

Smocking by Machine Technique Beginner Level

Create the look of hand smocking by machine, quickly and easily.

Use a sewing machine with smocking-type stitches, such as feather, smocking, fagoting, etc.

Supplies:

- Lightweight fabric
- Sewing Thread
- Cardboard to shape smocking
- Straight pins

Instructions:

1. Your fabric width should be 2-3 times wider than the finished size.
2. Determine how wide you would like the smocking insertion to be, Mark X amount of rows about 3/8" apart.
3. Select a straight stitch, stitch length 4.0
4. Loosen the upper thread tension.
5. Sew along the marked lines.
6. Place the fabric on the smocking board and anchor at center with several straight pins.
7. Carefully pull the lower thread to gather. It is better to grip the fabric and push it along the thread to gather.
8. When all rows are gathered, look it over and be sure that the gathers are evenly spaced and that the finished width is equal to half of the expected width. Repeat for the other side.
9. Use your steam iron to "set" the gathers, being sure not to change the shape of the gathers. To apply a stabilizer, see the Tip below.
10. Select a smocking stitch on your machine. For suggestions see Tip below.
11. Sew the selected stitch between the rows of straight stitching. You may want to use a contrasting thread color.
12. When you are finished with all of the rows, carefully pull out the lower thread.... its magic, isn't it!

Tips and Tricks

- * Work in a well lit area.... it will make all the difference!
- * Spray starch and iron your fabric several times before sewing.
- * Beginners should use lightweight fabric for the first time
- * Ask the fabric store for an empty board from the fabric bolt. This will make a great smocking board.
- * A good stitch for smocking is one that sews off of center. This means that the needle bar is moving to create the stitch and the feed dogs are not moving the fabric left and right to create the stitch.
- *

Smocking by Machine Technique Beginner Level

- * Use an iron-on knit stabilizer to stabilize the reverse side of the fabric before stitching.
- * Use different thread colors in the top and bottom when sewing the parallel lines of straight stitching.
- * If you have an automatic embroidery machine you can add machine embroidery to the top of your smocking.... be sure to loosen the upper tension so that the stitching does not over flatten the smocking.