

eBook
SERIES

Just SEW It!

Everyday Heirloom Sewing



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Everyday Heirloom

Heirloom sewing, also known as French hand sewing, is traditionally sewn with fine fabrics and delicate laces and made to be worn on special occasions. Often used in christening gowns and children's clothing along with women's blouses, dresses, lingerie, and wedding gowns, these beautiful techniques can be used with your favorite fabrics to give an heirloom feel to almost any project.

Elevate your everyday sewing using the following basic heirloom sewing techniques as described on the following pages:

- Joining Lace to Lace
- Lace Insertion
- Single Needle Tucks
- Fine Edge Finish
- French Seams
- Spanish Hemstitching



Traditional vs. Modern

Traditional heirloom sewing uses delicate fine fabrics that are often sheer or semi sheer; white, off-white, and cream are typical colors used for heirloom projects. Swiss batiste, fine broadcloths, and lightweight silks are commonly used with lace insertions, silk ribbon, embroidered handlooms and lace edgings to create dainty, feminine projects. The look of these blouses, gowns, and lingerie may be fragile but the construction is designed to add strength and stability that stands up to the wear and tear of use.

Modern heirloom uses the same sturdy techniques with a new choice of fabrics. Quilting cottons, batiks, lightweight linen and other natural fiber fabrics give a fresh new look to heirloom projects, often bringing print and color to the heirloom look. This eBook covers basic methods—the first step in learning a beautiful, timeless way to sew.

The presser feet and accessories shown here make heirloom techniques easy to sew with precision stitching. Available in different versions, the letter designation after the number refers to the type of machine for which it is designed.

- No Letter = BERNINA models that have a maximum stitch width of 5.5mm
- "C" Version = BERNINA models that have a maximum stitch width of 9mm
- "D" Version = BERNINA models equipped with the Dual Feed feature



Spanish Hemstitching Attachment #47 with Open Embroidery Foot #20/20C/20D



Buttonhole Foot #3/3C



Edgestitch Foot #10/10C/10D



Patchwork Foot #37/37D



Patchwork Foot with Guide #57/57D



Joining Lace to Lace

One of the hallmarks of heirloom projects is the lace that trims and adorns them. Separate pieces of lace are often sewn together to form wider laces and yardage. Edges are butted without overlapping and sewn together with a simple zigzag stitch. Edgestitch Foot #10/10C/10D is essential to stitching this technique cleanly and precisely.

Machine Settings and Supplies

- Edgestitch Foot #10/10C/10D
- Zigzag stitch: W=1.75mm; L=1mm
- Center needle position
- Two lengths of lace

Step 1

Attach the Edgestitch Foot #10/10C/10D to the machine; position each piece of lace under the foot with the guide between them.

Step 2

Stitch the laces together, keeping the fingers of each hand on one piece of lace. Gently guide the laces, keeping the edges next to the guide of the presser foot. The stitch should go from side to side, barely catching each edge of the laces.

Step 3

Continue adding lace as desired, following the stitching directions above.

Tips

- Press lace using spray starch or Best Press starch alternative before stitching.
- Use cotton thread in a color that matches the lace for the most inconspicuous stitching.



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Lace Insertion

Using lace to join two pieces of fabric is easier than it looks. The lace is first attached to a single piece of fabric. The fabric behind the lace is trimmed away, making it look as if one piece of fabric is attached to each edge of the lace.

Machine Settings and Supplies

- Edgestitch Foot #10/10C/10D
- Half left needle position
- One length of lace

First Stitching:

- Straight stitch: W=0mm; L=1.5-2mm

Second Stitching:

- Zigzag stitch: W=1mm; L=2mm

Step 1

Place the lace right side up on the right side of the fabric.

Step 2

Attach the Edgestitch Foot #10/10C/10D to the machine; position the fabric under the foot with the guide against one long edge of the lace.

Step 3

Stitch along each long edge, sewing just on the edge of the lace.

Step 4

Turn the fabric over and using sharp trimming scissors, cut through the fabric *behind* the lace, being careful not to cut the lace; press fabric edges away from the lace.

Step 5

Turn the fabric back to the right side. Select the zigzag stitch and make the adjustments shown above. Place the blade of the presser foot along the folded edge of the fabric. The needle is still in the half left position and should stitch on the seam allowances.

Step 6

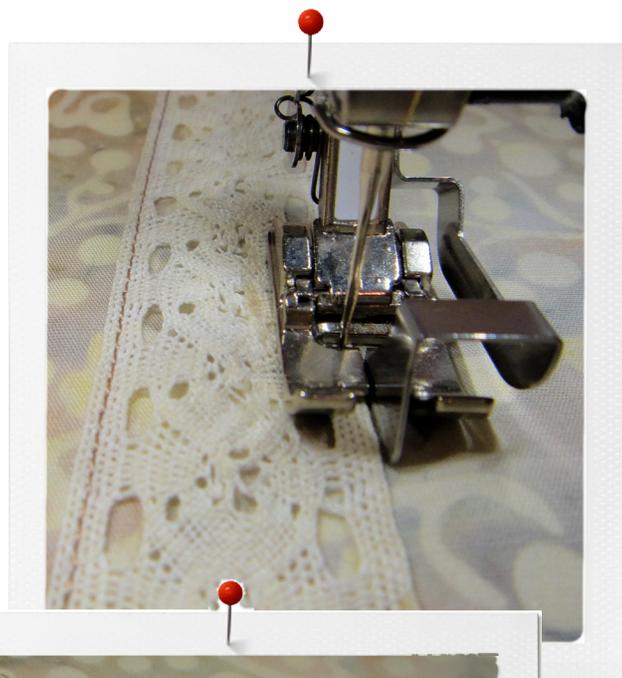
Zigzag stitch along each edge of lace on top of straight stitch.

Step 7

When the stitching is complete, trim the excess seam allowances close to the stitching; press.

Tip

For "invisible" stitching, use 60 weight cotton thread in a color that matches the lace.



Single Needle Tucks

Simple tucks add texture and interest to heirloom projects. The most important aspect of this type of tuck is the straight stitch. It must be perfect and exactly parallel to the folded edge of the fabric. The guide on Edgestitch Foot #10/10C/10D with an adjustable needle position is the answer to that perfection, producing tiny, delicate tucks effortlessly!

Machine Settings and Supplies

- Edgestitch Foot #10/10C/10D
- Straight stitch: W=0mm; L=2-2.5mm
- Left needle positions (see Step 3)
- Needle Stop Down

Step 1

Determine the position of the tuck and mark the fold line using pins, marker, or chalk. Fold fabric on the marked line.

Step 2

Attach Edgestitch Foot #10/10C/10D; position the fabric under the foot, placing the fold to the left of center next to the guide of the presser foot.

Step 3

Adjust the needle position to the left, selecting the needle position that gives the desired width for the tuck.

Step 4

Stitch the length of the fabric, keeping the folded edge of the fabric next to the guide of the foot.

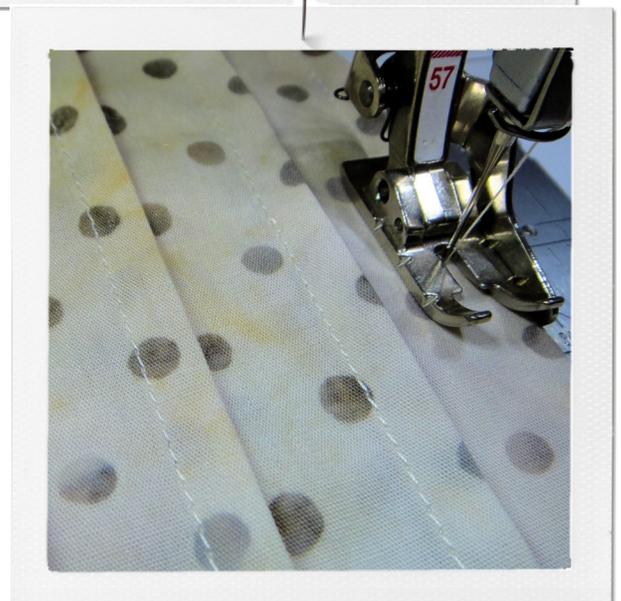
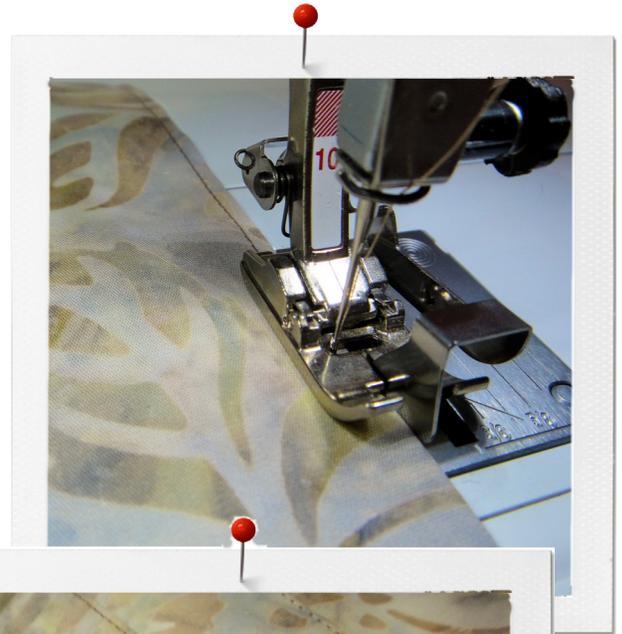
Step 5

Continue to fold and stitch the desired number of tucks; press them to one side.

Tips

To make tucks along the grain of the fabric, mark the fold lines by pulling a thread and drawing it out of the fabric. The line where the missing thread was becomes the mark for the fold of the tuck.

For wider tucks, use Patchwork Foot with Guide #57. Fold the fabric and align the fold with the guide of Foot #57. Using center needle position, stitch the tuck, keeping the folded edge next to the guide. The resulting tuck is ¼" wide.



Fine Edge Finish

This fine decorative edging works well on light to medium weight fabrics, providing a delicate edge that resembles a serger rolled hem. Buttonhole Foot #3 is the secret to making this narrow inconspicuous edging. When the fabric is positioned correctly, the left groove on the sole of the foot causes the fabric edge to roll as it is being over sewn with a close zigzag stitch.

Machine Settings

- Buttonhole Foot #3/3C
- Zigzag stitch: W=3-4mm; L=0.5-1mm
- Far left needle position

Fabric Prep

Trim the edge cleanly using a rotary cutter; press using spray starch or Best Press before stitching.

Step 1

Attach Buttonhole Foot #3 to the machine. Position fabric under the foot with the fabric edge aligned with the right edge of the middle toe as shown in the photo.

Step 2

Sew along the edge using the settings listed above. The raw edge should roll as it goes under the foot and the stitching will hold it in place. The stitch length will determine how "solid" the edge becomes as it is covered with thread.

Tips

For the softest and most delicate fine edge, use 60-80 weight thread in the needle and the bobbin.

If the fabric edge is not rolling, the fabric may be too heavy or too stiff for this technique.



French Seams

One of the beautiful aspects of heirloom sewing is the attention paid to finishing details. The inside of the garment often looks as finished and polished as the outside. A common seam used for this is the French seam; all raw edges are completely enclosed making it beautiful and sturdy at the same time.

Machine Settings and Supplies

- Patchwork Foot #37
- Straight stitch: W=0mm; L=2.5mm
- Center needle position

Step 1

- Attach Patchwork Foot #37 to the machine.

Step 2

Place two pieces of fabric *wrong* sides together; pin.

Step 3

Align the edge of the fabric with the inside edge of the right toe of the foot. Stitch the seam, resulting in a $\frac{1}{8}$ " seam allowances.

Step 4

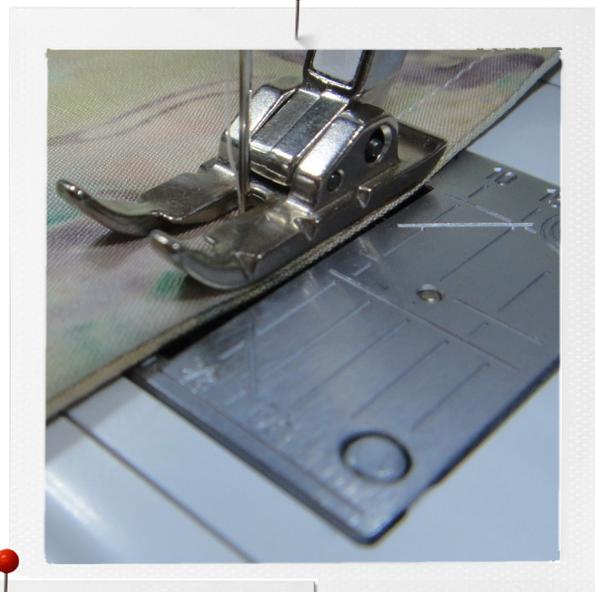
Press the seam as stitched and then press it open. Press it for a third time with the seam allowances together again.

Step 4

Turn the fabric with right sides together and place the fabric under the presser foot. Align edge of the fabric (previously stitched seam) with the outer edge of the presser foot. Stitch the seam, resulting in a $\frac{1}{4}$ " seam allowances. The raw edges of the first seam should be totally enclosed in the second seam.

Step 5

Press the seam to one side and turn the fabric right side out.



Fagoting

Meaning a “bundle of twigs”, fagoting is a method of joining finished edges (hemmed or folded) of fabric or ribbon with a lacy, twig-like stitch. A variety of decorative stitches can be used for this. The Spanish Hemstitching attachment consists of several “spacers” that are used to hold the fabric or ribbon pieces apart as the machine stitches from edge to edge.

Machine Settings

- Spanish Hemstitching Attachment #47
- Open Embroidery Foot #20/20C/20D
- Cotton or polyester embroidery thread
- Desired decorative stitch (see below—the stitch diagram in red [Ladder stitch] is the one used in the sample)
- Needle Stop Down

Step 1

Select the appropriate spacer for the maximum width of the machine (5.5mm or 9mm); attach it to the plate of the Spanish Hemstitching Attachment, and then secure the attachment to the machine according the package directions.

Step 2

Attach Open Embroidery Foot #20/20C/20D to the machine.

Step 3

Position one piece of fabric or ribbon on each side of spacer. Select decorative stitch; width should be at the maximum setting.

Step 4

Stitch the length of the fabric. The stitch should sew on the edges of both ribbons as it goes back and forth between them.

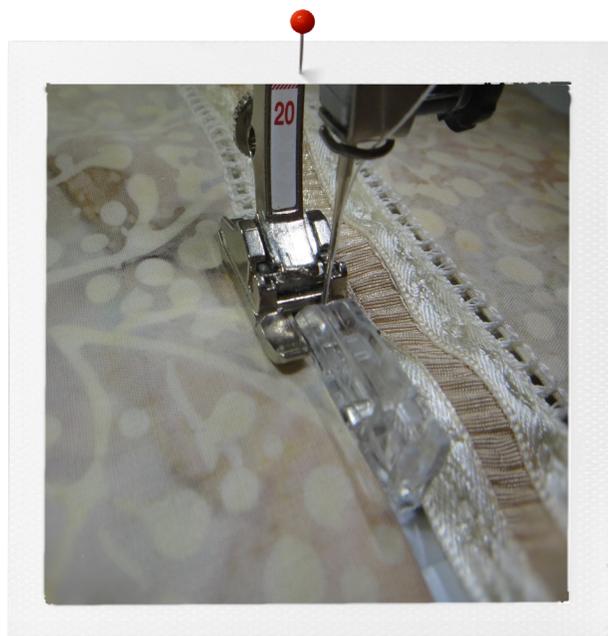
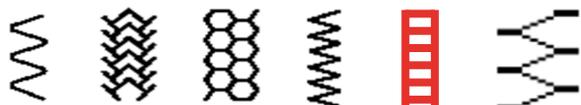
Step 5

Add additional strips of fabric or ribbon until the desired pieces are connected.

Tips

Place a narrow decorative cord in the spacer. Pull the cord a few inches under the needle and out the back; stitch.

Select a side-to-side decorative stitch; avoid stitches with long reverse patterns. The width of the stitch should be the maximum width of the sewing machine (5.5 mm or 9mm). Look for the stitches shown here or similar stitches on your machine to use for Spanish Hemstitching.



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