Overlocker,
Coverstitch, or Combo?

Get to know them & Choose what's right for you.



Overlocker Buying Guide for Australia

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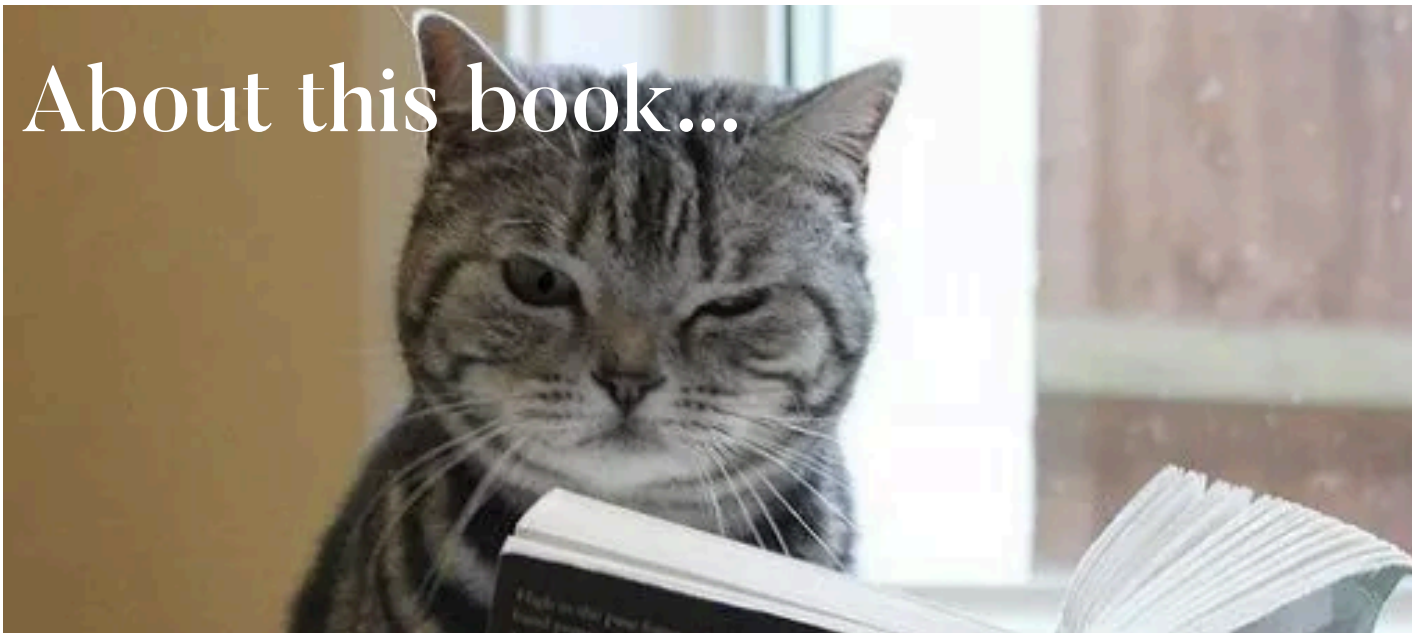
Decisions, decisions...

"I'm in the market for an Overlocker.
Which one Should I choose?"

If you find yourself asking this question, you're not alone - especially if you're a new to sewing.

Ready to Get Started? **Let's Begin.**

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About this book...

This Book is Designed for YOU

I wrote this book with ONE intension: Give you the **clarity & confidence** to make a choice that's right for YOU. Because I want you to end up with **a machine you're happy** with :-)

I do this by distilling some overwhelming (and often conflicting) information into **fundamental principles - based on machine types and your needs**, then presenting them in a way that's **easy to understand for all** - no matter where you are in your sewing journey!

How to Use This Book

In the first few pages, you'll find a quick overview **specifically written for your needs**.

The middle of the book is dedicated to machine types, and characteristics that define them.

Instead of getting lost in endless features, this section will **give you a solid understanding of machine types** - regardless what brand or model of machine. Having this knowledge will short-cut a lot of confusion and help you narrow down your options.

The third section goes into more details **about YOUR specific needs**, and **what features would support you**. This WILL make your decision easier.

The final section of the book covers a few **insider's secrets** that might interest (or surprise) you.

Enjoy!

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Just a few points...

It's NOT about brands...

Choosing a brand is a personal preference. Discussion of brands can quickly turn into heated debates so let's not go there :-)

That's why I've **deliberately chosen *not* to mention specific brands** (apart from Page 65 - 66).

Because brands & model numbers change all the time - while principles remain constant.



Having said that, there will be clickable buttons through out this book, showing machines that are currently available at my store - **whether you read this book today or 10 years from now**. If you don't see many brands, that's purely because I don't carry all the brands in the world - that's all.

Please consider these machines **examples only**, merely meant to illustrate specific points covered in these pages.

I encourage you to **go with brands of your choice** - based on principles we cover in this book. Because ultimately, you will be **empowered** by the knowledge to **choose confidently** - and be happy about your decision :-)

Also, **I'm based in Australia** (more about me on page 69).

Please bear in mind there will be different brands and models if you're in Europe, North America, or other parts of the world. **The principles still remain the same, no matter where you are** - because domestic machines are built to serve home users - YOU.

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You're ready for an overlocker if...

You've outgrown mocking overlocking stitches on a regular sewing machine.

Sure, you can zigzag along raw edges - that's perfectly functional.

Your machine might even do a good overcasting stitch that looks almost like overlocking - except it's s-l-o-w.

When you're short on time, an overlocker is definitely the most efficient way to finish your seams.

You find yourself sewing more and more garments in knit fabric.

In general, overlocker prevents knit fabric from rolling in your seam allowance, and copes better with the stretch in your garments.

Be sure to choose a decent overlocker though - because you'd still want your knit garments to have strong seams to withstand regular wash and wear.

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Think twice about an overlocker if...

You're new to sewing and still struggling with your regular sewing machine.

Fact: overlockers are more complex compare to a sewing machine.

If you are still learning to sew, and often struggle with basic garment construction and sewing techniques, you may not be ready.

Whilst an overlocker will add a neat finish to your edges, you still need to become competent in garment construction techniques to achieve a professional finish.

You identify yourself more as a quilter and only sew garments occasionally.

Do you really need an overlocker if you hardly ever use it?

If you're a quilter, consider saving the money to upgrade your basic machine to one that's more suited to making quilts, instead of getting an overlocker.

You'll get far more out of a sewing machine with larger throat area, and the odd raw edges can always be neatened with one of the overcasting stitches on your sewing machine.

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Overlocker or Serger?

Well, both names mean the same thing.

Americans generally refer to these as sergers, and nearly everyone else refers to them as overlockers.



Let's use "overlocker" because we're Aussies :-)

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Let's get ONE thing Straight...

An overlocker does NOT replace your sewing machine!

Because your overlocker is NOT a stand-alone machine that can do everything that a sewing machine can do.

While you *could* complete simple garments (i.e. T-shirts) with an overlocker, you cannot perform a full suite of work for a proper wardrobe - because you'd still need a sewing machine for zippers, buttonholes and topstitching.

So if you've not yet purchased any machine, **read this book first** and choose a sewing machine that suits your needs.



Already got a sewing machine? Great :-)

Let's get to know our overlockers.

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Get to Know The Machines







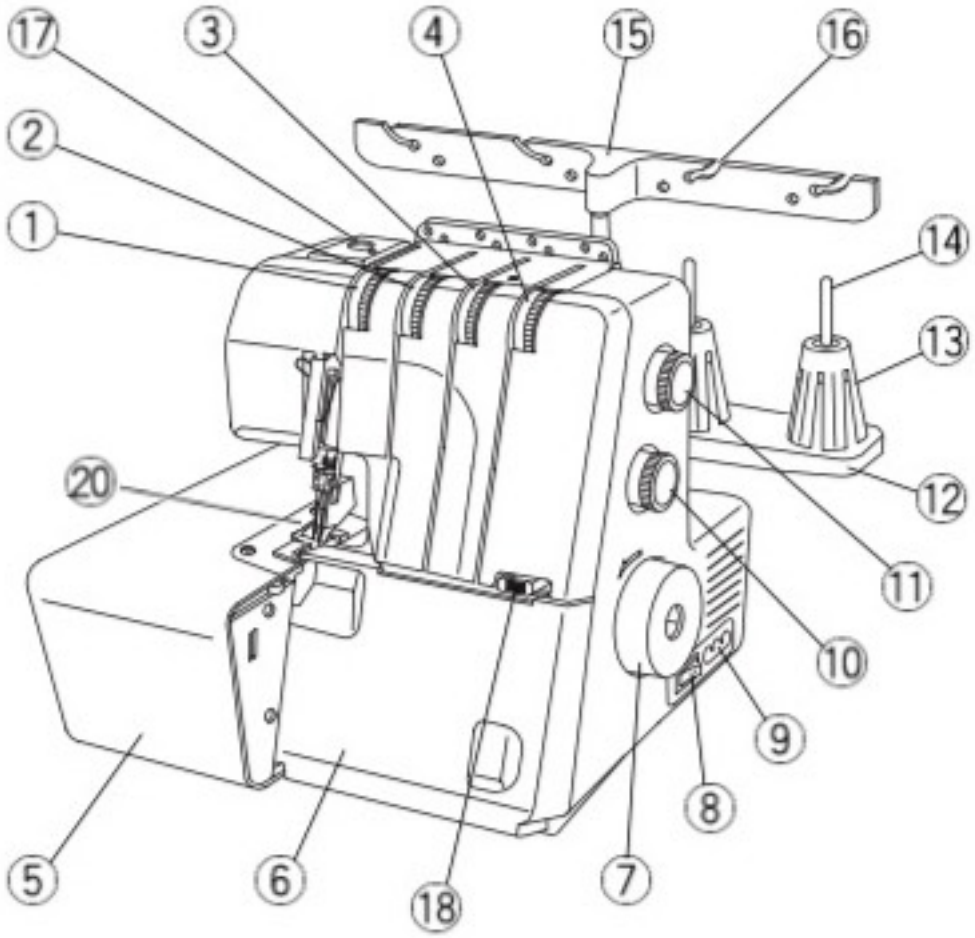
Beside Regular Sewing Machines, there are **3 other machine types:**

1. **Overlocker / Serger**
2. **Coverstitch Machine**
3. **Overlocker & Coverstitch Combo**

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Get to know your machine

Overlocker

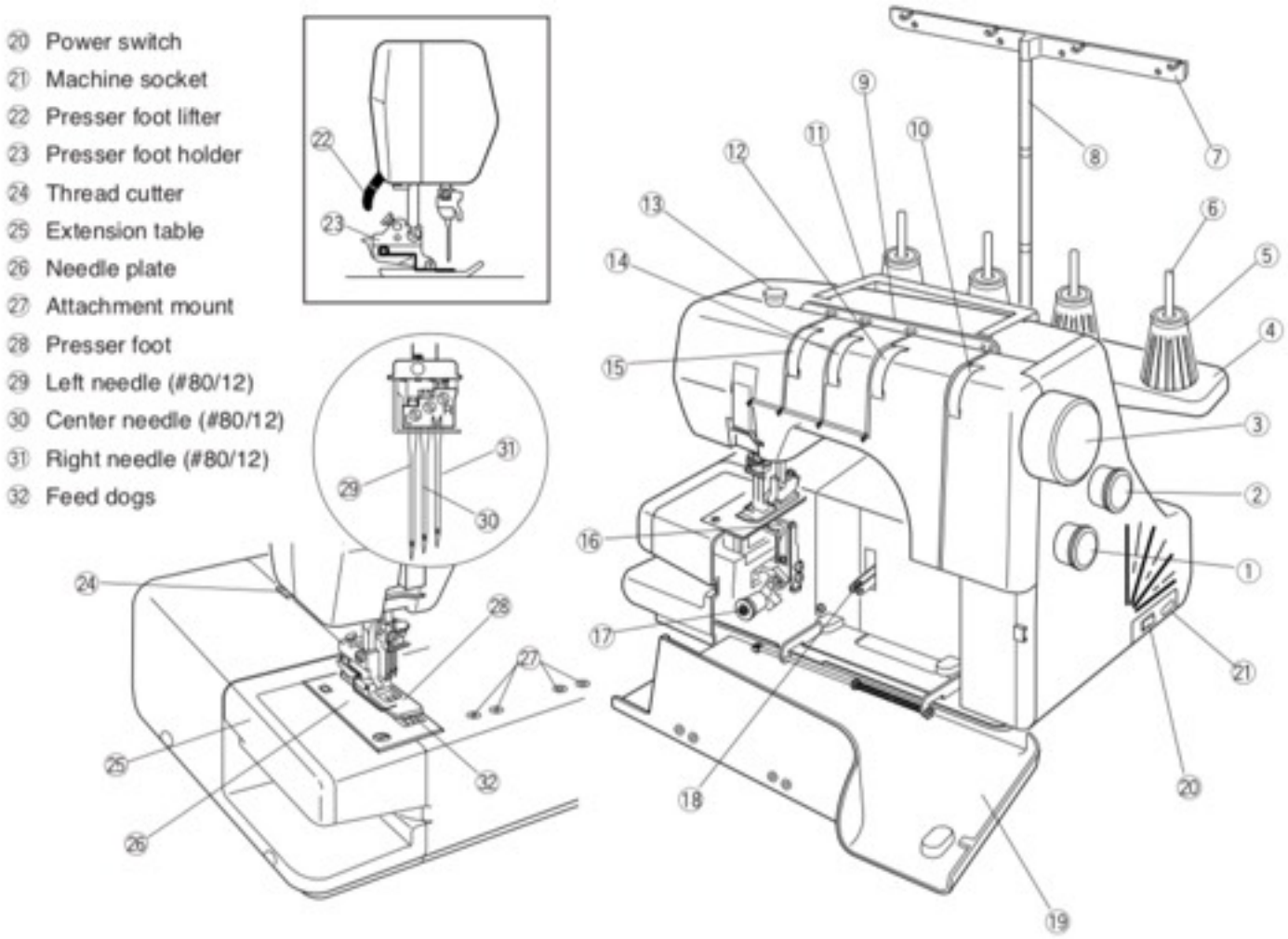


① Left needle thread tension dial
② Right needle thread tension dial
③ Upper looper thread tension dial
④ Lower looper thread tension dial
⑤ Side cover
⑥ Looper cover
⑦ Handwheel
⑧ Power switch
⑨ Machine socket
⑩ Differential feed dial
⑪ Stitch length dial
⑫ Spool stand
⑬ Spool holder
⑭ Spool pin
⑮ Thread guide bar
⑯ Thread guide
⑰ Pressure adjusting screw
⑱ Lower looper pre-tension setting slider
⑲ Needle plate setting knob
⑳ Presser foot

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Get to know your

Coverstitch Machine

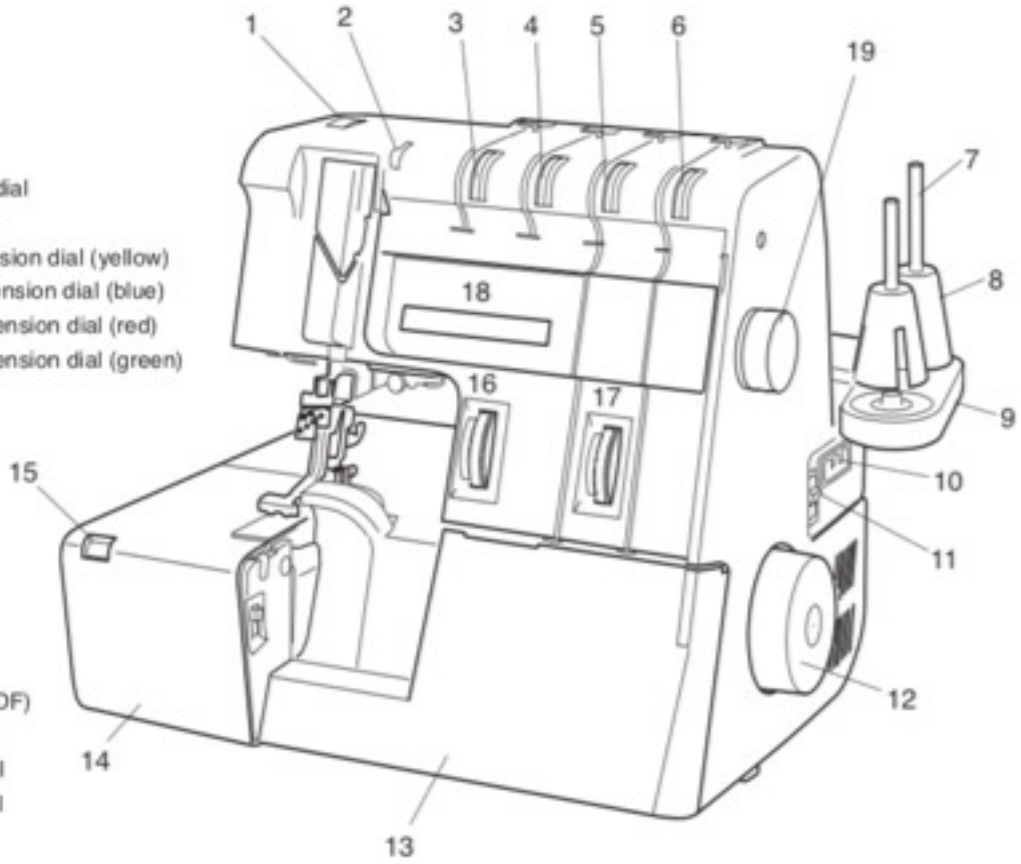


1. Differential feed dial
2. Stitch length dial
3. Handwheel
4. Spool stand
5. Spool holder
6. Spool pin
7. Thread guide bar
8. Thread guide plate
9. Thread guide post
10. Looper thread tension dial
11. Carrying handle
12. Right needle thread tension dial
13. Pressure adjusting screw
14. Center needle thread tension dial
15. Left needle thread tension dial
16. Looper
17. Looper release knob
18. Looper thread take-up lever
19. Looper cover

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Get to know your machine

Overlocker / Coverstitch Combo



1. Pressure adjustment dial
2. Tension release lever
3. Left needle thread tension dial (yellow)
4. Right needle thread tension dial (blue)
5. Upper looper thread tension dial (red)
6. Lower looper thread tension dial (green)
7. Spool pin
8. Spool holder
9. Spool pin base
10. Machine socket
11. Power switch
12. Handwheel
13. Front cover
14. Side cover
15. Cutting width window
16. Differential feed dial (DF)
17. Stitch length dial (SL)
18. Program display panel
19. Program selection dial





What the Symbols Represent

C: Program number
D: Differential feed
E: Stitch length
F: Needle position
G: Cutting width
H: Upper knife position
I: 2-thread converter
J: Overlock cover or Sewing table
K: Presser foot
L: Needle plate setting knob
M: Chain looper thread tension

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Overlocker vs. Sewing Machine



Your overlocker doesn't replace your sewing machine.

Instead, they work along side each other happily.

An overlocker is designed specifically to neaten raw edges - so technically it doesn't "sew" straight like a normal sewing machine. In fact, your typical overlocking stitch is more like knitting than sewing.

Overlocking trims and binds seams to prevent the fabric from fraying. It finishes the inside just like commercially made garments. Sometimes you might use an overlocker for outside seams as a feature, or to finish hems with rolled hemming, but in general the overlocker is used in construction rather than finishing.

Instead of just one needle, overlockers have two needles and a built-in blade so that while you seal off the raw edges, it also trims your seam allowance at the same time - so be careful of chomping too much off when you use an overlocker!

By nature, overlockers are more complex than sewing machine to thread up, because they take multiple spools - anywhere between 3 to 5.

There's no bobbin, though there are "loopers" that work with the two needles to create the overlocking effect.

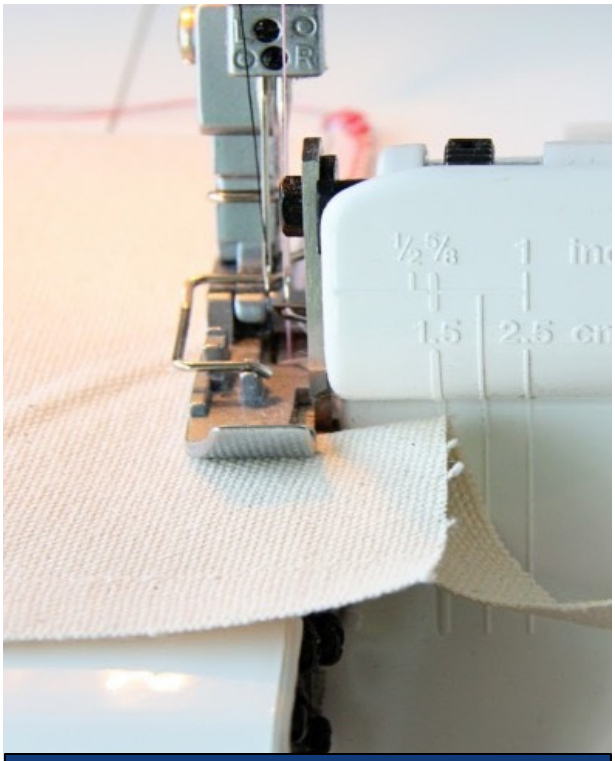
Threading is what most people find challenging (I'm not a huge fan either). Though most of the overlockers these days come pre-threaded, so you can simply tie your thread and "run" them through, instead of completely re-threading from scratch.

In any case, most brands include a DVD so that you're always going to have help on hand if you need. You can also find plenty of videos on YouTube if you didn't have the instruction or DVD on hand.

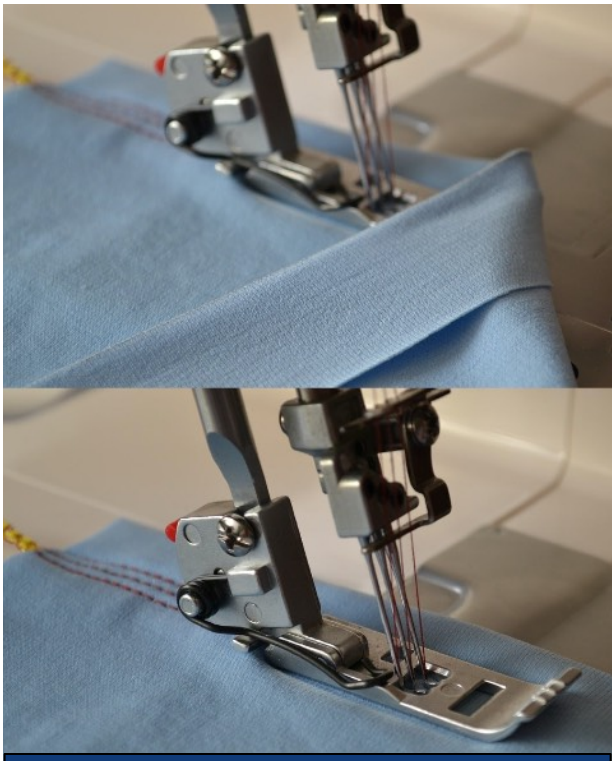
Next, let's look at the differences between an overlocker and a coverstitch machine.

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Overlocker vs. Coverstitch Machine



View Overlockers



View Coverstitch

Remember - neither machine will replace your sewing machine, but they both work together along with your sewing machine to produce THE most professional finish.

Main Differences

- Overlockers come with two cutting knives which trim edges as you stitch, while a coverstitch machine has none.
- An overlocker "locks" the edges while trimming them - it always run on the edges.
- Your coverstitch machine doesn't have a blade. It is designed to produce parallel lines of stitches for hemming - so it works away from the edges.
- The coverstitch machine has only one looper to thread, while overlockers have two.
- The coverstitch machine contains three needles, while the majority of overlockers have only two.

Main Similarities

- Both types of machines include an adjustable differential feed with a control dial. More on those later.
- Both overlocker and coverstitch machines use different needles compare to your sewing machines. Be sure to get the right needles!
- Both machines typically take larger thread cones because they use up more threads.

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Combination Machine: Best of Both Worlds?



Overlocker / Coverstitch Combo machine has all the functions you'd expect from a standard overlocker and a coverstitch machine. Some models might do more.

Janome 1200D for example, is actually 3 machines in one: the overlocker, the coverstitch, and a Top Cover Stitch hemmer - which is normally a separate industrial machine.

Having said that, having three machines in one does make operations a tad more complex, where you'd switch functions frequently.

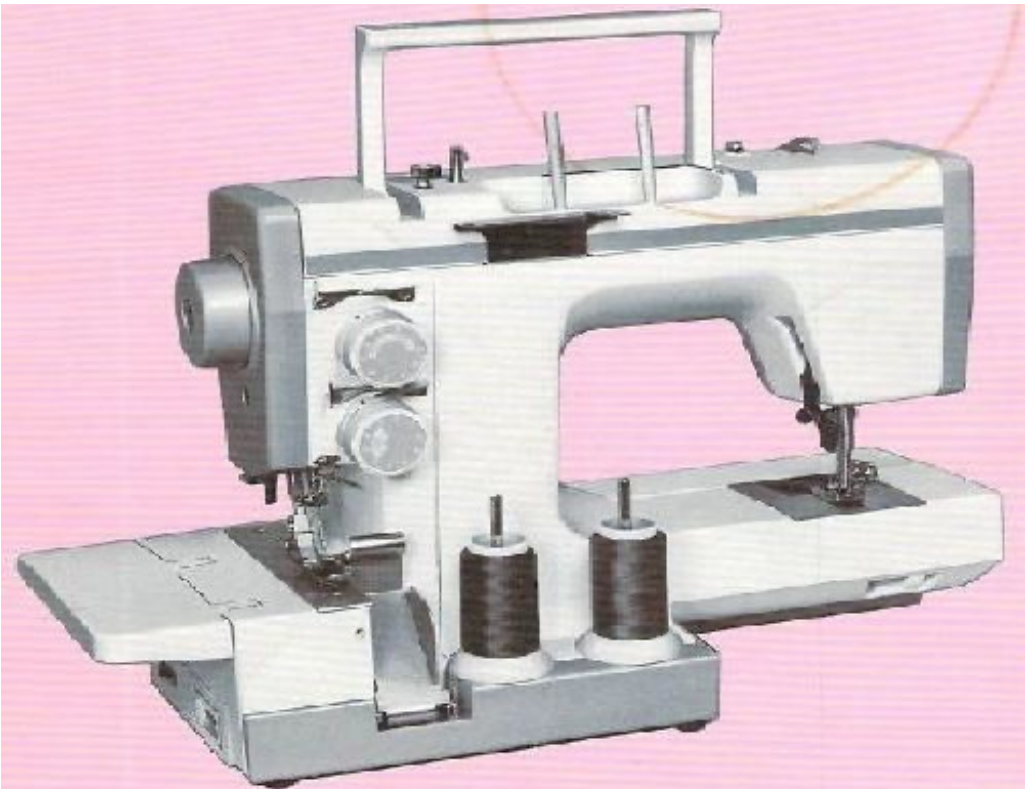
The alternative is to have both the overlocker & coverstitch machine side by side. This way each machine is set up for one job, while you simply hop between two machines at various points of your garment construction without having to stop sewing to muck around with any machine settings.

Still, if you have limited space and budget, being able to buy just ONE machine may work out for you perfectly.

View Overlocker / Coverstitch Combo Machine

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Is there such thing as Overlocker / Sewing Machine Combo?



Well, such combo machine *did* exist at one point - it was called the Janome Combi DX.

A true hybrid, it was a sewing machine on one side, and you turn it around to use the two-thread overlocker on the other side.

Genius idea, though it didn't last because the results turned out to be a compromise of both. I guess overlockers and sewing machines are just too different.

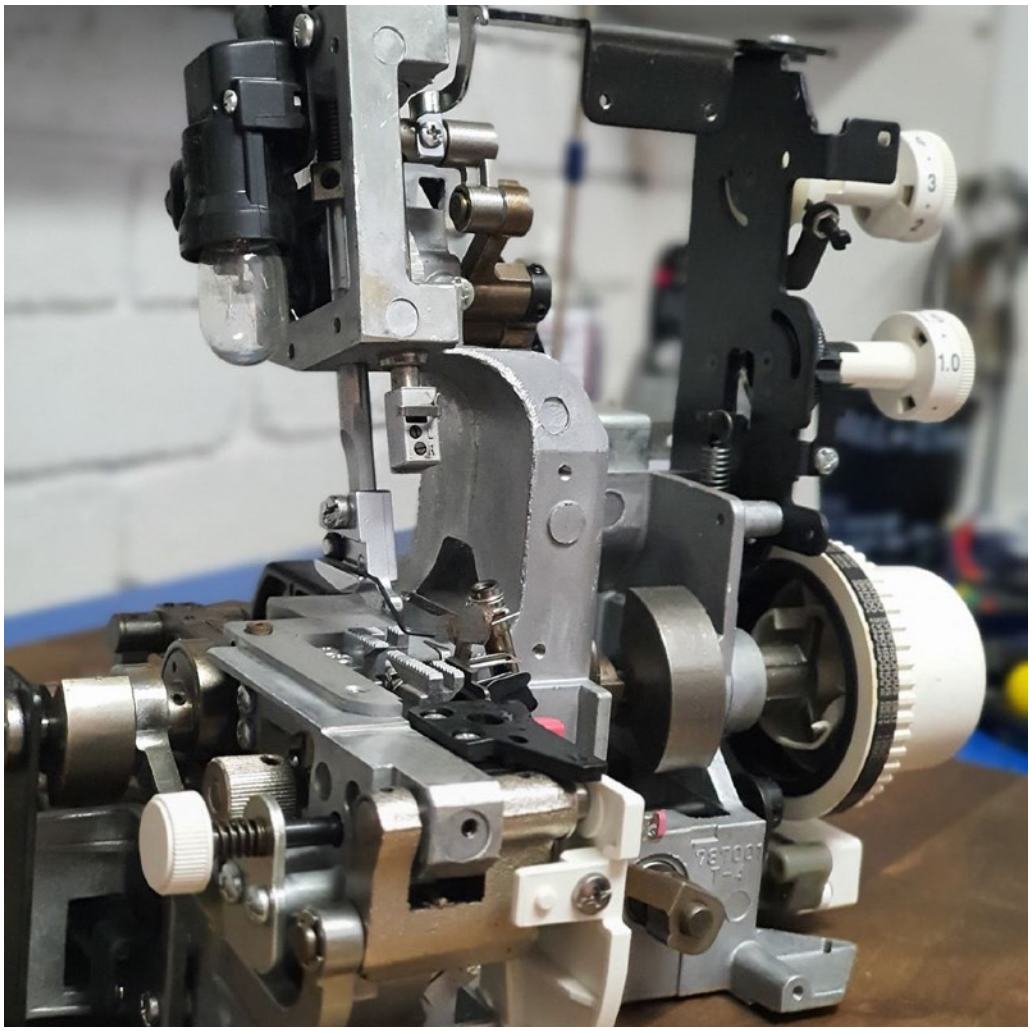
These days, sewing machine / overlocker combo is a package deal. With two stand-alone machines to work side by side, you'll find the experience best of both worlds.

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What To Look For in a Machine

Consider The Inside...



With machines, you *do* get what you pay for.

Even though one overlocker might look almost identical to another, the construction might be worlds apart. **You want a machine that's made of more metal than plastic.** So, how do you tell?

Pick the machines up (if you're in a shop) or look up the machine weight when shopping online. Generally, the heavier the machine, the more metal parts it contains.

Go for the heavier machine because it is likely to be more robust.

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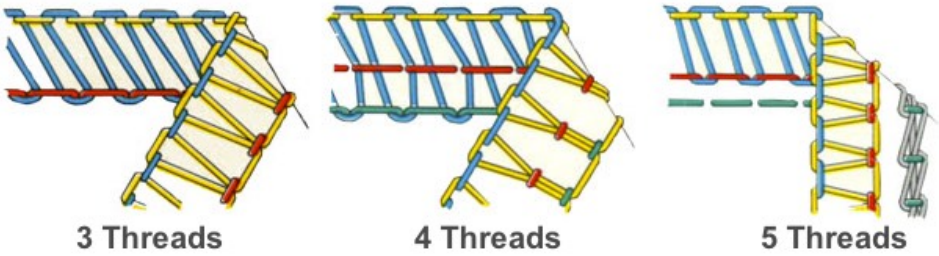
How Many Threads?



You can have 2, 3, 4, 5 threads overlocking.

Ideally your machine would have four (spools of) threads. Anything less won't give you a secure seam.

That's why **most overlockers have four spools** - two threads for needles (one in each needle) and two for the loopers (upper & lower loopers).



The three right hand threads finish the raw edge of the fabric.

The fourth left hand thread sews a standard straight stitch called the **Safety Stitch** (more on page 43).

If you have the 5th thread - that would give you an additional row of **chainstitch** which produces THE most professional finish, seen in most commercially made garments.

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Tension Dials

The dials allow you to adjust your tension. The more control you have over tension the better your results will be.

Modern machines often have '**lay-in' tension dials** (see top photo) which controls the thread tension inside the dials rather than tension knobs - which are exposed & more likely to get bumped accidentally (see bottom photo), so be sure to note down your perfect setting!

Lay-in tension dials still allows manual adjustment if need be - especially when you change fabric. Some models have fully automatic, self-adjusting tension control for a really even stitch on all kinds of fabrics. This is called **auto-tension** (see example **here**) - it's a good feature to have in an overlocker.

To achieve beautiful **rolled hems**, perfect for lightweight fabrics and evening wear, you can use tension controls to force the edge of the hem under as the overlocker finishes the edge to create a subtle and neat finish.



See Example



See Example

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Your ideal overlocker should cover **These Features**



Foot Pressure Adjustment



Wide Differential Feed Ratio

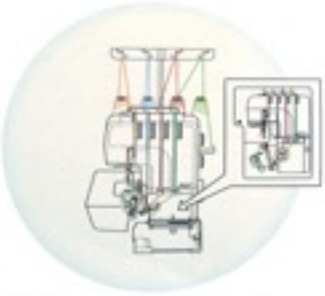


Adjustable Stitch Length

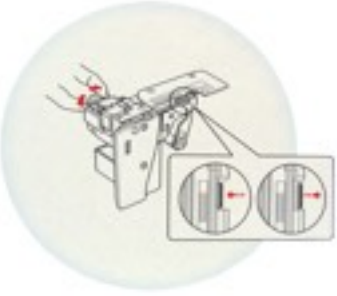


Buit-in Thread Cutter





Colour-coded Threading



Adjustable Cutting Width



Retractable Upper Knife



Easy Rolled Hem Conversion

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Your coverstitch machine should ideally have

These Features



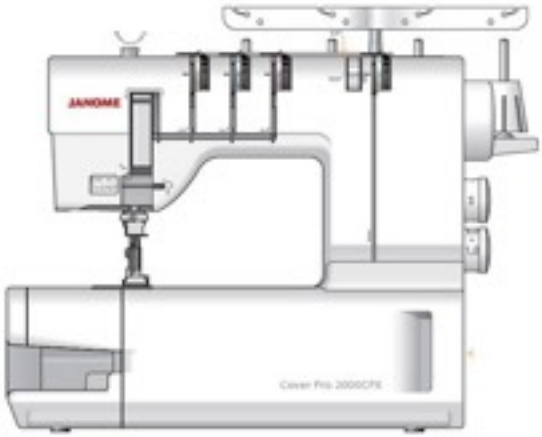
Built-in Stitch Chart



Differential Feed



Free Arm Option

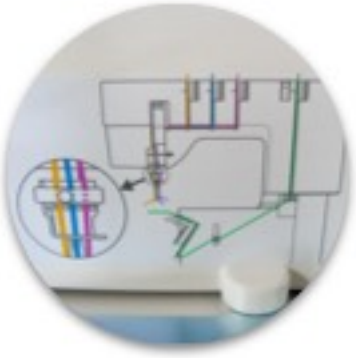




Chain Stitch &
Coverstitch Variations



Tension Lever Control



Quick Reference Guide



East Looper Threading

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If you're new to Overlocking

(or new to sewing)

What features to look for

- Easy to thread & use
- Quality vs. Budget
- Do you actually need one?

See Example Models

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Does Threading Freak You Out?



Let's just get the scary truth out of the way:

Overlockers ARE complex.

That's mainly because of the threading. That means the fear you're feeling is totally normal and reasonable :-)

To make the learning curve easier, most overlockers these days come colour-coded with diagram, while many models are sold with a comprehensive DVD so you always have help on hand.

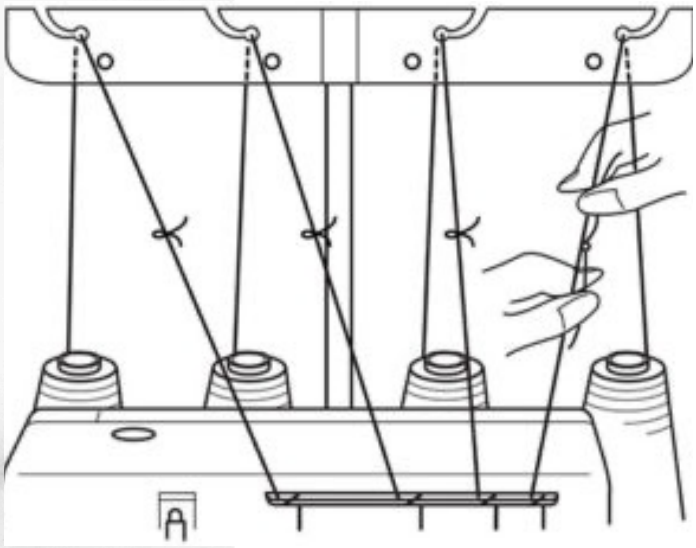
Some overlockers even come pre-threaded - so they are ready to go, out of the box!

Let's explore some ways to help you make friends with your overlocker while learning to thread, over in the next page...

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Threading Made Easy
(and non-scary)

Take a good look at your overlocker. Chances are, you'll find different colours on the knobs and dials, and there will be diagrams hidden inside the flaps. These are your map for threading :-)

You can even label your tensions dials, and note the correct order in threading.

Better still, if your overlocker comes pre-threaded, simply tie the threads to your new cones when you change colours, and simply run the machine and let it thread itself. This works most of the time.

When in doubt, simply refer back to the DVD that comes with your overlocker.

Is there an even better way to thread? YES. Go to page 35.

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Consider Your Budget...



As with all machines, you *do* get what you pay for. So always buy the best model within your budget.

Having said that - think about how much overlocking or coverstitch you're going to do.

Your level of usage is an excellent indication on how much you should spend. Think of it like "cost per use".

If you'd use the machines everyday, or most days, then definitely get yourself a top-of-range model.

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Mock Overlocking



You can achieve a similar result of overlocked edges using your sewing machine (see photo on the left).

Simply use an **overcasting foot**, then select a stitch pattern that resembles overlocking, and off you sew :-)

While this can take longer, it works well at no extra cost.

Take a look at the photo below - you almost can't tell the difference!



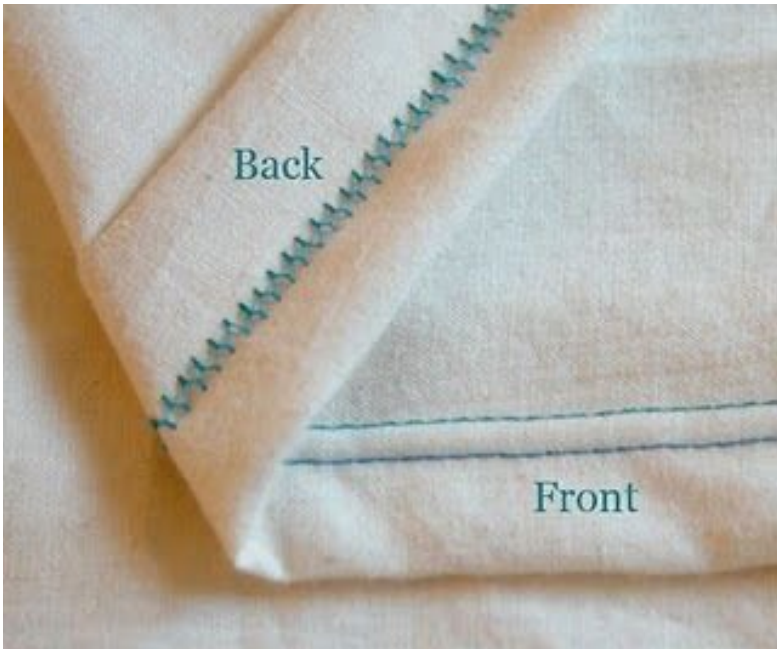
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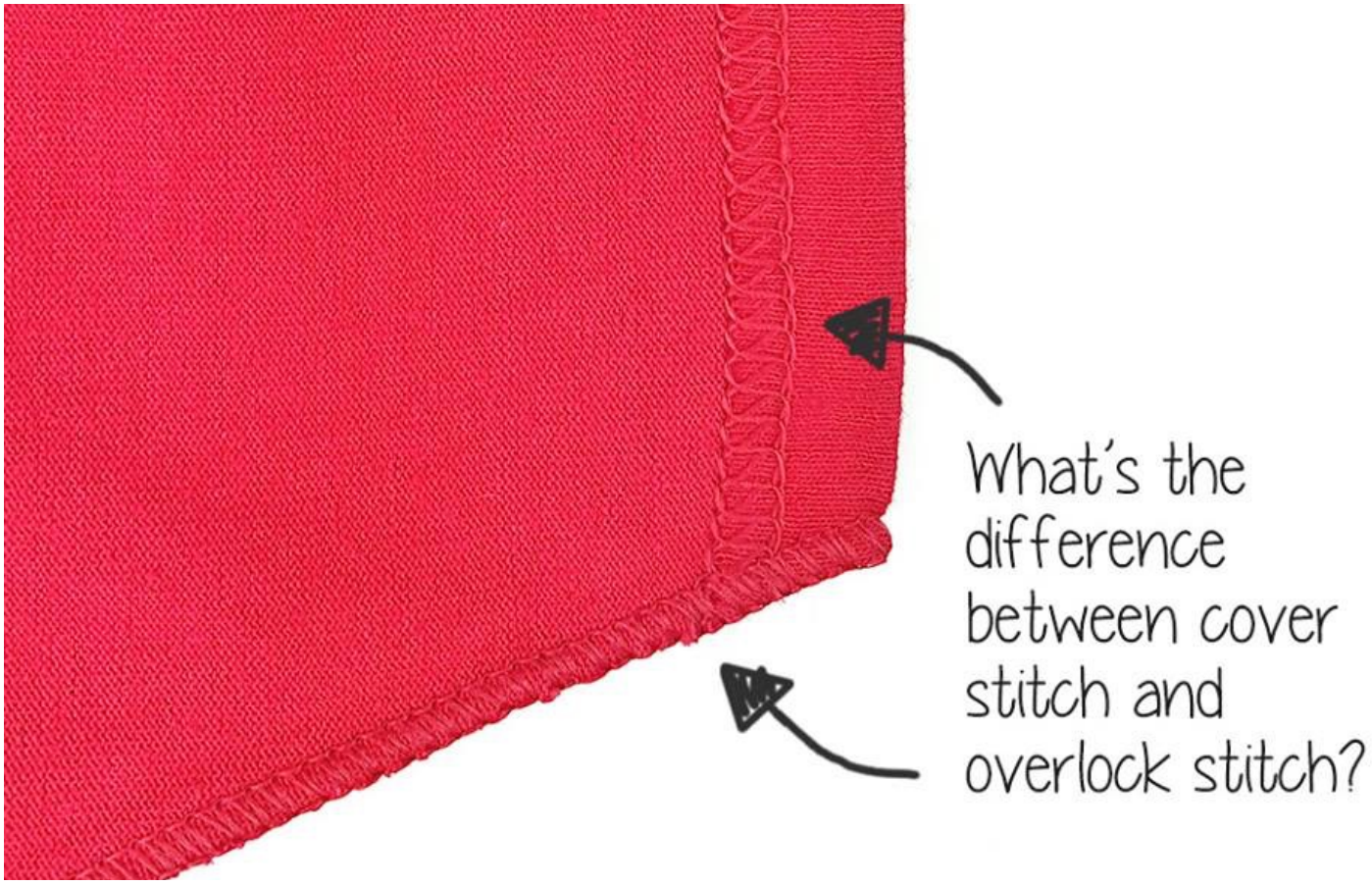
Mock Coverstitching

You know the classic t-shirt hem finish: two rows of stitching with the overlock-like reverse side.

You can reasonably imitate this on your sewing machine with a twin-needle stitch. See right.

Though if you intend to sew a lot of knit fabric, you'll always get better results from a proper coverstitch machine - which is different from an overlocker. See below.





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Presser Foot: Snap On & Off



Overlockers are complex, so it might be a good idea to make sure the overlocker / overstitch you intend to buy has **snap on presser feet**.

Most modern machines have this, though it's always advisable to check first.

This way, changing the presser foot is as simple as snapping it on and off - just like you would with sewing machines.

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What Are Those Markings?

Those lines & numbers are your **seam allowance guides**.

In most cases, you'd probably never need them because you're just trimming off the minimum as you finish raw edges inside your garments. Right?

Though some patterns do give a huge seam allowance, and you might not need that much in the seams.

That's when these markings come in handy - you can trim off any excess fabric evenly while overlocking.

Two tasks done in one easy step - fast too!

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If you're Upgrading

(and short on time)

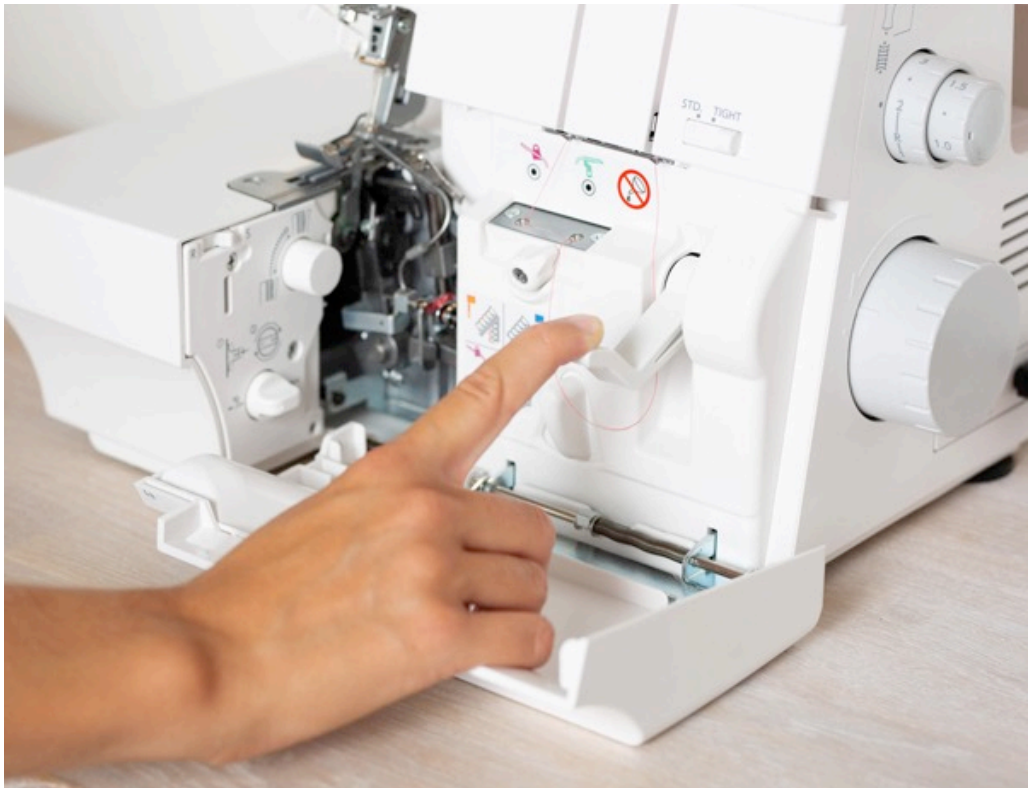
What features to look for

- Auto Threading
- Differential Feed
- Consider Your Space

See Example Models

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Consider Your Time...



How much available time do you have for sewing?

Do you need to squeeze as much work done as possible in your sewing sessions? Or, do you have all the time in the world and sewing is what you enjoy doing as a pastime?

If your sewing time is limited, consider investing in a machine that may cost more upfront, but ultimately cuts down the time you spend on re-threading - each time you change thread colour / thread type.

The latest technology utilised compressed air to assist in lower looper threading - which is where most people have trouble and normally takes the most amount of time (that you don't have).

Choosing **an overlocker with air-threading ability** is possibly the smartest decision to save time & frustration. It pays to get your time back.

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Can Threading Be Even Easier?

Yes, definitely!

If threading an overlocker scares the bejesus out of you - and that's the *only* reason that stops you from getting a much-needed machine, consider getting an **air-threading overlocker**.

How Does Air Threading Work??

Typically, it's threading the lower loopers that causes the most headaches for overlocker users. So here's a clever system that sucks the thread through, at the pull of a lever. No more headaches :-)

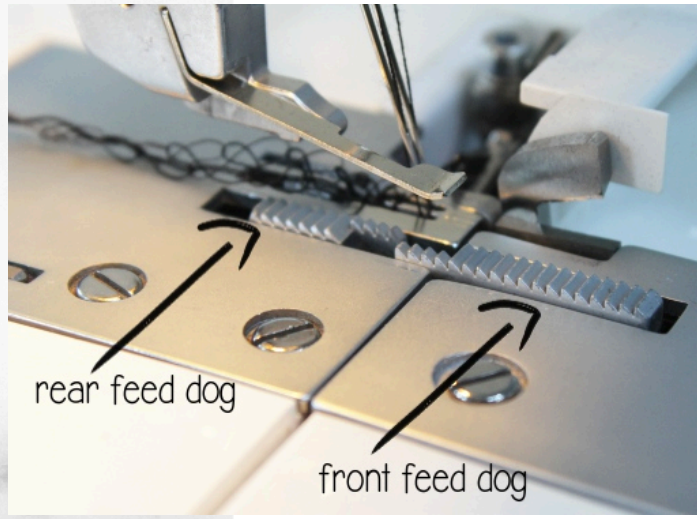
Watch the video above to see exactly how long it takes to thread.

While they're at it, threading the overlocker needles are also made easier with a built-in needle threader - which has always been available for sewing machines, but never for an overlocker. **Until now.**

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Differential Feed - what's that?

Look at your overlocker needle plate, you'll notice two independent sets of feed dogs: one front, the other one rear.

Each one has an individual feed mechanism: they can feed the fabric at the same speed, OR at a different ratio - depending on your needs.

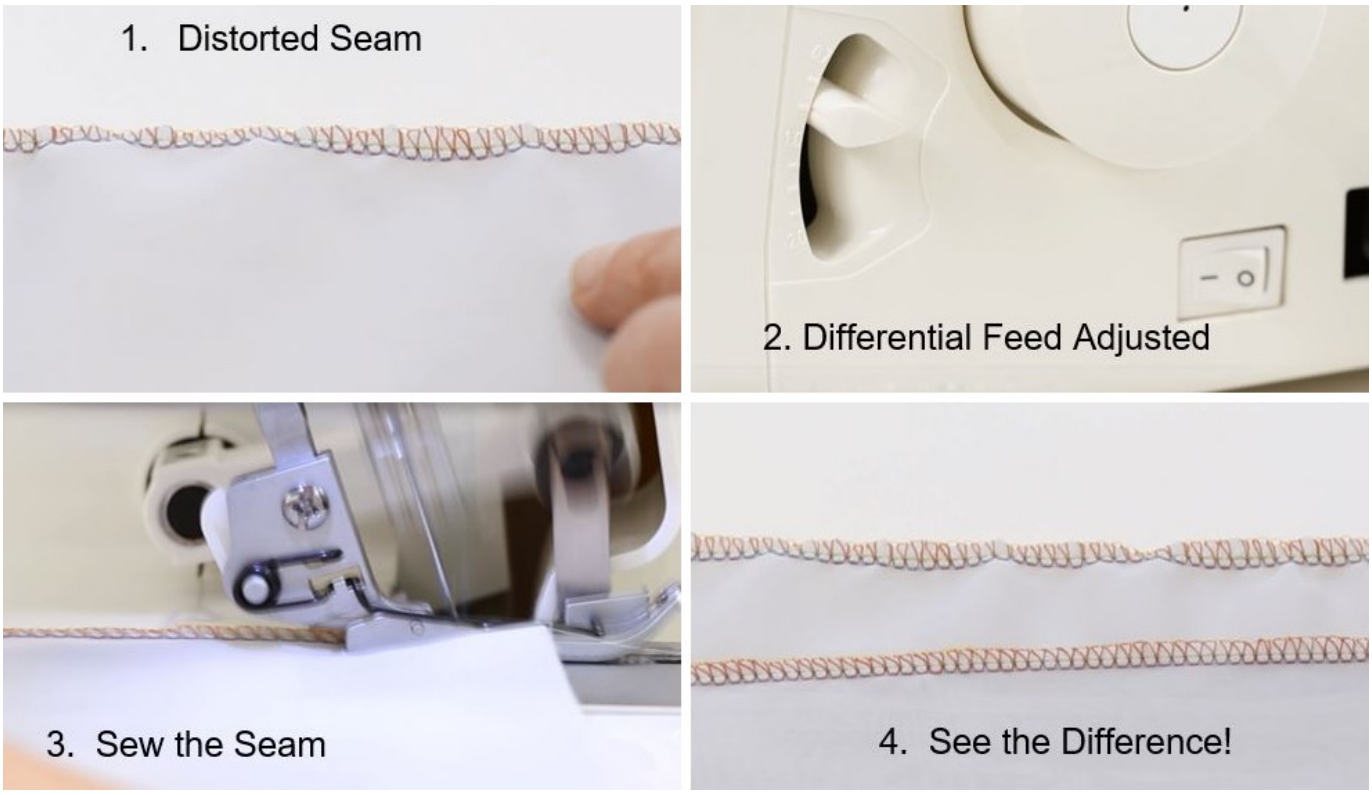
The differential feed knob/lever has a scale that goes from 0.5 to 2.2. You sew on 1.0 normally.

In short, 1.0 = Neutral, >1.0 = Easing (for knits), <1.0 = Stretching (for sheers).

- From 0.5 to 1.0 (negative differential feed) the front feed dog moves less than the rear feed dog, tightening / stretching the fabric under the presser foot to offset puckering.
- 1.0 (sometimes labeled as N - neutral differential feed) both feed dogs walks at the same speed - like walking foot for quilting.
- From 1.0 to 2.2 (positive differential feed) the front feed dog moves more than the rear feed dog, ease / gather the fabric under the foot to avoid over-stretching.

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Differential Feed – why do I need it?



For most sewing, you can leave the differential feed dial at 1.0 (neutral setting).

But when your fabrics are distorting or puckering, your **differential feed can help** you fix it - by changing the way the fabric is fed through - **that's why you need it!**

We know there are two sets of feed dogs – one in front and one in back (see previous page). The differential feed controls whether the feed dogs move in-sync, or differently - aptly named "differential feed.

Remember: 1.0 = Neutral, >1.0 = Easing (for knits), <1.0 = Stretching (for sheers).

For seams and hems on stretchy / knit fabrics that get distorted out of shape, set your differential feed dial >1.0 toward the larger number setting to ease it.

For seams and hems on sheer or very lightweight fabrics that tend to "pucker", adjust the differential feed dial <1.0 toward a lower number setting to tighten it.

Exactly where to set it depends on the type and thickness of fabric, so experiment on a scrap fabric to determine the best setting for the fabric you are sewing, and always remember to change the setting when you change fabric!

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Rolled Hem

One-Step Convert - No Plate Change

Most decent overlockers these days can sew a **rolled hem stitch**. Be sure to choose a model that converts an overlock stitch to a rolled hem stitch **without the fiddly needs of plate change**!

The rolled hem stitch is suitable for light weight fabrics such as voile, organdie, crepe etc.

The stitch length adjustment is critical to the finished look of the rolled hem stitch. If the stitch length is too short, the stitching may fall off the edge or it may be too heavy for lightweight fabrics, causing a stiffer edge; if too long the fabric may pucker.

Start with a standard 3 thread overlock stitch before adjusting tension for a three thread rolled hem.

Adjust stitch length to under 1mm for a filled-in edge finish that's heavier; adjust stitch length up to 2mm for a softer edge finish that is less filled-in.

Tighten lower looper thread tension dial to about 7. Then gradually increase the lower looper until you achieve the desired look. This means the upper looper thread is pulled around the edge of the fabric to the underside for a rounded rolled hem.

Loosen upper looper thread tension dial in addition to tightening the lower looper thread tension dial for flat, less-rounded, rolled hem, or if you are using a woolly nylon thread.

Loosen needle thread tension dial slightly if the fabric puckers length-wise, or stitch using taut sewing.

For taut sewing, hold the fabric firmly in front of and behind the presser foot while stitching, to prevent puckered seams. Do not pull the fabric through the machine. Sew at an even speed for smooth stitching.

For a more sculptural look, insert wire or fishing line between presser foot and knife as you sew. This can be done easily with a cording foot (see page xx).

NOTE: For best rolled hem results, thread the upper looper with woolly nylon and the needle and lower looper with lightweight regular thread. This will give a beautiful, more filled-in look (see circle insert above).

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Consider Your Space...

Your new overlocker has its own footprint, and will take up some room - most likely next to your sewing machine.

Do you have a dedicated space for BOTH machines to take up permanent residence? Or, do you need to rotate them, and just use one machine at a time?

Of course, the most ideal situation would be to have plenty of room for all THREE machines: sewing machine, overlocker, and coverstitch machine - sitting side by side.

If you want to save room, consider getting **an overlocker / overstitch combination**. These machines are slightly more complex, though perfect if you only have space to comfortably fit TWO machines.

Whatever you do, make sure you have enough room to sew!

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If you sew
Professionally
(with a healthy budget)

What features to look for

- Best in Class
- Fast & Reliable
- Maximum Capability

See Example Models

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Consider Your Intension...



What are your plans? Think about how much overlocking or coverstitch you're going to do.

If you intend to take on a lot of projects in knit fabric - especially in activewear... If you intend to run a small business, then definitely consider an overlocker AND an overstitch machine each - to sit along side your sewing machine.

This is the most efficient way so that you can have them all set up perfectly for your project at hand, and just hop between machines as if running a small production.

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Your ideal overlocker should cover these

Stitch Types



4 THREAD OVERLOCK SAFETY STITCH

The stitch employs both needles and stretches without breaking. Excellent for sewing knits, t-shirts and loose fitting woven garments.



3 THREAD OVERLOCK STADARD

Popular for garment construction on medium to heavyweight fabric. Generally used as an edge finish on single layers of fabric.



3 THREAD OVERLOCK NARROW

Same pattern as the standard overlock, but with narrower width. Commonly used for garment construction and lingerie with light to medium weight fabrics.



2 THREAD OVERCAST

The needle and lower looper threads form an edge finish that is lightweight and flat. Often used as an open seam edge on lightweight fabrics.



3 THREAD ROLLED HEM

Excellent for hemming on medium to lightweight single layer fabrics, on scarves, napkins and ruffles. It can also be used to create decorative pin-tucks.



2 THREAD ROLLED HEM

Since there are only 2 threads, the result is lighter & finer than the 3 thread version. This is suitable for fabrics like chiffon and also used for bridal veil edging.



3 THREAD PICOT EDGE

Hem finish with a slightly scalloped appearance, used to hem sheers and lightweight delicate fabrics. Works well on batiste, cotton voile, lawn, chiffon, georgette and fine knits. Excellent for finishing scarves handkerchiefs & pocket squares!



3 THREAD LETTUCE LEAF EDGE

A popular decorative wavy edging on stretch fabric using the differential feed. Can be used for more dramatic curves with a nylon cord encased. The differential feed controls the speed of fabric which can either be stretched to create more wave or eased to remove puckers.



FLATLOCK 3 & 2 THREAD

3 thread is perfect for joining fleece / knit fabrics. Can also be used as a decorative accent with heavier threads to resemble the top cover stitch seen on sportswear. 2 thread is ideal for joining lace to silk on lingerie. The reverse side looks like a ladder stitch.

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Safety Stitch

What is it?
Does Your Machine Have It?



The safety stitch is strong enough to hold seams that endures wear & tear, because it stretches without breaking.

Done with a 4-thread overlocker - a safety stitch consists of two rows of stitching in your fabric while the looper threads wrap the edge.

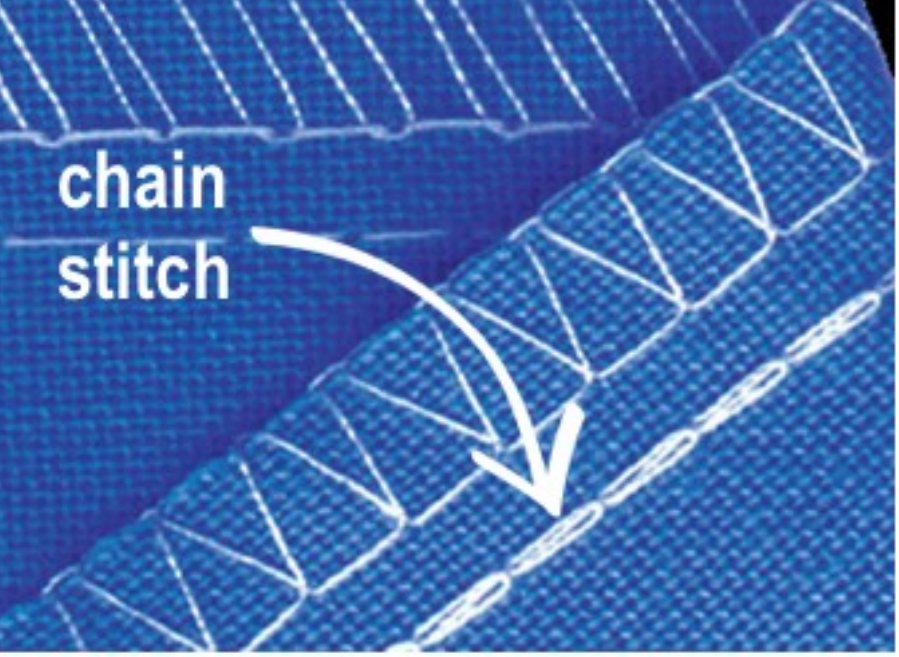
When you need flexibility in a seam, as well as durability, safety stitch is your best friend - especially used on medium to heavy weight fabrics, or on seams that see a bit of stress, such as on fitted garments.

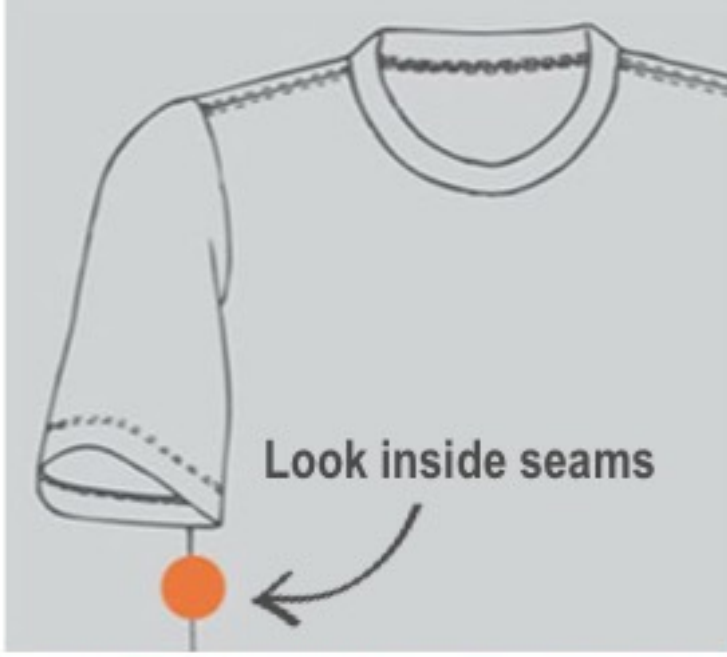
The safety stitch is an important feature for an overlockers - so be sure to look for it when choosing a machine!

View Examples



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Construct Garments

with overlocker alone - is it possible?



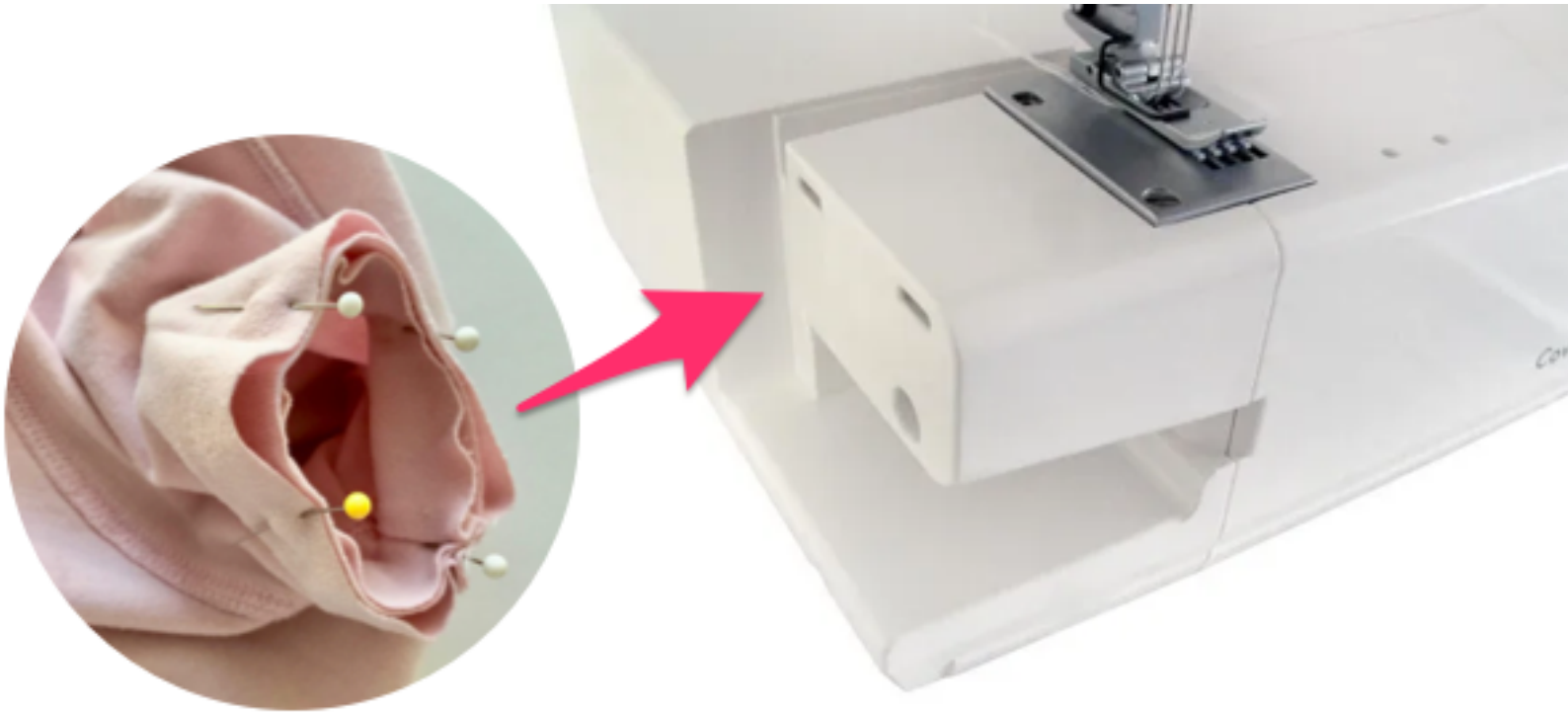
Technically - you could. But it's better to let your sewing machine help. Here's why...

In many cases, you might need the **seams pressed open**. This is where you sew the seam first with sewing machine before overlocking.

Commercially made garments are often done with a **5-thread machine**, which gives an extra row of chain stitch for **durability**. It's easy to achieve this by **simply stitch your seams with a sewing machine first**. This will ensure a strong seam that withstands wash & wear.

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Free Arm - with or without?





If your sewing machine has free-arm, you'd know that it comes in very handy for setting in sleeves & cuffs - especially for little garments!

While free-arm may not be a feature for all overlockers or overstitch machines, some models do have it.

If not, you can always use the flat-bed method, commonly used for garment productions on industrial machines - simply join the sleeves flat at the armholes, hem the cuffs, and sew up the side seam last. Fast and easy!

View Free Arm Example

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Best of the Best

When you've finally decided to turn your passion into a profession, consider investing in separate machines that are set up for handling the task they are designed to perform.

Next to your sewing machine, you'd ideally have an air-thread overlocker, and a good coverstitch machine ready to go.

Your might be surprised to learn that you don't need to go the extra expense for an all-industrial set up - in most cases decent domestic machines these days are better suited to a small boutique business. **Just remember: Buy Well, Buy Once.**

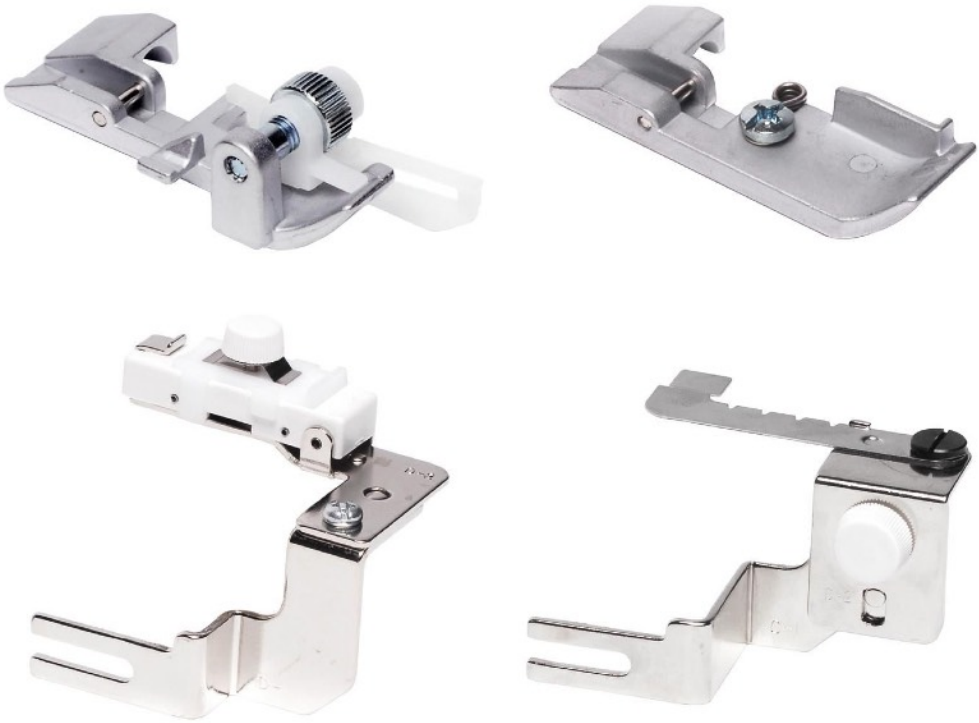


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Nice Extra Things To Have

What Extras come with the machine?

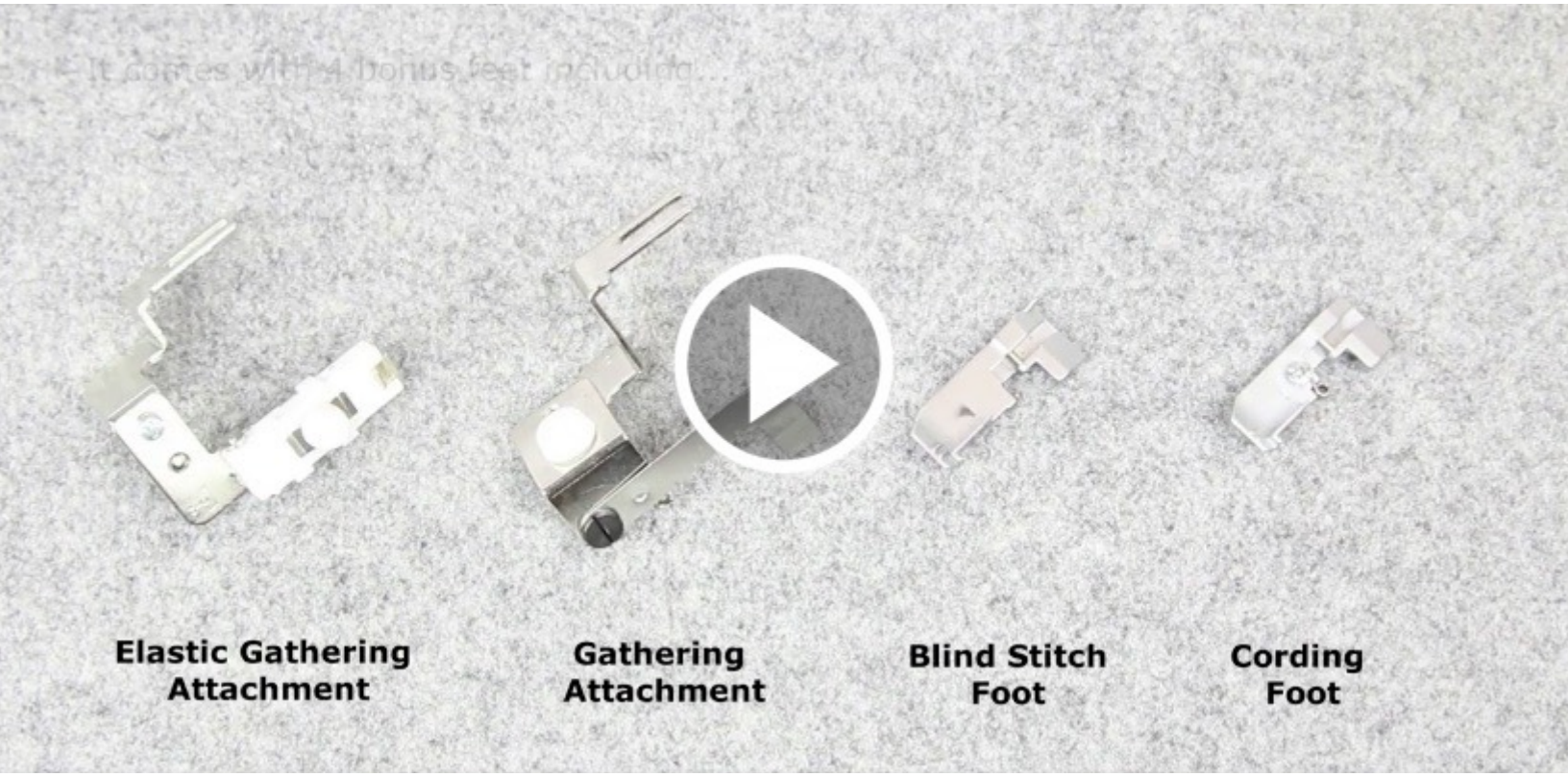


Some overlocker models come with extra attachments.

It's worthwhile to find out what these strange bits & pieces can do - especially if you intend to do gathering, blind hem, cording, attaching elastic (the next few pages will give you more details).

Having said that - you should still FOCUS on the important features you NEED in a machine. Don't get distracted by the extras because you may never use them. It's more important to get the right machine NOW. You can always get any additional feet as you need them later.

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What Do These Things Do?

From time to time, you might come across some overlockers that come with a BONUS deal that includes some extra attachments - these are specialty presser feet for overlockers.

Watch the video above to see the feet in action, for an overview.

Like most people, you might simply need an overlocker for finishing raw edges, and nothing more.

Though some overlockers can help you achieve much more - if you had the right attachments.

The next few pages go through each foot in more details, so you can decide if these are functions you actually need...

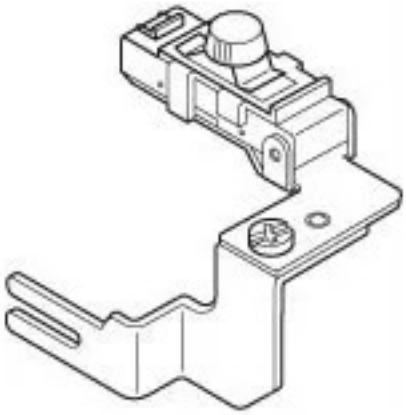
See Example With Bonus Feet

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Elastic Gathering Foot

Optional Extra Part No. 200218102 (BONUS for Janome 544D)



Stitching on elastic can sometimes be a little tricky especially when you have to stretch your elastic to size.

The elastic foot helps make this technique a little easier to handle.

Best results with light-weight fabrics, the gathering foot will allow you to **gently ease or slightly gather** fabric while stitching on elastic at the same time. Perfect for neckline, waist bands, and sleeve cuffs.

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Gathering Attachment

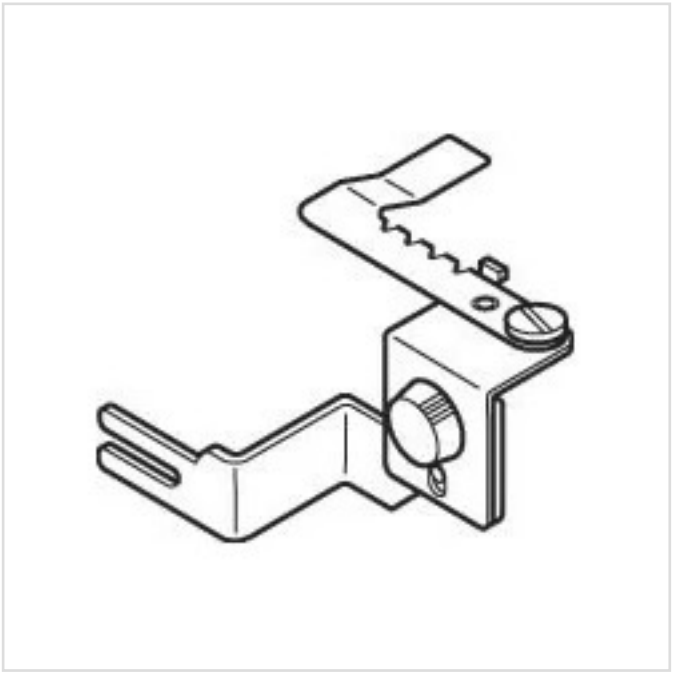
Optional Extra Part No. 200217101 (BONUS for Janome 544D)

This gathering attachment creates wonderful even gathers in a fast and easy way - with your overlocker.

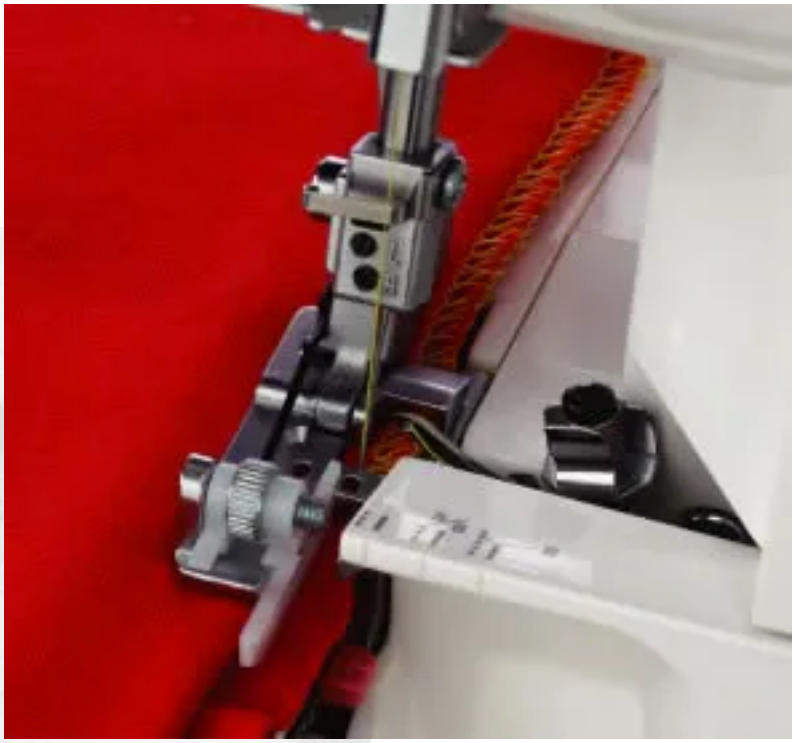
Best results with light-weight fabrics, it allows you to gather fabric to add soft, slight fullness for various garment and home decorating projects.

Especially useful when sewing large amounts of fabric, i.e. bed linens, and bridal gowns.

With the help of this super attachment you can also gather and sew onto a flat piece of fabric in ONE easy operation.

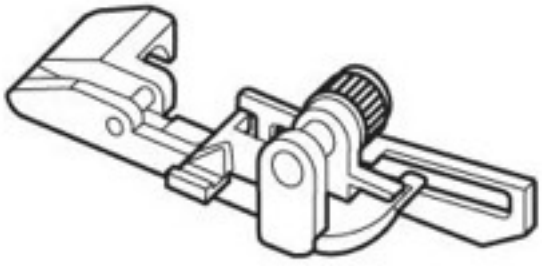


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Blind Stitch Foot

Optional Extra Part No. 200203104 (BONUS for Janome 544D)



Blind hemming is never an easy technique and demands practice and patience.

Using this foot ensures your blind hem is always neat and almost invisible without having to painstakingly hand finish your garments – because hand sewing takes time that most of us do not have!

Instead, you can use your overlocker to blind hem - this blind stitch foot is equipped with a guide to help keep your stitching straight.

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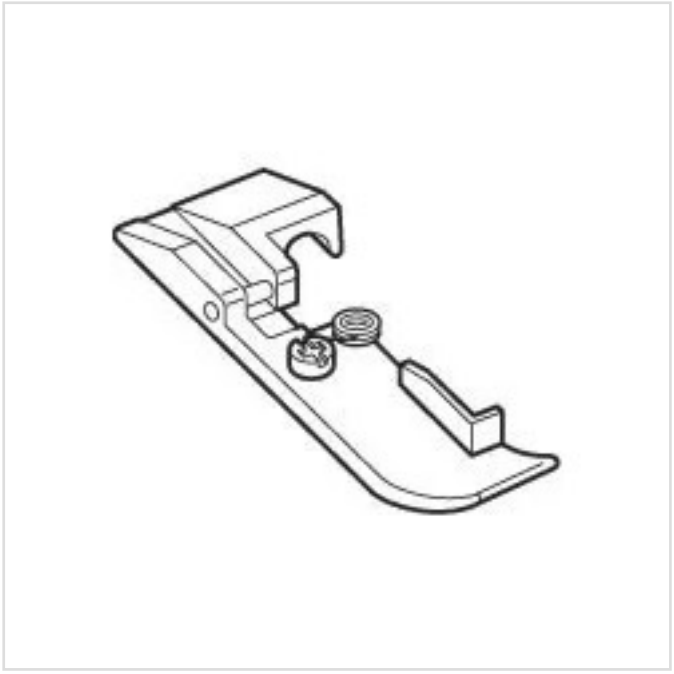


Cording Foot

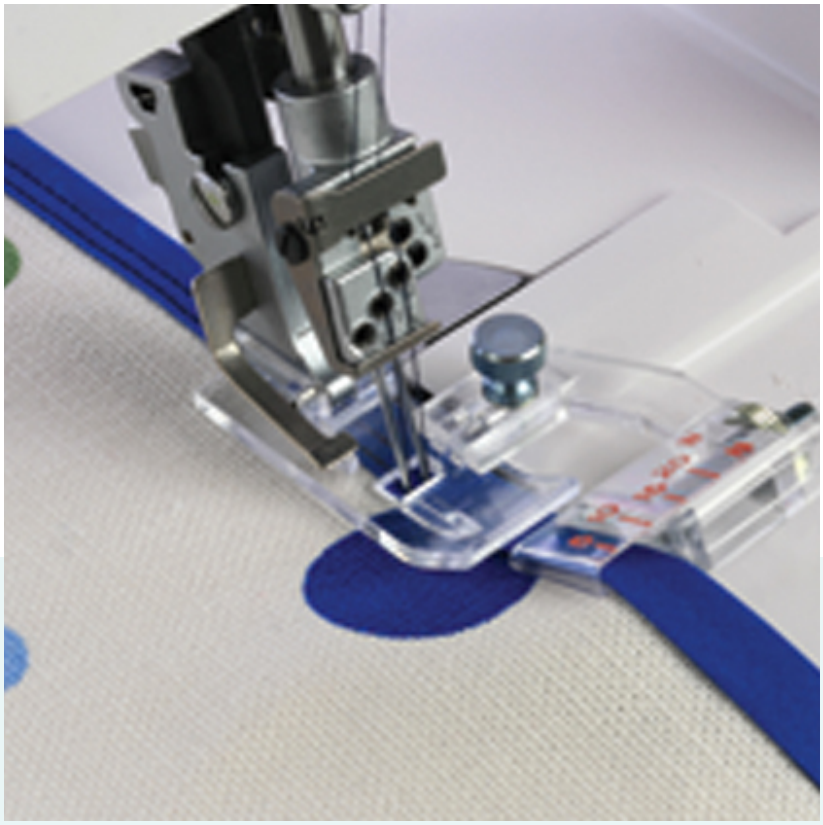
Optional Extra Part No. 200208109 (BONUS for Janome 544D)

Unlike the cording foot for sewing machines, this particular cording foot is made for an overlocker, and it is used in conjunction with the narrow hem setting of your overlocker.

This foot allows you to insert decorative cording or clear fishing wire as you stitch on the edges. One of the best example is the fluted edges of bridal tulles or dance costumes - a must if you intend to work in evening wear!



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Adjustable Bias Binder Foot

Optional Extra Part No. 200810100 for Janome 1200D

This adjustable foot allows you to attach 10mm to 40mm wide pre-folded bias binding but you only need to stitch it ONCE - which means it's faster and easier compare to traditional binding methods

Perfect for binding curves like armholes and necklines - works best with lightweight or medium weight fabric edge using **Chainstitch** - so make sure the machine has it.

Using this foot ensures your binding is always neat and professional-looking; without any hand tacking or excessive pinning. Happy days!

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Scrap Bin / Waste Tray

Overlocking can be messy - because the machine trims the fraying bits on the edge of your fabric as you go...

So consider this: **would the debris drive you nuts?**

If you answer "YES", then make sure you choose a model that provides a detachable dust bin to collect the trim-off. Sometimes these little bins double up as storage boxes.

If your overlocker doesn't have such thing, then consider getting a separate "overlock tidy". Or make your own!

View Examples



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Does it come with a cover?



Surprisingly - most overlockers don't come with any covers.

Sometimes there might be a soft cover, but that's about it. A hard cover like they ones that come with sewing machines are as rare as hen's teeth.

So chances are, making a fabric cover for your new overlocker just might be your first project :-)

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Good To Know



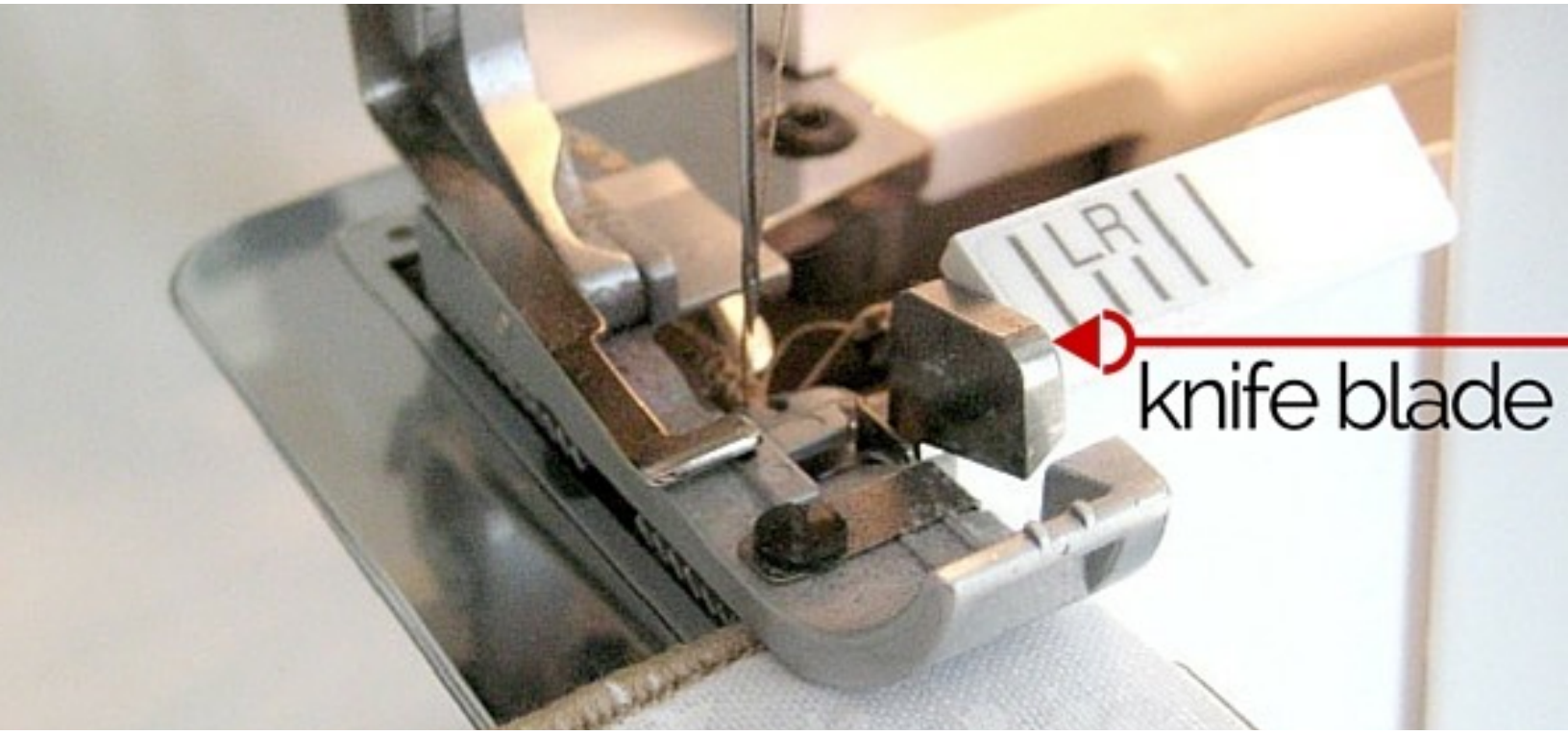
If you were to ask me just one thing...

Over the next pages, I'm going to share a few **insider's snippets,** as well as clearing up some common misconceptions about sewing machines for you.

In case your question hasn't been covered so far, you might find it in this section. If not, simply send me a quick email and ask away :-)

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Watch out for the pins!





Sewing over pins is something we ALL know not to do, except we've all done it - more often than you and I would ever admit. Right?

Well, let's NOT do that when we're overlocking.

Because there's a knife blade. And you definitely don't want to find out what happens when the knife blade runs into that forgotten pin. Which means...

Remember to remove pins when you're sewing.

Better still - use an awl to guide your fabric through. It gives you precise control and your overlocker blade will thank you!

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Clean Your Machine. Frequently.



It's important to clean your overlocker more frequently than your sewing machine. Why?

Because your overlocker is cutting fabric while sewing, it ends up collecting a lot more lint and dust than your sewing machine. Don't let them build up.

Most machine's come with a small lint brush you can use to keep it clean and tidy.

In addition to brushing, you can also use tweezers to remove lint from tricky spots.

Think twice about using compressed air though, because it can force lint back into places that are harder to clean.

The fuzz shown above is only from 2 small woven projects so you can imagine just how quickly debris builds up in there.

Just like your car, you'll want to get your overlocker professionally serviced about once a year along with your sewing machine - so they will run smoother and you'll get more years out of your investments!

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Use Only Good Thread

Not all threads are created equal. Avoid cheap thread at all cost, because the lower the price, the shorter the fibre - which means cheap threads are less strong, and tend to give a LOT of lint.

Since your overlocker collects a lot of lint from trimming already - the last thing you need is a thread that sheds & gunks up the machine.

Take a closer look at the above image, comparing two different quality.

The good thread on the left has a nice sheen on the cone compares to the cone on the right. You can see the good thread is smoother, stronger, with an even texture - which will give you better results.

Because good quality threads have a smooth, even finish that passes easily through your machine's tension discs with minimal friction.

You'll get much better tension without having to fiddle with the default settings. Saving time and headaches!

High quality threads also give less lint which means your machine stays cleaner!

Remember - a smooth, even thread is also stronger. This is especially important if you're using the overlocker to put your garment together.

View Example

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Matching Thread Colours

Let's break the myth once and for all...

Your overlocker thread does NOT need to match your fabric perfectly.

Think about the practicality: it's easy to spend an arm and a leg on FOUR cones of matching thread, each time you use a different fabric. Would you even have room to store them all?

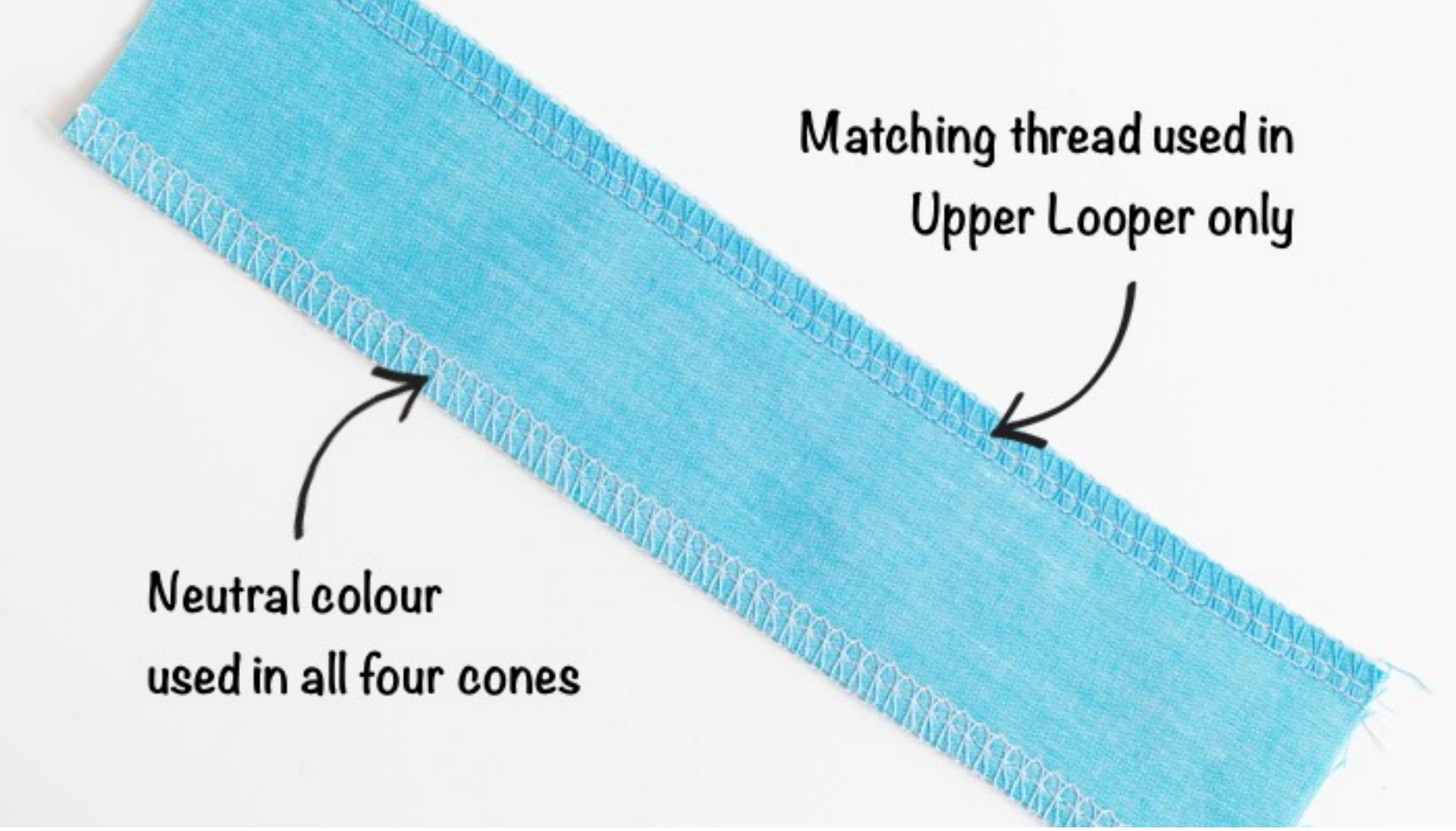
Instead, keep a few neutral shades on hand and choose them to match the tonal value of your fabric.

Consider keeping these on hand: white, natural, soft grey, and black.

Hot Tip:

If you're not sure what shade / tonal value is the best match for your fabric, take a photo of it in black and white and choose what blends in best!

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If you must match colour...

Ok, some project really DO demand matching thread colour. Besides, even though overlocking is almost always on the inside, YOU would know if things don't match.

Rather than buying 4 cones of an odd colour you might never use again, purchase just ONE specialty colour to match your fabric and use neutral colours in tonal values for the other three cones.

Use your matching colour thread ONLY the upper looper of your machine and thread the rest with your neutral threads.

Because the other three threads tend to blend in with your fabric, they will barely show while the top side of your seam allowance will match perfectly!

You can see how effective this is in the above photo.

Like good sewing machine thread, high quality overlocker thread isn't cheap, so this is a great trick to save money while still having the insides of your garment look as amazing as the outsides. Happy days!

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Rotate Your Spools

Why would you do that, you asked?

Because your thread spools won't run out at the same rate.

Not all spools get used evenly. Your upper looper in the uses the most thread, followed by the lower looper.

To make sure you run out of all 4 cones at approximately the same time, simply rotate your cones occasionally, switching the needle cones with the looper cones.

This should help prevent you from having to run out of thread unexpectedly, and left with a few annoying odd cones here and there!

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Japanese vs. European

The sewing machine world is surprisingly similar to the car industry - largely made up of Japanese & European Makes and Models.

The main difference relates to sourcing **spare parts** and **accessories**.

Generally, parts for European Makes are harder to source and cost more compare to Japanese Makes - which are often widely available with **more affordable options** in universal parts. See? Not so different to cars :-)

Notable Brands

Notable Japanese Makes are **Janome** (who also owns **Elna** & New Home), **Brother Group** (they also makes a lot of **BabyLock** machines & printers / copiers etc), and **Toyota Group** (better known for making cars) that owns **Juki** and **Necchi** (which was originally Italian).

Best known European Make is **Bernina**, followed by **Husqvarna Viking** and **Pfaff** (both owned by SVP Group - a multi-national corporation that also owns White and Singer).

So what about **Singer**? Is it a European or Japanese Make?

Today's Singer are mostly made in China, by the Feiyue Group. The current models are physically identical to Japanese Makes, which means parts and accessories are easier to come by compared to vintage Singers.

Here's a more complete list in Wiki - many brands listed no longer exist today.

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You might not know this - but...

Where Is Your Machine Made?



<u>Fact:</u> Country of Origin is important, but Factory Ownership matters even more.

None of the notable brands are made in the "West" these days - apart from Bernina, which are still made in Switzerland, with prestigious prices to match.

For the rest of the world, BEST machines are **still made in Japan**, with Taiwan as the next best option.

Did you know...

Janome is **one of only two** remaining sewing machine brands in the world that are still owned by the original founding family?

While the original treadle machine (that we all love) was made famous by Singer, the Singer Corporation today is no longer under the original inventor.

It is now part of SVP Worldwide - a multi-national which also owns the Pfaff and Husqvarna Viking brands. They compete for chain store shelf space & price point with other brands like Brother.

The Truth is - Most sewing machine companies today no longer take care of their own manufacturing.

Because many brands are owned by multi-nationals - who get machines made in Vietnam, China & Brazil.

Janome is one of the exceptions.

They still insist on making machines from their own three factories (in Japan, Taiwan, & Thailand) where they **keep their trade secret & quality integrity** intact - instead of "farming out" the manufacturing to anonymous factories like most other brands.

Every 2nd sewing machine sold in Australia is a Janome. That makes Janome *the* **most popular brand loved by Aussies.**

Full Disclosure: I know more about Janome because I stock them at my store. I do this because Janome provides the BEST service in Australia with the least amount of warranty issues. My opinion is based on positive real-life experience, which I hope you can enjoy too.

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A few things to know....

About Your Warranty







Sewing machine companies don't deal directly with the public. Instead, they expect your original sellers to look after you for any warranty claims. So keep your purchase record and **remember who you bought the machine from** - they are your first point of contact.

Your warranty right is covered within Australian Consumer Laws, and your seller WILL be required to looked after you - regardless whether you register your details on the manufacturer's website or not.

Because warranty registration is simply for data collection - so that the sewing machine companies know who their consumers are. That's all.

A responsible seller will always keep your full sales record, and they will be happy to help you directly - just contact them whenever you need.

The length of warranty vary between brands.

You can generally expect a one or two year of full coverage for manufacturing issues, and up to 5 years for "electronics" which basically means computer components like a motherboard (which isn't applicable in all models. Mechanical model won't have such thing, for example).

Remember to keep your box and inner packaging, in case your machine needs to be sent away to "see a doctor". It's essential to protect your machine in transit and nothing beats the original packaging.

In the same way that you'd service your car, make sure your machine is regularly serviced, too.

Regular services aren't part of warranty and you're free to choose a trustworthy mechanic near you.

Look After Your Machine.... And let it look after YOU!

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Where to Buy?

More to the point - WHO to buy from...?



Now that you've probably decided what model you'd like to buy. **But where to buy from?**

Sure, if there's a chain store near you, it might seem easy to pop in and grab one. Though you'd probably discover two things (1) they don't have what you want (2) the staff know less about sewing than you do.

How's the shopping experience so far? How well do you think they'd look after you should you need help down the track?

Instead, find an independent sewing specialty store - either online or physical. Because when you support a small business, they support you.

These days it's easy to shop around and compare prices online - things have become **a lot more transparent**, and that's good news for you.

Though it's always a great idea to call or email a few sellers beforehand, to see who **you feel most comfortable** with.

Your sewing machine from **a reputable company** is bound to last you a long time - and same goes for your relationship with the person you buy from.

A caring business with expertise will to **take good care of YOU and your sewing needs** for years to come. Say hello today :-)

Want to know who we are...?

About Us

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Hello, I'm Shelley

I confess that I'm a **fabric** addict. I love nothing more than geeking out over the ins-and-outs of **sewing machines** - and all the bits that come with it. **Presser Feet** are my specialty :-)

I've been sharing my passion of sewing all my life - with a career in fashion design and patchwork teaching. Now **I serve fellow sewist** everywhere. We deliver curated sewing goodies to your door and help **celebrate your joy** in the simple act of making something by hand.

Because **We're Here for YOU** and your sewing needs.

- **Here's a quick tour Behind the Scene at Sew Much Easier:**
  www.sewmucheasier.com/behind-the-scene-tour

- **Here's a story about how sewing help get my life back:**
  www.sewmucheasier.com/good-bye-career-hello-life

- **If you're ready to treat yourself with some sewing goodies, take a look here:**
  www.sewmucheasier.com/products

Or, simply pick up the phone and call **1300 88 11 59** (we're in Australia).

Let's be friends, and **Happy Sewing!**

Shelley

xoxox



Thank You.

At **Sew Much Easier**, we have ONE intention - **to help you SEW... much easier!**

We stock only a handful of curated sewing goodies - hand picked and tested ourselves - before we decide whether or not they make it on the website. Because we're only interested in handing over what YOU would be happy with. **I'm here to make YOUR day :-)**

So, How can I Help You Sew Easier Today?

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