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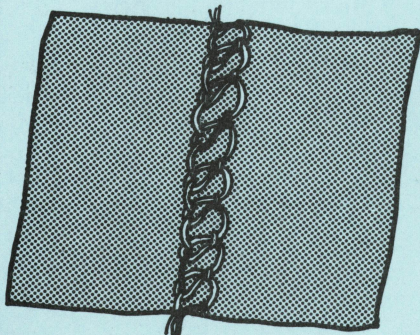
Current Information Series No. 771

Decorative Serging

Barbara Morales and Ernestine Porter

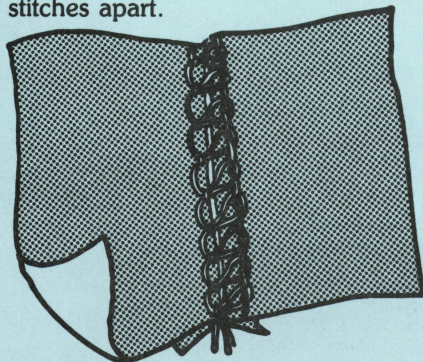
Traditionally, home sergers have been used as an efficient means for finishing seams. As sergers become more readily available, many new uses are being developed. There are many ways to use the serger for decorative sewing. By using any of several specialty threads and adjusting tensions, decorative serging has limitless possibilities. Here are some ways to use the serger for decorative sewing.

Decorative flat locking can be used in place of trim or top stitching. A variety of threads such as pearl cotton, metallic, buttonhole twist or top stitching threads in solid or varigated colors can create very special effects.

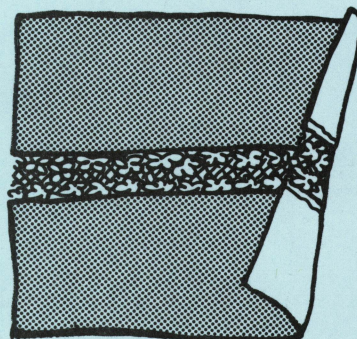


Fagoting is a decorative stitch that joins two fabrics together. Traditionally, it is done by hand with embroidery thread. This stitch can be created on the serger by using a two-thread flat lock stitch.

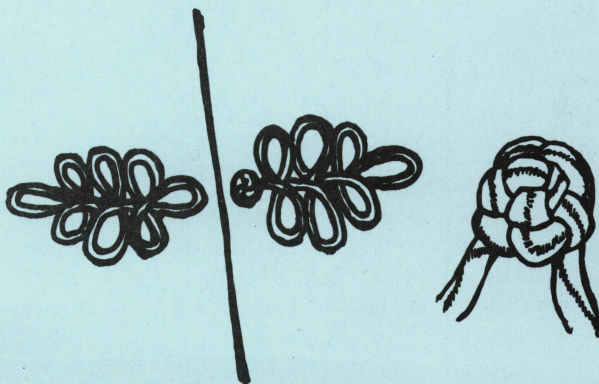
Place a decorative thread in the lower looper and regular thread in the needle. Press seam allowances to the wrong side. Place the two pieces of fabric wrong sides together. Use a long, wide stitch setting. Stitch so that the needle is just catching the fabric at the edge of the fold on either side. When stitching is complete, lay fabric flat, pulling the stitches apart.



Insertion lace — Using the rolled hem stitch, serge lace to fabric edge, right sides together, trimming edge of fabric but not lace. Repeat on opposite side.

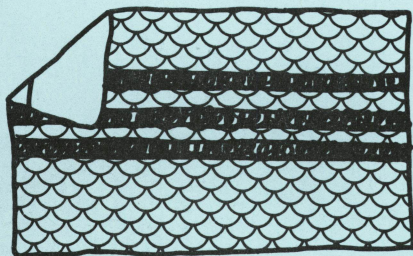


Decorative braid can be made by using metallic or other decorative thread in the upper looper with a matching thread in the lower looper and needle. Using a three-thread stitch, serge over a filler cord. To achieve a more round braid, tighten lower tension to pull stitches to the back — similar to the setting used for rolled hemming. Yarn, ribbon, cotton cording or twill tape work well as fillers. Braid can be used to make Chinese ball buttons, frogs, belt loops or as stitch on trim.

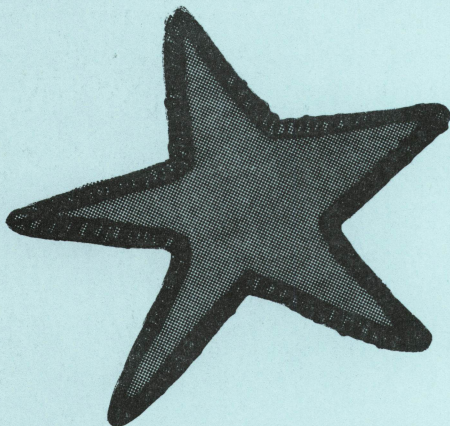


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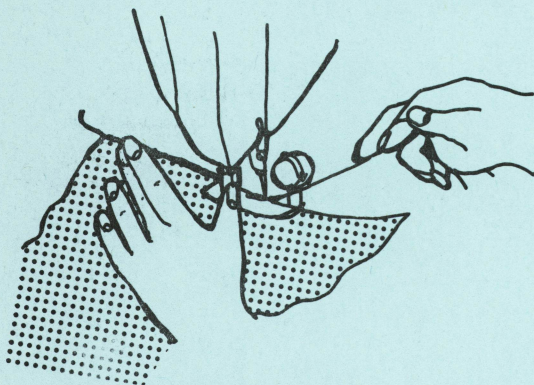
Pintucks add an interesting touch to many garments. The effect depends on the length and width of the stitch and the type of thread used. Use a three-thread stitch or narrow rolled hem stitch. Stitch tucks in the uncut fabric; then cut pattern piece. "Mock" pintucks can be made using a flat lock stitch.



Applique — Draw applique on fabric. Serge allowing knife to cut design. Stitch on garment with conventional machine.

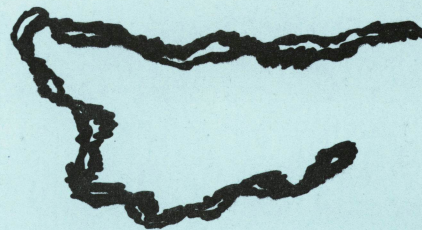


Sequins can be sewn on garments with the serger using a two-thread flat lock stitch. Press fold into the fabric where sequins are to be sewn. Place sequins under the back presser foot and over the front of the presser foot.

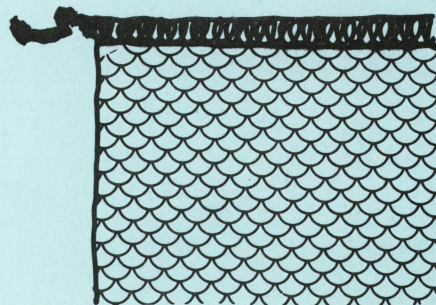


Pull sequins to the right against the knife (do not cut sequins). Begin stitching slowly, holding onto sequins and thread chain. Stitch slowly, pulling gently behind the pressure foot. Thread will loop over the sequins. After stitching is complete, it may be necessary to slip some threads under sequins.

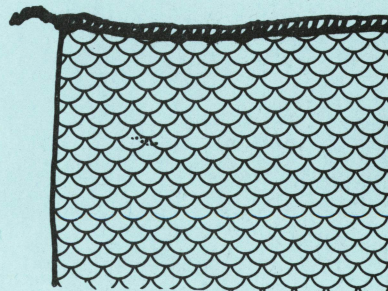
Specialty thread — A stretchy, texturized, yarn-like thread, Woolly Nylon, is the latest specialty thread for use with sergers.



Woolly Nylon can be used for serge seaming in lingerie, leotards, tights, swimsuits and other stretch fabrics. It provides a strong yet soft and flexible seam.



Woolly Nylon also produces a perfect rolled hem. The yarn-like characteristics fill in the spaces between stitches, giving a very professional look to hems and ruffle edges.



Because of its bulkiness, it is more difficult to thread the serger. A size 14 needle is required if using it in the needle, and a wire needle threader is recommended for threading the eyes of the loopers and needles. As with other decorative threads, a matching regular thread may be used in the needle.

Woolly Nylon is available in many colors and is reasonably priced. Not only are there many uses with stretch fabrics, but because of its strength and heavier look, Woolly Nylon is perfect for home decorating projects too.

About the Authors

Barbara Morales is an Extension home economist in Jerome County. Ernestine Porter is University of Idaho Extension textiles and clothing specialist, School of Home Economics, Moscow.

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