

# Scented Pyramids (or Juggling Balls)



Slide 2:

# Introduction

## The project

- A set of 3 “Scented Pyramids” to use in a drawer or on a shelf in a wardrobe.

OR

- A set of juggling balls (see slide 4)

## Skills learned

- Setting the sewing machine width and length dials
- What is a “seam allowance”?
- The importance of pinning
- Sewing to an accurate seam allowance
- Stitching corners
- Topstitching
- The importance of pressing and trimming
- Turning through
- Machine or hand stitching to complete the item.

# Slide 3: What materials you need

- Paper for sewing practice
- Scraps of fabric for sewing practice – use woven fabric such as a (non-stretchy) shirt, duvet cover, sheet.

## For EACH pyramid:

- Lavender (for a scented pyramid) OR rice (for juggling balls)
- TWO 10cm x 10cm squares of woven fabric such as a (non-stretchy) shirt, duvet cover, sheet.
- Machine sewing thread
- A few pins
- A hand sewing needle

Slide 4:

# Juggling Balls

- This set of three scented pyramids can be filled with rice - ordinary dry rice used for cooking – and used for juggling! It might sound strange, but it’s actually quite fun to learn to juggle with 3 of these pyramids. If you decide to do this, you’ll need to fill them quite full – and pack the rice down fairly well because it has a tendency to “settle”.

## Slide 5: Total beginner or not?

- If you have NEVER used a sewing machine before, you'll need to read through all the slides, and follow my advice/ instructions.
- If you have basic knowledge of how to set up your machine and just want to start sewing, skip to [slide 20](#).

# Slide 6: Threading your sewing machine

- Although all sewing machines are very similar, you need to refer to the manual for your particular sewing machine to complete these initial steps:
  - Filling the bobbin (the lower thread)
  - Threading the machine (the top thread)
  - Inserting the bobbin

## Slide 7: Setting your machine

- Sewing machines can be mechanical or computerised, but they all have the facility to alter these basic settings:
  - Pattern selector
  - Stitch width
  - Stitch length
  - Tension
- Again, the way you change these settings will be explained in your manual.

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# Pattern Selector

- **ALWAYS** make sure your needle is raised before you change any stitch settings.
- To do this, turn the balance wheel **only in the direction stated in your manual.**
- For this first project, you are going to use only “Straight Stitch”.
- Using your manual, find out how to set the machine to straight stitch.



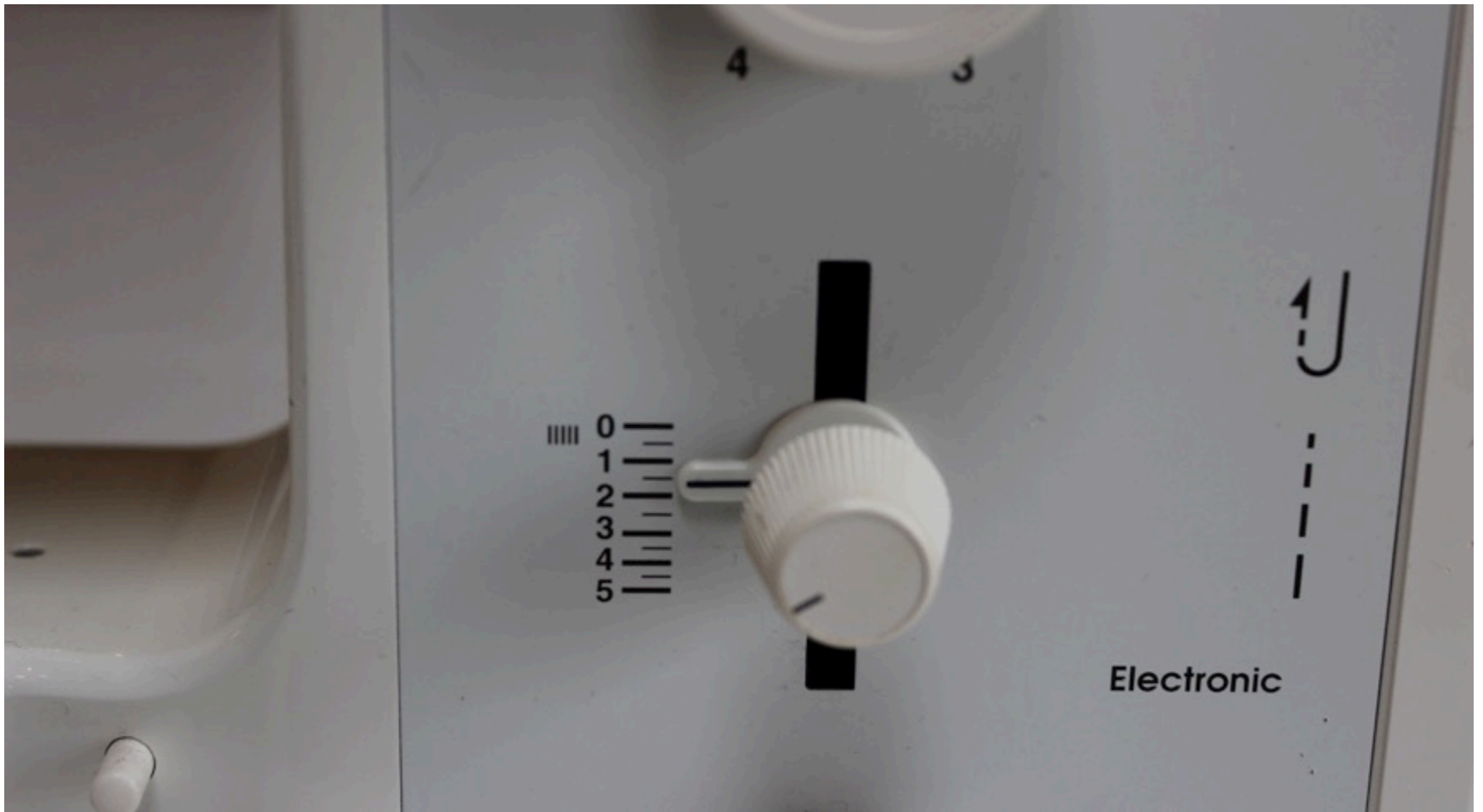


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# Stitch Length

- You can alter the **length** of the stitch.
- There might be a “length” dial or you might have to change this setting using buttons, in which case there is usually a digital display.
- The general rule is: You use a LONGER stitch for thicker fabrics or many layers, and a SHORTER stitch for finer fabrics or single layers.
- The standard setting which will work for a good many jobs when using STRAIGHT STITCH is a setting of **2.4 or 2.5mm**.
- Set your length to 2.4 or 2.5 for this project.

An **example** of how the stitch length setting might be altered.



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# Stitch Width

- Straight stitch has no “width”. However, the “width” button/dial still has to be set correctly because it often determines the position of your needle.
- The width setting for STRAIGHT STITCH will depend on your machine. *Usually* – but not always - this means setting the width to “3” or “0” – **check your manual**.
- Make sure the needle is raised, then change the “width” setting and watch the needle move from left to right.
- You usually need to sew with your needle in the **central position**. HOWEVER – do check your manual because every machine will be different.

An **example** of a width dial:



# Tension

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- Tension simply refers to the balance between the top (spool) thread and the lower (bobbin) thread, and how tight or loose these threads are.
- You need to get a good balance to create a strong stitch.
- Your stitches should look the same on the **top** and the **bottom** of your fabric.
- If the tension is too loose or too tight your stitches might have loops or the thread might look as if it is making the fabric crinkle.
- If that is the case you might need to alter the tension >>>>> (next slide)

Poor tension – loops showing on the wrong side of the fabric.



# Slide 15: Tension or needle or thread?

- You should NOT need to alter the tension very often and will need to refer to your manual to explain more about this.
- Other problems that might make the stitch uneven/weak:
  - A blunt needle
  - The wrong size needle
  - Poor quality thread
  - Spool and bobbin thread of a different quality or type

Slide 16:

# Exercise (1)

- **You're going to stitch on paper to start with, to get used to how it feels to sew.** Use a flat piece of paper with a straight edge.
- **DON'T switch on your machine until you are ready to sew.**
- ALWAYS keep your hands/ fingers away from the needle when it is switched on.
- **ALWAYS keep your foot on the floor and not hovering on the foot pedal when your fingers are anywhere near the needle.**
- Pull about 30cm of top and bobbin thread out, to the back, behind the needle.
- Place the paper under your needle and lower the presser foot.
- Gently put your foot on the foot pedal and start to sew **but... >>>**
- **DON'T hold or guide the paper, simply WATCH how the machine itself pushes the paper backwards as the needle and thread sew.**
- You do **NOT** have to push the paper through.



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# When you've finished...

- When you have finished, make sure the needle is raised.
- Lift the presser foot.
- Pull the paper out, pulling it AWAY FROM YOU, backwards, behind the needle.
- Cut the threads close to the paper.
- If it doesn't pull out smoothly, you might need to turn the balance wheel very slightly forwards and backwards to loosen the bobbin thread.

Slide 18:

## Exercise (2)

- Take a sheet of paper and rule a few lines. Then draw a few wavy lines too.
- Now try to stitch on top of these lines. Straight lines are easier than curved lines.
- **Don't go too fast** – learn to use the foot pedal to increase/decrease the speed smoothly.
- **At a corner** – leave the needle DOWN (in the paper), lift the presser foot, turn/pivot the paper until it looks as if it is in the correct position, lower the presser foot...and continue to sew.
- **For curves** – sew VERY slowly. Sometimes you will have to leave the needle down, lift the presser foot, turn the paper VERY SLIGHTLY, put the presser foot down, sew a few stitches...then repeat this process again.

Slide 19:

## Exercise (3)

- Now take a scrap of fabric. *See notes on Slide (3)*
- Remember to pull out about 30cm of thread before starting (to prevent the needle from unthreading).
- Put the presser foot down and start to sew, just to get a feel of sewing on fabric before you start your project.

Slide 20:

# The project

- Each pyramid is made out of TWO squares of fabric. If necessary, iron the fabrics before starting.
- Each square must be cut accurately – 10cm x 10cm
- Create a paper pattern to do this using a ruler and pen/pencil.
- Then pin this on the fabric and cut the fabric out.
- **>>> means the information carries on, onto the next slide**

Slide 21:

1) Lay your two squares in front of you with the RIGHT SIDE of the fabric facing up. By RIGHT SIDE I mean the side that looks best!



Slide 22:

2) Lay one square on top of the other with the **right sides** facing each other

>>>>



Slide 23:

3) Pin the two squares together, as shown, using 5 pins. You are going to sew around **three sides**, so leave one side **unpinned**, to remind you.

**Read the next slide carefully before you start sewing.**



## Slide 24:

- \* You are going to sew the squares together 10mm/1cm from the edge.
- \* ALWAYS sew with the fabric on the LEFT of the foot.
- \* If you look at the needle plate – the area under your needle – you will see lines engraved on the metal.
- \* Find the one which says either “10” or “3/8”
- \* These lines are 10mm/1cm (or 3/8”) from your needle.
- \* You need to sew with the edge of the fabric lined up with that 10mm/1cm line.

>>>>>



Slide 25:

\*Line the edge of the fabric up with the 10mm (3/8") line. Lower the presser foot.

\* To secure your stitches, sew 3-4 stitches, then press the **reverse** button/lever and sew 3-4 stitches backwards.

\* Let go of the reverse button/lever and your machine will sew forward again  
- **sew down the first side until you are 10mm (3/8") from the bottom edge**

\* **SEE >>>>>**



# Turning corners...

(i) Stitch until you are 10mm (3/8") from the first corner.



# Turning corners...

(ii) Raise the presser foot and turn the fabric... Until the second side is lined up with the 10mm (3/8") line.



# Turning corners...

- (iii) Put the presser foot back down and continue sewing the next side.  
Stitch the second corner in the same way as the first



Slide 29:

After sewing THREE sides, **secure** your stitching :

\* Sew right to the edge of the fabric, then reverse back 3-4 stitches, then go forwards to the edge again. >>>>



Slide 30: When you have finished, your square will look like this.



Slide 31:

Trim off the loose threads close to your fabric.

Also cut off the two corners opposite the open side. To do this, **cut CLOSE to your stitching without cutting through your stitching** like this.



Slide 32: **Press** the stitches you have just done - with a steam iron. Pressing is an important step – **don't be tempted to skip it!** >>>>





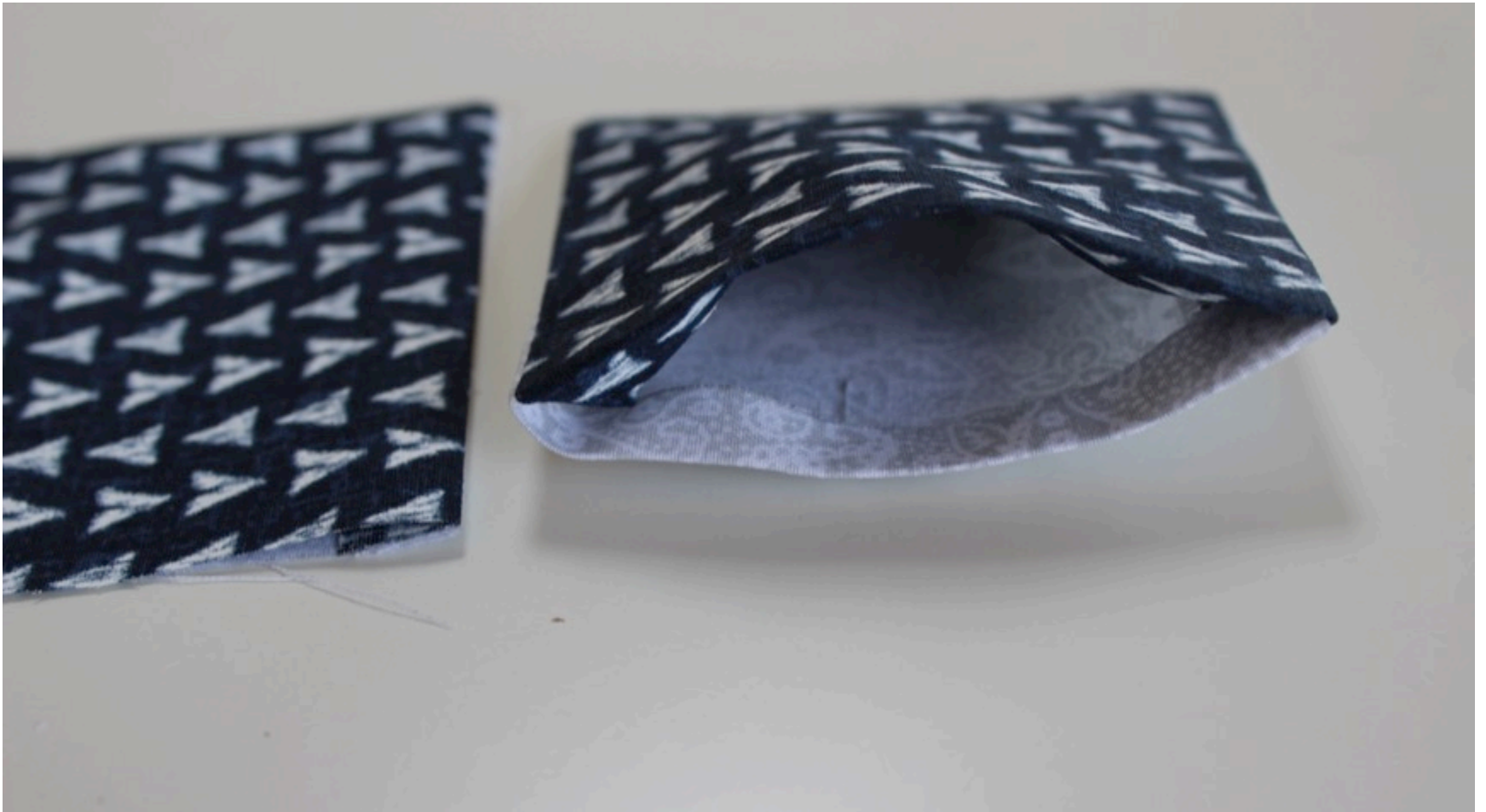
Slide 33: Turn your work through, so the **right side (R.S.)** is now on the outside.



Slide 34: Now press again, so it's really flat. Try hard to poke the corners through neatly – but don't use anything too sharp otherwise you might poke through your stitches at the corner. *(Photo shows before and after pressing flat)*



Slide 35: This is a bit fiddly... Now press the open edge inside so it is square again, and measures approx. 8cm x 8cm.



Slide 36:

\* Stuff with **either dried lavender** (using a spoon helps!) or rice if you're making juggling balls.

\* Bring the two **seams together**, as shown – this gives the pyramid (3D) shape so follow the photo below.



Slide 37:

**To machine stitch the remaining side – this is awkward and recommended for people with experience! Hand stitching this final side is safer.**

**See slide 41 for handstitching instructions**

**However, if you wish to use machine stitching:**

\* Pin carefully along the open side about **2cm** from the fold so there is room for your presser foot.

The pins should prevent the filling from falling out when you tip the pyramid on its side

Slide 38:

Carefully sew along this final edge, stitching about **2-3mm** from the fold.  
**Reverse stitch** at each end, to secure and trim threads.



Slide 39:

This is what it should look like, before you remove the pins and before you trim off the loose threads.



Slide 40: This is what the finished scented sachet or juggling ball should look like.





Slide 41: Handstitching...

Use a length of **single** thread no longer than the distance from your shoulder to your wrist and **no knot**.

Secure your thread at the right hand side by first going into the fabric about 1cm from the edge, then pull all but the last 1-2 (1/2-1")cm through AT the edge.



Slide 42: Use overstitch to stitch the opening together, moving across from right to left about 3mm at a time and taking the thread over from the side closest to you to the opposite side, pulling the stitches together. >>>>





Slide 44: Keep going until you reach the left hand side then work 3 stitches on the spot, then cut off the thread here. Go back to the side where you started and cut off the excess 1-2cm you left at the beginning.



Slide 45:  
The finished hand-stitched pyramid.

