

As Seen on It's Sew Easy Public Television – Series 1400
Machine Embroidery for Ready-Made Garments



Presented by: Joanne Banko
www.letsgosew.com

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First a little background - It's been more than two decades since I purchased my first embroidery machine. To this very day I still love to watch the hoop "dance" and never tire of watching the machine work its magic. The ticky-tick sound it makes as the needle travels to stitch out my creations is music to my ears! Perhaps you feel the same way! Whether you're new to embroidery, just interested in starting, or already have experience, this show is designed to give you guidelines for planning, preparation, and placement, with the goal of embroidering ready-mades you can be proud to wear or give to others.

Tips for adding machine embroidery to ready-made garments:

Featured machine in this segment is the [Brother XV8550D Dream Machine2](#). This is a top of the line model and loaded with special features. However, you may have noticed while watching that I did not take advantage of special machine features while embroidering. If you have built in "toots and whistles" by all means use them! In this show I wanted both beginners and more *seasoned stitchers* to know that they could experience quality results by following basic guidelines on any machine, from entry-level to top of the line. Below are some basic tips to guide you in adding embroidery to existing garments:

- Plan your embroidery carefully, not just where and how you will place designs but also matching the size and density of designs to compliment the weight of your garment.
- “It’s best to test!” I dig into my stash or purchase a small amount of fabric yardage that’s as close as possible to my ready-made and test the design and stabilizer combination before embellishing my actual garment. Of course if you have a similar garment you can use for a test that works too.
- Denim is ideal for many embroidery designs, usually needing only a layer or two of tear-away, or a layer of wash-away stabilizer on the back to achieve good results. Jean jacket backs are a great canvas for added embroidery. Steer clear of bulky seams and consider adding trim to compliment the design.
- *If possible*, pre-wash garments before embroidering. This takes care of any shrinkage issues and eliminates excess dye.
- Stock up on stabilizers. This subject is too big to cover in one short show but keep these general rules in mind: Knits and thin fabrics benefit from a stabilizer that is temporarily or permanently bonded to the fabric. Tear-away or wash-away generally works well for stable woven fabrics. Avoid hooping stiff tear-away with your garment. Use a medium weight stabilizer instead, or consider “floating” the tear-away under the hoop. Any fabric with nap or texture requires a water-soluble or iron-away topper to keep stitches from sinking in and getting lost in the fabric.
- Use the smallest hoop possible, *whenever possible*, and you will have better registration with your designs.
- For ease in embroidering choose garments that can open up perfectly flat. However, don’t let lined garments stop you from adding embroidery. Carefully open up lining as much as needed to establish a generous flat area, and then either hoop traditionally or use wash-away or tear-away sticky stabilizer to temporarily hold fabric in place. Clip or tape excess fabric to keep it out of the way while stitching.
- If you have a piece that is impossible to hoop, embroider on a sheer or complimentary fabric, and then trim, treat with seam sealant if necessary, and use hand or machine stitches to apply to your piece as an appliqué. If sewing is not possible select suitable fabric glue and glue in place.
- Design templates make embroidery easier and very accurate. [Wrapped in Embroidery](#) by Joanne Banko contains valuable embroidery tips, including needle, thread, and stabilizer information, plus instructions for proper hooping and methods for perfect placement of design motifs.

Additional Resources:

- Visit me at my Sewing and Embroidery website www.letsgosew.com. You’ll find online lessons, videos, free downloads, and lots of sewing and embroidery information and inspiration!
- Find me on Facebook www.facebook.com/letsgosew/
- Be sure to visit the [Official Brother Blog](#) to read my posts on a wide variety of sewing subjects.

Happy Sewing!

