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Serging Lingerie

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With a serger, making lingerie is no longer a difficult project. You can achieve professional results simply and quickly. Do some price comparison shopping at your favorite ready-to-wear store to discover that you can make lingerie for a fraction of the cost.

Machine

For constructing lingerie on your serger, start with a machine that is oiled and cleaned. If you have not recently changed the needle, put in a new one for serging on delicate lingerie fabrics.

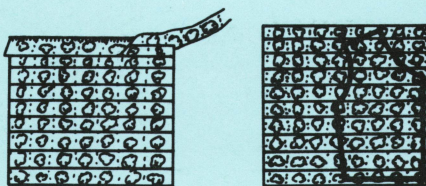
Many different types of sergers are on the market today, and all will make beautiful lingerie. The only difference will be in the appearance of the finished seam.

Fabric and Trim

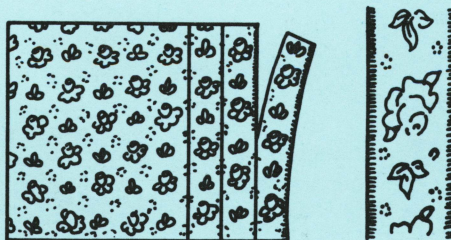
In addition to the regular lingerie fabrics that are available, you might consider other possibilities. The silky polyesters used to make blouses would also make beautiful lingerie. They range in color from pastel to bright and are available in both prints and solids. Silks are also a consideration. Other possibilities include satins, soft voiles and chiffons. Cotton knits used to make t-shirts are available in both prints and solids.

If you have a pretty lace trim, you can create your own yardage. Use a flatlock stitch to attach the rows of lace. With right sides together, attach rows until you achieve the desired size. Then cut out the lingerie pattern. Lace trims that are available by the yard often limit your color selection since they usually come only in black and white. Using a serger makes it easy to create your own trim. If the fab-

ric store in your area has a bridal section, you will find a broad selection of lace



available in widths from 45 to 54 inches. Using a contrasting or matching thread and the rolled hem feature of your serger, you can customize trim to fit your needs. The rolled hem finishes the edge



and the knife cuts strips of lace to the desired width. The other edge can be finished with the same type of serging.

If you decide to use nylon lingerie tricot, you will find it easier to handle if you don't prewash it. The fabric rolls less before washing and shrinkage is not that much, anyway. To determine the right side of tricot fabric, stretch the crosswise edge. The right side is the direction the fabric rolls. Because of this roll, you should serge with the right side down, when serging on single thickness.

If real silk is your fabric selection, then make it wash and wear. Do this by placing the fabric in warm water with liquid dishwashing detergent, swish it around for a few minutes, rinse, roll in a towel and press with iron on a low steam setting. Since washing silk that is labeled "dry clean only" may change the color, texture, sheen or size, be sure to test a 4-inch square fabric swatch first. If shrinkage is excessive, you may not have enough fabric. You may also find some fragile silks that cannot be washed.

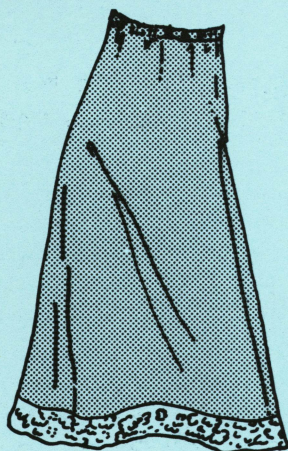
If the pattern you have chosen recommends a tricot fabric and you substitute a lightweight woven, be sure to cut pattern pieces in the bias direction. The stretch of the bias is necessary to achieve the appropriate fit. Lightweight, loosely woven fabric may require that the seam be reinforced on your conventional machine. Do a test seam to determine this.

If you wish to use lingerie fabric and it is not available in your area, you can shop by mail from Sew Easy Lingerie, Inc., 1625 Hennepin Ave., Minneapolis, MN 55043.

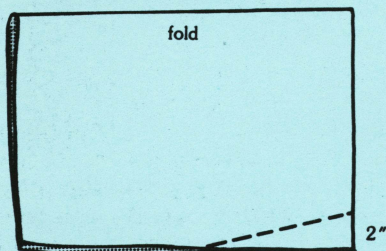
Patterns

When shopping for lingerie patterns, you will find that the selection in the lingerie section of the pattern catalog is quite limited. If you are making a slip, you will find more choices in the bridal section. A pattern for a full slip can be shortened to end 4 inches below the waistline to make a camisole. Another idea for camisole patterns would be the pullover tops in the summer catalogs. They are often in the section entitled "Easy to Sew."

You can use the full slip pattern to make a half slip by cutting at the natural waistline and using elastic. Actually, a half slip can be made without a pattern.



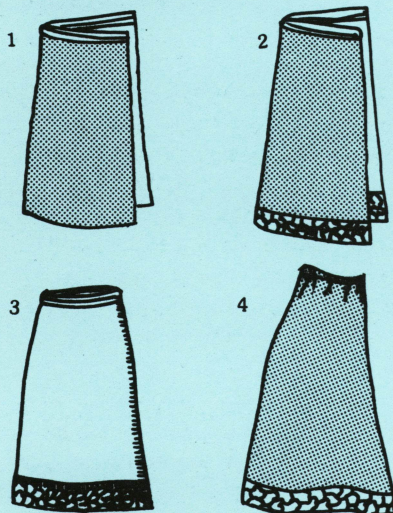
A length of 45-inch or wider fabric is necessary if your hip measurement is greater than 40 inches. Use tricot or other stretch fabric and reduce the width at the



waistline by 2 inches as shown. Serge in the following order:

1. Flatlock or serge elastic to waistline (lingerie elastic is the softest).
2. Flatlock or serge lace to the hem of the slip.
3. Flatlock or serge the side seam.

For sporty gowns, consider using a simple t-shirt dress pattern. Leave side seams open below the hip or round the hem to give a shirt-tail appearance. The



section labeled maternity would be good for full, roomy lounge wear. As you can see, lingerie patterns do not have to be labeled "lingerie."

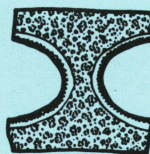
Some pattern companies do offer a wide variety of lingerie patterns. Many of these patterns come with multiple sizes for the price of one. Three mail order resources for lingerie patterns are: Kwik Sew, 3000 Washington Ave. N., Minneapolis, MN 55411-1699; Stretch & Sew, 1165 Valley River Drive, Eugene, OR 97401; Serging Ahead, P.O. Box 45, Grandview, MO 64030.

Any lingerie pattern is easier and faster to sew if you do flat construction. This is particularly true of small circular areas. For example, panties should be sewn in the following order:

1. With crotch lining and crotch wrong sides together, attach right sides together to the back and front.



2. Serge elastic to leg openings.



3. Serge a side seam with right sides together. Secure seam end that is not crossed by another seam.



4. Serge elastic to the waistline.



5. With right sides together, serge the other side seam. Secure seam ends and the panties are completed.



Seams

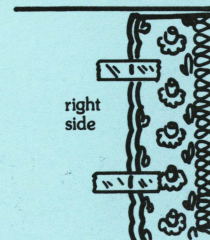
For sewing lingerie, a 3-thread seam is recommended because it can be made in narrower widths and it is flexible. However, a 4- or 5-thread stitch can also be used. Flatlock seams are recommended for lingerie, where undergarment seams may show through.

Always sew a test seam on a fabric scrap to decide the best width for the design of the garment and the fabric you

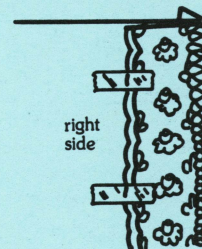
have chosen. Both the stitch length and stitch width may need to be adjusted to achieve the desired appearance and seam strength.

Lace

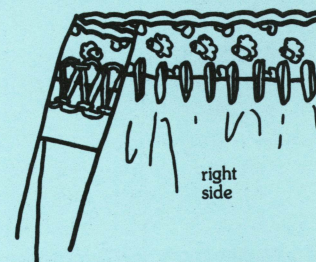
A flatlock seam is a good method for attaching lace. Cut off the seam allowance when working on knit fabric. With right sides together, place the lace along the fabric edge. Taping the lace to the fabric will help hold it in place.



When you use a woven fabric for lingerie construction, fold the seam allowance to the wrong side. This strengthens the seam. With right sides together, place the lace along the fold. You may consider finishing the raw edge to prevent fraying if it was not cut on the bias.



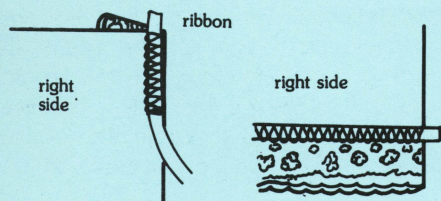
Pull the lace up until the fabric and lace edges are butted together. The stitches will form a ladder effect on the right side.



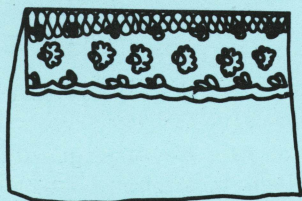
If you prefer to have the stitch loops on the right side, then place the wrong sides of the fabric and lace together.

In combination with this flatlock method, lace can be attached with ribbon. Place the lace and ribbon along the seamline, and the knife will trim off the fabric seam allowance. If you are concerned about cutting the lace or ribbon, start by trimming off the seam allowance. Then align all three edges for serging. Place edges of lingerie and lace wrong sides together. On the right side of the garment,

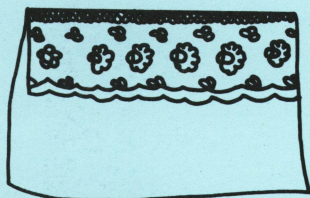
place $\frac{1}{8}$ inch of ribbon even with the edge. Using a stitch width slightly larger than the ribbon, serge over the ribbon. Be careful not to cut the ribbon. Pull the fabric and lace to flatten the seam.



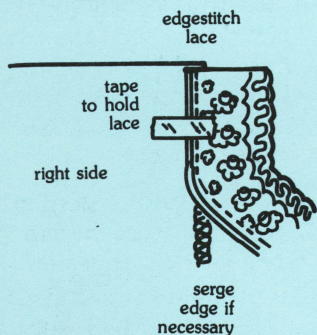
Attaching lace to a hem can also be done using a 3-thread stitch. The seam may be on the wrong side of the garment as in the conventional lace application.



Or you may like to try a narrow stitch width and attach the lace with the seam on the outside.



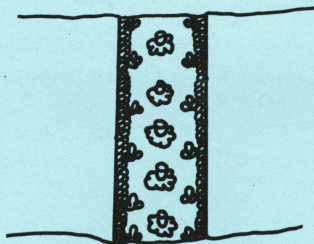
Another method of attaching lace is by overlapping. First, when working with a woven fabric, serge the edge. You should serge the edge of tricot since it prevents the edge from rolling. For all other fabric, trim off the hem or seam allowances before starting to attach the lace. To attach, lap the lace $\frac{1}{4}$ inch over



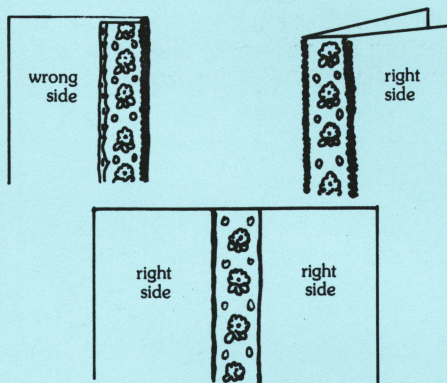
the edge on the right side. Edgestitch the lace in place using a narrow zig zag or straight stitch on your conventional machine.

Lace inserts, a characteristic of pretty lingerie, are easy to do before you cut out the pattern. Depending on the appear-

ance, you can insert the lace using the 2-thread flatlock stitch explained earlier or with a narrow rolled hem. When us-



ing a rolled hem, cut the fabric in the desired widths. Then place the lace trim along the edge on the wrong side of the fabric. Sew the edges together with a narrow rolled hem. Repeat this on the other edge of the lace trim. The lace inset will lay flat when opened up.



Picot Edge

If you do not want lace for an edge finish, you might try the delicate picot edge. Use the narrowest stitch width on your machine. The rolled hem feature is perfect for creating this edge. Experiment with a long stitch length to find the one that looks best on your fabric. Also, experiment with tension settings. Try the normal setting and then one with a tightened lower looper setting. This will cause the finished edge to roll slightly. Both tension settings are attractive. For this stitch, you need to hold the fabric tight in the front and back of the presser foot. This will prevent the fabric from gathering. **Be sure you do not pull the fabric, just hold it tight.**



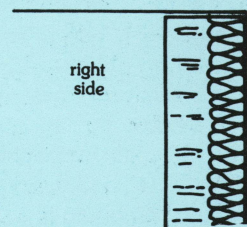
Elastic

Elastic can be attached with either a 2-thread or 3-thread seam. The seam allowance on the wrong side of the 3-thread seam may cause the elastic to roll. However, this creates a more dura-

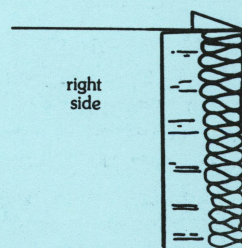
ble seam than flatlocking. Use soft lingerie elastic for this method. The 2-thread flatlock seam will lie flat, but the serger stitches will be visible on the right side of the seam. Both seams are quick and easy. Experiment with both techniques to see which one looks best on your fabric and pattern design.

The best way to distribute ease is to quarter the elastic and stretch it from both in front and back of the presser foot. The only thread to penetrate fabric and elastic is the needle thread. This enables the elastic to keep its stretch better than when sewn on the conventional machine with a zig zag stitch.

To flatlock elastic to knit fabric, place the elastic along the seamline or cut the seam allowance off and align the edges. Keep right sides together. Serge in place being careful that the knife does not cut the elastic.

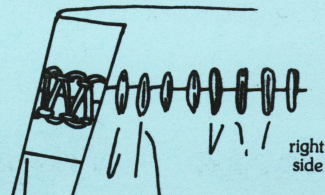


For woven fabric, fold the seam allowance to the wrong side. This prevents the fabric from raveling through the stitching. With right sides together, place the elastic along the fold. Serge in place making sure that the knife does not cut the elastic. Again, if the fabric is not cut on the bias, you may consider finishing the raw edge to prevent fraying.

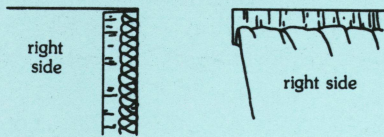


Pull up the elastic until the fabric and elastic edges are flush. The stitches will create a ladder appearance on the right side. If you would prefer that the right side show the loops, then stitch with fabric and elastic wrong sides together.

For a 3- or 4-thread seam, use $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch elastic. Be sure the garment has a $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch

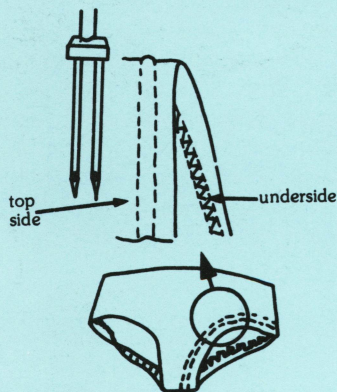


seam allowance. Place the elastic right sides together with the fabric. Serge the edges making sure the knives do not cut the elastic. Turn elastic up and push the seam allowance toward the garment.



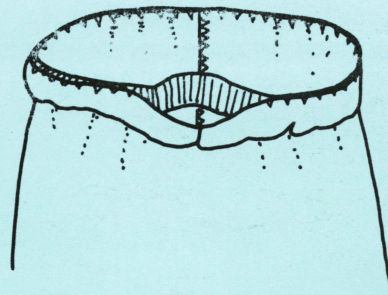
Another 3- or 4-thread application is possible where the elastic is serged to the edge and then turned up and stitched in place on your conventional machine. For this method, you should use a double needle for the top stitching. Make sure the hole in your throat plate is large enough for the two needles. They are available in 1.6, 2.0, 3.0 and 4.0 mm widths. Use the width that the throat plate will accommodate. One width is not necessarily better than another.

The top of the machine requires two threads and the bobbin holds one. The two straight stitched rows are held in place by a flexible zig zag stitch on the wrong side. This stitching is less likely to pop out when stretched. Using wooly nylon thread in the bobbin is a good idea.



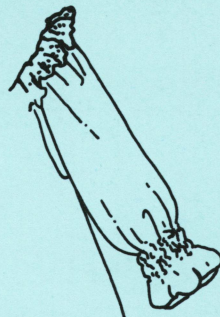
You often see this in ready-to-wear. This type of thread adds strength, softness and stitch elasticity. However, regular thread provides sufficient stretch because of the zig zag stitch formation on the wrong side.

Some lingerie designs recommend that the elastic be in a casing. To form the casing, fold fabric the same as for blind hemming and serge in the fabric fold. Serging can be done over the elastic at the same time you make the casing or the elastic can be threaded through the completed

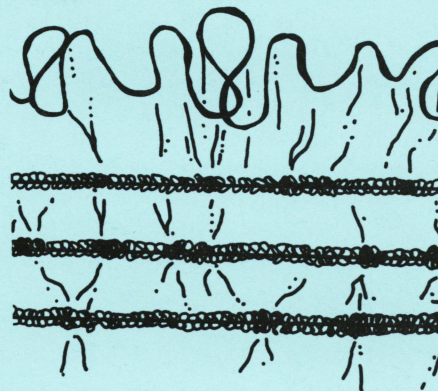


casing. Encased waistband elastic should be serged in one step through all layers. This eliminates the possibility of the elastic turning or rolling inside the casing. The seam will have the same amount of stretch as the elastic.

Shirring with elastic thread is a great way to handle puffy, full sleeves or the bodice of a nightgown. Determine the number of shirring rows you need. To measure the amount of fabric this technique will require, do a test seam on a

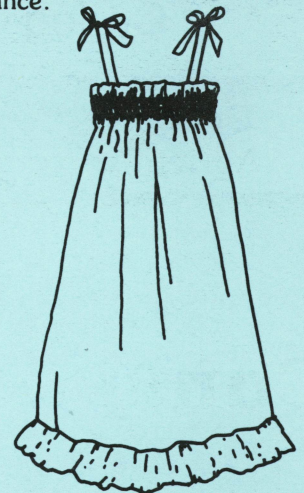


fabric fold. Multiply the amount of fabric used in the test seam by the number of rows required, and add this amount to the sleeve length. Fold the shirred area right sides together. Serge over elastic thread without stretching it. The resulting overlock stitches encase the elastic thread.



Be careful that the knives do not cut the fabric fold. Do this procedure on all the rows you planned. Then draw up the

elastic threads to the desired fullness. A good guide is to have the measurement slightly larger than the wrist or bodice seam. Secure the elastic ends in the seam allowance.



Spaghetti Straps

Fine lingerie often requires you to make spaghetti straps or tubing ties. The procedure for both is the same and is much easier with a serger than a conventional machine. To cut the fabric, follow the instructions on the guide sheet. Generally, you will need a strip of fabric 2 inches wide 2 inches longer than the completed strap or tie. Depending on the purpose of the tubing, the instructions will indicate cutting on the straight of the grain, on the bias or, in the case of knit fabric, in the direction of greatest stretch.

On your serger, sew out a thread chain 6 inches longer than the completed length of the strap or tie. Bring the thread chain around in front of the presser foot and smooth the loops out. Then fold the fabric right sides together around the thread chain. Place the fold of fabric to the left side of the presser foot. Sew the seam. The thread chain will be encased in the fabric fold. As the finished edge comes out behind the presser foot, it is seamed, cut to the appropriate width and ready to turn. The thread chain is already in place to make turning easy. Pull on the chain to turn the tubing right side out.

