
Machine Sewing: Needle and Thread Basics with Liesl Gibson

Chapter 1 - Introduction

Overview

(upbeat music) - There's more to picking out thread for your project than just matching the color. You can choose from a variety of threads and sewing machine needles, depending on the project that you're making. (upbeat music)

Chapter 2 - Needle and Thread Basics

Needle and Thread Basics

(cheerful music) - [Instructor] There are lots of different types of threads. And that includes different thicknesses, and different purposes that those threads can serve. ^The general principle for selecting thread is, ^you want the thread to be a little bit weaker ^than the fabric itself, ^because, it's a lot easier to repair a torn seam, than it is to repair a torn fabric. For general sewing however, I like to stick with mercerized cotton. Mercerization is a process that singes all the extra hairs off the edge of the cotton, and makes it a nice, shiny thread. And then, if I need something a little bit stronger, for example, if I'm sewing knits, and need the knit to be able to stretch, without breaking the thread, I will go with an all purpose thread, which is a polyester, cotton blend. There are top stitching threads, which are thicker and heavier, embroidery threads, metallic threads, which will give your embroidery a special sheen to it. There's quilting threads, both for machine patchwork, as well as for hand-quilting. So, lots of different things to choose from, ^but in general, I like the cotton and ^the poly-cotton, or all purpose thread. When you get into sewing machine needles, the top part is called the shank. And if you look at a needle up close, you'll see that it's almost all round, except for one flat part. And the flat part is the back of the needle. So when you insert the needle into your machine, be sure that that flat part is in the back of the machine. And that will help you get it in properly. And you'll also notice, there's a groove, that runs right down the front of the needle. And the thread will travel down that groove, and into the eye, the hole of the needle. And then, the very bottom of the needle is the point. ^The smaller the number on the needle, ^the finer the needle itself is. An all purpose needle tends to be on the finer side. It's good for most purposes. It has a sharp point. So, it's great for sewing wovens. ^A lot of people say it's a good idea to change you needle, ^after every project. ^And that way, it's not getting dull ^and snagging your fabric. I like to buy my needles in bulk for exactly that reason, then I remember and I don't feel guilty when I change a needle. You can also get into a lot of specialty needles, like, twin needles, which actually have two needles, attached to one head, that goes into the machine, great for hemming knits, and doing decorative rows of stitching. You can get into wing needles, which have a much wider point to them, which actually opens up the fabric, and allows you to sew decorative hems and things like that. Then, when you get into pins, I like to have three different types of pins. And you can go with an all purpose pin, which is just a satin pin. It's got a metal head. It's nothing fancy. It's terrific if you're going to be fitting muslins and things like that, because it doesn't bend too easily. So, it's a nice, strong, all purpose needle. I also like to have a finer pin, for finer fabrics. Nice to have something that just slides really easily through the fabric, without making a big hole, and without offering much resistance. And then you can also find these really wonderful glass-headed pins. These are great for really delicate fabrics, or if you're doing some patchwork, or something like that, where you want to be lining up seams, very, very, precisely. They're a bit of a luxury item. I don't use

them that often, because they do bend quite easily. So they're not great for say, pinning a muslin, or something like that. ^But they're wonderful to have. ^And they're a real pleasure to use as well.