placement accuracy. Some machines use seam guides that are left and/or right facing and are inserted into the presser foot shaft.



Left & right guides for use with presser feet

Other machines use a seam guide that slides onto the extension table. Whether you are hemming or sewing lines of stitching for decoration, use the seam guide for stitching perfection.



Seam guide for use with slide-on table

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Exercise 2

4-THREAD COVERSTITCH

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

Needle: (3) 80/12 ELX needles

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

Foot: Cover-/Chainstitch Foot



1. Set the machine for the 4-thread Coverstitch 6 mm LC-CC-RC #21.
2. Fold the fabric in half to 4″ x 8″.
3. Place the fabric under the foot so that the needles start in fabric.
4. Place the fold along one of the guidelines on the Coverstitch Insert.
5. Stitch to the end of the fabric, but not off.
6. Raise the presser foot.
7. Use the CS Lock Tool to hook the needle threads between the foot and the fabric.
8. Pull the threads toward you and cut.
9. Pull the fabric to the back left of the machine to release the looper thread. The needle threads will move to the back of the fabric and lock the stitch.
10. Cut the threads about an inch from the fabric.
11. Enter your settings in the table below (Fig. 5).

Tension Settings				Machine Settings	
LC	CC	RC	CL	SL	DF
3.5 - 4	4 - 4.5	4 - 6	1.5 - 4	3 - 3.5	1

Fig. 5

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Exercise 3

3-THREAD WIDE COVERSTITCH

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

Needle: (2) 80/12 ELX needles

Thread: (3) spools of serger thread (yellow, blue, purple)

Foot: Cover-/Chainstitch Foot



The 4-thread coverstitch and 3-thread wide coverstitch are both 6 mm wide. The difference is that the center needle is not used for the 3-thread wide version.

1. Set the machine for the 3-thread Coverstitch 6mm LC-RC #22.
2. Fold the fabric in half to 4" x 8".
3. Place the fabric under the foot so that the needles start in fabric.
4. Place the fold along one of the guidelines on the Coverstitch Insert.
5. Stitch to the end of the fabric, but not off.
6. Raise the presser foot.
7. Use the CS Lock Tool to hook the needle threads between the foot and the fabric.
8. Pull the threads toward you and cut.
9. Pull the fabric to the back left of the machine to release the looper thread. The needle threads will move to the back of the fabric and lock the stitch.
10. Cut the threads about an inch from the fabric.
11. Enter your settings in the table below (Fig. 6).

Tension Settings				Machine Settings	
LC	CC	RC	CL	SL	DF
3.5 - 4	--	4 - 5.5	1.5 - 4	3 - 3.5	1

Fig. 6

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Exercise 4

3-THREAD NARROW COVERSTITCH

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

Needle: (2) 80/12 ELX needles

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

Foot: Cover-/Chainstitch Foot



The 3-thread narrow coverstitch is 3 mm wide. The center needle is used and either the right or left needle.

1. Set the machine for the 3-thread Coverstitch 3 mm CC-RC #24.
2. Fold the fabric in half to 4" x 8".
3. Place the fabric under the foot so that the needles start in fabric.
4. Place the fold along one of the guidelines on the Coverstitch Insert.
5. Stitch to the end of the fabric, but not off.
6. Raise the presser foot.
7. Use the CS Lock Tool to hook the needle threads between the foot and the fabric.
8. Pull the threads toward you and cut.
9. Pull the fabric to the back left of the machine to release the looper thread. The needle threads will move to the back of the fabric and lock the stitch.
10. Cut the threads about an inch from the fabric.
11. Enter your settings in the table below (Fig. 7).

Tension Settings				Machine Settings	
LC	CC	RC	CL	SL	DF
--	4 - 4.5	4 - 6	4 - 1.5	3 - 3.5	1

Fig. 7

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Exercise 5

2-THREAD CHAINSTITCH

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

Needle: (1) 80/12 ELX needle

Thread: (2) spools of serger thread (yellow, purple)

Foot: Cover-/Chainstitch Foot



1. Set the machine for the 2-thread Chainstitch RC #16.
2. Fold the fabric in half to 4" x 8".
3. Place the fabric under the foot so that the needle starts in fabric.
4. Place the fold along one of the guidelines on the Coverstitch Insert.
5. Stitch to the end of the fabric, but not off.
6. Raise the presser foot.
7. Use the CS Lock Tool to hook the needle thread between the foot and the fabric.
8. Pull the thread toward you and cut.
9. Pull the fabric to the back left of the machine to release the looper thread. The needle thread will move to the back of the fabric and lock the stitch.
10. Cut the threads about an inch from the fabric.
11. Sew a second curved line of stitching.
12. Enter your settings in the table below (Fig. 8).

Tension Settings				Machine Settings	
LC	CC	RC	CL	SL	DF
--	--	3 - 4	1.5 - 4	3	1

Fig. 8

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Exercise 6

CHAINSTITCH REMOVAL

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

Needle: (1) 80/12 ELX needle

Thread: (2) spools of serger thread (yellow, purple)

Foot: Cover-/Chainstitch Foot



1. Set the machine for the 2-thread Chainstitch RC #16.
2. Fold the fabric in half to 4" x 8".
3. Place the fabric under the foot so that the needle starts in fabric.
4. Place the fold along one of the guidelines on the Coverstitch Insert.
5. Stitch to the end of the fabric, but not off.
6. Raise the presser foot.
7. Use the CS Lock Tool to hook the needle thread between the foot and the fabric.
8. Pull the thread toward you and cut.
9. Pull the fabric to the back left of the machine to release the looper thread. The needle thread will move to the back of the fabric and lock the stitch.
10. Cut the threads about an inch from the fabric.
11. From the end of the seam, unpick a few of the needle stitches.

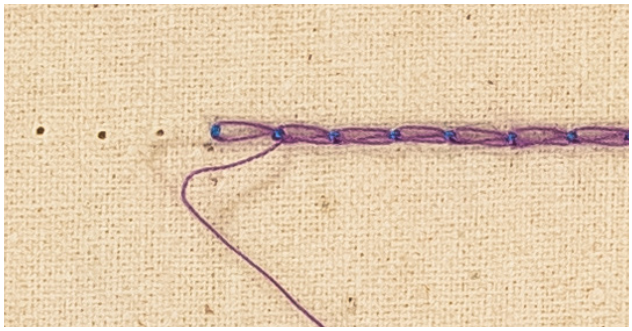


Fig. 9

12. Turn the fabric over and pull the chain stitches away from the fabric (Fig. 9).
13. Remove the needle thread.

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SPECIALTY TECHNIQUES

CHAINSTITCH GATHERING

Many decorative and specialty techniques can be accomplished with a chain- or coverstitch. Chainstitch gathering allows you to sew rows of stitching to create a shirred or smocked effect on lightweight fabric. Note that the closer together the rows of stitching are, the greater the amount of shirring produced.



THREAD BLENDING

Thread blending is a technique where more than one thread is placed through the looper. This can be done with any of the stitches on the overlock or coverstitch machine. Use a thread cradle to make it easier to thread an air threading machine. On a manual threading machine, treat the multiple threads as one when threading the looper. Threads are placed on unused spool pins and threaded through the same pre-tension and tension disc. The finished stitch has texture and color variation that will add a unique touch to your project.

FEATURE FOCUS

Thread Cradle

A thread cradle is useful when threading multiple threads or thicker threads through an air threading looper. Cut a 32" length of serger thread, fold in half, and thread the ends into the air threading nozzle holding onto the loop. Place the decorative threads into the loop and pull on the serger thread ends that are extending through the looper eye. When using multiple threads, slow your sewing speed and watch for any tangling around the upper part of the retractable thread stand.



Tip:

There are many feet and accessories that can be used with your machine. Whether you want to make belt loops or binding, sew curves, or stitch down ribbon, there are tools to make that easy and fun.

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Exercise 7

CHAINSTITCH GATHERING

Fabric: (1) 2" x 20" strip of light weight soft fabric

Needle: (1) 80/12 ELX needle

Thread: (2) spools of serger thread (yellow, purple)

Foot: Cover-/Chainstitch Foot



1. Set the machine for the 2-thread Chainstitch RC #16.
2. Increase the Stitch Length to 4.5.
3. Increase the Differential Feed to 2.0.
4. Place the fabric under the foot so that the needle starts in fabric. Do not fold the fabric.
5. Stitch to the end of the fabric, but not off. Keep a light hand on the fabric as it moves under the foot.
6. Raise the presser foot.
7. Use the CS Lock Tool to hook the needle thread between the foot and the fabric.
8. Pull the thread toward you and cut.
9. Pull the fabric to the back left of the machine to release the looper thread. The needle thread will move to the back of the fabric and lock the stitch.
10. Cut the threads about an inch from the fabric.
11. Enter your settings in the table below (Fig. 10).

Tip:

You can increase your needle tension to further increase the gathered effect, or use the Shirring Foot #C24 or Gathering Foot #C18.

Tension Settings				Machine Settings	
LC	CC	RC	CL	SL	DF
--	--	3 - 4	1.5 - 4	4.5	2

Fig. 10

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Exercise 8

THREAD BLENDING

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

Needle: (2) 80/12 ELX needles

Thread: (2) spools of serger thread (yellow, blue)

Foot: Cover-/Chainstitch Foot



1. Set the machine for the 3-thread Coverstitch 6 mm LC-RC #22.
2. On the L 890, place the decorative threads on the chain and lower looper spool pins. On the L 620, place one of the threads on an external thread stand
3. Use a thread cradle and thread the decorative threads in the chain looper.
4. Fold the fabric half to 4" x 8".
5. Place the fabric under the foot so that the needles start in fabric.
6. Place the fold along one of the guidelines on the Coverstitch Insert.
7. Stitch to the end of the fabric, but not off.
8. Raise the presser foot.
9. Use the CS Lock Tool to hook the needle threads between the foot and the fabric.
10. Pull the threads toward you and cut.
11. Pull the fabric to the back left of the machine to release the looper thread. The needle threads will move to the back of the fabric and lock the stitch.
12. Cut the threads about an inch from the fabric.
13. Enter your settings in the table below (Fig. 11).

Tension Settings				Machine Settings	
LC	CC	RC	CL	SL	DF
3.5 - 4	--	4 - 5.5	1.5 - 4	3 - 3.5	1

Fig. 11

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MACHINE REFERENCE INDEX

This workbook encompasses overlock combo machines and coverstitch only machines. Not all functions and exercises are applicable 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 overlock stitches are covered in a separate book (Overlock 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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