

Basic Heirloom Sewing Skills

from

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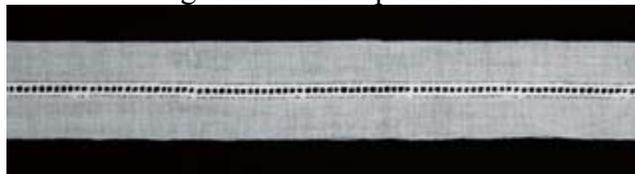
A wonderful starter project for Heirloom Sewing by Machine is to make a baby bonnet. My pattern, [Heirloom Baby Bonnet](#) can be created for sizes infant up through approx 2 years. For a baby gift, Easter finery, or just a wonderful gift for a special young girl – this is a great project to have fun with and a great gift to have ‘on hand’.



Hints for Successful Heirloom Sewing

1. Use ONLY fine, top quality laces – usually 90% cotton, 10% nylon. These never come pre-gathered, rather you pull up the very, very top thread to gather them yourself.
2. Always spray starch and press all laces, Entredeux, and fabric before beginning work – UNLESS fabric or lace is to be gathered.
3. Use extra fine thread - I recommend either
 - Mettler Article 240 which is a 60 weight, 2 ply thread – denoted with 60/2 on the spool... (I sell all Mettler threads on my website at 20% off for a box of 5 of the same color) ... or
 - Madeira Tanne 80 – an 80 weight thread (though only available in white and ecru).

Using a regular weight thread will yield ugly, heavy results – so don't do it!
4. Use a compatible fine, sharp needle – 70 Microtex or Denim/Sharp needle from Schmetz.
5. Use Entredeux – a strip of ‘holes’ with batiste on either side – which is French for “Between 2” at the following locations: A picture of Entredeux follows below.



I have Swiss Entredeux available at my website at the following link: [Entredeux](#)

Get the Swiss, not the American! There's a WORLD of difference! You won't find good Entredeux – or most likely ANY Entredeux at chain stores.

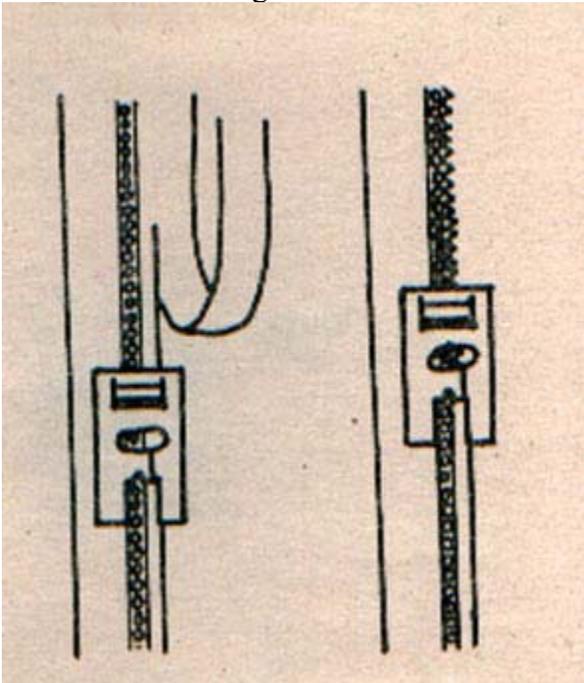
<http://www.marthapullen.com> is also a great source for heirloom sewing needs.

Entredeux is used:

- Between fabric & lace
 - Between flat lace and gathered lace
 - Between fabric and gathered lace
6. Trim fuzzies from fabric raw edges before stitching.

Set your Machine for Heirloom Sewing

1. Presser foot: check yours out – a great one is one with grooves on the under side – like a buttonhole foot. Otherwise, a General Purpose Foot that accommodates ZigZag will work just fine.
2. Establish front (right) side of Entredeux by examining closely. The front side will have the smoothest satin-looking embroidery.
3. Trim right-hand side of Entredeux leaving 1/8" to 3/16" of batiste.
4. Set Stitch Width: Set machine so needle ZIG (left swing of needle) enters Entredeux hole and ZAGS (right swing of needle) goes just off the batiste. See Diagram below.
5. Set Stitch Length: Set length so needle enters each hole of Entredeux. Skipping a hole is preferable to entering a hole more than one time. Your stitch length will generally remain at this setting for most heirloom sewing by machine. See Diagram below.

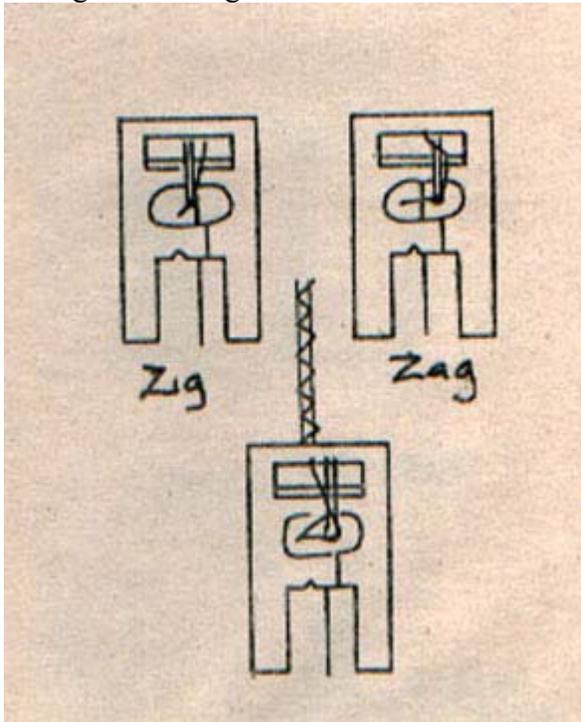


Roll & Whip

This is the most-oft used 'stitch' in heirloom sewing by machine. Work with your machine and this until you 'get' it. Ideally, the edge will roll up – and you'll likely be amazed you can do this 'rolling' with your sewing machine!

1. Stitch Length: remains set as for Entredeux stitching – you do NOT want a 'satin stitch' short length!
2. Stitch Width: Set ZIG 1/8" – 1/4" into fabric and ZAG completely clear of the fabric edge – out into the 'air' as it is called in heirloom sewing.

Placement of the fabric is important – the edge of the fabric should be placed almost in the middle of the presser foot. Different weights of fabric will require different width settings. See Diagram below.



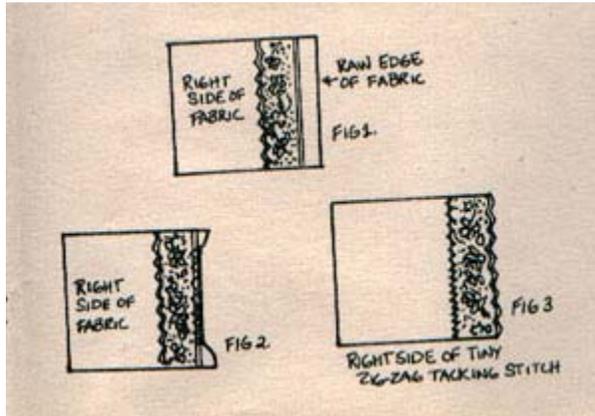
Flat Lace to Flat Fabric

This is an amazing technique! Trying to figure out how this was done on a little day gown I was given when my daughter arrived opened the 'world' of heirloom sewing for me. Get ready – if you haven't done this yet, you'll be absolutely blown away that your machine can do this!

Right sides of lace and fabric together (*though with most heirloom type fabrics, there is no right and wrong – and on fine laces, it is hard to tell – though the 'right' side is the side on which any 'stems to flowers stand out the most'...*)

1. Lay straight edge of lace 1/4" to LEFT of Cut Fabric edge. See Fig. 1
2. Using same stitch width and length as settings you determined for Roll & Whip: the left ZIG should cover the lace heading (but no more) right ZAG should span over the raw edge of the fabric, in the 'air', and roll that edge into the lace. See Fig. 2 below. *Hint:*

Do NOT pull on or stretch the lace, and slightly hold the Fabric tautly underneath the lace, in front of the machine. If you tug on the lace, it will make the lace curl.



3. Press lace outward, away from the fabric. The seam will roll toward the lace – this A-OK! Do NOT try to get this little seam to go back towards the fabric!!!
4. The lace will tend to flip back onto the fabric – so we use what Martha Pullen calls a “Scotch Tape Stitch” to eliminate this tendency. This is a tiny, almost invisible zig zag stitch over the ‘seam’ from the right hand side, on top of the seam, to ‘tack’ the lace outward, away from the fabric. This stitch could be less wide than the Roll & Whip setting – perhaps 1 or less, and perhaps a bit longer. See Figure 3 above.

Flat Lace to Flat Lace

Hint: An Edge Stitch foot (with a blade in the center) – or even I’ve seen a Blind Hem foot – with a similar, moving ‘blade’ – will help with this technique...

1. Machine settings:

Width – set JUST to take in the headings of both laces

Length – fairly short, but not satin-stitch short. You do NOT want the thread to show any more than necessary.

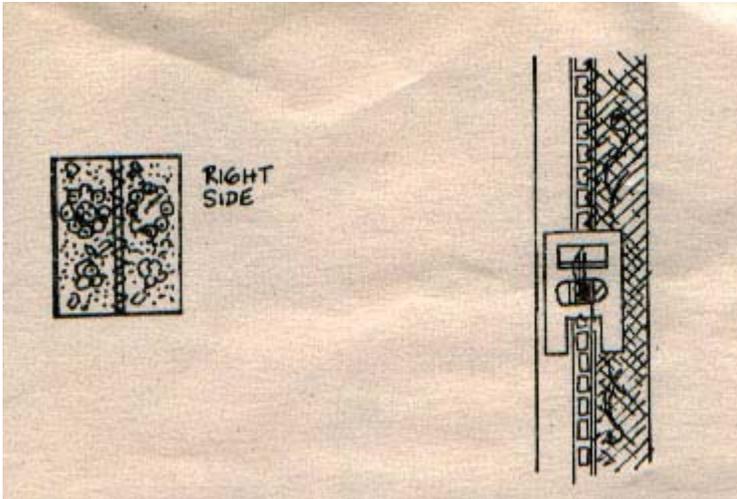
2. Holding the laces just a bit apart – (the swing of the needle will pull them together) – zig zag them together with the above settings. *The blade of the foot helps keep the laces apart a bit just before the zig zag stitch pulls them together. If you feed the laces into the machine butted, the zig zag will overlap the edges too much.*

See the diagram on the left hand side below for end result.

Flat Lace to Entredeux

This is very similar to Flat Lace to Flat Lace – just make sure that the length is set so that you hit every hole with the Zig, and miss a hole rather than going into a hole more than once.

See the diagram on the right hand side below for end result.



Flat Lace to Flat Lace

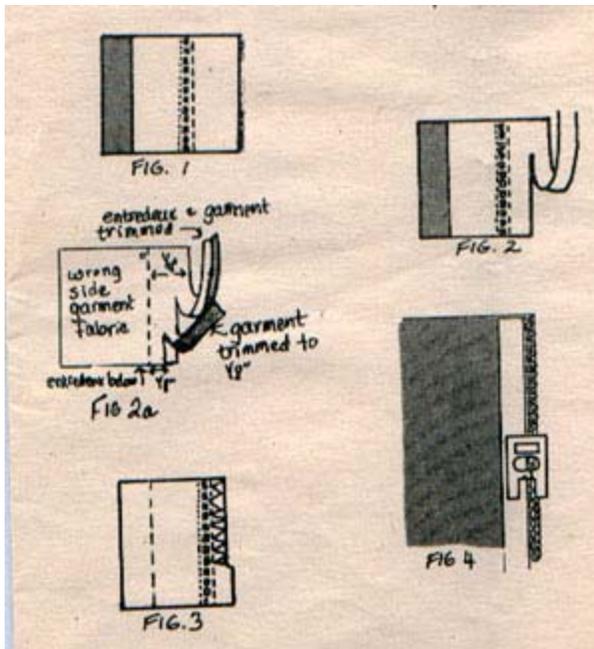
Entredeux to Flat Lace

Entredeux to Flat Fabric

Method 1 - Londa's Favorite way

1. Right sides together, lay Entredeux on top of fabric, batiste edge of Entredeux aligned with raw edge of fabric.
2. Entredeux on top, with a shorter than usual **straight** stitch, stitch close to the right hand edge of the Entredeux embroidery. See Figure 1 below.
3. Trim fabric and Entredeux batiste to right of stitching down to ¼", or width needed for roll & whipping. See Fig. 2 below.
(When joining Entredeux to a fabric that is at all of heavier weight than batiste, trim seam allowance of that heavier fabric to 1/8".) See Figure 2a below.
4. Wrong side of garment fabric up at machine, (Entredeux side down at the machine), set width and length for Roll & Whip. Stitch, rolling and whipping batiste edge of Entredeux over the shorter-trimmed seam allowance: allowing left needle swing to zig just UP TO the Entredeux straight stitching. See Fig. 3 below.

(You may elect to zig zag INTO Entredeux holes and off right side of batiste allowance. See Figure 4 below.)

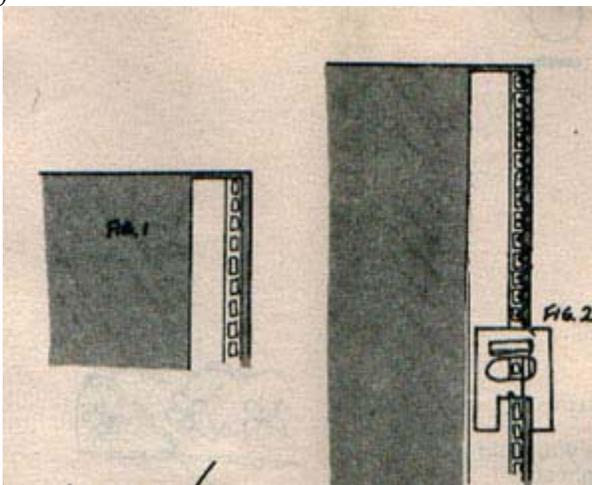


Method 2

This method is not as strong, and the threads show more, but it more accurately duplicates French Handsewing than Method 1.

1. On one side, carefully trim batiste off Entredeux completely.
2. Right sides together, lay Entredeux 1/8" to the left of the fabric raw edge. See Figure 1 below.
3. Zig Zag into holes of Entredeux and over the right side edge of fabric. See Figure 2 below. This is rolling and whipping AND going into the holes of the Entredeux all at the same time.

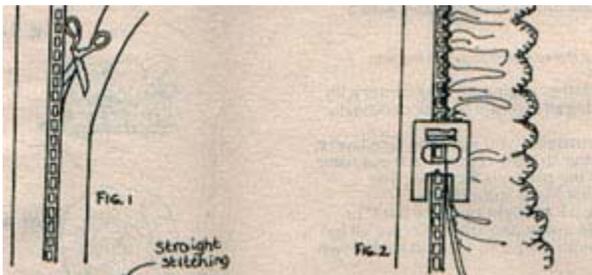
You may wish to first Roll & Whip the fabric edge before joining the Entredeux to the fabric.



Entredeux to Gathered Lace

Personally, I feel this is the hardest to do – because you'll find that as you stitch, the gathers you have placed in the lace by pulling up the TOP thread will scootch out in front of the presser foot. You just need to 'boss' it – using a sharp pointed instrument like a Needle Trolley or an Awl or Seam Ripper to 'coach' those gathers up and the the right, and underneath the presser foot. Practice!

1. Trim right hand side of front side of Entredeux completely off. See Figure 1 below.
2. Cut lace edging 1 ½ to 3 times the length of Entredeux for proper fullness desired.
3. Mark corresponding halves and quarters on lace and Entredeux for matching to distribute the lace fullness equally.
4. Butt straight edge of lace to trimmed edge of Entredeux. Secure at beginning with VERY CLOSE ZIG ZAG stitches for 1/4" or so. **THEN**, begin gathering lace by pulling the VERY TOP THREAD OF LACE. Set machine to zig zag into each hole of Entredeux, and to encompass heading of gathered lace. Remember to use your edger foot, if you have one. See Figure 2 below.



Entredeux to Gathered Fabric

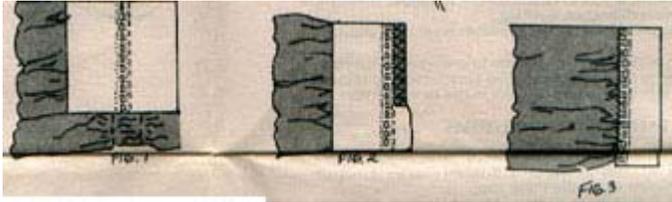
This technique is what you use to create rows of 'puffing' – often seen in yokes, around skirts, on pillows, etc. It is a wonderful, textural effect that is low cost – as it doesn't require any lace. ☺ Heirloom sewing can easily get VERY pricey!

Method 1 – Londa's Favorite

Switch to Polyester Thread for this step – it is a pain, but worth it, because the lightweight cotton thread you've been using will be bound to break when you pull threads to create the gathers!

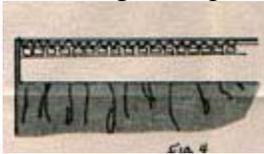
1. Stitch 2 rows of gathering stitches, ¼' apart on the fabric. *I secure at the beginning of my stitching by backstitching. Then, I pull the TOP threads from the end where I stop stitching to set my gathers.*
2. Right sides together, lay untrimmed Entredeux over gathers so holes lie **between** gathering rows. **Straight stitch** as close as possible to Entredeux embroidery. See Figure 1 below.
3. Trim seam allowance to ¼". Trim gathered fabric a bit closer. *I have to have an [Applique Scissors](#) to do careful trimming in heirloom sewing!* Roll & Whip the seam allowance, having left zig of zig zag stitch just meet the straight stitching. See Figure 2 below.

4. Press seam toward gathered fabric. *In this case, you MUST get this seam to stay back, away from the Entredeux holes – or you won't see those precious little holes!* From top side, a tiny Zig Zag tacking stitch may be placed over the seam to keep the seam toward the fabric. *This is a VERY narrow stitch – almost a zig zag 'in the ditch'.* See Figure 3 below.



Method 2

1. Steps 1-3 identical to Method 1, but trim seam a tad closer. Roll & Whip, letting zig (left swing) enter **into** Entredeux holes and Zag (right needle swing) **clear** the fabric edge. Step 4 above optional if needed. See Figure 4 in diagram below.



*I include a complete Heirloom Sewing Guide which I compiled from the many teachers and sources I studied in each of my heirloom patterns featuring designs for women and young girls. You can find all of my **Londa's Elegant Creations patterns** at this link:*

*<http://www.londas-sewing.com/nl.asp?p=0&c=162>. Several of my patterns were featured in garments in Martha Pullen's Heirloom Sewing For Women, and in **Creative Needle** and **Sew Beautiful** magazines in the late 80's and early 90's.*

If you haven't yet given Heirloom Sewing a whirl, do give it a try. When I first came across it – the creativity of heirloom breathed a new life into my custom sewing business. I am 'sew' grateful for the effect heirloom has had on my creative sewing hobby!