



CONSTRUCTION GUIDELINES

Beginning – 1-3 years in sewing project

The primary goal is to learn to operate a standard sewing machine in a safe and correct manner.

Refer to the “Let’s Sew” book, chapters 1, 2 & 4-6, for beginning skill lessons. Garments made in beginning sewing should incorporate some of the sewing techniques identified as appropriate for beginning; avoid the construction techniques listed in intermediate and advanced sewing.

Beginning Sewing Skills

- Read and understand the pattern envelope
- Fabric selection and preparation
- Laying and cutting out a pattern
- Threading and operating a sewing machine
- Pressing different fabrics
- Sewing a straight seam and curves

Beginning Construction Techniques

- Elastic or draw string waistbands
- Grading, clipping, notching
- Handling trims (trims may include pre-gathered lace, bias trims, or other flat trims. Ribbed knit trims are excluded).
- Casings
- Sewing on hooks, eyes, grommets, snaps and buttons
- Seam Finishing
- Hems and other hand sewing skills
- Interfacing
- Patch and in-seam pockets
- Velcro closures
- Simple top stitching
- Under stitching
- Stay stitching

Garments in this level should not have gathers, buttonholes or set-on waistbands. Basic trims may be used. Do not use plaids, stripes, or fabrics requiring matching in beginning sewing. Fabrics with one-way designs should be cut in the same direction.

Suggested Project Ideas

- Scarves
- Simple jumper*
- Simple skirt (elastic or draw string waistband)*
- Simple shorts or pants (unfitted style)*
- Swim or bath shift
- Simple top or tank top (without set-in sleeves)*
- Tote bag
- Napkins (4)
- Chef’s apron*
- Vest
- Tie or other accessory
- Simple pillow
- Pot holders (2)
- Stuffed animals or toys (flat unpieced)
- Placemats (4)

* Showcase Projects modeled by 4-Her

Suggested Fabrics

- broadcloth
- drill
- gingham
- dotted Swiss
- calico

- duck
- muslin poplin
- kettle cloth
- double knits
- denim
- felt

Intermediate – 2-6 years in the sewing project

The primary goal is to learn new techniques and seam finishes. The use of a serger is an acceptable seam construction method for knit fabrics such as those used for sweatshirts. Use of the serger should be discouraged for seam construction for woven fabrics, but serging could be used as a seam finish.

Refer to the “Let’s Sew” book, chapters 3 - 7, for intermediate sewing skill lessons. Garments made in intermediate sewing should contain some of the following construction techniques, but should avoid those described under advanced intermediate and advanced sewing.

Intermediate Construction Techniques

- Darts
- Interfacing
- Seam finishes
- Hems
- Gathering
- Simple flat yokes
- Trims (include trims to be gathered, bias trims, rib knit trims, and other trims)
- Top stitching
- Waistband application
- Stitch-in-the-ditch
- Machine buttonholes
- Crotch construction
- Centered and lapped zipper
- Simple collars, avoid notched and lapel collars
- Exposed zipper application
- Simple soft pleats (excluding single or multiple panels of pleats)

Suggested Project Ideas

- Blouse or shirt (dropped shoulder or raglan sleeves)*
- Dress or jumper*
- Top or tank top*
- Beach robe or cover-up
- Vest – unlined or lined*
- Hooded top*
- Pillows with ruffled gathered trims
- Recycled Garment
- Unlined jacket or blazer
- Pants or shorts*
- Pajamas or nightgown*
- Hat
- Stuffed toys or dolls (pieced)
- Bath robe (dropped shoulder or raglan sleeves)*
- Apron – with waistband and/or ruffles
- Pullover sweatshirt – single ribbing application - round neckline*
- Skirt*

* Showcase Projects modeled by 4-Her

Suggested Fabrics

All of beginner fabrics plus:

- chambray
- flannel
- quilted
- seersucker
- single knits

Advanced Intermediate – 3-8 years in sewing project

The use of a serger is acceptable in seam construction on knits and most woven fabrics (cotton, polyester, rayon, blends, etc.). Seam finishes done with a conventional machine or a serger are acceptable.

Garments made in advanced intermediate sewing should contain some of the following construction techniques, but avoid those described under advanced sewing.

Advanced Intermediate Construction Techniques

- Yokes
- Collar
- Cuff application
- Linings
- Set-in sleeves – exclude sleeves made as straight seam around shoulder & up side
- Bias detailing
- New closures (gripper snaps)
- Seam finishing including flat-fell
- Pattern alteration
- Fly or invisible zipper
- Pleats
- Plaids, stripes, checks, or any fabric requiring matching
- Decorative machine stitching

Suggested Project Ideas

- Skirt – lined or unlined*
- Vest – lined or unlined*
- Pullover sweatshirt –single or double ribbing application – round or v neck*
- Blouse or shirt*
- Fitted pants or shorts*
- Jacket or coat – lined or unlined (no collar preferred)*
- Swimsuits
- Simple luggage (gym bags, gaiter kits)
- Dress*
- 2 piece coordinated outfit*
- Sleepwear*
- Cape*
- Recycled garment

*** Showcase Projects modeled by 4-Her**

Suggested Fabrics

All the beginner and intermediate fabrics plus:

- fleece
- herringbone
- challis
- denim (stiff)
- gabardine

- homespun
- crepe
- flannel (wool)
- gauze
- linen
- pique
- plaids (even)
- stripes
- terry cloth
- tweed
- voile

Advanced – 5 years and more in the sewing project

Any method of construction, either by serger or conventional machine, is acceptable. Sergers would be especially suitable for lingerie or delicate specialty fabrics such as crepe de chine or sheer fabrics for formals.

Garments in advanced sewing should contain some of the following construction techniques.

Advanced Construction Techniques

- French seam
- French whipped seams
- Slot seam
- Corded seam
- Bound buttonhole
- Specialty fabric construction (woven sheers, wool, lacy fabric, pile, satin, metallic, brocade, leather, suede, etc.)
- Tailoring-hand pad stitching
- Tailoring-pressing techniques
- Leather or suede techniques
- General tailoring skills
- French or chain tacks
- Applied backing or lining
- Vents
- Specialized fasteners and notions
- Bound and welt pockets

Suggested Project Ideas

- Pleated skirts*
- 3 piece tailored outfit *
- 5 piece tailored outfit*
- Formals/evening wear*
- Dress of specialty fabric*
- Down or poly filled garment*
- Swimsuits
- Tailored garment*
- Luggage, fanny pack kits
- Lined coat, or blazer*
- Article made of leather or leather-look fabric
- Design your own garment
- Recycle a garment
- Outdoor wear*

***Showcase Projects modeled by 4-Her**

Suggested Fabrics

All the beginner, intermediate, advanced intermediate fabrics plus:

- 2-way stretch knits
- batiste
- Chiffons
- georgette
- organdy
- organza
- voile
- brocade
- crepe de chine
- nylon taffeta
- rip-stop nylon
- eyelet
- lace
- net
- leather
- suede
- fake furs
- Spandex
- tricot
- velour
- velvet
- velveteen

- plaids (uneven)
- “light weight silkies”