

# 5 PRO TIPS

to make your sewing sessions easier

Tips from a costume designer who is always in a "we need it yesterday" mode!



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# MAIN TOOL TRAY

Having your main tools easily accessible, yet out of the way is the easiest way to increase productivity and eliminate frustration.

Keep your work table clear of clutter.

I have been using a tool tray system for as long as I can remember and have found it to be the most effective way to work.

\*Find a roomy sewing tray that holds all your main tools so you can see them easily and it slides easily on the work table.

\*This helps to keep all your tools contained in one spot where you know they are always at (as long as you are in the habit of always putting them back in the tray!)

\* This also makes clean up a breeze because everything just goes back into the tray!



# KEEP YOUR MACHINE AREA CLEAR

KEEP YOUR LEFT SIDE CLEAR. YOUR FABRIC SHOULD BE ABLE TO MOVE THRU THE MACHINE WITHOUT KNOCKING THINGS OFF THE TABLE.

Nothing is more frustrating than trying to sew and everything getting caught up in your project. Pins flying all over the place, bobbins rolling around, shears falling to the floor or worse getting caught in your fabric. Just keep your left side always clear and things will run smoother,



## SMALL TRAY AT YOUR RIGHT SIDE FOR A FEW KEY TOOLS

I keep just a few tools at the sewing table.

Tools I need at the machine area; thread clippers, zipper foot, screwdriver, tomato pin cushion, a piece of white paper to help with needle threading and magnetic seam guider.

I keep the rest of my tools in the tool tray at my cutting table where most of the prep and construction is done.



## MAGNETIC STRIP TO CATCH PINS

I have a small strip of magnetic tape on the right side of my machine table. This is where my pins rest after I pull them out when sewing, this way they are not floating all over the table. It's a great way to keep them contained and you less frustrated.

# BE A THREAD BOSS

## KEEP YOUR THREADS IN LINE

Get in the habit of being in control of your thread. Be a thread boss!

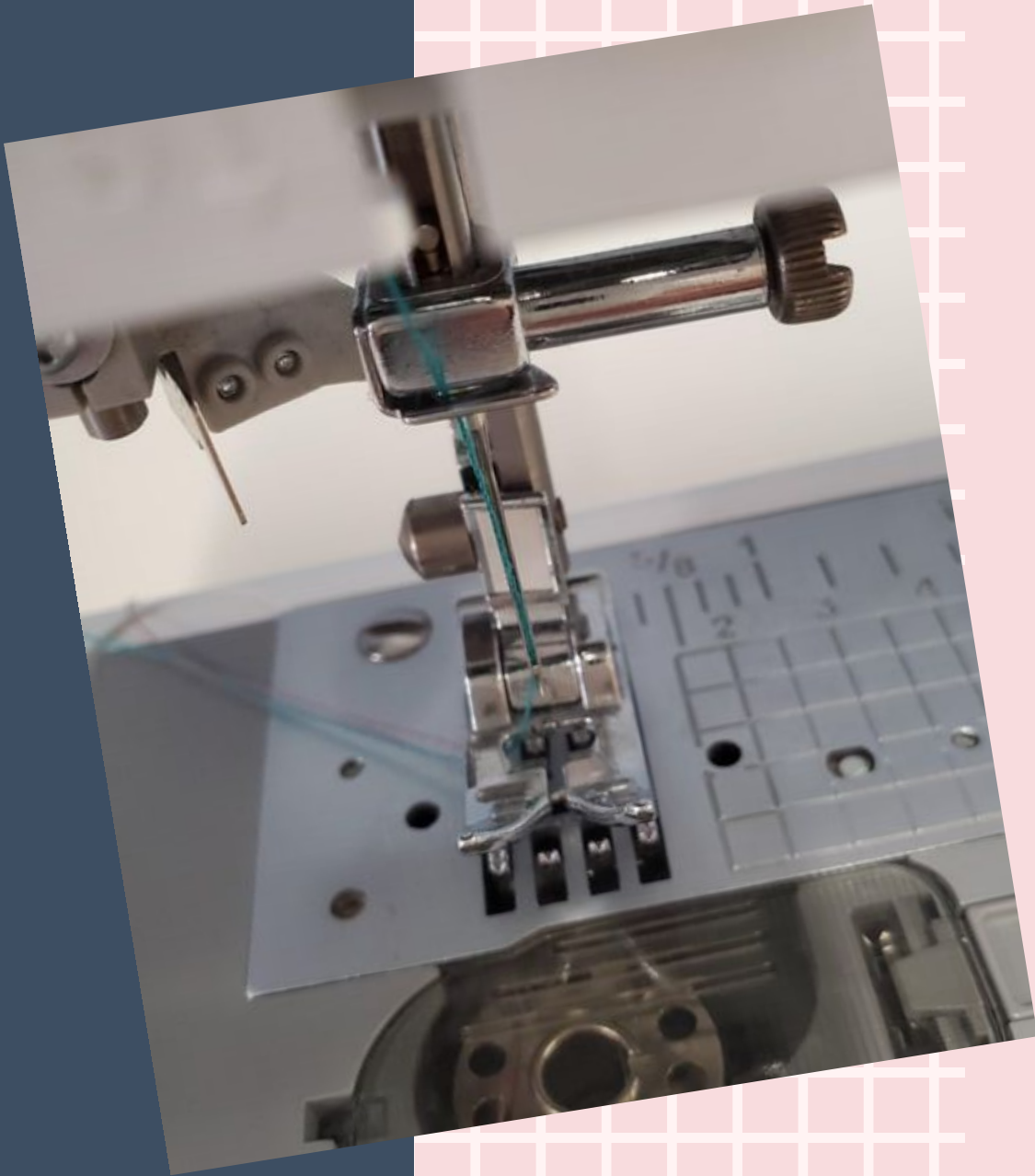
First, when you are threading your machine, be sure to put both the threads under and back of the presser foot.

Starting your seam with a thread tangle is so frustrating. If you just take a second to pull both threads to the back and under the foot the stitching process goes so much more smoothly.

And then when clipping off your new seam, be sure to have a long tail about 8-9 inches. This helps eliminate your top thread from unthreading when you start your next seam.

I am also always paying attention to the tension when I am pulling my new seam off the machine. If you detect tightness or a very loose pull thru, then something in the threading may of slipped. Always paying attention to your thread tension will keep you from having to redo a seam and prevent those dreaded thread tangles.

For more frustration reduction... be sure to clip the ends of your threads off as you go. Don't wait until the project is done to clip them all. It is so much easier to connect your garment seams and notches together when threads are not in your way. Save time and frustration by not having to stop and clip threads when trying to match things up. I'm just sayin....



# PIN TO SEW

## ALWAYS BE THINKING OF THE DIRECTION YOUR PINS ARE IN..?

In my classes, I am always reminding my students to think about how the seam they are preparing is going to feed thru the machine.

Pin your seams so the pins are easy to pull out as your seam is moving thru the machine.

For smooth seam making, your project should be out to the left of the presser foot and the seam and pins are lined up on the throat plate. The pins can be easily pulled out in this set up and transferred to the pin catcher/holder on the right side of your machine table.

Think about how the project feeds thru the machine and you will end the frustration.

Sewing time is easier when you are not getting your project all bunched up and pins stabbing you endlessly and landing in your lap or on the floor.

When preparing your seams get in the habit of thinking about how the fabric will feed thru the machine and how you place your pins so that your motions are smooth and easy.

You will find that the more you sew and practice this habit it becomes automatic.



# PRESSING

## THE KEY TO A PROFESSIONAL OUTCOME!

Pressing as you go, I can't say enough about this habit.

Flat smooth seams make the overall look more professional. Taking the time to press before stitching the seam makes the sewing easier and smoother. If you just roll a seam or hem you end up with puckers, curls and stretched seams. The results are not pretty and makes all your work look homemade.

It's in the pressing that you mold the fibers to the way you want the fabric to lay.  
(the fabrics' grainline has its own say here too)

I see so many beginners try to skip this step and they wonder why their hems curl and stretch and then not matching up at the end of the stitch.

Pressing helps mold the fibers to fix in place so you can just sew it down.

Use pressing tools like sleeve boards, hams, press mits and blocks to help you get into areas easier and without pressing creases in other parts of your garment will make your sewing projects look much more professional.

