



Week 3

- Rethink Your Ribbon & Trim
- Repurpose Your Clothes, Patterns and Notions
- **Research Sewing & Embroidery Tools**
- Reinventing the Wheel: Make Your Own Tool Clutch

Let's Research Tools for Hand-Stitching and Sewing

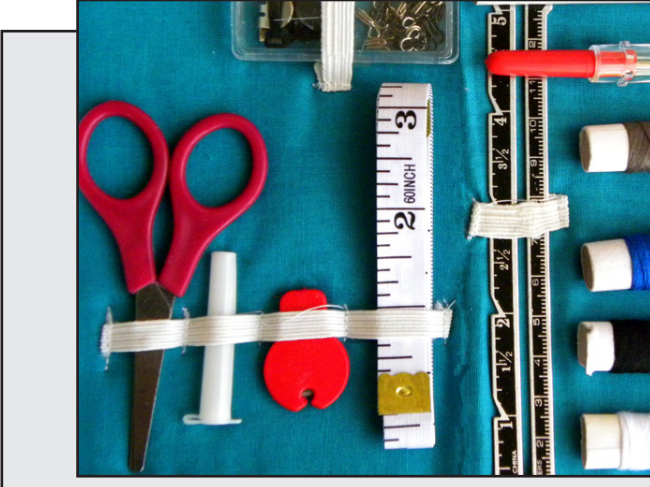
Using hand-stitching and sewing on your scrapbook pages is becoming somewhat of a staple these days. However, there are still plenty of us out there who aren't taking full advantage of all the charm and detail that both hand-stitching and sewing techniques have to offer.

This lesson offers something for everyone--recommendations for those of you who are interested in sticking with hand sewing techniques, information for those of you who are exploring the possibility of buying a sewing machine and some tips and techniques for those of you who are looking for more ways to use the hand-stitching and sewing tools you already have.

Please be advised that these reviews contain my personal recommendations and opinions based on my experience and research of certain products. Any and all information provided should be verified by the manufacturer.

This lesson is not just for those of you who own a sewing machine--this lesson has a little something for all of you. So let's get started!

Pulling Together a Sewing Kit For Your Scrapbooking



Whether you use mainly hand-stitching techniques or you have a sewing machine that you use religiously on your scrapbook pages it may be a good idea to assemble a small sewing kit to aid you in bringing some stitched charm to your pages. Below is a list of supplies that I like to keep on hand for adding these details to my pages.

Recommended Items for Your Scrapbook Sewing Kit:

- 1. Awl** – This makes hand-stitching a bit easier if you use it to poke holes for your stitches beforehand.
- 2. Small snip scissors**-These are great for clipping your stray threads close to your page whether you're machine stitching or hand-stitching.
- 3. Fabric Shears**-Use these for fabric only so they won't dull or get nicks.
- 4. Thimble**-To protect those pretty little fingers of your's from blisters!
- 5. Thread and Embroidery Floss**- For your sewing machine make sure you have matching thread for both your top and bobbin threads--I always make sure I have black and white. And keep an assortment of embroidery floss for hand-stitching as well.
- 6. Seam Gauge**- This will help you to gauge whether elements on your page will interfere with your machine stitching and will also help you to keep your stitching straight, as sometimes elements sticking out from your page can make it difficult to see your machine's guides.
- 7. Tracing Wheel**-Use this to make uniformly spaced holes for hand-stitching.
- 8. Pins and Pin Cushion**- I like pins with big, colored heads so you don't run them over with your machine or accidentally leave them in your project!
- 9. Hand Sewing Needles**- You'll want a variety of sizes that will accommodate both thread and thicker floss.
- 10. Measuring Tape**- To aid you in taking measurements for your larger projects.

Alternative Stitching Tools and Techniques



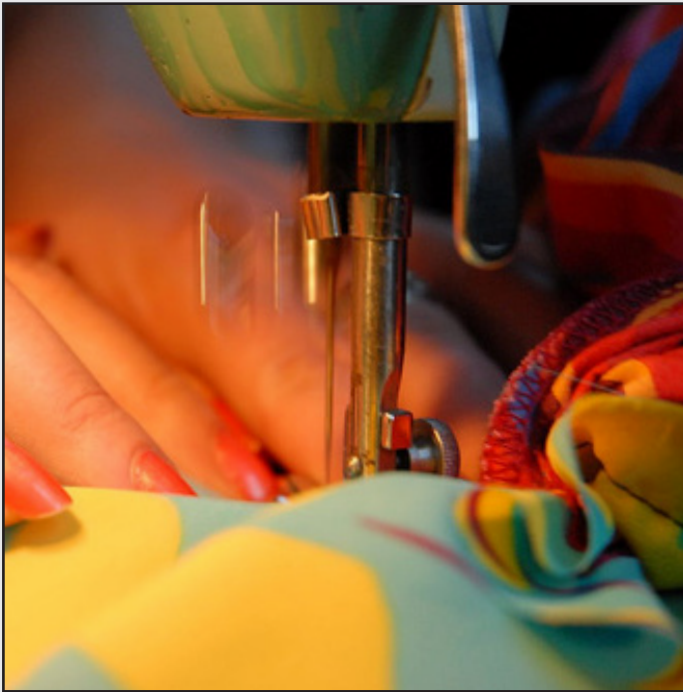
As I said earlier--you don't have to have a sewing machine to bring the detail of stitching to your scrapbook layouts! The following alternatives are perfect for those of you who aren't ready to use your machines in this manner or for those of you who don't own a sewing machine.

Pre-Stitched Papers: You can find all sorts of papers, cardstock and even die cut papers that are already stitched--making it convenient for those of you without the time or tools.

Faux Stitching: Creating a faux-stitched look is simple with the right supplies--you can use an inked tracing wheel to run along your pages to recreate perfect machine stitches or you could use puffy paint to recreate the chunky look of flossy hand-stitches. You could also draw your faux stitches directly onto your page or project with a fine-point marker for a simple yet defining effect.

Stitching Templates: Bazzill and Crafter's Workshop offer stitching templates that can help take the guess work out of beautifully-stitched borders and designs, by acting as a guide to punch your sewing path from. You could also use basic stencils and shape templates for guides as well.

Sew Easy Tool: This tool by We R Memory Keepers, does indeed make everything "sew-easy!" It's used much like a tracing wheel but has interchangeable heads that punch different designs along whatever path you choose. Then you go back through and use these punched holes as your guide for making fun hand-stitched designs.



Do You Really Need a Sewing Machine?

If you're in the market for a sewing machine, below are a few questions that you can ask yourself to determine whether a sewing machine is right for you and to help you figure out what you are looking for. You don't necessarily have to go out and buy a brand new sewing machine--you could purchase a used one from ebay or a second-hand store. Or you could check with friends and relatives to see if they own one they're not making use of.

Before buying a sewing machine--ask yourself the following questions :

- Do I know how to sew--if not, do I have the time to devote to learning?
- Will I use my sewing machine enough to make it worth the investment?
- What projects beside paper crafting might I use my sewing machine for?
- Do I have a home for my sewing machine or will I have to find a place to store it?
- What type of monetary investment am I willing to make in a sewing machine?
- What features do I consider MUST-HAVES and what features do I simply want my sewing machine to have?

Considering these things in advance will be helpful to the sales associate helping you to make your purchase or for your own research if you decide to buy your machine online.

And just because you don't know how to sew doesn't mean you shouldn't buy a sewing machine! It just means you need to be willing to learn. Some places offer free or discounted lessons along with the purchase of a new machine or there are some fun beginner sewing classes available online!



Tips For Using Your Sewing Machine on Paper and More.

Do you own a sewing machine but aren't sure you want to use it on paper? Despite your fears, most sewing machines can handle paper when used with the proper tools and care. Below are a few tips to help you take the plunge! Or for those of you who have already taken the plunge--take a peek and see if some of these tips might improve the paper sewing experience for you.

- Use a sharp industrial needle, this will handle your layers of paper, fabric and even chipboard. Typically a needle meant for use on denim works best.
- Make sure the space around your sewing machine is clear to make turning corners easier.
- If you find you run out room when stitching around your 12 x 12 pages and your sewing machine is set down inside a cabinet--I would recommend using it while in the raised position or removing it from the cabinet and placing it on a clear table.
- Change your needle fairly often—this will prevent your needle from tearing your paper, getting stuck or breaking.
- Consider using a quilting thread. It fills the holes that your machine creates in your paper better than lighter-weight threads and your stitched details will stand out better on your pages.
- When sewing over thicker layers you may want to use the hand-wheel for nice even stitches and then you'll be able to feel if the needle is having any trouble penetrating your layers.
- Check your bobbin before each use to make sure you have enough thread on it to complete your stitching. Nothing is worse than running out of thread in the middle of the process.
- After each use make sure to remove any paper scraps from your feed dogs or bobbin compartment—these can really gum up the works.
- Speaking of gum—try to avoid stitching over adhesive. In the event you can't use pins--try using a removable adhesive.
- Experiment—if you're new to this it could feel fairly foreign to you for the first little bit, but the more comfortable you become, the more fun you'll start to have!

A Few of My Favorite Ways to Use My Hand-Stitching and Sewing Tools On My Pages

Below are some ways that I like using both hand-stitching and sewing tools and techniques in my pages. Enjoy!



I often use hand-stitches or my sewing machine to create a quilted or stitched grid foundation for my pages.

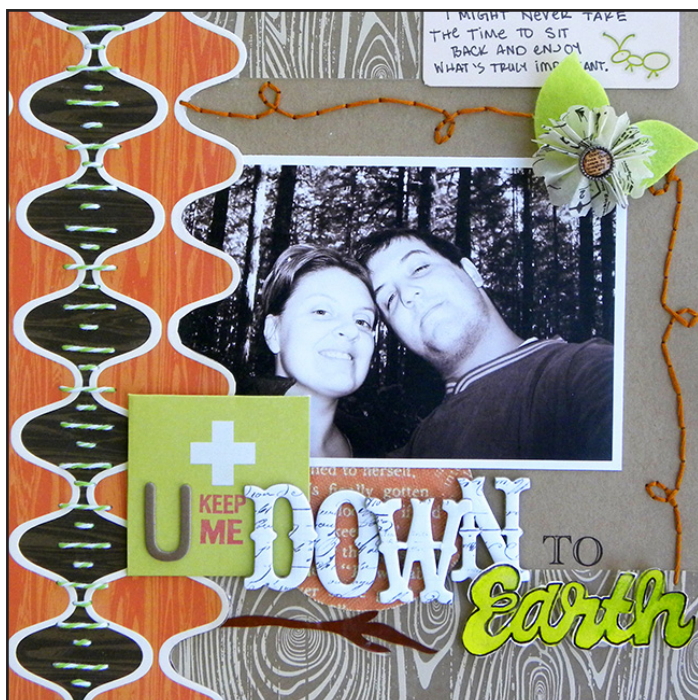
We've talked about how to use your scraps to create paper mosaics and grid foundations, but in "Sweet Dreams" I added extra charm to this technique by using my sewing machine to stitch down my individual squares, creating a quilted effect.



This is a great way to mix and match patterned papers on your pages!

- The stitching I've used on "Sweet Dreams" creates unity amongst each of the individual squares of my grid and causes the different prints and patterns to come across as a single collection--rather than the mixture of unrelated papers that they truly are.
- After you've chosen a selection of scraps to work with in your grid foundation use your hand-stitches or sewing machine to really solidify the look!
- In this page I used a machine zig-zag. But you can experiment with lots of different stitches for completely different looks.

I like to use charming stitched borders and frames to draw attention to my photos and give my pages a completed look.



In "U Keep Me Down To Earth" I used one of my Bazzill stitching guides to add this whimsical hand-stitched frame to my page. It not only adds the perfect finish to this page--but it also draws your eye into the center of the layout where my photo resides.

To get this look:

1. I laid my template over the space in which I wanted to create my stitched frame, then using an awl poked the holes through the guides provided by the templates.
2. Then I chose a coordinating embroidery floss--I like to use the whole strand for extra chunky stitches like these.
3. Next I threaded my needle with about a foot-and-a-half worth the floss.
4. Finally I used an embroidery stitch to stitch through the pre-punched holes.

I love using stitches to help my titles to stand out on the page.

Stitching can help draw attention to your titles, secure them and give them a sense of permanence on the page. Below are a few examples of how you might use stitching in your titles to help them stand out:

- In "Fashion" I used two congruent hand-stitches on each alpha--positioned randomly to add a pop of color and a little extra detail.
- In "Fading Beauty" I stitched over-top of my title with my sewing machine--back and forth, haphazardly--to secure my stickers to the page and to help create visual interest.
- You could also use an embroidery stitch around your alphas to add emphasis and texture or use a few cross stitches on each letter for a little extra security and charm.



I have fun creating free-style stitching designs on the back-grounds of my pages.



In "After the Leaves Fall" I used these free-style machine stitches to set the scene for my layout and to create a road map, if you will, for laying down my page elements.

- This can be a great way to add texture and interest to your page's background, while connecting the elements on your page and directing the viewer's eye.
- The whole point of these types of designs is that they are random and free-flowing, so use your imagination and just keep sewing.
- It's best to work with a clear area when using your machine for this type of maneuvering. Move your machine away from the wall and up out of a cabinet so nothing interferes with the turning of your page.

When I feel like something's missing--I throw in a few hand stitches to finish things off.

A few random stitches can be the perfect way to finish things off with out overwhelming your page. Before I added the cross-stitches to my layout "Remember..." I kept thinking that something was missing! When I get this feeling I often turn to stitches, as they offer maximum impact and take up very little space on a page--meaning you can add them without having to worry about crowding the elements on your page or cluttering your design.

Consider the following when using a few stray stitches to spice things up:

- What part of your layout could use the extra attention?
- Where might stitches fulfill a sense of purpose on your page?
- Are there specific colors that you could use to help tie in other elements and create unity?



Your Assignment:

In the Forum we're talking about:

- *How you feel about stitching on your pages?*
- *Do you own a sewing machine? Or are you thinking of purchasing one?*
- *Do you have questions or concerns about using your sewing machine on paper?*
- *Besides a sewing machine do you use any other stitching or sewing tools or techniques on your pages?*

In the Gallery:

Experiment with stitching in your next layout. Feel free to showcase a technique from this lesson or another technique that involves hand-stitching or machine sewing. If you are already pretty familiar with stitching on your pages then inspire us with a technique that is outside of your comfort zone!