



ON PINS AND NEEDLES

PIN POINTS

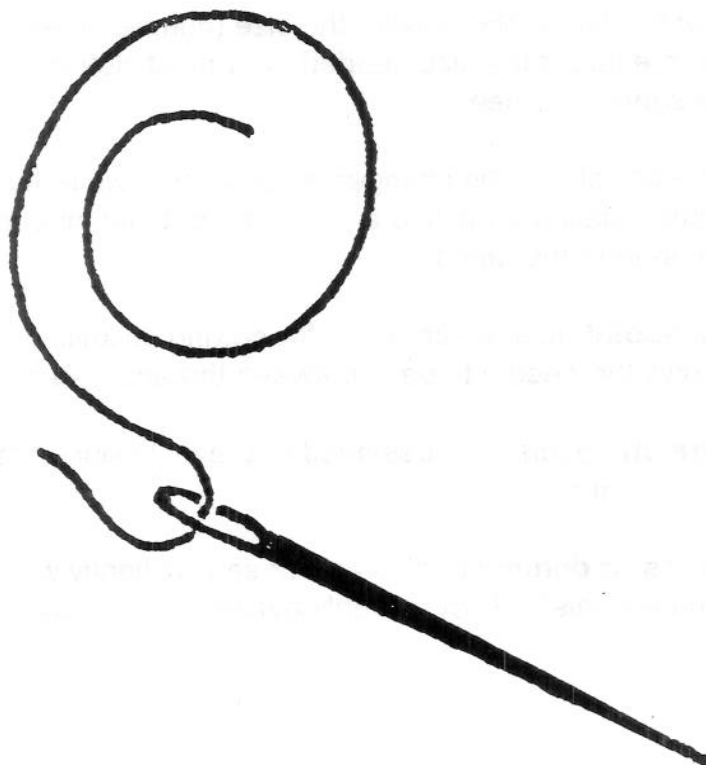
- Pins are sized by their length; each digit equals 1/16 inch, so a size 20 pin is 20/16 inch or 1 1/4 inches long.
- Pins are most commonly made of steel or stainless steel because they are rust resistant. However, if left in fabric where there is high humidity, they can become rusty over time.
- Pin points can become dull or bent. Discard any pins that have dull points or bent ends because they snag the fabric when used.
- Seamster pins are the general all-purpose type and can be found in sizes 16, 17, and 20.
- Silk pins have a smaller diameter and are especially suited to lightly woven, finer fabrics.
- Ball point pins were developed in the 1960s when double knits were popular. The tip is slightly rounded so it will slip between the yarns rather than piercing them. They also work well with most woven fabrics.
- Quilting pins are extra long and are especially helpful with thick fabrics like velvet, terry cloth, velour, fleece, and wool.
- A large plastic pin head makes it easier to insert in the fabric, and if lost, recovery is easier.
- Steel "T" pins are a large, heavy-duty pin that would be used for heavy, tightly woven fabrics, such as canvas or upholstery material.
- Many different types of pins are available, but it is important to select the correct pin for the type of fabric you are using.
- A guideline for pin selection: always use the thinnest pin you can on the fabric you are working with to eliminate the possibility of having pinholes left in the finished garment.



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HAND-SEWING NEEDLE NOTES

- Hand-sewing needles come in sizes from 1 (the coarsest) to 10 (the finest) and in several types to suit different sewing needs. Packaged assortments are available in sizes 3 to 9 and 5 to 10.
- **Sharps** are all-purpose, round-eyed needles of medium length.
- **Between**s are short, round-eyed needles used for very fine sewing.
- **Milliners** are round-eyed, long and slender needles used for basting, hand-shirring, and similar tasks.
- **Crewels** are medium-length needles with long eyes that make threading easy, and they can carry several strands of thread as used for embroidery.
- **Calyx-eyed** needles are open at the top for quick threading.





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MACHINE NEEDLE NOTES

- Machine needles have two sizing systems: European and American. The needles manufactured within the European system are numbered from 60 to 120, with the numbers based on the diameter of the needle. The needles manufactured in the American system are numbered from 8 to 21.
- Some needle packages have both sets of numbers to avoid confusion. The size equivalents most commonly used are:

	American	European	
For light, shear fabrics:	8	60	
	10	70	
For medium weight fabrics:	12	80	
	14	90	
For heavy weight fabrics:	16	100	(Note: These cannot
	18	110	be used in the serger.)
For very heavy weight fabrics:	20	120	

The lighter the fabric, the smaller the size (number) needle you need; the heavier the fabric, the larger the size needed. For most clothing fabrics, sizes 12/80 or 14/90 will serve your needs.

- Needles should be changed after sewing two or three garments or immediately after hitting a pin. A bent, blunt, or burred needle can cause damage to the fabric.
- **Ball-point** needles are used for sewing on knits because the rounded tip allows the needle to pass between threads instead of penetrating them.
- **Stretch** needles are designed to prevent skipped stitches while sewing on stretch fabrics.
- **Jeans or denim** needles are for sewing tightly woven fabrics and fabrics with a heavy finish. They are only available in the larger sizes.



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MACHINE NEEDLE NOTES

- **Wing** needles are designed for decorative hemstitching. They push threads apart, creating a hole in crisp fabrics, such as linen. The needle shaft is like two wings projecting from either side of the eye. They come in larger sizes.
- **Wedge** needles are shaped like a wedge with sharp edges. They are used for sewing leathers and vinyls. The sharp edges cut the fabric and allow the needle to feed through easily.
- **Twin or double** needles are used for decorative sewing, topstitching, and pin tucks. Two needles are mounted on a single shank. They are only available for use with light to medium weight fabrics.
- **Self-threading or handicap** needles are for people who have difficulty threading ordinary needles. The eye has a slot cut on a slant so thread can slide down the needle shaft until it slips into the eye.
- The sewing machine needle is sometimes the source of grievance for the beginning seamster. If you discover you are having any of the following stitching problems, check the needle.

Problem

Fabric snagged
Needle unthreads or thread breaks

Stitches skipped
Stitches cut fibers

Stitches don't form correctly

Cause

Dull or blunt needle
Needle is not correctly placed in machine

Incorrectly placed needle
Standard needle needs to be replaced with ball-point needle
Needle is not correctly placed in machine

- **Inserting a sewing machine needle** requires that you pay particular attention to the direction you place it in the presser bar. The side of the needle with the longest groove always faces toward the thread. This groove provides a place for the thread to rest when it goes down in the needle to the lower thread in the bobbin case for interlocking stitches.