

1971

## EC71-480 9 Stitches for the Stitch in Time

Jane Speece

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# Stitches for the stitch in time...

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# 9 Stitches for the STITCH in TIME

By Jane Speece  
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Small amounts of repair work can return a garment to attractiveness and usefulness without spending a great amount of time. Make minor repairs before the garment passes the point where it can be repaired and you'll save yourself a big job. A few basic stitches can enable one to handle almost all kinds of repairs.

Unless noted otherwise, the right-handed person works from right to left when using the stitches described on these pages.

The **Back Stitch** (Fig. 1) is a strong, sturdy stitch of particular use in repairing areas where it is difficult to guide a sewing machine in a finished area. It is also good for repairing a short break in a seam, zippers, gussets or armhole seams. Work will be done on the right or wrong side, depending on the area being mended.

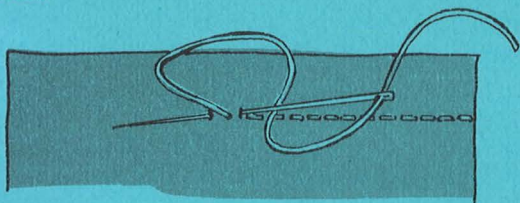


Fig. 1. Backstitch

Use an unknotted thread and take several tiny stitches in the same spot. Take a stitch back about  $\frac{1}{16}$  to  $\frac{1}{8}$  inch and bring the needle about  $\frac{1}{16}$  to  $\frac{1}{8}$  inch forward along the seam line. Insert the needle at the end of the previous stitch and bring it out one stitch ahead. Repeat the procedure until the seam is finished. The stitches on the underside will be



longer and overlap a bit. They will look like machine stitching on the upper side.

The **Running Stitch** (Fig. 2) is the most common stitch used. It can be used to mend gathers or seams in any area hard to reach by machine. Use it also to go around the edges of patches.

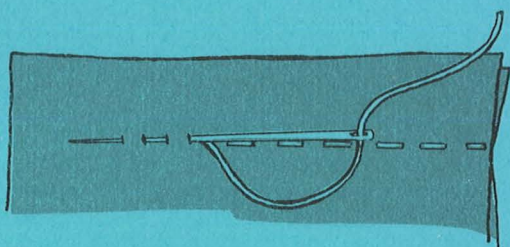


Fig. 2. Running Stitch

A long, fine needle is necessary. Take several small stitches forward before pulling the thread through the fabric, making the stitches even in size. For permanence, stitches should be no longer than  $\frac{1}{8}$  to  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch. The size of the stitch will vary with its use; the longer the stitch, the more like a basting stitch it becomes.

The **Overhand Stitch** (Fig. 3a) is used in areas where strong, tiny stitches are needed to hold two finished edges together. It is particularly useful in repairing the armhole seam of a lining, for edging patches or repairing breaks in lace trims. You can work this stitch from either the right or left.

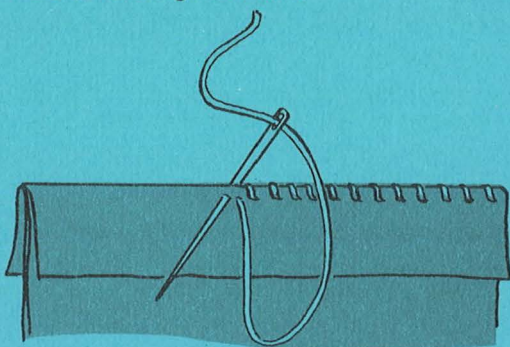


Fig. 3a. Overhand Stitch

Insert the needle toward you diagonally through the back and front fold. Pick up only one or two threads as the needle moves through the fabric to the front. Repeat the procedure until the row is finished. The stitches will lie straight over the edge and should be close together.

The **Whip Stitch** (Fig. 3b) is a variation of the overhand stitch and serves the same purpose. In this stitch the needle is inserted at right angles to the fabric rather than diagonally. The result is a slanted instead of a straight stitch along the edge.

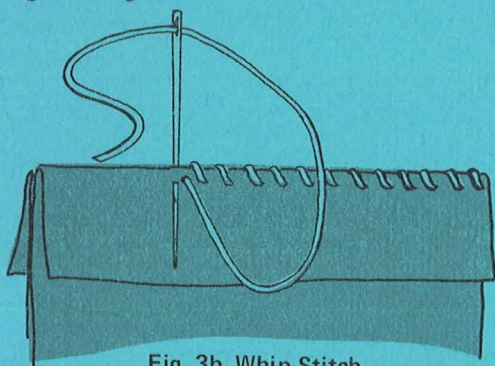


Fig. 3b. Whip Stitch

The **Overcast Stitch** (Fig. 3c) is the same as the overhand stitch except it goes through only a single layer. You could use it to finish the raw edge of a seam which has begun to ravel. The stitch will vary from  $\frac{1}{4}$  to  $\frac{3}{8}$  inch in depth and spacing, depending on the fabric's tendency to ravel.

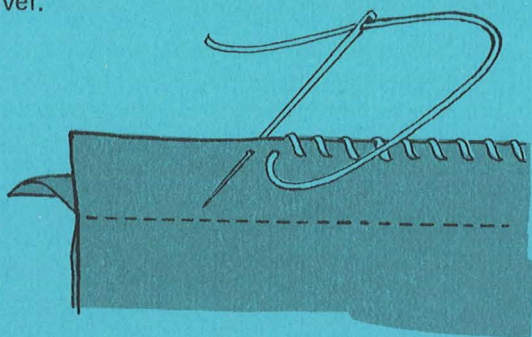


Fig. 3c. Overcast Stitch



The **Hemming Stitch** (Fig. 4) is similar to the overhand stitch, but it is put in from a different angle. It is used to join a double layer to a single layer of fabric and is valuable for repairing hems or breaks in linings.

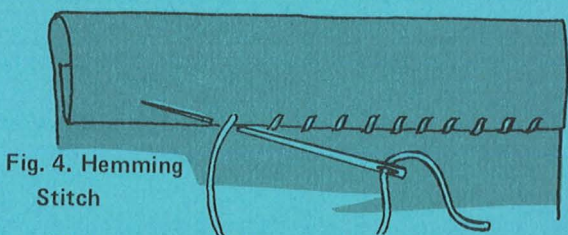


Fig. 4. Hemming  
Stitch

Take several tiny backstitches in the layer that will not show on the right side. Take a tiny stitch, picking up one thread of the fabric, bringing the needle up diagonally through the folded edge of the other layer at the same time. Pick up the next stitch directly below. Repeat the procedure, spacing stitches about  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch apart.

The **Slipstitch** (Fig. 5) is used to fasten trims, pockets, linings or hems. It is valuable for use wherever a folded edge is joined to a single layer and an almost invisible stitch is needed.

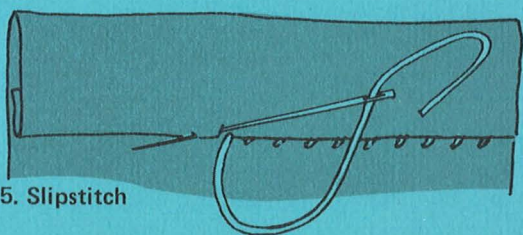


Fig. 5. Slipstitch

Fasten the thread with several tiny backstitches where they will not show. Slip the needle through the fold of the top layer for  $\frac{1}{8}$  to  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch. Pick up a single strand of the lower fabric directly below the point where the needle emerges from the fold. Repeat this procedure, spacing stitches evenly.

Lengthening the stitch in both the fold and lower fabric will give **slip basting** which is useful in rounding a curve or rematching a plaid for later machine stitching.

The **Lacing or Fishbone Stitch** (Fig. 6) is particularly useful for pulling the edges of long slashes or tears together. Widely spaced stitches help hold a damaged area before applying a patch or darn. Closely spaced stitches will hold a slash permanently in an area where there is little strain.

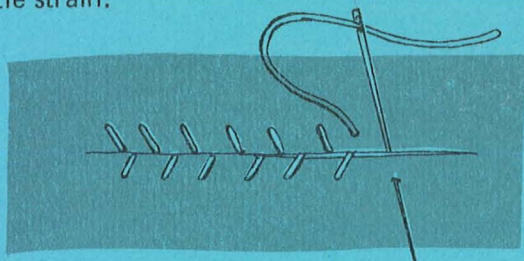


Fig. 6. Lacing or Fishbone Stitch

Take several tiny stitches to anchor the thread on the wrong side. Bring needle up through the slash and insert it in the fabric about 1/4 inch above the slash, bringing the needle out through the slash. Pull thread through, then insert the needle into the fabric on the other side of the slash, bring it out into the slash again. Continue this procedure throughout the length of the tear or rip.

The **Catch Stitch** (Fig. 7) is useful for holding raw edges of patches in place, replacing labels, holding lining pleats or repairing hems in knits or stretch fabrics. It is used in areas where two layers of fabrics need to be held together in a flexible manner. The right-handed person will work from left to right. Depth and spacing of stitches will depend on the fabric and the kind of repair.

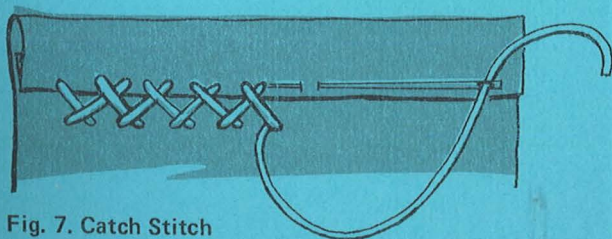


Fig. 7. Catch Stitch



Take several tiny stitches in one layer a short distance from the edge. Moving diagonally to the right, take a tiny stitch of no more than a few strands of fabric in the other layer. Move diagonally back to the other layer for the second stitch. The thread should remain loose so the two layers are not held tightly.

The **Blanket Stitch** (Fig. 8) is useful for covering raw edges which show, strengthening corners or repairing belt loops.

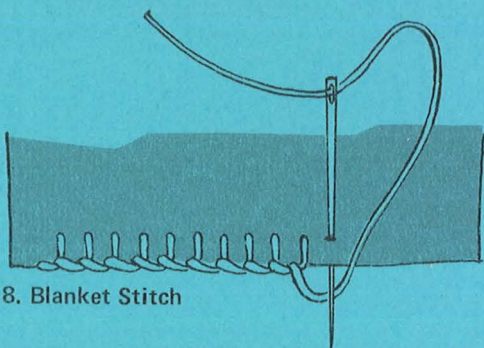


Fig. 8. Blanket Stitch

Work from left to right with the edge of the fabric toward you. Take several tiny stitches on the wrong side of the garment at the edge. Insert the needle about  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch from the edge on the right side of fabric. As the needle moves under the fabric, point it toward you. The needle must pass over the loop of thread to form the finished thread edge as it is brought under the fabric. The size of the stitch will vary, depending on the area of use. It will be very close for belt loops and  $\frac{1}{4}$  to  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch apart for the edging.

The **Buttonhole Stitch** (Fig. 9), important in repairing and strengthening buttonholes, is also a sturdy stitch for replacing hooks, eyes and snaps.

Begin work in the middle of one side of the buttonhole. Fasten the thread on the wrong side with several tiny back stitches. Insert the needle through the slash in the buttonhole and bring it up on the outside of the stitching line. Make sure the needle passes over the loop



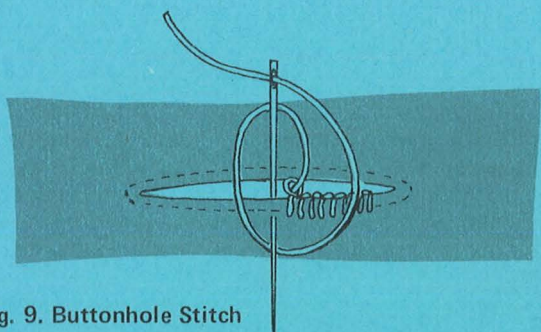


Fig. 9. Buttonhole Stitch

thread that is formed. Pull the needle through the loop, making sure the loop lies smoothly. Repeat the procedure until the buttonhole is covered.

Double thread is often used in mending stitches. To avoid possible snags and unsightly loops as you work, use a special threading.

Guide the two cut ends of the thread through the eye of the needle at the same time. Bring these ends through the loop formed at the other end of the double thread. Gently pull the thread through until the loop is snug at the eye of the needle (Fig. 10). This will keep the needle from slipping out of its central position as you work.

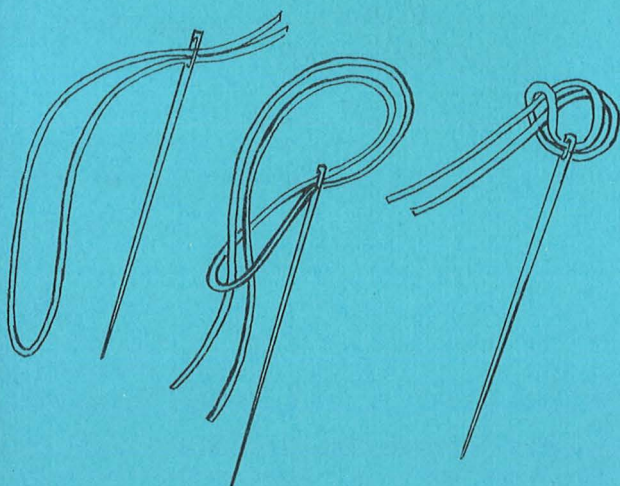


Fig. 10. Using Double Thread