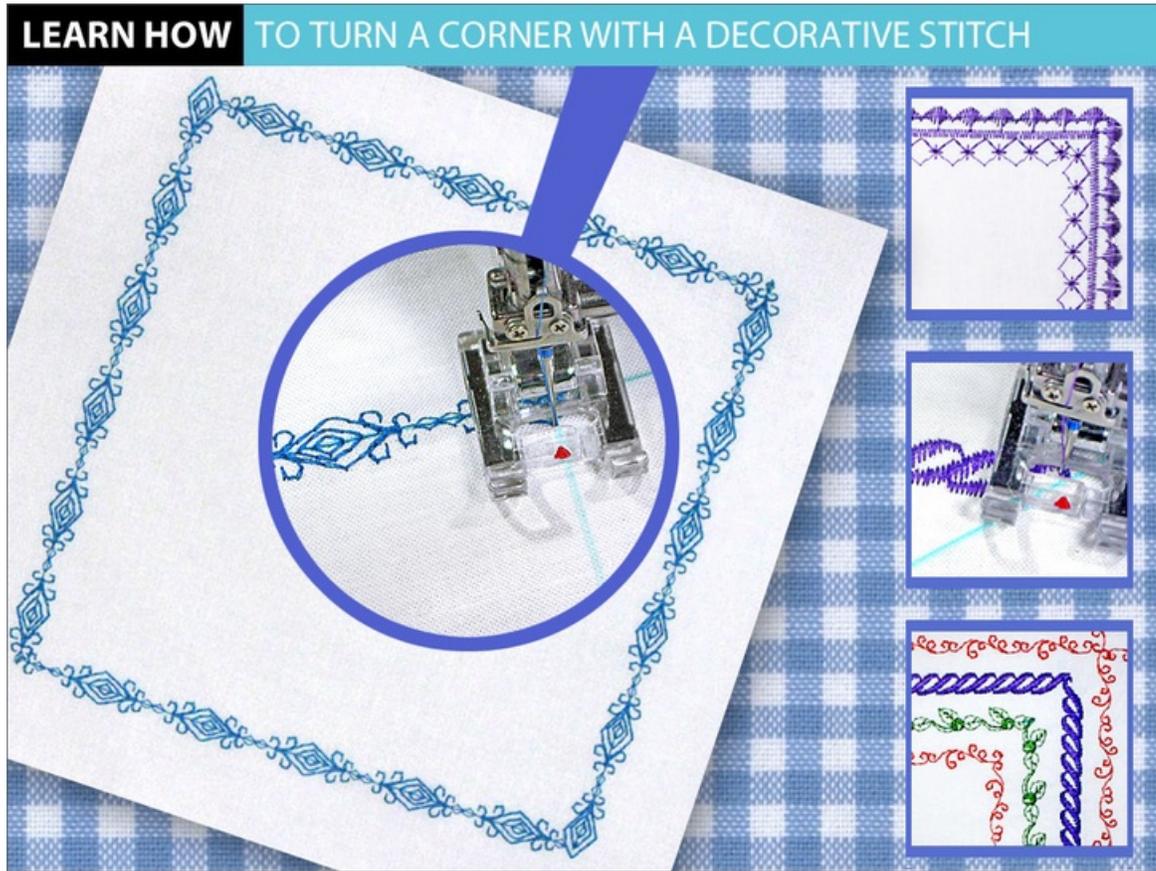


How to Turn a Corner with a Decorative Stitch

Editor: Liz Johnson
Thursday, 17 September 2015 1:00



Did you ever have one of those cute little wind-up toys? It's so fun to watch as it tick-tock walks across the floor. But what happens when it comes to a wall? Can it turn left or right or even stop? No! It just keeps going, *ka-wonking* its little toy head against the wall over and over and over. It's a little like the decorative stitch. As long as you're going straight, all is well. The pattern is pretty, the thread is colorful, it's adding an amazing accent to your project. Then the corner approaches. If making a turn with a decorative stitch has you ka-wonking your own head against the wall, we're here to help with three ways to take a turn for the better.

The keys to a good corner for any of the options outlined below are 1) a guideline to follow, 2) a slow and steady pace, and 3) practicing your stitch on scraps to memorize how the pattern forms and repeats.

Our thanks to [Janome America](#) Education Coordinator, Nancy Fiedler for providing these helpful tips and techniques. Nancy created her samples on the [Janome Memory Craft 8900QCP Special Edition](#).

We are using the [Janome Satin Stitch foot](#), which is standard on most Janome models. It's transparent, so you can see the stitches forming beneath the foot, and it has a bright red arrow at the exact center needle drop. This arrow makes it very easy to follow your drawn guide lines. If you do not have this exact type of foot, another foot can be substituted, but do try to use a transparent presser foot for the best results.

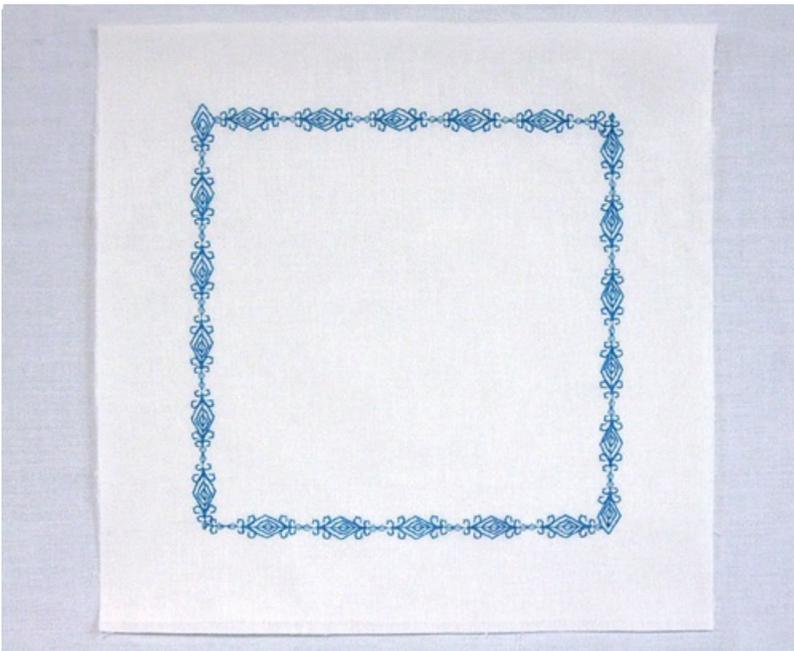
Instructions for locking off at the beginning and end of each line of stitches

Janome electronic machines most often have a locking stitch function programmed into their decorative stitches. This means they automatically lock at the beginning of the stitch. At the end, you can simply press the *Reverse* button and the machine will immediately lock off and stop. The machine only stitches in reverse for straight and zig zag settings; the rest of the stitches automatically lock off and stop.

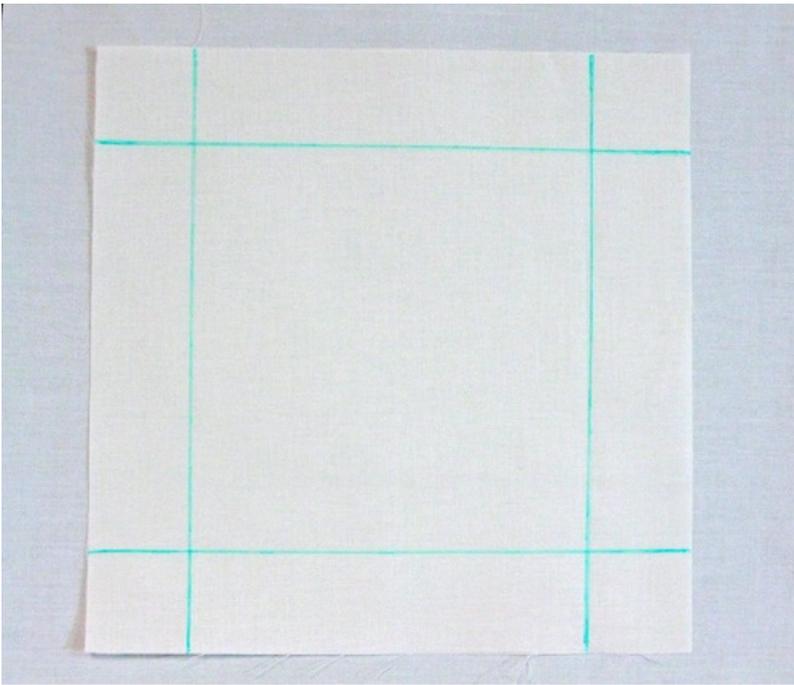
If your model is mechanical or is a brand that does not have a locking stitch, there are alternatives. At the beginning, make sure you have long thread tails. Do not lock the stitch to begin, simply start sewing. When done, return to the head of each stitch line, pull the thread tails through to the back, and knot to secure. At the end of the stitch line, stop sewing at your desired position. Re-set the machine for a straight stitch, shorten the stitch length to 0, and sew 4-5 stitches in place. You could also use the beginning technique of leaving the thread tails long and pulling them through to the back to knot.

Option 1: Continuous stitching with a single stitch pattern

This technique will give you a continuous line of stitching around a square, rectangle or other straight-edged shape.

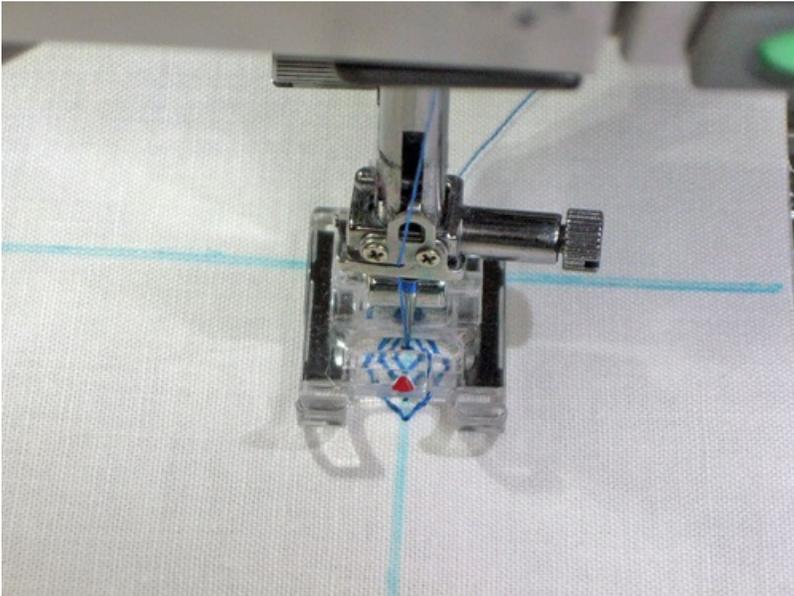


Using a fabric pen or pencil and a ruler, draw guides for each line of decorative stitching. When positioning, remember that these lines represent the *center* of the stitches. Keep this in mind when plotting distance from a seam or edge. Use a clear ruler and measure carefully to insure all intersections are straight and true. You will be working on the right side of your fabric, so make sure the pen or pencil you've chosen will easily wipe away or will vanish with exposure to the air or the heat of an iron.

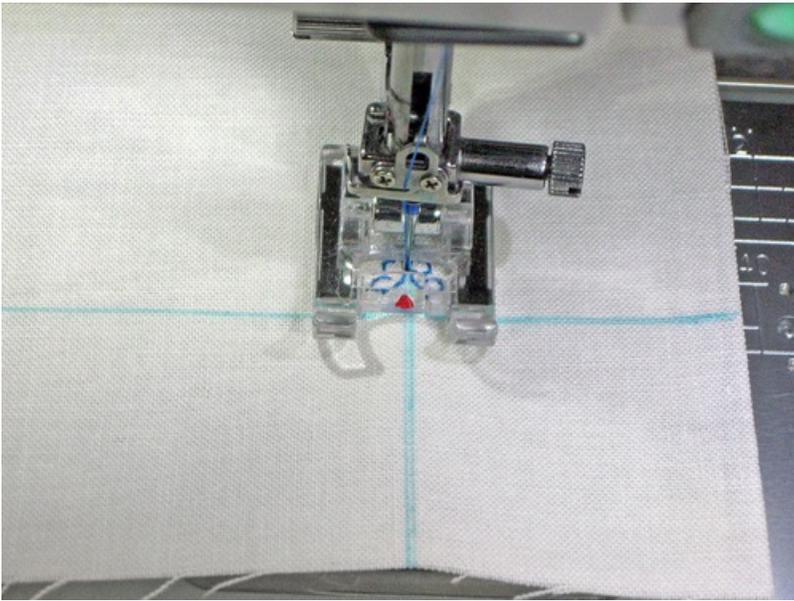


As mentioned above, always practice first. Draw several single corners onto a scrap of your project fabric. Test your chosen stitch to determine width and length, then watch how the pattern stitches out so you can recognize its true starting and stopping points.

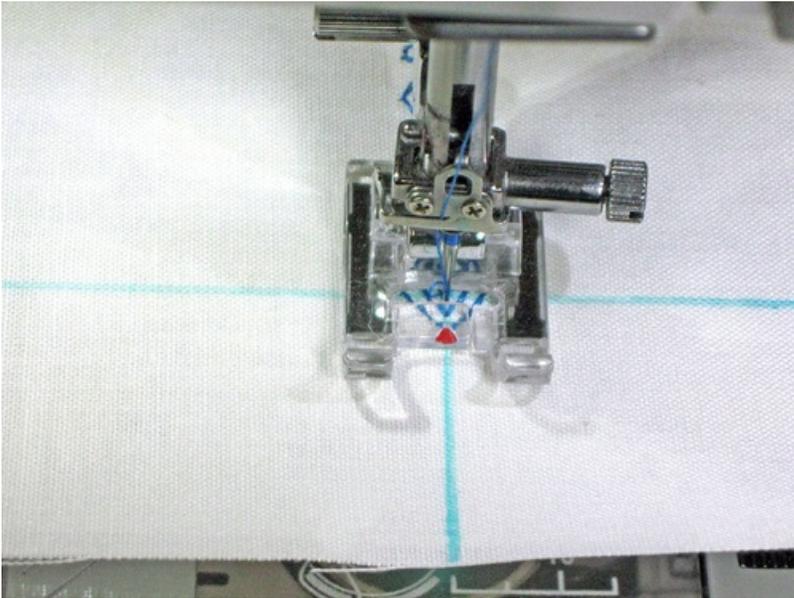
To start, center the presser foot over your drawn line and drop your needle directly into an intersection point. Start stitching along the guide line towards the first corner.



Slow down as you approach the corner and carefully watch the both the forming of the stitch and the position of the needle. You want to stop and lock the stitch with the needle as close as possible to the coming intersection and in its center position.

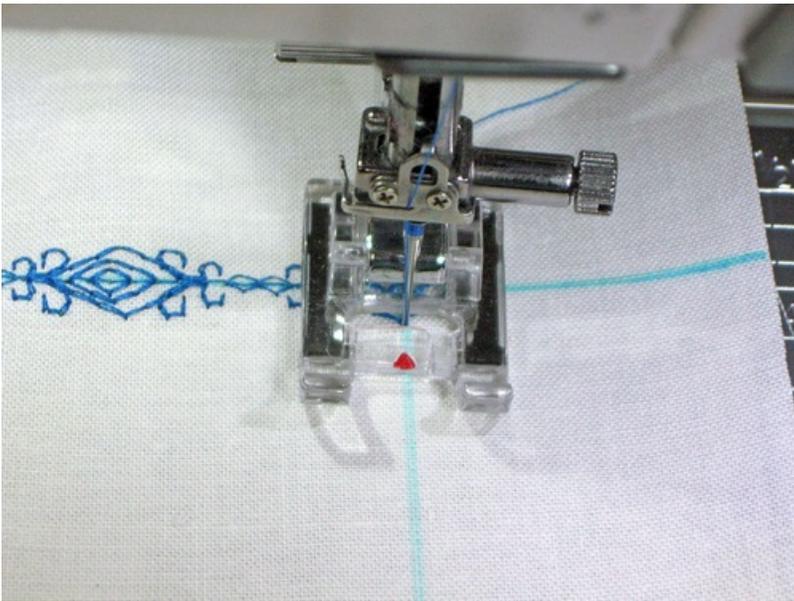


If you must pass the intersection in order to finish a stitch pattern, it should go no farther past than half the width of the decorative stitch. In our sample, we used a 9mm width stitch, so we didn't want to pass our intersection point by more than 4.5mm.



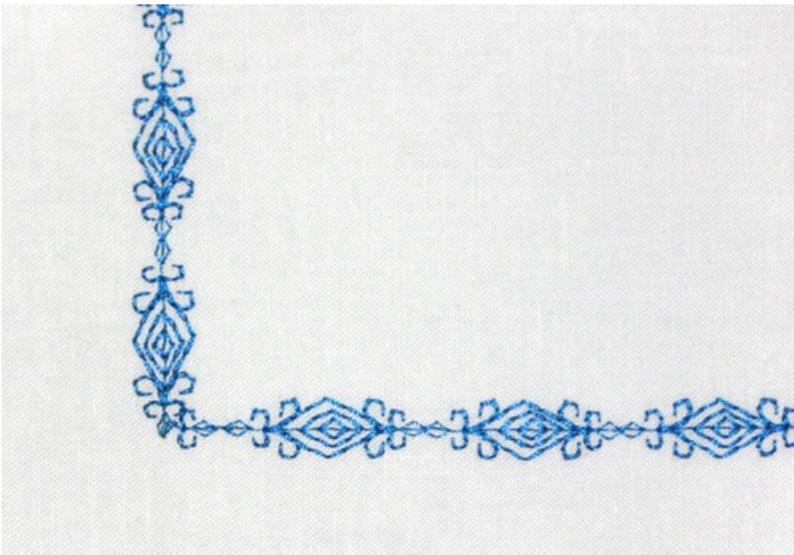
When pivoting around a corner in standard sewing with a straight stitch, you do not lock the stitch and you stop at the corner with the needle in the down position, lifting the presser foot and pivoting the fabric 90°. For decorative stitching, you are treating each side of your chosen shape as an independent seam with a beginning and end.

At your stop point, lock the stitch. Raise the needle. Pivot the fabric, re-positioning it so the presser foot will be centered on the guide line for the next line of stitching. Carefully drop the needle so it's just touching the fabric. Adjust the fabric until the point of the needle butts up to the previous row of stitches. When this needle drop test is precise, insert the needle all the way through the fabric and lower the presser foot. Check once again that the guide line is still centered under the presser foot.

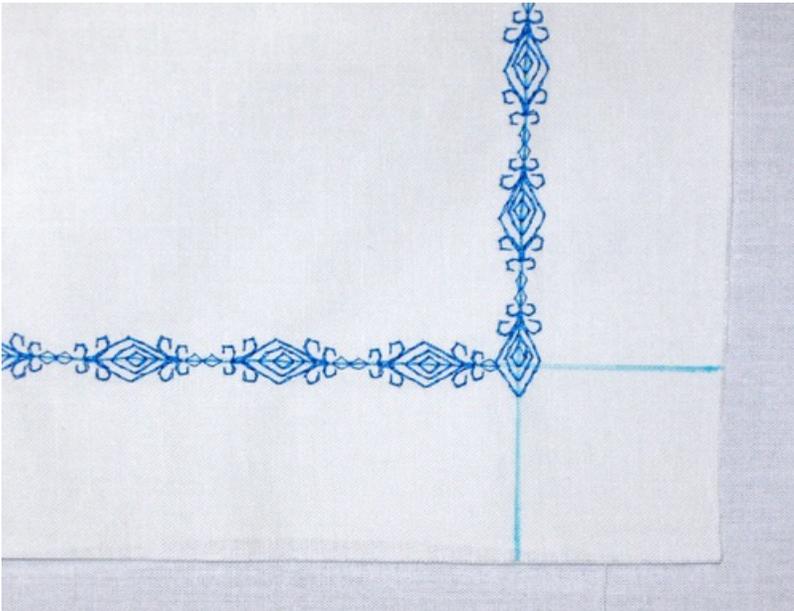


Begin stitching along the new guide line.

Repeat at each corner until you return to your starting point.

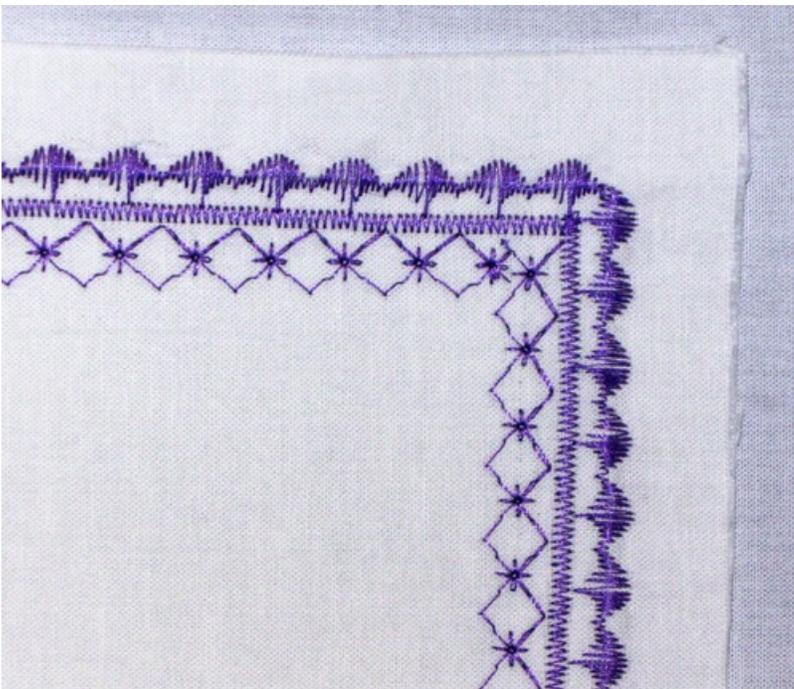


NOTE: Depending on your stitch pattern and the size of your continuous shape, your corners may not be identical. If you want identical corners, you need to go to the trouble to precisely measure your stitch pattern and make sure you draw your shape so each side will accommodate the same number of stitch motifs from exact start point to exact stop point.

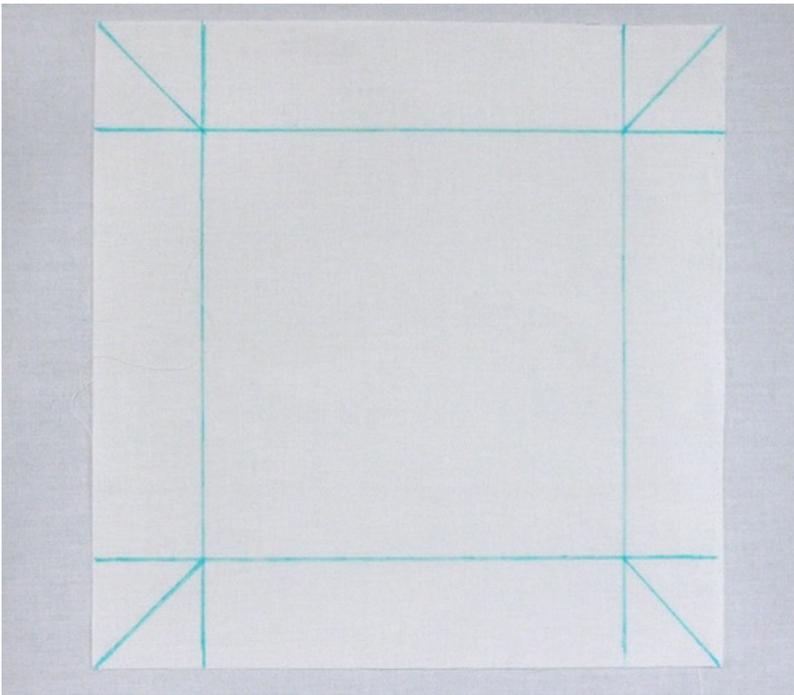


Option 2: Continuous stitching with stacked stitches

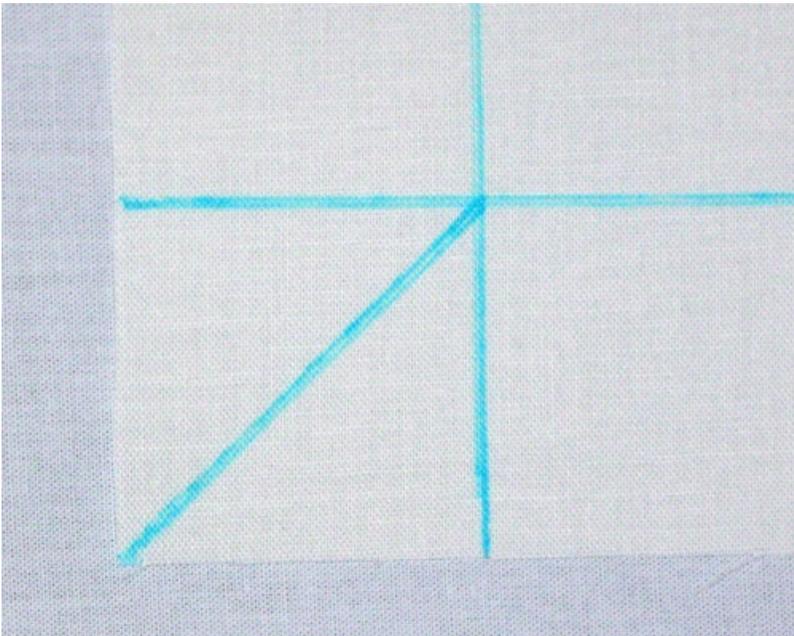
This is similar to option 1, but with an additional guide line to allow you to build multiple rows of stacked stitches.



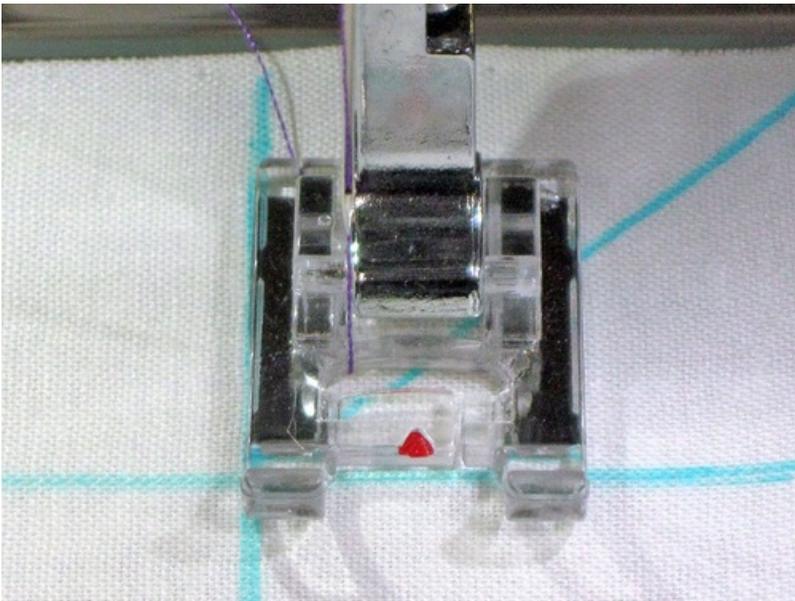
Using a fabric pen or pencil and a ruler, draw guides for each of your lines of decorative stitching. In this case, these lines do not represent the *center* of the stitch line as they did above. They are instead an inner frame on which the stacked stitches will build. You will run the edge of your presser foot along these guide lines to keep a straight run, building from the inside out. Keep this in mind as you plot the position of your finished stitches.



In addition to the main straight lines of your shape, add a 45° diagonal line in each corner.

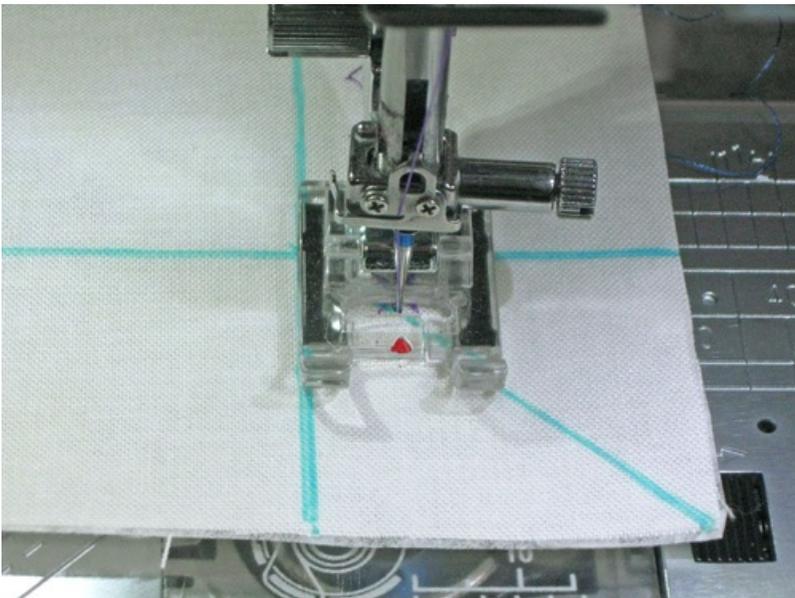


To start, line up your presser foot with the right angle of the first corner. Position the needle so its starting needle drop will hit the diagonal line. This may be the center needle position or it may be left or right; our sample started with the needle to the left. Knowing this starting position is one of the reasons you practice first to recognize each stitch's start and end points.



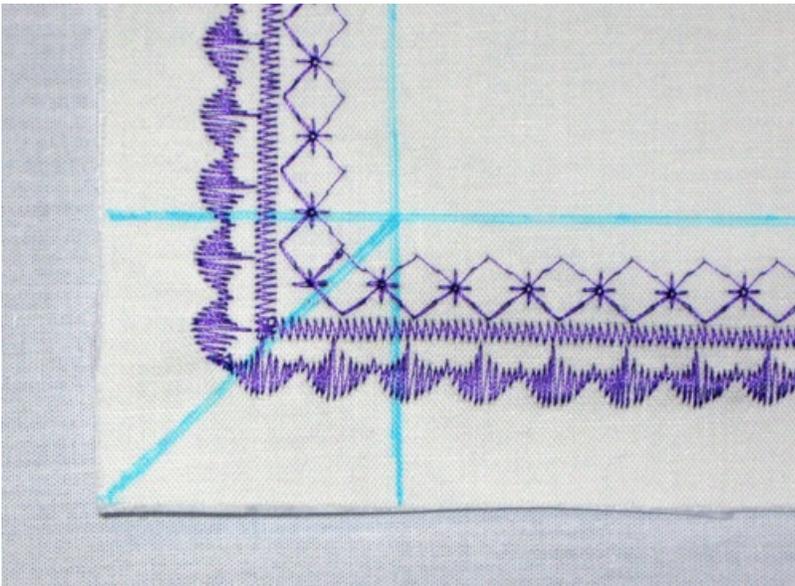
Start stitching, running the edge of the presser foot along the guide line towards the next corner.

Stop when you reach the diagonal line of the next corner with your needle at the *center* position (or as close as possible as detailed above). Lock the stitch.



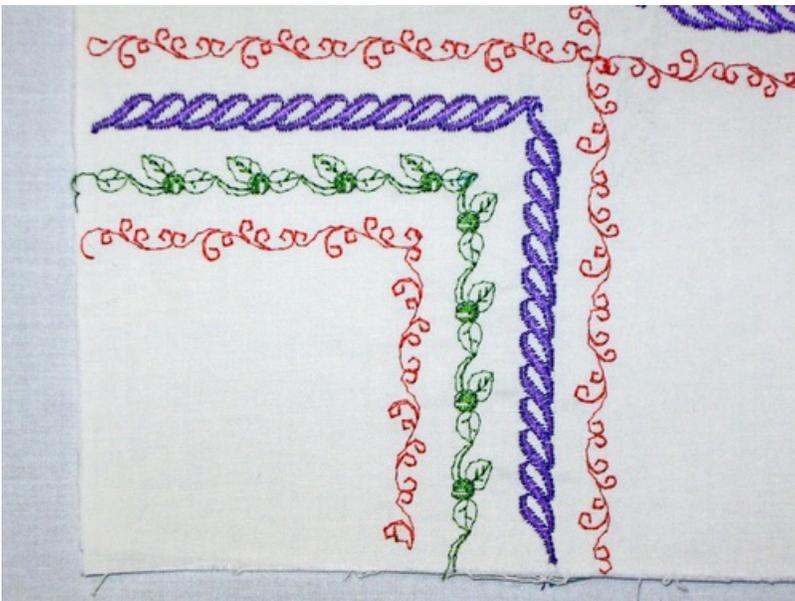
Re-position as described above and continue around the shape.

Add additional stitches, building outwards. After the first line of stitches, it's easiest to use the previous stitches as a guide for the next line of stitches, but you could also draw in more guide lines if you want your stitches to be farther apart. The key is to use the diagonal line as the starting and stopping point for each side.

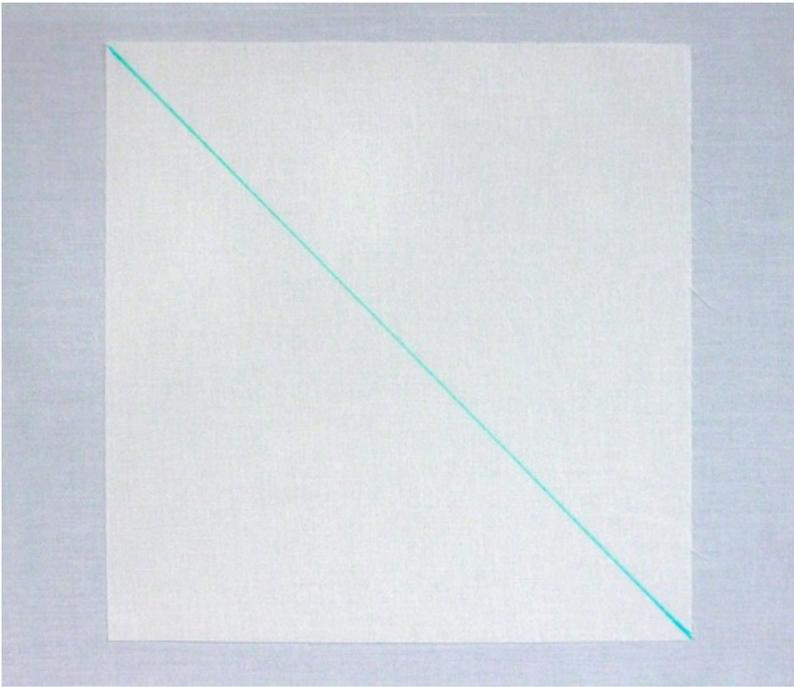


Option 3: Creating a single corner

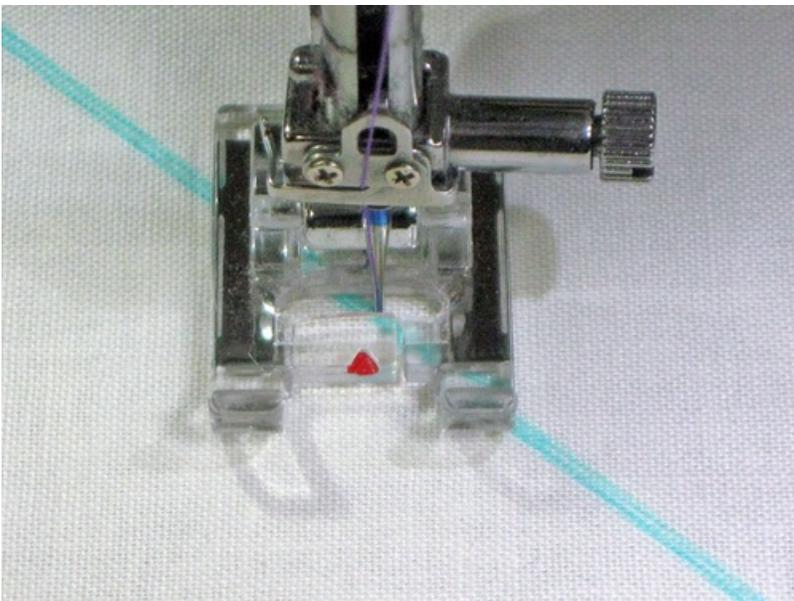
When you need just a single corner, it's easiest to start at the point of the corner and sew out in either direction.



Draw a diagonal line. This line represents the intersection point of your corner(s). Our sample shows how you can use the same diagonal line to stitch perfectly stacked corners in both directions.



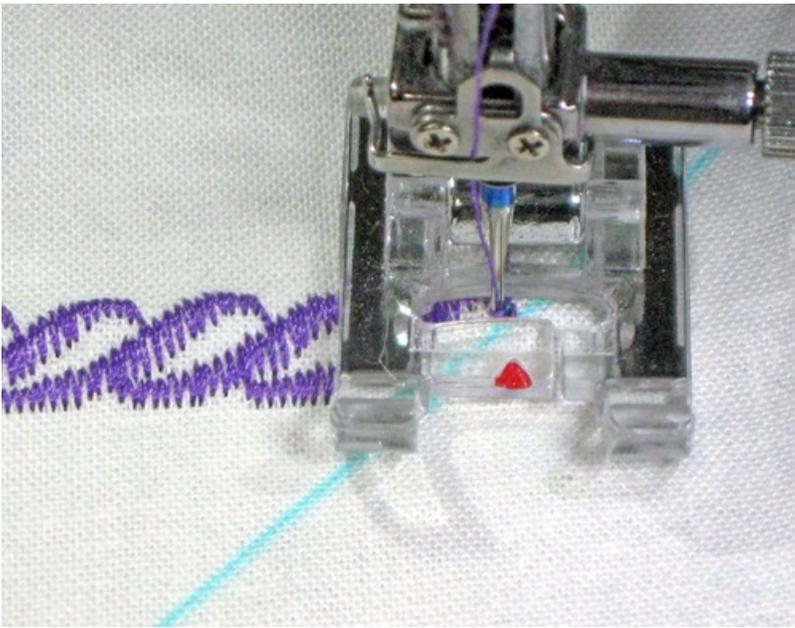
Decide where you want the point of your first corner. Place the fabric under the presser foot so the line runs diagonally under the foot and the needle drop will hit your exact corner point.



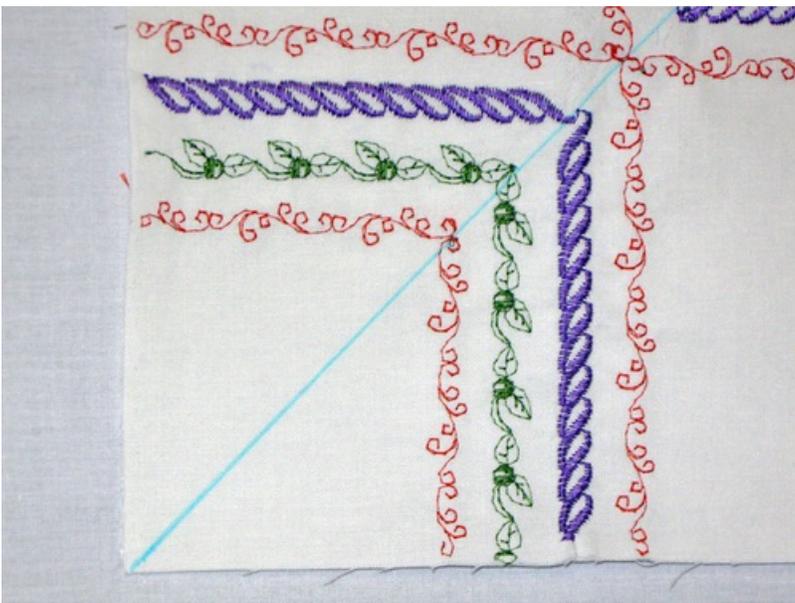
To start, stitch straight out from the diagonal line. We used our [Janome Cloth Guide](#) to keep our stitching straight. You could also draw in stitching guide lines intersecting the diagonal line. These lines would represent the center of your stitches as described above in Option 1.

Stitch from the diagonal line out to the stopping point of the corner or the edge of the fabric, whichever is correct for your project. Lock the stitch.

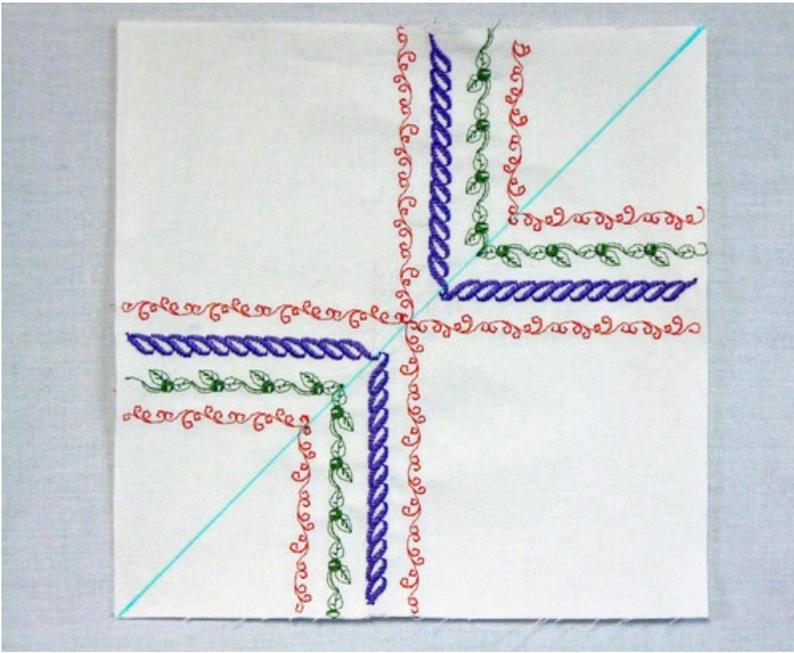
Rotate the fabric and reposition it under the presser foot at the corner point. The guide line should once again run diagonally under the foot. Line up the needle drop so it goes in at the exact starting point of your first line of stitching.



Stitch straight out from the diagonal line (which should be at a 90° angle to your first line) to the opposite side of the fabric. Repeat to build as many corners as you'd like along the same diagonal line.



You can even rotate the fabric 180° and create a mirror image going in the opposite direction along the diagonal line.



Remember, *one good turn deserves another*... now you can create decorative corners with ease.

Our thanks again to *Janome America* Education Coordinator, Nancy Fiedler for her help with this tutorial.

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