

Twin Needle Reference Chart

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Technique	Fabric	Stitch	Upper Tension	Foot	Needle	Thread	Tips
Twin needle topstitching							
Flat topstitching: parallel rows of topstitching	Lightweight wovens or knits	Straight	Loosen; always test	Flat-bottom zigzag foot	1.6 to 2mm	Fine	Test-stitch a sample
	Medium-weight wovens or knits		Normal		2.5 to 3mm	Appropriate for fabric and look desired; polyester for knits	
	Medium- to heavyweight wovens or knits				4mm or more		
Cover stitch: hemming stitch that mimics commercial cover stitch; results in parallel rows of topstitching on the right side, with raw edge of hem covered by zigzag bobbin thread on wrong side	Any knits, some wovens	Straight	Normal	Flat-bottom zigzag foot	Choose a needle wide enough for the look you want and the appropriate size and type for your fabric	Polyester, cotton-covered polyester, or other appropriate thread with strength and stretch to hem knits	Test-stitch a sample
Embossed effect: topstitching with contrasting thread colors; darker color creates "shadow" of lighter tone	Lightweight wovens or knits	Decorative or straight	Loosen	Flat-bottom zigzag foot	1.6 to 2mm	Machine-embroidery cotton, rayon, or decorative threads	Test-stitch a sample
	Medium-weight wovens or knits	Decorative or straight	Normal		2.5 to 3mm		
Hemstitching							
Hemstitch: double wing needle creates openings in fabric that resemble hand-hemstitching or entredeux	Woven linen or cotton with little or no polyester, fabrics with body like organdy, and loosely woven fabrics	Straight, set 2 to 2.5mm long	Usually normal, but on heavier fabrics, increase tension to create enough pull to open the holes; on very lightweight fabrics loosen to prevent puckering	Open-toe satin-stitch foot or transparent plastic foot	Double wing	Very fine machine-embroidery cotton, rayon, silk, and other decorative threads. Madeira 80/2, YLI Heirloom 100/2 or 70/2, Mettler 60/2, and DMC 50/2; color usually matches fabric	Spray-starch fabric and press several times until it is stiff. A lightweight tear-away stabilizer can be used under the fabric. Hold fabric taut while stitching first row, with needles and presser foot up, turn fabric 180 degrees, lower needles into fabric so wing needle returns exactly to the last hole it made, lower the presser foot, and begin to sew. Sew slowly making sure the wing needle always returns to the right hole. Pull the fabric to the front or back to make adjustments as you sew.

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Threads magazine,

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Technique	Fabric	Stitch	Upper Tension	Foot	Needle	Thread	Tips
Twin needle embellishment							
Topstitched ribbon: appliqué fine ribbon to the right side of the fabric; double needle attaches ribbon on both edges in one pass	Most wovens and knits	Straight	Loosen	Flat-bottom zigzag foot	Slightly narrower than ribbon width; fine needle to avoid damaging ribbon	Appropriate for fabric and ribbon and look desired	Test-stitch a sample
Textured topstitching: allover topstitching adds subtly puckered texture to fabric	Medium-weight wovens or knits	Decorative or straight	Normal	Pintuck foot or satin-stitch foot	2.5 to 3mm	Machine-embroidery cotton, rayon, or decorative threads	Stitch the texture into fabric before cutting pattern piece
	Medium- to heavyweight wovens or knits				4mm needles or more		
Shadow work: topstitching on sheer fabric, with darker bobbin thread that shows through as a shadow	Sheer wovens with body, such as Swiss organdy, organza, or batiste	Straight, tracery scallop, arch, or serpentine stitch; stitch length varies but set the stitch width as wide as the machine permits	Loosen	Flat-bottom zigzag foot or satin-stitch foot	2.5mm has enough space for shadow and is narrow enough to be used with a decorative stitch	Machine-embroidery cotton, size appropriate for fabric-50/2 or 60/2	Use spray starch to stabilize (several applications if needed)
Corded shadow work: contrast-color cording added to wrong side of fabric is held in place by bobbin thread and shows through as a shadow	Sheer wovens with body, such as Swiss organdy, organza, or batiste	Same as above, but stitch can be lengthened	Loosen	Flat-bottom zigzag foot or satin-stitch foot	2.5mm has enough space for shadow and is narrow enough to be used with a decorative stitch	Thread: see above; cord: pearl cotton, crochet thread, buttonhole twist, topstitching thread	Use spray starch to stabilize (several applications if needed)
Embellished hemming: embellishment techniques used at hemline; especially suited to sheer fabrics	Lightweight wovens or knits	Straight, scallops, or serpentine	Loosen	Flat-bottom zigzag foot or satin-stitch foot	1.6 to 2mm	Fine	Press hem to wrong side and sew from right side with stitching at least 1/4 in. from the edge of the hem allowance, then trim to stitching
	Medium-weight wovens or knits		Normal		2.5 to 3mm	Appropriate to fabric and look desired	
	Medium- to heavyweight wovens or knits				4mm needles or wider		

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Pintucks							
Plain pintucks	Swiss batiste	Straight, 1.5 to 2mm long	Normal to slightly loosened; test	Narrow groove pintuck foot	1.6mm, size 70	Fine machine-embroidery cotton: Mettler 60/2, Madeira or DMC 50/2, Coats Dual Duty Plus Extra Fine	For all pintucks always stitch a test sample on a scrap of the fabric with the grain direction the same as on the project. (Lengthwise pintucks are more difficult.) Stitch on oversized fabric before cutting pattern. Mark the first pintuck (pull a thread, press a crease, etc.) and guide the remainder from it using the pintuck foot as a guide.
	Light- to medium-weight wovens	Straight, about 2mm long		Narrow groove pintuck foot for closely spaced needles and a larger grooved foot for widely spaced needle	1.6mm, 2mm, or 2.5mm, size 70 or 80 needles as appropriate for the fabric and thread		
	Polyester/cotton broadcloth	Straight		5- or 7-groove pintuck foot	2mm, size 80		
Corded pintucks: cording incorporated on wrong side of fabric to stabilize pintucks and reduce puckering	Light- to medium- weight wovens	Straight	Normal to slightly loosened; test	5- or 7-groove pintuck foot	1.6 to 2mm on lightweight fabrics; 2.5 to 3mm for medium-weight fabrics	Fine machine-embroidery cotton: Mettler 60/2, Madeira or DMC 50/2, Coats Dual Duty Plus Extra Fine	See article in <i>Threads</i> No. 107, pp. 58-61, for how to manage the cording. See above for marking. Use contrast cording for shadow work effect.