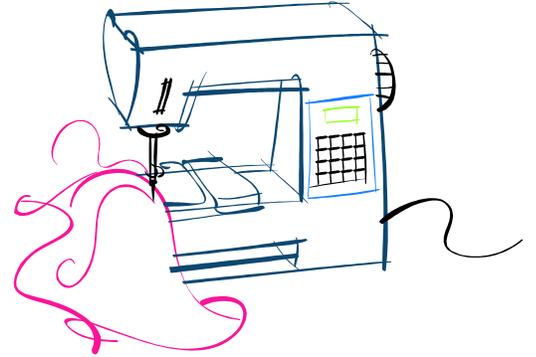


## GRADES 6 & UP ONLY!

### Sewing With Sergers

A serger or overlock machine is not necessary for completing a clothing project. A serger can be used to complete a variety of sewing technique. If you have the opportunity to learn how to use one, please do.

*What is a serger?* It stitches, trims and overcast in one step at almost twice the speed of a regular sewing machine. A serger differs from your sewing machine in 8 ways. A serger has a cutter, the stitch is formed through a knitting process, the machine doesn't have a bobbin, and it can use 2 to 4 spools of thread. A serger cannot sew a traditional straight stitch, it feeds 2 layers of fabric more evenly, you don't have to lift the presser foot to feed fabric into it, and they won't jam if you sew without fabric. A serger doesn't replace a regular sewing machine. Most of the time you sew a garment using both machines.



**When it comes to sewing your 4-H garments, there are no hard and fast rules as to when you should use a serger.** Many of the books referred to at the end of this sheet will have information about when and how sergers are used in garment construction. Following are some suggestions that are provided as guidelines and information to help you in sewing your garment.

There are many different sergers and they don't all sew the same kinds of seams. Some of these machines can be used with different numbers of threads.

### **Stitch Characteristics and Uses**

- ✂ 2 thread overedge, used to finish seams and edges. It is not used to sew seams. Used mostly on lightweight fabrics or for using heavier decorative threads.
- ✂ 3 thread overlock, can be used to sew seams as well as a seam finish. The stitch has lots of give so it is excellent for knits.
- ✂  $\frac{3}{4}$  thread overlock, used more on wovens, excellent for clothing that gets hard wear. The stitch has nearly as much give as a 3 thread.
- ✂ 4 thread called a true 4 thread, all 4 threads are necessary to sew a serged seam. Well-suited for loosely woven fabrics because the chain forms a strong seam and the seam allowance is wider. It does not have as much stretch.
- ✂ 5 thread safety stitch, this is used for a stable seam with durable seam finish, used mostly on wovens.

## Using Serger Stitching On Clothing

### Seams

- ✂ As a finish on the edge of a 5/8" seam, where the fabric is then pressed open.
- ✂ The fabric is seamed and finished all in one step, used more on knits; the seam is then pressed to one side.
- ✂ Also used as a mock flat felled seam, rolled seam, or French seam sometimes the regular sewing machine and serger are used together for this.

### Seam finishing

- ✂ The seams of garments, facings, waistbands, cuffs as well as other garment pieces that need to have seamed finish applied.

### Decorative Stitch

- ✂ Collars, cuffs, yokes and any other place you would want to use decorative stitching.

### Hems

- ✂ To finish the raw edge on a hem that you sew by hand or that you machine hem. You might also use a rolled hem on some garments and as well serge finish the edge of a blouse that you will always tuck in.

## Where The Different Seams Are Used

### Serged Together Seam Use

These are used for most all weights of knits, as well as on fabrics that pucker easily. Also on loose fitting garments and garments that it doesn't matter that you can't press the seam open. Usually these seams are narrow 1/4" or more.

### Regular Seam Where Seam Allowance Is Pressed Open

This is used where should be flat and pressed open, in bulky fabrics, on pockets, and any other place that you want to prevent the fabric from raveling.

### About Serger Thread

Serger thread comes in a variety of colors; the only thread that needs to match your fabric is the needle thread. The other thread colors you are use should be what is called blended thread. Light colors with light needle and fabric colors and dark colors with dark needle and fabric colors. The thread that forms the seam finish, which is the looper thread, needs to only be the blender thread colors. There are a variety of threads to use for decorative stitching.

### Places To Go For Help:

- Purdue Elkhart County Extension Office
- Fabric Stores
- Books: Sewing With Sergers, Brown & Palmer Sewing With An Overlock, Singer Serged Garments In Minutes, Young & Baker

