

## Sewing Basics - A Perfectly Balanced Serged Edge

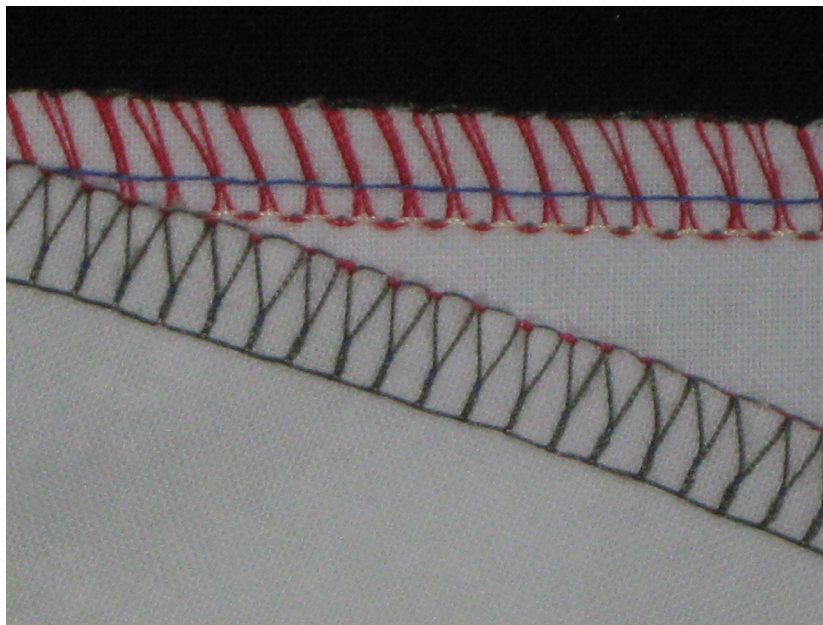
By Nancy Fiedler



A serger can be your best friend. All of your seams will have a clean professional look done in just a blink of the eye. To achieve this look, you just need to understand how to balance the tensions.

Here is a quick and easy tutorial to get you started.

1. The best way to get to know which thread is doing what, thread your serger in four different colors. If you match the thread color to the guides, it becomes even easier.
  - Green - Lower looper
  - Red - Upper looper
  - Blue - Right needle
  - Yellow - Left needle
2. A balanced overcast will lay perfectly flat. The upper and lower looper threads will meet at the edge of the fabric to form the hitch line.

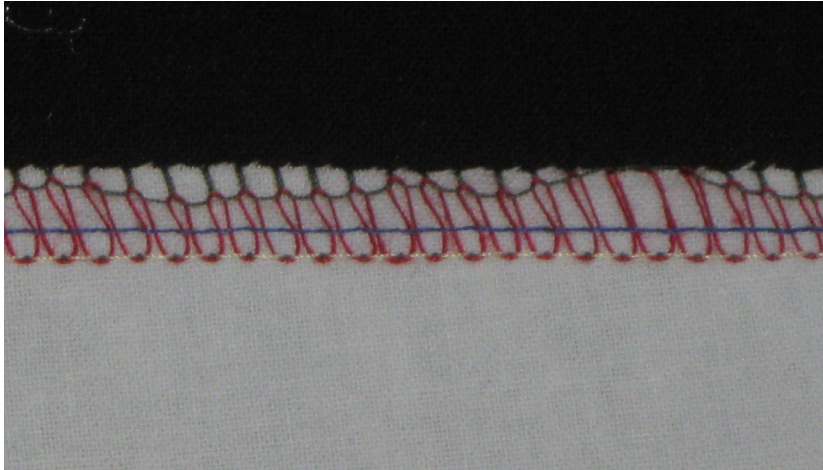


3. The needle threads will lay flat on the top layer of fabric and barely show on the bottom layer.
4. When you open the seam, no thread should show on the right side of the seam.

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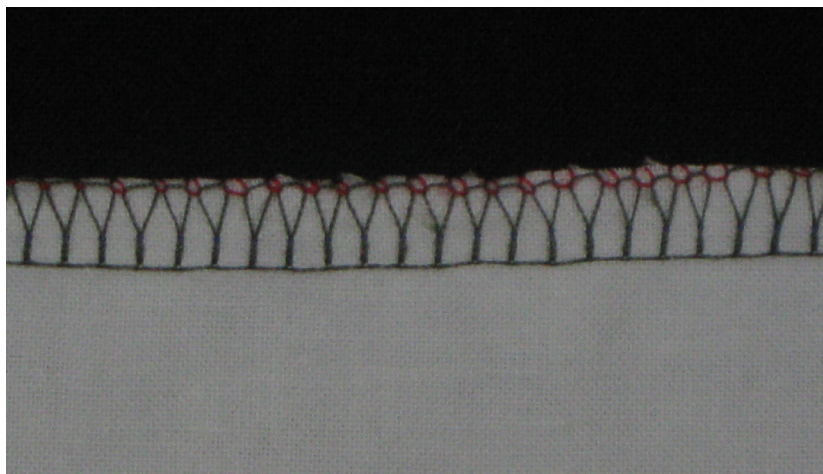
### Trouble Shooting:

**Problem:** Hitch line falling to the front of the seam. The image below indicates the lower looper tension is too loose.



**Fix:** Turn the tension on the lower looper to a higher number by one. Test the seam and if necessary, continue adjusting the tension so that the hitch line falls at the edge of the seam.

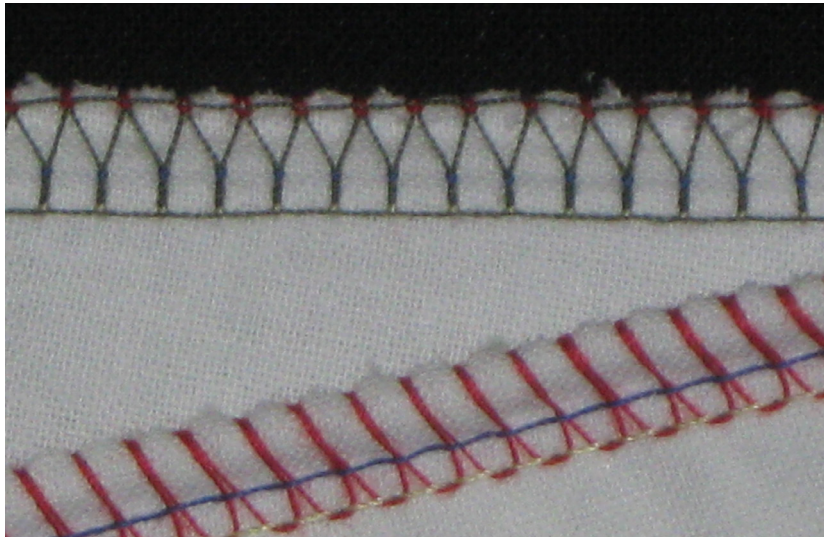
**Problem:** Hitch line is falling to the back of the seam. This indicates that the upper looper tension is too loose.



**Fix:** Turn the tension of the upper looper to a higher number of one. Test the seam and if necessary, continue adjusting the tension so that the hitch line falls at the edge of the seam.

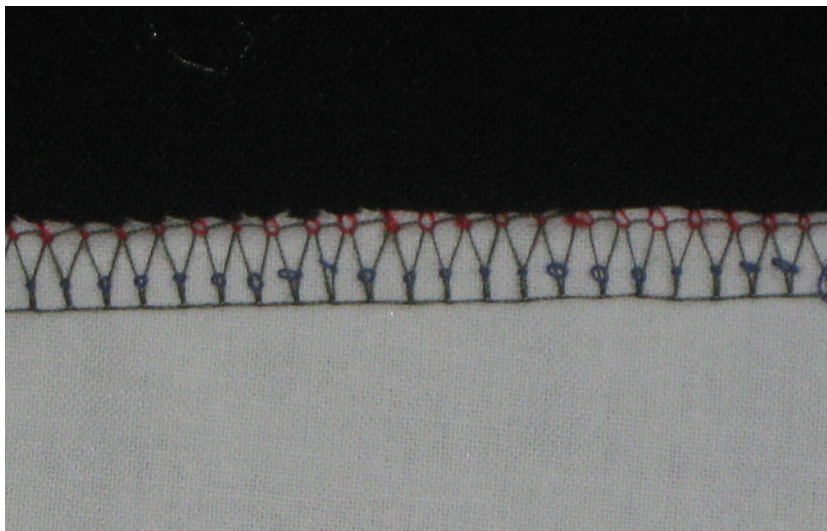
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**Problem:** Seam puckers or cups. This indicates that the tension of one or both loopers is too tight.



**Fix:** Adjusting only one tension at a time, turn the tension of one of the loopers to a lower number by one. Test the seam and then adjust the tension of the second looper. Continue adjusting the tensions until the seam lays flat.

**Problem:** Right needle is looping on the back side of the seam. This indicates the right needle thread is too loose.

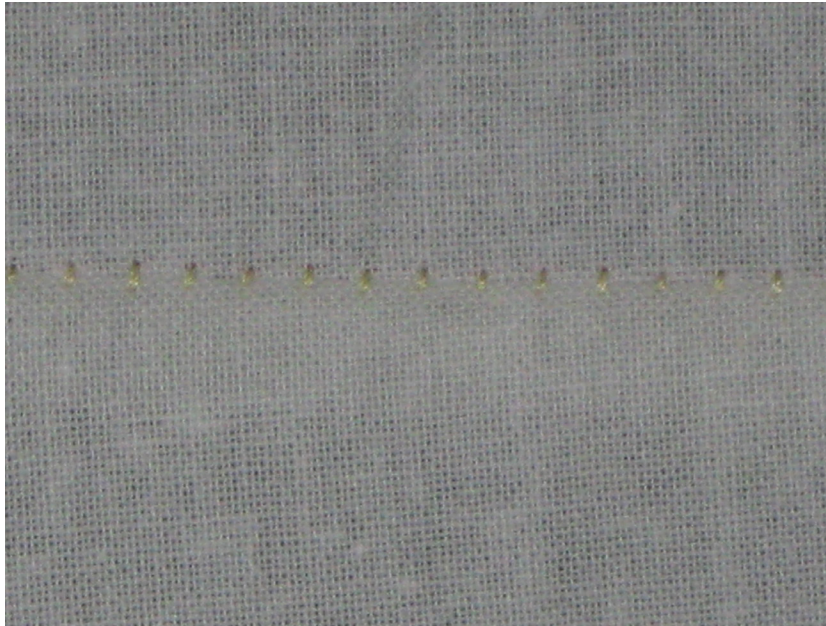


**Fix:** Turn the tension of the right needle to a higher number by one. Test the seam and if necessary, continue adjusting the tension until the loop disappears on the back side of the seam.



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**Problem:** The needle thread shows on the right side of the seam when the seam is opened. This indicates that the left needle thread is too loose.



**Fix:** Turn the tension of the right needle to a higher number by one. Test the seam, if necessary, continue adjusting the tension until no thread shows when the seam is opened.

Always test your overcast stitches on scraps of the fabric you are using in your project. You will discover that you may need to make slight adjustments when you change fabrics! Plush fabrics, like fleece, may need a slightly looser looper tension to allow the hitch line to fall along the edge. Thin, silky-type fabrics may need a slightly tighter looper tension so that the hitch line falls along the edge.

A bad needle will show up much sooner on your serger than a standard machine. Make sure to change your needles every 8 hours!

Follow these steps and your seams will look perfect every time and before long, you and your serger will be inseparable.

**Follow these links for some serger inspiration!**

<http://janome.com/en/inspire/projects/garment/beat-the-heat-tank-top-tie/>

<http://janome.com/en/inspire/projects/garment/back-to-school-outfit/>

<http://janome.com/en/inspire/projects/garment/call-ajaire-swimwear-with-coverstitch-tips/>