QUICK GUIDE

Needle & Thread

Which needle, stitch and thread to start with for knits, denim and wovens, from the needle and thread makers' own guides.

FABRIC	NEEDLE (SCHMETZ)	SEAM STITCH	THREAD	HEM / TIP
KNIT **Jersey, French terry**	**Jersey 70/10–90/14**	Narrow zigzag (start ~1 mm wide × 1.5–2 mm long) or stretch stitch	All-purpose polyester	Stretch twin 4.0/75 hems (2.5/75 for fine jersey), thread from two spools
KNIT **Spandex, rib**	**Stretch 75/11–90/14**	Zigzag or stretch stitch. Let it feed, don't pull	All-purpose polyester	Not sure the knit has elastane? Use stretch
WOVEN **Denim**	**Jeans 90/14–110/18**	Straight, ~2.5–3 mm	All-purpose to sew; topstitch thread to topstitch	Topstitch ~3–3.5 mm, all-purpose thread in the bobbin
WOVEN **Cotton, linen**	**Universal 70/10–90/14**	Straight, ~2.5 mm	All-purpose polyester	Finish raw edges: zigzag, overlock or French seams
WOVEN **Rayon, lawn, silk**	**Microtex or Universal 60/8–80/12**	Straight, ~2–2.5 mm	All-purpose polyester	Fresh needle; tissue under fine edges stops chewing

All-purpose thread

Gütermann Sew-all

Fiber	**100% polyester**
Weight	**No. 100**
Needle	**Universal 70–90**

Made for all fabrics and seams, by machine or by hand: construction seams, topstitching and decorative stitches.

Topstitch thread

Gütermann Top Stitch

Fiber	**100% polyester**
Weight	**No. 30 (thicker)**
Needle	**100–120**

For visible stitching on medium to heavy wovens, like jeans. Use it in the needle only, with all-purpose thread in the bobbin.

Reading twin needles

Schmetz

A pack marked **4.0/75** means 4.0 mm between the two needles, size 75. Thread each needle from its own spool, both unwinding the same way. One bobbin serves both.

Softer knit hems

our twin-needle guide

Some sewists hand-wind textured (woolly) nylon onto the bobbin for a stretchier underside. Test tension on a scrap first.

Needle *rules*

01 **New project, new needle.** A dull or burred needle is a common cause of skipped stitches on knits.

02 **Knits get a ball point.** Jersey for cotton knits, stretch for anything with spandex.

03 **Too thick leaves holes.** Right type, wrong size still marks fine fabric. Test on a scrap.

04 **Stitch lengths are starting points.** Test on a scrap cut the same way as the garment.

Sources, checked Nov 2026. SCHMETZ "Needles by Fabric Type," "Four needles for jersey," Needle ABC (PDF) and twin-needle guides; Gütermann creativ product information for Sew-all and Top Stitch thread; Sew by the Yard guides to sewing knits without a serger and twin-needle hems.