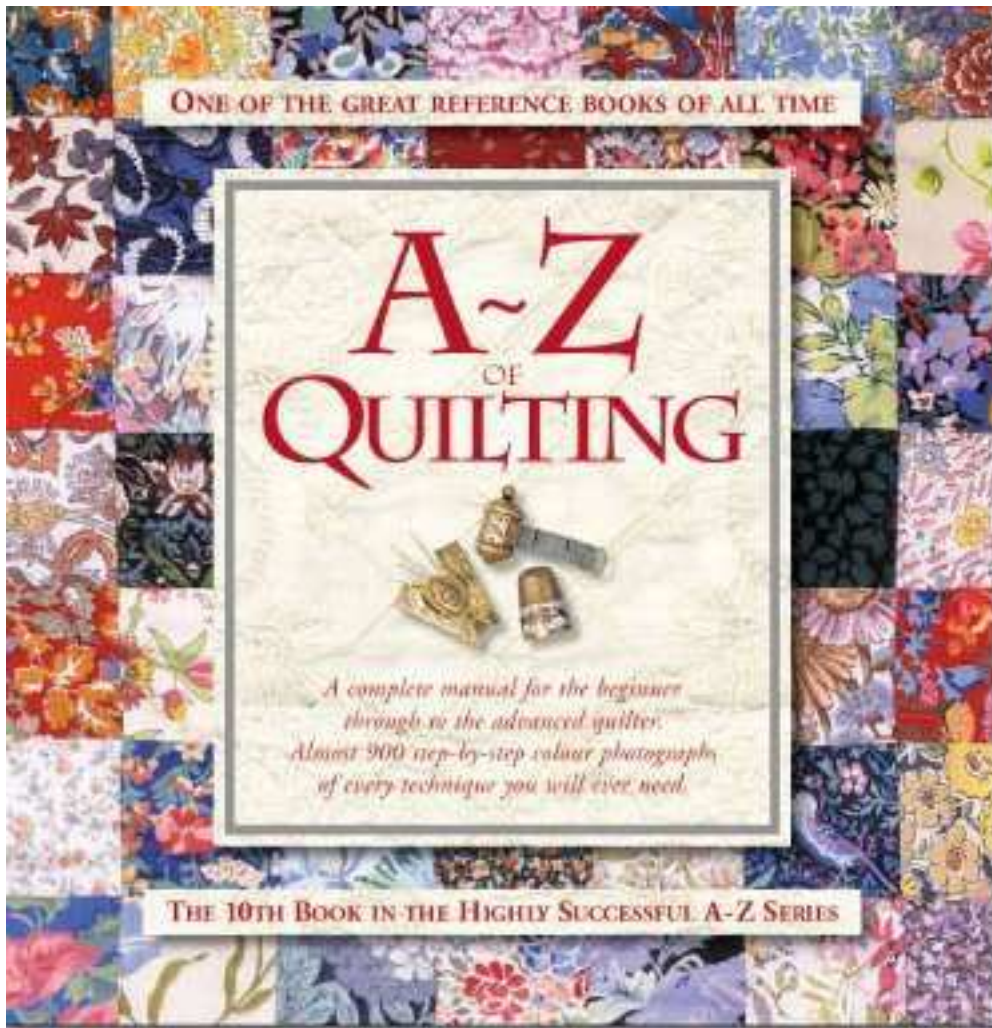


Hello everyone!

Happy May Day!

Hope everyone is having a wonderful May with lots of flowers and sunshine and sewing! We have (hopefully) seen the last of the rain here for a while and the weather has started to warm up – makes me think of cute little summer dresses and wish that my daughters were young enough to still want to wear them! Oh well, that is what Hope Chests are for!



The new book in the A – Z series, A – Z of Quilting, will be arriving this summer! This book looks to be another favorite! Regularly \$29.95, for our May special, if you preorder by June 1, we have it on sale for

\$24.00!

Just email or call me (805) 529-5005 and let me know and I will put you on my list!

Also this month, to go along with the Machine Needles info, I have Schmetz Microtex (Sharp) Needles in sizes **60/8**, **70/10**, and **80/12**. They come 5 to a package and are \$2.85 per pack.. These are the same needles that you see in Joann's on a card that retails for \$4.19!

If you buy 5 or more packages, save an additional **20%** and pay only **\$2.28** per pack!



Now, on to machine needles! When I learned how to sew, we always changed the needle when it broke! Sometimes it would be weeks or months before my needle would break and I would just keep on stitching, happy as a clam, until I heard a crunch or a pop, and then it was time for a new needle! Now that I have been sewing for a while and have lots of practical experience in this area, I can tell you to please change your needle after every 4 – 5 hours of sewing or with every new project! Sewing machine needles do wear, and can have burrs, chips, and dullness. These can lead to missed stitches, snagging threads, tension problems, and a stitch that doesn't look nice!

When you change your needle, you want to make sure that the needle you choose matches the fabric you are sewing on and the thread you are using. There are many different types and sizes of needles to

choose from, and making the right choice will help your stitches look their best!

(Although there are several machine needle manufacturers, the machine needles that I am referring to are made by Schmetz. Schmetz needles will fit most machines, Please note Singer needles are made for Singer machines ONLY!).

The sewing machine needle consists of :

Shank – the top of the needle with one side that is flat. This end of the needle fits into the machine.

Blade – the long part of the needle. Has 1 or 2 grooves that guide the thread.

Groove – is on the shaft on the same side of the needle as the rounded shaft. The groove acts as a guide as the thread lays in it.

Scarf – the indentation above the eye of the needle

Point – the point contains the eye of the needle and can be one of several designs, depending on the purpose of the needle. These include sharp, rounded, and ballpoint.

The thread that you are using needs to match the needle. If the needle is too small, the thread won't be guided by the groove and the thread will shred. If the needle is too large, the holes (from the needle) will be visible because the thread is not large enough to fill them. You can test the thread to see if it fits the needle by doing the following: thread a 15 inch piece of thread through the needle. Hold the thread vertically and taut with the needle at one end of the thread. Spin the needle. If it slips down the thread, YEAH! If not, you need a larger needle!

Tip! I usually use a 60 or a 70 Microtex / Sharp needle for all of my sewing. If I am sewing on my favorite fine fabrics, such as Swiss voile, Swiss baby flannel, Swiss pique' or Ulster handkerchief linen, I will use a 60 Microtex and the corresponding thread (usually Madeira Cotona 80, YLI Heirloom Sewing Thread 70 or Mettler Fine Embroidery 60). If I am sewing on a fun fabric, such as a K.P. Kids, Hoffman, or Kaufman print, I will use a 70 Microtex with the corresponding thread (usually Mettler Silk Finnish 50).

The Number Metric or NM system is used to size the needles. The Number Metric is the diameter of the needle blade in hundredths of a millimeter measured above the scarf (the indentation above the eye of the needle). A needle with a blade diameter of 0.70 mm is a NM size 70 needle. If you see a needle that has a low number (8-19), these needles are numbered using the American system.

The conversion chart is as follows:

NM	American
60	8
65	9
70	10
75	11
80	12
90	14
100	16
110	18
120	19

Remember! For Machine Needles, the higher the number, the larger the needle!

Types of Needles:

Universal (H) – the most common type of needle. The point of the needle is not sharp and not rounded, but somewhere in the middle. As its name indicates, this needle was designed as a basic machine needle to sew on woven or knit fabrics. Available in sizes 60/8 thru 120/19.

Microtex / Sharp – purple stripe on the round side of the shank – this needle is wonderful for microfibers and lightweight and silky woven fabrics. The needle is slender and has a finer point. These come in sizes 60/8, 70/10, and 80/12. This type of needle is wonderful for heirloom sewing!

Denim / Sharp – blue strip on the round side of the shank – this needle is used for firmly woven fabrics, such as denim or gaberdine. These needles have a sharp point and can easily pierce the fibers of dense fabrics. Available in sizes 70/10 – 110/18.

Stretch - yellow stripe in the round side of the shank – this needle is used for knit fabrics. The tip is slightly rounded, which allows the needle to separate the fabric instead of piercing the fabric. This helps to prevent skipped stitches. Available in sizes 75/11 and 90/14.

Ball Point – the ball point needle is used on heavy knit fabric, such as spandex. Available in sizes 70/10 – 100/16.

Embroidery – red stripe on the round side of the shank – the embroidery needle has a light ballpoint tip and a larger eye to accommodate the heavier threads used for machine embroidery. This helps to reduce skipped stitches and to keep the threads and fabric from being damaged. Available in sizes 75/11 and 90/14.

Quilting – green stripe on the round side of the shank – quilting needles are specifically designed to penetrate multiple layers of cloth, which is often found when sewing quilts. Available in sizes 75/11 and 90/14.

Topstitch – this needle has a larger than average eye, which is used with the heavier topstitching threads. Available in sizes 80/12 – 100/16.

Leather – used on leather. The wedge shaped point on these needles enables the needle to cut through the leather instead of tearing it. Available in sizes 80/12 – 110/18.

Spring – these needles are for free motion embroidery, monogramming and quilting. It has a spring around the needle, which acts like a flexible presser foot. The spring needles are available in universal, stretch, denim, machine embroidery, and quilting, in various types and sizes.

Metallic – specifically designed to use with metallic threads. They have a fine shaft, a very sharp point and an elongated eye to accommodate the thread. The groove on the shaft of the needle is larger, to hold the thread and help prevent skipped stitches. Available in sizes 70/10 thru 90/14.

Self-threading – a general purpose needle that has a slot on one side so that the thread can slide into the eye of the needle. Come in size 80/12 and 90/14.

Wing / Hemstitch – the side of this needle's shank are flared and looks like a wing. Used to create openings in the fabric to look like hemstitching. Wing needles come in 2 sizes, 100/16 and 120/19.

Twin and Triple – these needles are constructed with either 2 or 3 needles on a crossbar. They are used for decorative sewing and making tucks. The sizing on the package consists of 2 numbers: the first number is the distance between the needles and the second number is the European or \mathcal{NM} size. For example, 2.0/80 would mean that the needles are 2.0 mm apart and a size 80 needle. Twin needles are available in various sizes and types.

Remember! Change your needle often and use the smallest needle that is appropriate to help keep your stitches looking fine!

I hope this has been helpful and informative! If you have any questions, please email or call! Next time we will talk about thread!

Have a Great Memorial Day!

Vaune