



How to...



DID YOU KNOW?
American inventor Elias Howe patented the first sewing machine in 1846.

Learn the basics of sewing

You don't have to own a sewing machine to try this fun, hands-on home hobby.

Sewing is a great way to express your creativity while making something that's useful in your everyday life. Whether you want to stitch together a simple pillow or sew on a button, learning how to sew by hand (meaning without a sewing machine) is the best place to begin. All you need is a needle, thread, and a few pieces of fabric. Then follow these steps.

Thread a needle

A sewing needle has two ends: a sharp point and a looped end called the eye. Cut a long piece of thread with scissors. Hold the end of the thread in one hand and the needle in your other hand. Focus on the eye, and push the thread end through the hole. Now pull that end to meet the other end. Knot the two ends together. To see how to do this, have an adult help you go online to tinyurl.com/TWJUS-Thread and watch the needle threading tutorial.



Sewing by hand

Try a basic stitch

The basic beginner's stitch is called the running stitch. You can practice it using two small pieces of fabric. Put your threaded needle underneath the two pieces of fabric and then push the point up through both fabric layers. Pull the needle and thread all the way through until your knot stops it. Then move the point of the needle a tiny bit to the side, push it back down

through the fabric, and pull it out the bottom. Repeat over and over, creating a line of stitches that holds the two fabric layers together. To finish, knot the thread at the end. For help, search online with an adult for the YouTube video tinyurl.com/TWJUS-SewingLesson.

Make a project

You can use the simple running stitch to make lots of projects. One easy idea is a small pillow. Draw a simple shape, like a heart or triangle, on a piece of paper and then cut it out. Trace this pattern twice onto a piece of fabric, then cut out the two pieces. Stitch the pieces together along the edges, leaving a two-inch-wide opening. Stuff it with cotton batting or fabric scraps, then sew up the opening. For more beginner project ideas, check out videos at tinyurl.com/TWJUS-SewingProjects.

Expand your toolbox

You can buy a few inexpensive supplies to make basic projects easier. Pins will help hold fabric together as you sew, and a pincushion will give you a place to store them. Fabric scissors are helpful for cutting through material more precisely. If you get really serious about sewing, you will probably want to learn to sew on a machine. See if a family member has one, or look into kids' classes in your town.

4 more crafts with thread and yarn

You can try these other activities that use thread and yarn to create cool textiles.

Embroidery

Embroidery is similar to hand sewing, except you use colored thread to stitch words or decorative designs onto fabric.



Knitting

Knitters use two long, thick needles (they're not sharp)

to create stitches out of yarn. Multiple rows of stitches are joined together to make scarves, hats, and sweaters.

Quilting

In this sewing technique, a layer of fabric called batting is sandwiched between a top and bottom layer of regular fabric. Then they are all sewn together using multiple rows of decorative stitching. The batting adds warmth.



Weaving

Weaving is a way to turn yarn into beautiful fabric. Weavers

use a device called a loom to hold rows of yarn tightly in place. Then they move different colors of yarn back and forth through the rows to create a pattern.