

Out of the Box Sewing - For the Beginner

By Janome Maker Milinda Stephenson

So you have a new sewing machine, but aren't quite sure what to do with it! You've just bought your first sewing machine and you cannot wait to get started. The only problem is that you aren't exactly certain how to make your machine move from boxed wonder to your own personal workhorse.

If you have about an hour to spare, you can follow these very simple instructions to gain confidence and actually sew something on your new favorite toy.

Beginning Sewing i: Fun and Fabulous Pillowcase



Supplies:

- Sewing machine
- Sewing machine instruction book
- 26" x 41" quilter's cotton for the pillow case body (3/4 yards of fabric cut to 26" x 41"); 11" x 41" coordinating quilter's cotton for pillow case border (1/3 yard of fabric cut to 11" x 41")
- Matching thread
- Empty bobbin
- Scissors
- Straight pins
- Scrap fabric (a few 8" x 12" pieces of fabric for practicing stitches)

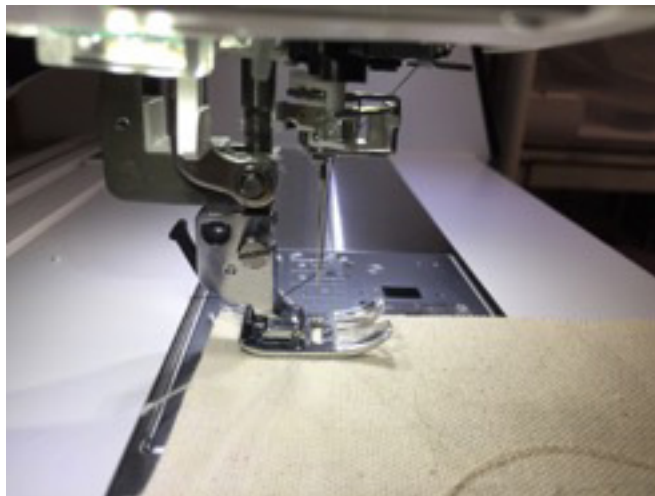
Out of the Box Sewing - For the Beginner

Step 1: Practice Straight and Zig-Zag Stitches

- Using your instruction manual, wind the bobbin with thread that matches sewing thread.
 - Using scrap material of about 8" x 12" (about the size of a standard sheet of paper), practice sewing lines of straight stitching.
1. Begin by **raising the presser foot** and slipping the fabric under the presser foot. Be certain that your fabric is lying about a 1/4" behind and beyond your presser foot so that the fabric doesn't get pulled down into the bobbin area.



2. Now, lower the presser foot.



Out of the Box Sewing - For the Beginner

3. Begin sewing by guiding the fabric with your hands, but be certain not to push or pull the fabric as this can damage your machine. The feed dogs will do the work of pulling the fabric through for you. All you need to do is gently guide it.
4. Sew until you've reached about a 1/4" from the edge. Stop sewing, but keep the presser foot down.
5. You will need to reverse your straight stitch to secure your stitch. Use your instruction manual to find the button or knob that enables you to stitch backwards. Stitch about five stitches back.



6. Raise your presser foot.
7. Pull the fabric to the back of your machine.

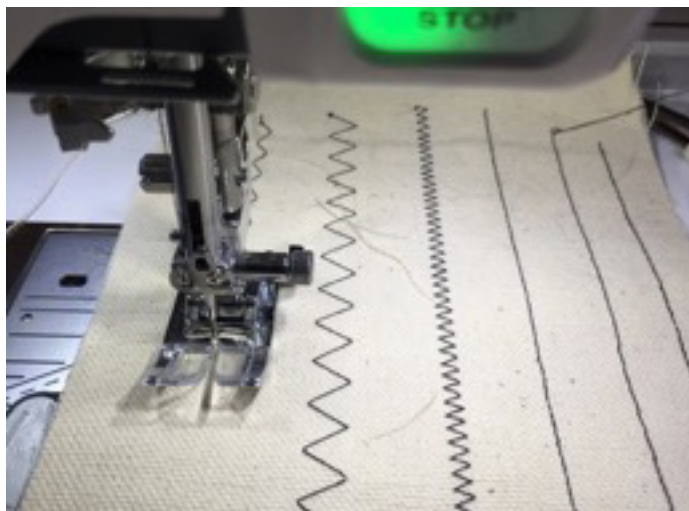


Out of the Box Sewing - For the Beginner

8. Leaving a thread tail a few inches behind your presser foot and from the fabric, clip.



9. Now repeat steps 1-7. Using your instruction manual as your guide, lengthen the stitch length and sew a few lines. Now, shorten the stitch length and do the same.
10. Using your instruction manual as your guide, change your stitch from a straight stitch to a zig-zag stitch. Follow steps 1-7 and play with various stitch lengths and widths.
11. Be certain to re-enforce stitches at the end by backstitching. This is an excellent habit and will keep your future projects from unravelling!



Congratulations! You have mastered the basics of sewing. Now, let's use your new-found skills to sew something useful!

Fun and Fabulous Pillow Case

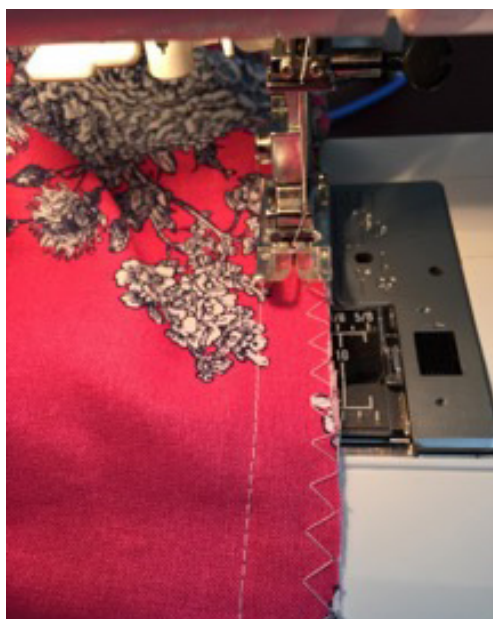
By Milinda Stephenson

Step 1: Fold the border fabric in half, wrong sides together, to 5 1/2" x 41" and then press.

Step 2: Pin the folded border fabric to the right side of the body fabric, matching the 41" raw edges.



Step 3: Sew a 5/8" seam using a straight stitch. Re-enforce the seam with a zig-zag stitch just outside of the straight stitch.

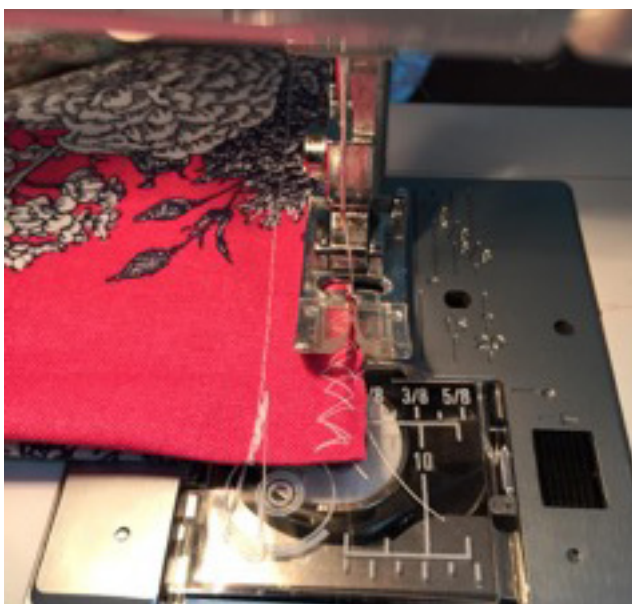


Fun and Fabulous Pillow Case

Step 4: Press and turn the pillowcase to the outside. Topstitch along the outside of your seam, a 1/4" from the seam.



Step 5: Fold the pillow case right sides together. Stitch closed the bottom and sides opening and re-enforce the seams with a zig-zag stitch just outside of the straight stitch. Be certain to backstitch at the edge of the pillowcase opening.



Turn right side out and press.