

Satin Stitching

Tips and Tricks

Satin stitching by machine is one way to stitch around appliqué to secure them. The basic pointers here will help make this technique easier for you. Spend some time practicing and fine-tuning your satin stitching, and you'll be very happy with the new things you can do to embellish and adorn your projects.



In this lesson, we'll focus on the method used to create the smaller pieces, such as the fusible appliqué banners and table toppers featured in this issue.

Since the backs of these pieces will always be against a table or wall, don't worry about whether or not the satin stitching shows on them. Along with the quilting, do the satin stitching through the sandwiched layers of the quilt.

Satin stitching through all of the layers eliminates the need for any tear-away stabilizer that would

be necessary to satin stitch through a single layer of background fabric. This eliminates an extra step in the process. If you satin stitch your appliqué using stabilizer before putting your quilt top together, you'll still need to quilt them once you sandwich your layers.



The sandwiched piece can also be easier to maneuver because it has some body to it. As you do when you're quilting, roll up whatever part of a piece you're not quilting or satin stitching and use the roll as the means for turning and manipulating the piece through the machine—much like the rudder on a boat.

But none of this matters at all if you're not yet comfortable with your satin stitching. So, keep these things in mind and use the tips that follow as a guide to learn and practice what makes this particular kind of appliqué look as if it's been embroidered.

Tips for Satin Stitching

1. Threads that are good for embroidery are good for satin stitching. Polyester threads or 40 wt rayon work well. The polyester is less prone to breakage than the rayon.



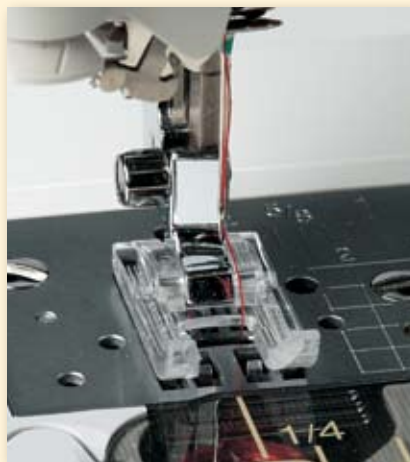
2. Your needle is also important. A 90/14 needle is great for satin stitching through the sandwiched layers, but wouldn't be good when used with a single layer of foundation fabric and stabilizer.

3. Set your machine to its zigzag or satin stitch setting, and adjust your stitch width as desired. Make sure the stitch is wide enough to stitch to the inside and outside of the raw edge of your appliqué. Use the 2.5 mm setting most often. On finer pieces and fabrics, use a narrower stitch. The narrower your stitch, the easier it is to make clean, tight curves. Satin stitching that is too wide is just not attractive.

4. The tighter your stitch length, the better. A tight stitch means it takes longer to go around your appliqué, but it's worth the time. Many students are unhappy

with their satin stitching because they're too impatient to use the tightest stitch length possible. Set your stitch length at 0.2 mm for satin stitching. Your machine may not allow you to go that tight, so shorten your stitch length as much as possible stick to it. Experiment by lengthening the stitch slightly until it feeds smoothly.

5. Use an open-toe presser foot with a channel on the underside that allows your raised satin stitching to slide under it as you feed the piece through the machine. Guide the raw edge of your appliqué into the center mark on the foot to be sure you're encasing the entire raw edge of the fabric with your satin stitching.



6. Stitch at a comfortable pace. Start slowly, if you're a novice. As your stitching improves with practice, stitch faster. The faster you are able to stitch, the better your satin stitching will look. Many of today's home embroidery machines do the best satin stitching because

they're made for that. With practice, you can make a basic machine with a zigzag stitch work well, too.

7. Satin stitching may come undone if the beginnings and endings aren't backstitched. Pull your thread tail to the front of the presser foot at the beginning of a line of satin stitching and stitch over it for an inch or so to keep it from coming undone and to hide the end.



8. Set your machine to stop with the needle in the down position when satin stitching to make pivoting easier.

9. Stitch over the raw edge with the appliqué to the left side of the needle. ★