

MACHINE EMBROIDERY

Embroidering by machine opens many doors for unique and creative stitchery. As with most things worthwhile, it takes practice to become proficient, but one can do acceptable work in just a few hours.

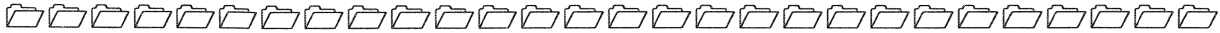
Free machine embroidery is described as decorative machine stitchery where the presser foot is removed and the feed dogs are covered or lowered. The fabric moves freely as directed by the hands. The speed of the machine and direction of the movement determines the stitch length and the decorative effect.

- Preparing Fabric:**
- Transfer design onto fabric with a fabric marker, chalk, or stitch outline.
 - Place non-fusible interfacing (or coffee filter) behind the area to be stitched.
 - Place fabric and interfacing in hoop.

- Using a Hoop:**
- Assemble the hoop with the large circle (the one with the screw adjustment) on the bottom.
 - Place the fabric right side up on top.
 - Push the smaller hoop down into the larger ring.
 - Pull fabric so it is taught; tighten screw.
(You may not be able to use a hoop on very heavy fabric like terry cloth. When possible, the hoop works best.)

- Preparing the Machine for Embroidery:**
- Lower the feed dogs.
 - Remove presser foot and replace with darning or embroidery foot.
 - Use machine embroidery thread for the upper thread; use regular cotton/polyester thread for the bobbin.
 - Place hoop (with fabric) under the darning foot.
 - Pull the bobbin thread to the top of the fabric and lower the presser foot lever. Secure threads by holding both threads and taking a few stitches in the same place. Cut off ends.

Get in the habit of always bringing the bobbin thread to the surface of the fabric before beginning to stitch. Be sure both threads are under the darning foot, not coming up through it. Having both threads on top prevents jamming and snarling on the underside.



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Stitching: ● Sew smoothly, coordinating hand and eye movements.

Since no feeding is being done by the feed dogs, you will need to learn to move the fabric manually as you run the machine. This is where the term "free machine embroidery" comes into being. The stitching (width and length) is controlled by the speed in which you move the fabric under the foot, and the speed of the machine.

Your goal is to run the machine fairly fast. The faster you run the machine, the easier it is to develop accuracy in your embroidery. Practice on sample pieces. Find a comfortable speed and then keep it constant. Develop a rhythm with the motor speed of the machine. However, **DO NOT GUN THE MACHINE**. Also, do not go fast, then slow, then fast again. Erratic speed keeps your hands from developing a constant rhythm with the machine, and the stitching will not be smooth and attractive.

When using a hoop, direct the hoop with little fingers and thumbs outside the hoop; keep other three fingers of both hands firmly pressed against the fabric near the needle. When not using a hoop, fingers must hold fabric firmly against the needle plate. Grasp fabric at the edges.

There is a special thread made specifically for machine embroidery. It is a thinner, finer thread and is not strong enough to be used for regular sewing. For maximum performance, it is recommended that this thread be used. However, threads made from different fibers create different visual effects with the embroidery. Silk and rayon threads will provide more sheen, cotton threads less sheen, etc. Try using several kinds of threads to see the difference, but be sure they are very thin threads to prevent machine jamming. Regular sewing thread (cotton/polyester blend) is used on the bobbin.