How to Sew Beautiful Top Stitching

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To sew beautiful top stitching you need to accurately stitch parallel to a “guideline”. The guideline is a feature on the fabric that you want to stitch parallel to, such as an existing seamline or an existing top stitching line (e.g., if you are doing a double top stitch).

- It is best to use good quality top stitching thread for the upper thread and regular thread in the bobbin.
- Top stitching often looks better with a slightly longer stitch length, e.g., 2.8mm.

When topstitching the markings on the stitch plate don’t help much – unless you can see through the fabric! Instead, accurately align the guideline on your fabric with either of the outside edges of the presser foot or the left or right-hand inside edges of its slot.

This table shows the sewing machine needle position setting, depending on the distance you want the top stitching to be (either from the left or from the right) from the guideline”.

### SEWING MACHINE NEEDLE POSITION SETTING CHART FOR ACCURATE TOPSTITCHING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Alignment of guideline to presser foot</th>
<th>Distance to LEFT of guideline</th>
<th>Distance to RIGHT of guideline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>inch</td>
<td>mm</td>
<td>1/25&quot; 1/24&quot; 1/23&quot; 1/22&quot; 1/21&quot; 1/20&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mm</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Left-hand side</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Left-hand slot edge</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Right-hand slot edge</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Right-hand side</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This chart is for the common standard presser foot, e.g. Janome A.

See example overleaf.
Example: Sewing a double top stitch line: Two parallel top stitch lines ⅛” apart and the first 1/12” from a seamline.

Step I: Sew first top stitching line: Top stitch 1/12” (2mm) to the right of a seam line:

1. This is to the right of the seamline so use the blue side of the chart.
2. Line up seam line with left-hand slot edge of presser foot.
3. Adjust needle position to 5.0 (this is the chart entry in the row labelled left-hand slot edge and blue column headed 1/12”).
4. Top stitch.

*Left-hand side of slot edge aligned to seam line. Needle 1/12” to the right of seam line.*
Step II: Sew second top stitching line: Top stitch 1/4” (6mm) from first line above and away from the seam line:

5. Fabric is now arranged to top stitch /4” (6mm) to the left of the first top stitching line so use the green side of the chart.
6. Line up first top stitching line with right-hand side of presser foot.
7. Adjust needle position to 6.0 (this is the chart entry in the row labelled right-hand side and green column headed 1/4”).
8. Topstitch.

Right-hand side of presser foot aligned to first top stitching line. Needle ¼” to left of first top stitching line.