

Free Motion Sewing on Jeans

I love the trend of embellished denim. You can achieve this look with your sewing machine using a technique called “free-motion sewing”. This is done by dropping the feed dogs and moving the fabric under the needle to draw the designs you want. You can do this on most garments with the right stabilizer.



Materials

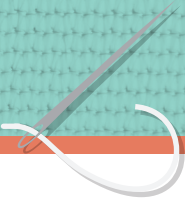
- Jeans
 - Brother Pacesetter medium weight, adhesive tear-away stabilizer (SA5815)
 - Brother Pacesetter lightweight, adhesive water soluble stabilizer (SA5906)
 - Marking tools
 - Brother embroidery thread
 - Seam ripper
 - Any Brother sewing machine that has a drop feed feature (i.e., ability to lower the feed dogs)*
 - Spring action quilting foot (may be included with your machine, or can be purchased separately)*
- *Refer to your machine's user manual for features and included feet

Sewing Directions

- 1 Use a seam ripper and remove the stitches of the pocket. (Mine had metal snaps at the top corners, so I just removed the stitches up to that point.) Most denim pockets will have heavy stitching here, so if you don't want to hassle with removing the entire pocket, just remove up to that point.



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Sewing Directions (cont'd.)

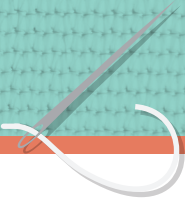
- 2 Place a medium weight adhesive tear-away stabilizer on the back of the pocket.



- 3 I use two different techniques for doing free motion. The first one is to use a fabric marking tool and draw the design directly onto the pocket. The second one is good for a design with more detail. Read through and try the instructions for both techniques to see which works best for your project.



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Sewing Directions (cont'd.)

3a Free motion technique #1

- Draw your design onto the pocket using a fabric marking tool.



- Set up your machine to free motion: Place the spring action quilting foot on, and drop the feed dogs. Use the default straight stitch length. Use embroidery thread to enhance the design.
- Like anything, it's a good idea to practice with similar material prior to the final project. Find a point to start and begin tracing the outline with the needle.



Tip: Once you've gone over the sketch you can retrace again.

Tip: Use the N foot and satin stitch to create bolder edges (like I did on the stems). To fill in parts of the design, use back-and-forth motions.

- Pin the pocket back into place. Use similar thread and stitch length to follow the previous stitch marks.

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Sewing Directions (cont'd.)

3b Free motion technique #2

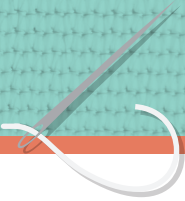
Now for the *other* way to do this, which is good when creating a design with more detail. Use adhesive-backed water soluble stabilizer, and trace your design onto the stabilizer. Then cut to the size of the pocket. The stabilizer is self-adhesive, so you can just stick it directly onto the top of the pocket. (If you're using water soluble stabilizer that is not adhesive-backed, then use pins or a temporary adhesive spray to keep it in place.)



- 4 Free motion directly onto the stabilizer, and be sure to follow the outline. The stabilizer is water soluble, so it will dissolve once it gets wet.



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Sewing Directions (cont'd.)

- 5 Once finished soak it in water till the stabilizer dissolves. Once the design has dried you can go over it for some added details.



- 6 Sew the pocket back on.



This project created by Laura Pifer

Laura is the blogger and designer of the DIY fashion blog Trash to Couture. Trash to Couture was created in 2010 to inspire a less wasteful approach to the mass-produced fashion mainstream through DIY tutorials and repurposed fashions. Laura is also a sewing educator and specializes in designing content for media such as Altered Couture and It's Sew Easy TV.