

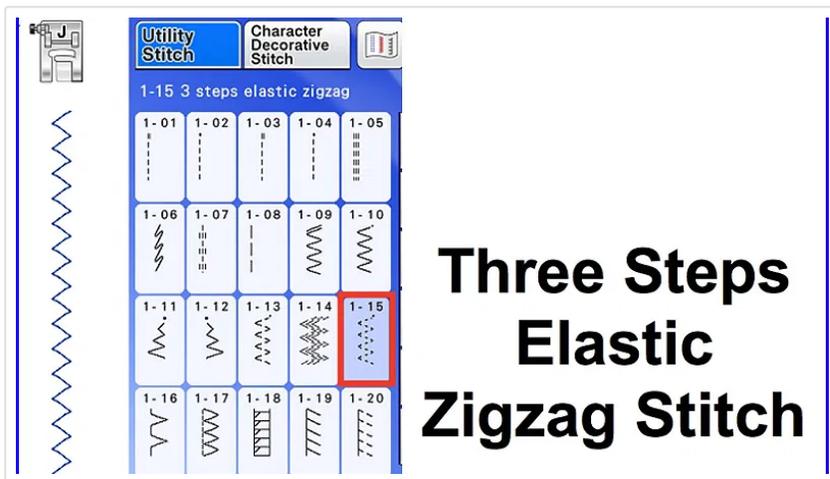


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Quick Tip – Overcasting with the Triple Zigzag Stitch

February 8, 2021 | By Joanne Banko | Quick Tip, Stitches | No Comments

Opinion by Paid Consultant



~Joanne Banko, Brother Sews Ambassador

This multi-purpose stitch has been a favorite of mine for many years. It's called an elastic zigzag stitch. While it is ideal for sewing elastic, that's a topic for another day. Since it's not actually in the category of overcasting stitches it often gets overlooked for this purpose. However, I have found it to be one of the most versatile overcasting stitches in my sewing repertoire. You'll find this stitch on most Brother sewing machine models.

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Before we explore this stitch, let's start with a quick definition of overcasting. In generic terms, you'll often see sewing instructions telling you to clean finish a fabric edge. Clean finishing raw or unfinished edges keeps fabric from raveling during the life of the project. Without finishing seams and raw edges, you run the risk of losing part of the garment with subsequent wearing and laundering. Using a stitch that wraps over or overcasts the raw edge keeps the edges intact. Depending on the fabric, you may see a few stray threads, but the fabric will be kept from continuous raveling. Clean finishing with an overcasting stitch also keeps your seams looking neat on the inside.

The width and length of this stitch are highly adjustable for a wide range of sewing effects. The stitch is made with three small straight stitches forming in each left and right swing of the zig and zag of this stitch.

Ideal for fabrics ranging from fine to heavy, simply customize the stitch length and width, fine-tuning it for different weights and thicknesses of fabric and fabric layers. When using this stitch, be sure to line up the raw edge of the fabric so the furthest right hand swing of the zigzag falls just off the raw edge of the fabric. Below are examples of stitch settings for three different fabrics: lining material, linen, and heavy denim. Samples were stitched on a single layer of fabric.

Figure #1a and Figure #1b: Lining Material:

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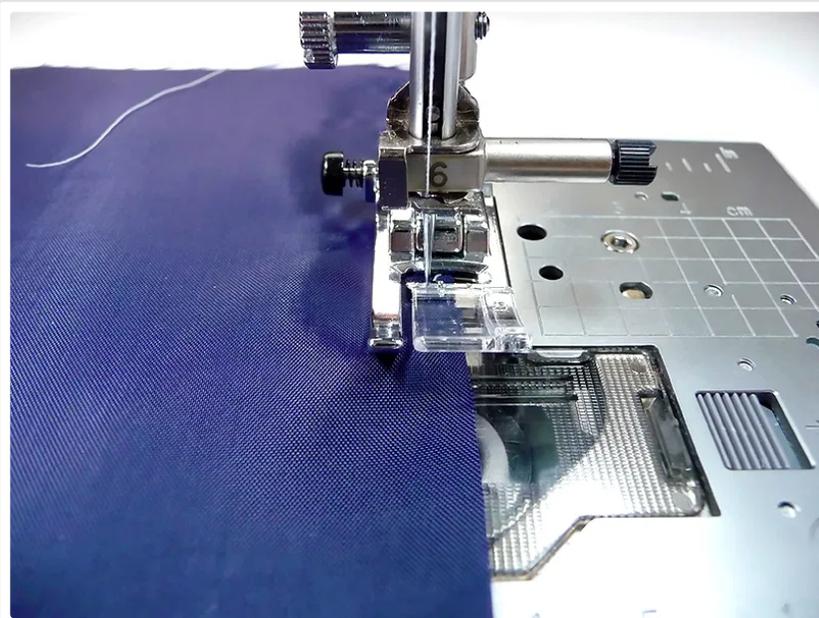


Figure #1a



Figure #1b

Figure #2a and Figure 2b: Linen:



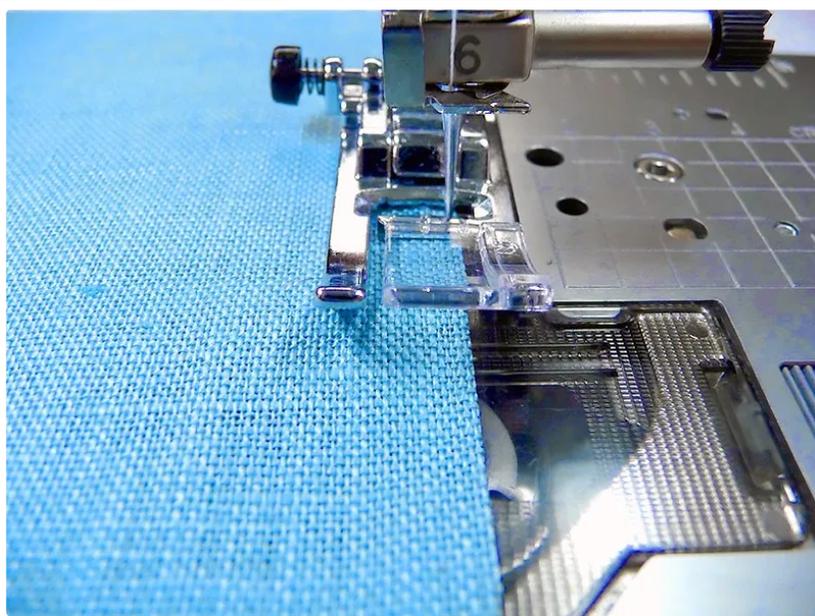


Figure #2a



Figure #2b

Figure #3a and Figure #3b: Denim:





Figure #3a



Figure #3b

Take another look at the fabric samples and you'll see the raveling already taking place on the unfinished edges. **See Figure #4.** Some fabrics seem to ravel just by breathing on them! This shows how important it is to clean finish those raw edges.



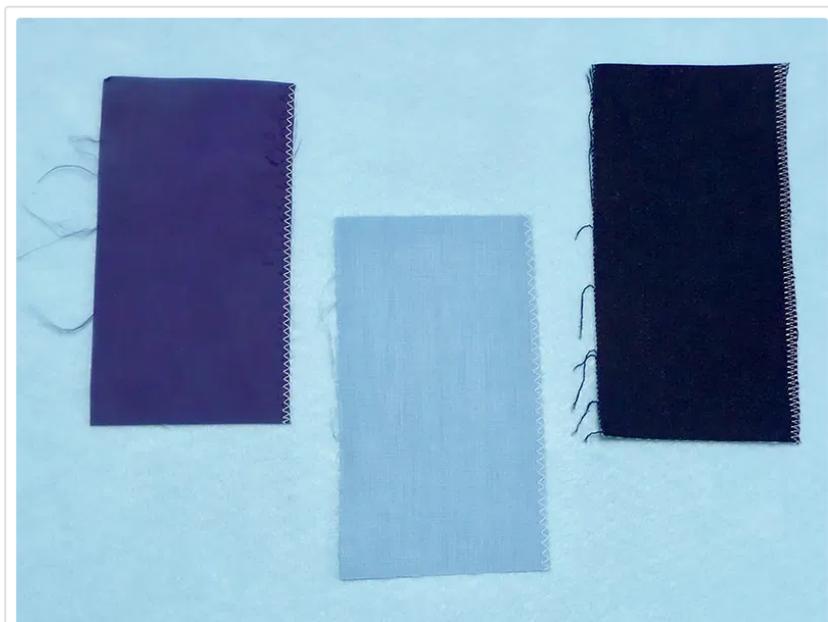


Figure #4

There are of course many other options for overcasting and clean finishing edges. This stitch happens to be readily available on many machines, easy to use, and suitable for fabric weights from light to heavy and everything in between! When using this stitch, experiment on fabric scraps to choose the best width and length settings. Ideally, you want the raw edge covered just enough to prevent raveling but not enough to add too much bulk and thickness to the fabric. Keep swatches with your fabric width and length settings noted for future reference. You'll be good to go and ready to sew your next project!

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