

Hand Sewing Needle Guide

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Your Guide
to
Successful
Sewing

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Needles for hand sewing, quilting and needlework vary in thickness, point shape, length and the size of the needle eye. Each type is intended for general sewing, a special task or technique, a certain type of fabric or a specific type of thread, yarn or ribbon.

For best results, use a needle size that is small enough to stitch through the fabric without stretching it, but strong enough not to break or bend. Select an eye size that is large enough to accommodate the thread, yarn or ribbon you'll be using.

Packages of needles are labeled by type and size. The length and thickness of the needle increases as the size gets smaller. For example, a size 1 needle will be thicker and longer, while a size 12 needle will be finer and shorter.

Needle Type	Description	Usage	Sizes
Ball-point	Rounded point	Needles are used for knit fabrics. They have a rounded point that goes between the yarns instead of through them.	5 to 10
Beading	Long, thin needles	These needles are used for sewing beads and sequins to fabric	10 to 15
Betweeners or Quilting	Shorter needle with a small, rounded eye	The shorter length of these needles enables you to stitch quickly and accurately. They are for quilting, making fine stitches in heavy fabrics and other detailed handwork.	1 to 12
Bodkins	This is a long, thick needle with a ball-point end and can be flat or round. They have a large, elongated eye.	Usually used for threading ribbon, elastic or other flat trims through casings, lace openings or other embellishments.	17
Chenille	Thick needles with a large, long eye and a very sharp point.	Chenille needles are used for ribbon or heavy embroidery. The eye accommodates several strands of floss, and the sharp point makes it easy to stitch through coarse fabrics.	13 to 26
Darners (Cotton)	Long needle with a long eye and sharp point	Used for darning work (mending holes)	1 to 9
Darners (Long)	Like cotton darners but longer.	Used for mending and darning larger holes.	5/0 to 9
Darners (Yarn)	Larger than cotton darners, long needle with large eye.	Designed for darning with yarn.	14 to 18
Doll	Long, thin needles	For soft sculpturing on dolls, particularly facial features	2 1/2" to 7" long

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Needle Type	Description	Usage	Sizes
Easy- or Self-Threading	All-purpose, sharp sewing needle with a slotted top instead of a standard eye	These are easy to thread by pulling the thread through the top of the needle. (Also called Calyx-eyes)	4 to 8
Embroidery needles	Same length and point as an ordinary sharp needle, but with an elongated eye	Used for hand embroidery using floss. The elongated eye is designed to accommodate strands of embroidery floss.	1 to 10
Glovers or Leather	Triangular point	For sewing leather, suede, vinyl or plastic; the triangular point passes through these tough materials without tearing them.	3/0 to 10
Milliners	Similar to ordinary sharp needles but longer	Particularly designed for use in millinery, they are also used for basting, pleating and decorative stitches.	5/0 to 10
Sailmakers	Similar to Glovers and Leather needles except the triangular point extends farther up the needle shaft to the eye	Used for sewing thick canvas or heavy leather	
Sharps	Medium length with a round eye and sharp point	Ordinary sewing needles for miscellaneous hand-sewing projects	1 to 12
Sharps (Carpet)	Like regular sharps, but heavier	For sewing carpets and rugs	16 to 18
Tapestry	Large eye, blunt tip	For needlepoint, embroidery and decorative stitching on loosely woven fabrics. These needles have a large eye to accommodate yarn, several strands of floss or decorative threads; its blunt tip passes through the fabric without damaging it.	13 to 28
Upholstery	Heavy, long and straight or curved needle	For sewing thick upholstery fabrics, tufting and for tying quilts. Curved needles are used wherever a straight needle is awkward or impractical.	3" to 12" long (curved 1 1/2" to 6" long)