

# How Pick the Right Needle

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<http://www.burdastyle.com/techniques/how-pick-the-right-needle>

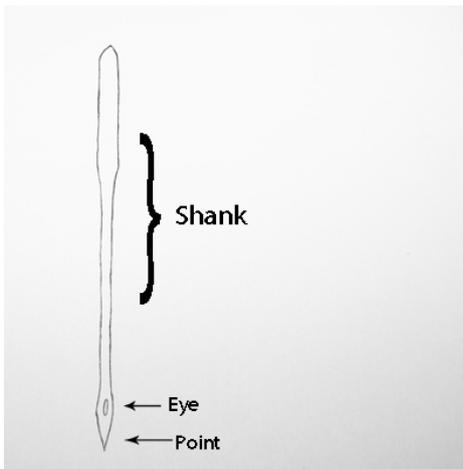
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Sewing machine needles are the workhorses of sewing. Depending on how fast you sew, a needle may pass through the fabric many hundreds of times in an hour. Understanding the needle is essential for trouble-free sewing and good results. In this How To we will learn all about needles, their different parts, the different sizing systems, and how to make them work for you, not against you. Knowledge is power!!

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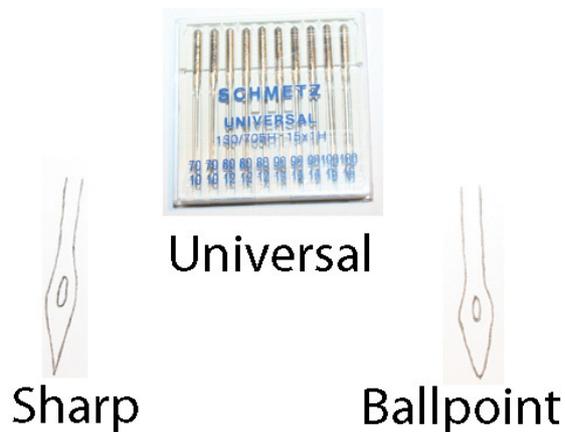
## Step 1



**Shank:** The Shank is the long part of the needle. The diameter of the shank affects how thick of a hole it makes in the fabric and how big the eye of the needle can be, and thus how thick the thread can be. Ideally, the eye of the needle is just big enough for the thread. Too much extra room in the eye causes extra wear and tear on the thread. Thicker threads and thicker fabrics, obviously, require thicker needles. Besides diameter, flexibility is another important factor. More rigid fabrics, like denim, need more rigid needles.

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## Step 2



Needle point: Before synthetic knits were invented, machine needles were sharp. Sharp needles snag or run knit fabric, so more rounded, or 'Ballpoint' needles were invented. 'Universal' needles are a compromise between 'Sharps' and 'Ballpoint' needles; that is, Universal needles can be used on a wider array of fabrics. However, it is best to choose the best needle for each individual project. Ideally, you should choose a new needle each time you start a new project.

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## Step 3



Sizing: For home sewing, size #11 is generally fine for normal weight fabrics. Sizes #11, 14, and 16 are common sizes for home needles, and are based on the old Singer sizing standard. However, there are several types of sizing systems. The same needle may have 4 'different' sizes written on it, which can be very confusing if you are trying to figure out what all those numbers mean. Often, you will see the sizes separated by a slash, such as 11/75 or 75/11. Here, the '75' refers to the "Number Metric" system indicating the diameter of the slimmest part needle blade in the hundredths of a millimeter; that is size, a size '75' needle has a diameter of 0.75mm. Another way to measure needles is the 130/705 H system. This is an international system; the H stands for Hohlkehle in German, which means 'with scarf'. Scarf refers to the indentation above the eye of the needle. Household needles have a flattened shank so the needle's eye will be perfectly positioned in relation to the bobbin hook.

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## Step 4



Wear and tear: Imagine how many times a needle passes through the fabric as you sew. A lot!! Often, if your machine is skipping stitches, your thread is breaking, or your fabric is snagging, you may have a damaged needle that looks fine to the naked eye. That tiny tip of the needle wears out, bends, gets damaged, etc. The eye of the needle may also develop tiny snags. As we all know, there may be other problems with the machine, but starting with replacing the needle (with the proper one for the project at hand, of course) is a good place to start. Make it a habit to change your needle.

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