

Is There a Baby Lock Serger "Secret Menu"?

Information on Baby Lock sergers is not secret. There are many sources available to get the most out of these machines. After all, a serger is helpful for all types of sewing from garment making to home décor to quilting. It is truly amazing all the sewing techniques that a Baby Lock serger can do. It is even more amazing how easy it is to set up the machine to use these self-threading, no tension techniques. There is a huge amount of information available to educate and get the absolute most use out of these versatile machines. Use the Owner's Guide included with the machine for detail with color-coded threading paths and suggested threads. Simply use the Quick Reference guide that comes packaged with the machine to quickly set up for most of the stitches and stitch combinations, but there are combinations not shown on the guide. Refer to the optional Inspirational Guide for your machine to find detailed instructions on specific techniques for basic and advanced serging. Baby Lock offers a subscription to hundreds of videos with their Love of Knowledge program.

Because these machines are so user-friendly, it's easy to just set up the machine for the basic functions and serge away. The serger will generally always sew something even if the settings are not specific to the desired technique. That cannot be said for most other sergers. Using the serger for more sewing techniques for more sewing projects means getting absolutely the most use out of your machine investment. Some "Secret Knowledge" can make your experience actually easier than all the above information may show. Sew, let's dive into some lesser known facts and techniques for Baby Lock four-thread and eight-thread sergers that, well, betcha didn't know...

Thread and Even More Thread

Most sergers are very tolerant to different types of thread and even thread of a poor quality. Because the loopers are larger than the eye of a needle, larger, more decorative threads can be accommodated. In sergers that use a tensioning system, tension settings must be adjusted when larger or smaller threads are used. Baby Lock sergers use a patented thread delivery system for the overlock stitches that actually measures the thread and does not rely on a tensioning system. There are no tension settings to adjust.

- When threading the machine for overlock stitches, the thread must be clicked into the first thread guide. This thread guide holds the thread for the mechanical thread delivery system to work.
- Cone thread is handy for the serger, but spool thread works just as well. There are multiple spool cap accessories to place the thread on the spool pin. Actually, thread can even be placed in a sturdy container, such as a ceramic cup, in the back of the machine. As long as the thread flows smoothly and consistently the serger will be very happy.
- Have only one spool of the right color for your project? Use your sewing machine bobbin winder to split the spool into different sources. Use the smaller quantity of thread in the needle if possible because it uses less thread. Use the cup technique to hold the bobbin in the back of the machine. When using the smaller quantity of thread in the loopers, watch for when the thread may be getting low. Because the serger is self threading, stop the work and re-thread with a new bobbin full of thread. Thinner looper thread can be joined with an overhand or surgeon's knot when the work should not be stopped. Stitch slowly until the knot passes through the machine. (Actually the exact color is not **usually** super important for **the looper threads**. Choose a color that is a good value match. For example, don't use black thread in the loopers for a project with white fabric.)
- Create your own thicker thread by using multiple threads in the loopers. Use this technique to color blend threads. When threading the loopers, set up the machine for threading and use either a thread cradle or the threading wire that came in the accessory pouch of the machine. Send the thread cradle through the air threading system while keeping a loop of thread. Thread the machine with the multiple

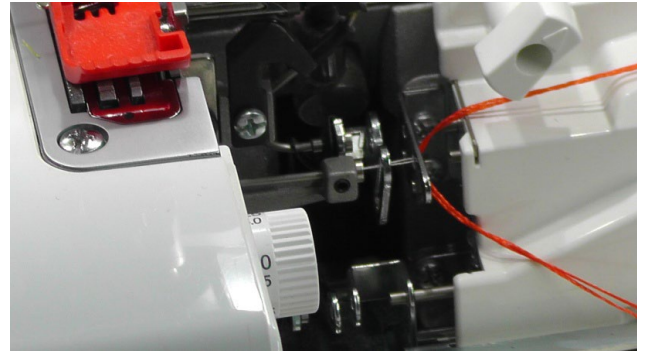
threads as if they are one and insert the ends into the loop. Pull the threads through and serge away.

Always Follow the Threading Rules, Maybe Perhaps Sometimes

Quickly changing from one stitch to the other does not necessarily mean completely re-threading the machine. Needles and threads can be moved from one position to the other without completely re-threading the machine.

- Changing from wide to narrow three-thread overlock involves using a needle in either the O1 (left) or O2 (right) position, placing the needle thread in the first or second slot and moving the stitch selector (either A, B, C or D). Don't completely re-thread the machine. Leaving the needle threaded, loosen the tightening screw and move the needle to the new position. Move the thread by placing the spool side into the thread guide forming a loop and pull the thread through. Move the thread to the new slot and click into the thread guide. If the thread is not on the "correct" spool pin on the thread stand it will still work great as long as the thread can flow smoothly.
- The needle slots for the cover stitch needles work the same for all the needle positions in eight-thread sergers. When moving a needle from one position to another such as from a wide cover to a narrow cover, just move the needle and leave the thread in the same slot. Cover stitch only machines have individual slots for each needle position. When changing on these machines, also move the thread to the new slot. Always lay thread the cover stitch slots with the presser foot lever up (just like a sewing machine). Floss the thread into the slot before lowering the presser foot lever.
- When changing needles to a new position or removing a needle, leave the needle threaded. When the needle is out and in hand, cut the thread. If a needle is dropped into the machine, look to the bottom of the machine for a handle. Pull the handle and the needle is generally right on the magnetic pad of the little drawer. Are you missing the magnetic pad? Cut a thin refrigerator magnet and glue it into position.

- If the thread fits in the threading ports, it can be used. Very thick threads can be used in the loopers but the threading ports should be avoided for best results with very thick threads. (The thread turns a 90 degree angle just after the ports and that can hold the thicker thread back.) Thread the machine with the thick thread up to the threading ports and into the bypass thread guide. Use the wire that came with the machine or a thread cradle to bypass the ports. Put the machine into threading position and thread the wire or cradle (hold the loop back). Move the machine into serging position to expose the thread in the tubular loopers. Pull the loop from the first open position and thread the thicker thread through the loop. Pull the thread through the looper.



- The Automatic Thread Delivery system will give great results for almost all of your serging. To adjust the system, use the adjusting knob to deliver more or less thread by turning the knob to the “+” or “-“. The Automatic Thread Delivery system can also be bypassed **if necessary** for thick threads. Sew a test sample and use a long stitch length.

Sew Tiny, The Rolled Hem

The Rolled Hem is a very versatile stitch. On many other brands of serger the needle plate must be changed to create a rolled hem. To modify the Baby Lock serger to a rolled hem, turn the Large, Lower stitch Length knob to the Rolled Hem position. Follow these tips for great results.

- Use a thinner thread for a rolled hem and adjust the stitch length. Thicker threads just stack up on each other and the stitch is just “clunky”. After stitching, pull the rolled hem through your fingers to smooth it out.
- If the rolled hem has “pokeys” of thread escaping the stitch, serge over a strip of wash away or heat away stabilizer lain on top of the fabric. The stabilizer will hold the pokeys in place even after it is removed.



- The width setting for a rolled hem is generally “M”. The M stands for marrow hem. Marrow hem is the industry term for the rolled hem. If the hem literally pulls away from a very lightweight fabric on a test sample, widen the cutting width to the maximum.
- For a very delicate rolled hem set up the machine for a narrow two-thread flatlock. Move the stitch selector to D and the stitch length to the Rolled Hem side of the dial. This stitch is not shown on the Quick Reference Guide.
- Use a rolled hem as a seam for sheer or lightweight fabrics. Widen the cutting width to the maximum for the strongest seam and/or stitch just inside the rolled hem on the sewing machine. The Baby Lock Mini Piping foot will help keep the rolled hem in position.

Feet and Attachments, Collect ‘Em All

The serger is packaged with the standard foot that works with all of the different stitches and stitch combinations. Specialty feet and attachments designed for specific tasks will make quick work of those tasks.

- Specialty serger feet snap on and are specific for either four-thread or eight-thread sergers. (Pink packaging is for four-thread accessories and green packaging is for eight-thread sergers.) Attachments manipulate the fabric before it reaches the needle and are attached to the machine with the white thumb screws that come with the machine.
- The standard foot has slots that can be used to position ¼” and 3/8” trim or elastic. The eight-thread serger foot has a slot for the overlock side and a separate slot for the cover stitch side. Insert twill or elastic to a seam for stabilization.
- A serger controls fabric very well because of the double set of feed dogs and the long feet maintain contact with more of the fabric. The UltraT serger foot fits all Baby Lock eight thread sergers. It reduces friction and allows for even more fabric control. Use this foot and a chain stitch with appropriate thread for traditional seaming on difficult fabrics.

- Many feet have multiple uses. The Elastic foot has a hole to guide wire for wire edge ribbon or fishing line for a lettuce edge hem into perfect position for a rolled hem. Use the lace applicator foot to position fabric perfectly when stitching a flatlock seam or a ¼" quilt seam. Use the cording foot to insert a zipper. Buy a longer zipper than needed to allow room for the long serger foot
- A separate Inspirational Guide is available for just the serger feet and attachments. When purchasing feet and attachments, foot kits are available for both four-thread and eight-thread sergers and the cost of a kit is less than purchasing individual feet (and you get a super cool carrying case to store them in).

Serge What?

Creative minds has been pushing Baby Lock sergers into many new and creative applications for these machines. Here's a big thank you to Baby Lock Educational Consultants for thinking outside the box and outside the guide book! Did you know that a Baby Lock Educational Consultant, Margaret Tully, showed the engineers how to create the wave stitch using her fingers? They took the concept back to R & D and the exclusive wave stitch was born the very next year.

- The serger can stitch "in the air" because of the Thread Delivery System. Take advantage of this for serger trim, serger jewelry, serger tassels and serger crochet.
- Cover stitches on wash away stabilizer create a lacey fabric. Overlap the stitches so they connect to create a fabric.
- Use the rolled hem or wave rolled hem as piping or added to binding for the look of piping. Use the beading foot to stitch over cording to create a thicker, custom piping.
- For maximum gathering or gathering heavier fabrics, use the ruffling foot and a seven or eight thread stitch. Use the seven or eight thread combination for seaming heavy fabrics.
- Use the chain stitch and a smooth thread (for easy removal) to baste together a fitting muslin. Just pull the looper thread to un-sew the seam.