



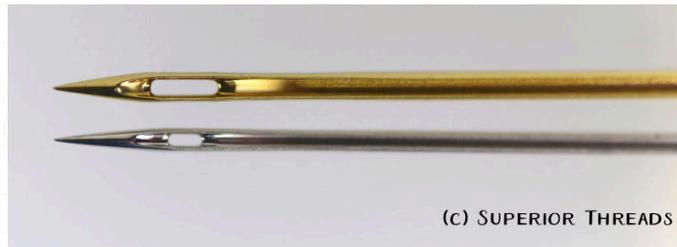
HOW TO TOPSTITCHING

TUTORIAL

WWW.SERIALBAGMAKERS.COM

PROPER NEEDLE AND THREAD

When you are confident enough you can use special top stitching thread. That thread has more body and for that reason needs a different needle. A topstitch needle has a larger eye so it is easier to weave the thick thread through.



(c) SUPERIOR THREADS

TRIPLE STITCH

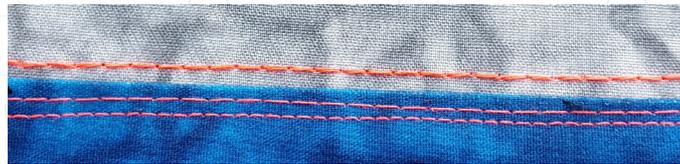
On my machine, I have a special stitch, called 'triple stitch'. It's also known as a stretch stitch, or triple stretch stitch.

I can use a normal thread and a normal needle. Basically, it's my machine that sews over every stitch 3 times. So the thickness of each stitch triples up. So instead of one line of thread, you'll have three lines of thread stitched in the same place. I like using this stitch for topstitching because it doesn't require me to buy special thread. Using the same thread ensures my topstitching matches the rest of the stitching. And I don't have to switch needles and thread.

Warning: this stitch uses up lots of thread! Plus, if you should have to, it's very tedious to unpick three times the amount of stitching, and it's more likely to leave holes or marks on your fabric if you remove it. So if you're going to triple-stitch, proceed with caution!

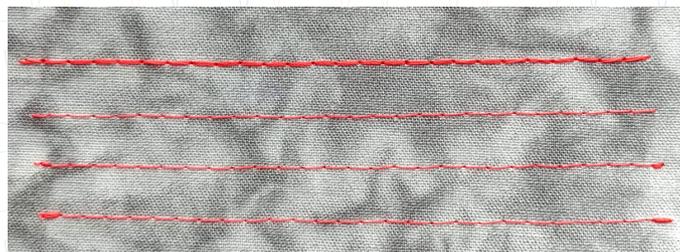
USE A LONGER STITCH LENGTH

For a decorative stitch, it's important that each stitch is more defined, so it looks better with a longer stitch length. Compare the result of my machine's default 2.5 stitch length versus a 4 stitch length in the picture below (both on the blue) and the triple stitch on the gray on top.



AVOID BACKSTITCHING

If the beginning and end of your line of topstitching won't be enclosed in another seam, you'll need to secure your stitches, which is usually done with backstitching. However, in contrast thread especially, backstitching can look obvious and unsightly. Instead, try to shorten your stitch length as much as possible and tack the stitches in place at the beginning and end of the seam. See the difference.



On the bottom I did a lockstitch at the normal 4 stitch length (same as the topstitching). 1 line above that, the length of the lockstitch was 1.5. Second from the top I did no lockstitch at all. At the very top you see the triple stitch where you do not need to lockstitch at all.

PULL THREAD TAILS TO THE WRONG SIDE.

Whether at the beginning or end of the line of topstitching or in the middle of a seam where fixing an error, the stitches will be best blended if you pull the thread tails to the wrong side of your work. If you snip them on the right side, it can be difficult to cut them perfectly level with the surface of the fabric and there still may be evidence of “hairy” stitches.

To pull the threads to the wrong side, tug on the bobbin thread tail until a loop from the top thread pulls through. Use a seam ripper or pin to pull the rest of the length of the thread through.

CHOOSING THE RIGHT PRESSER FOOT FOR TOPSTITCHING

You certainly don't need a special presser foot for topstitching, but on particularly tricky sections, switching your presser foot can help.

A regular presser foot is a great choice for topstitching. Sometimes however, the presser foot can have trouble sewing over a bulky seam when the foot is stuck trying to move uphill.

Hump jumper

If you place some scrap fabric under the foot behind the piece you're sewing, the presser foot will no longer be tilted up and it will sew forward much more smoothly. This helps avoid uneven stitch length. A special tool that does the same thing is called a hump jumper or a jean-a-ma-jig.

