

Three Tips from Jen's Embroidery Studio

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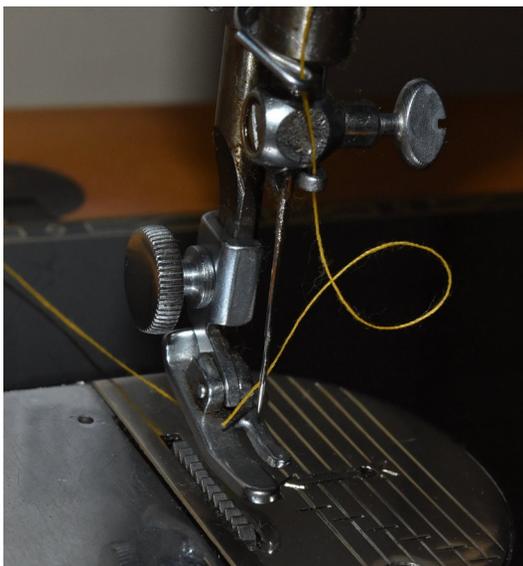
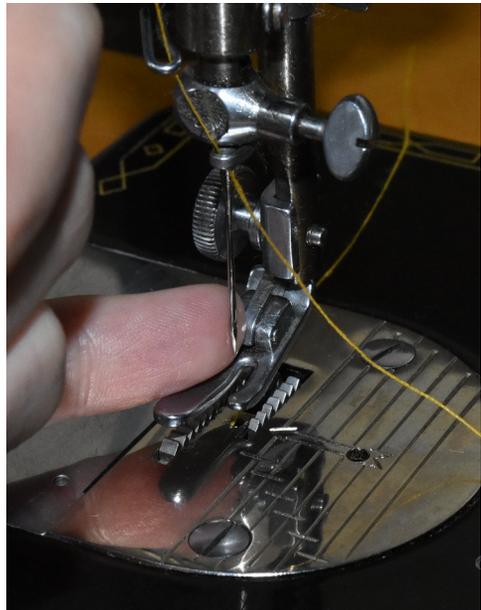
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Instead of a project this week, I thought I'd share three of the tips that make my life easier in the sewing room. I've selected them because they're ones I'm currently using . . . a lot.

Tip #1

If you sew on older or vintage machines, as I regularly do, you need this brilliant tip, which I only recently picked up from on line.

We all know to snip the thread cleanly and moisten the end before attempting to put it through the needle, but you should also moisten the back of the needle eye.



Just lightly lick your finger, draw your moistened fingertip across the back of the eye, then insert your thread end, which has also been moistened. Presto: the thread end slips right through with ease.

This tip **really** works, and I can't believe that I've never run across it before in more than 40 years of sewing!

In case you're wondering, the machine in the photos is a beautiful Singer 201K, which -- rather unusually -- threads from right to left.

Tip #2

I've been making a lot of small projects lately, including drawstring gift bags that feature an embroidered panel. I hate the amount of wasted stabilizer created by each stitch-out: the 5x7" hoop requires at least 7x10" of stabilizer, even if the design I'm stitching is only 4x5".

These projects need only a lightweight stabilizer since they won't be taking a lot of wear. I've found that two exhausted dryer sheets stitched together will make a large enough panel to fit my 5x7" hoop -- and best of all, they're free.

At right, I'm sewing two sheets together on my Singer 15 treadle.



When hooped, the panel has a narrow seam down the center, but that doesn't really matter for the gift bags I'm making.



(I likely wouldn't use this tactic on a tee shirt or other wearable, but it's great for this purpose).



If the fabric is really lightweight, I may also starch it first using some left-over bits of water-soluble stabilizer that I have liquified in water..

Waste not, want not!

When the starched fabric is dry, I spray and pin the fabric in place on the dryer sheet/stabilizer, and complete the embroidery.

Once the embroidered panels are completed, I'll set them aside to stitch into gift bags and stockings as a complement to the fashion fabric.



Tip #3

I find that the nozzle on a can of spray glue can clog up well before the can is empty, rendering the rest of the contents unusable, a frustrating waste, especially when the stuff is so expensive.



I've tried every solvent I can think of, but had never found a satisfactory way of cleaning out a clogged nozzle . . . until now.

If you've got a keen eye, you'll have noticed that one of the cans in the group above is WD-40. You'll also likely have noticed that it has the same kind of nozzle as the three cans of adhesive, and that's the key to keeping the nozzles free.



Whenever I notice the nozzle beginning to gunk up on my can of adhesive spray, I just pop off the nozzle and switch it with the one on the WD-40 can. A few spritzes of WD-40 cleans the nozzle from the inside out, and if I spray into a cloth, I can use that to wipe the outside of the nozzle too. Presto! A clean nozzle. I usually just leave the nozzles switched til the next time I have to clean the adhesive one. They are identical.

Not all spray adhesives use the style of nozzle shown here, but fortunately WD-40 comes with a variety of styles, and you'll most likely be able to find the nozzle that matches your spray adhesive.

Be careful to do this in a well-ventilated area well away from your project surface. WD-40 isn't corrosive, but it can leave oily stains on fabric and may even damage some synthetics.

Wash your hands before returning to your sewing.

