

Sashiko Machine—One Stitch, a World of Techniques With Debi Kuennen-Baker

What is the Sashiko?

The Sashiko is like no other machine you have ever sewn on. It uses only a bobbin thread to make a beautiful hand look stitch.

With only four places to make adjustments on the machine, it is one of the easiest machines you will ever learn.

It is Exclusive to Baby Lock

Machine Parts & Functions

Presser Foot Pressure

The Presser Foot Pressure dial, found on the top left of the machine, adjusts how much pressure or how hard the presses down on the fabric. The factory setting is 5, and does not have to be changed very often. If you are working on heavy fabric, such as a quilt you may need to decrease the pressure. Very light weight fabrics might require you to increase the pressure.



Presser Foot Height Adjustment

The Presser Foot Height adjustment dial determines how high the foot raises while in the needle down position.

It has two functions.



When set at “0” to “1” the foot sits on the fabric for straight sewing, 2” to “3” raises the foot in the needle down position for curved sewing, pivoting and couching decorative threads in specialty mode.

Positioning Button & LED Lights

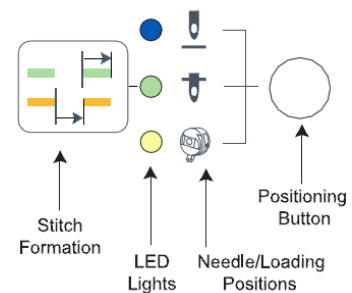
The LED lights next to the Needle Up/Down Button have 4 functions.

When the top light is **Blue**, the machine is in needle up. This means when ever you stop sewing the needle will stop in the up position

When the middle light is **Green**, the machine will stop in the down position when you stop sewing. This is a great aid when pivoting around corners and curves as well as decorative techniques.

When the middle light is flashing **Green**, the machine is in Specialty Mode. The machine will now take one stitch and one space and stop. You will need to lift your foot off the foot control and depress it again to take another stitch and space. This mode is used when doing decorative techniques.

When the bottom light is **Yellow**, the machine is in the bobbin loading position. This light needs to be lit whenever you open the side door to remove or insert a bobbin.



Stitch Length & Stitch Spacing

The Stitch Length and Stitch Space levers adjust the stitch Length and stitch space between 2mm and 5mm in Length.

The stitch and space Length can be adjusted independently of each other.



Stitch Length



Stitch Spacing

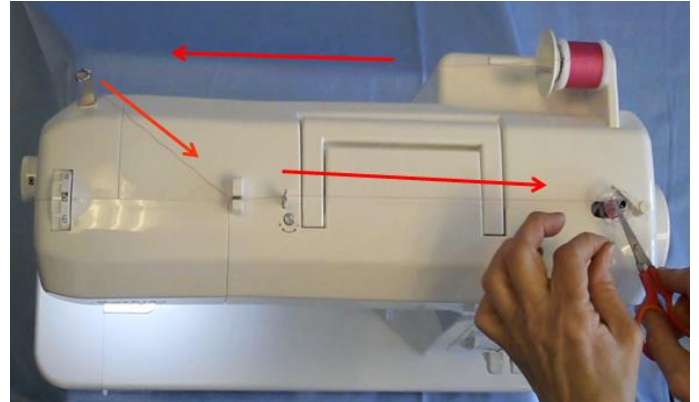


How to Set Up and Operate Your Sashiko Machine

Winding the Bobbin

Use a Baby Lock class 15 bobbin.

Put spool of thread onto spool pin, secure with spool cap. Place thread in the thread guide at the top left of the machine. Snap thread into the pre-tension disk, you should hear or feel it click into place. Lay thread into bobbin winder adjustment guide.



Put the end of thread through one of the holes in the bobbin from the inside to the outside.



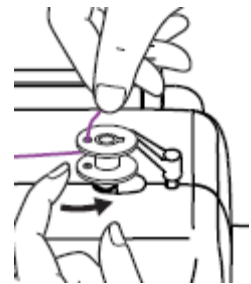
Place bobbin on the bobbin winder, push the bobbin winder to the right to engage. Holding the thread, step on the foot control, after a few winds, stop winding the bobbin and cut the thread even with the bobbin.

Press on the foot control to continue winding the bobbin.

After you have held the foot control down for 4-5 seconds, you can remove your foot from the foot control and the bobbin will continue to wind.

The bobbin will stop winding when the bobbin is full.

Press bobbin winder to the left to disengage, cut thread and remove bobbin from winder. The machine will not function if the bobbin winder is engaged.



Threading the Bobbin Case

Press and hold positioning button, the yellow light will be lit

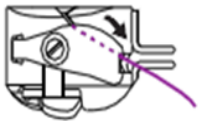
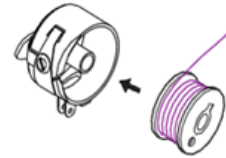
Open side cover

Remove the bobbin case



Inserting the Bobbin Case

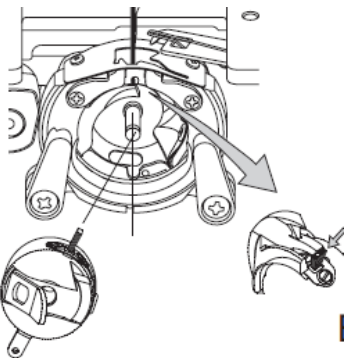
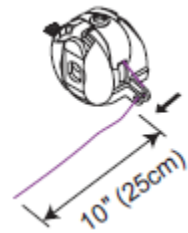
Insert a full bobbin so it bobbin turns clockwise



Pull the thread through the slot, under the tension spring and through the hole directly above the double-eye thread guides

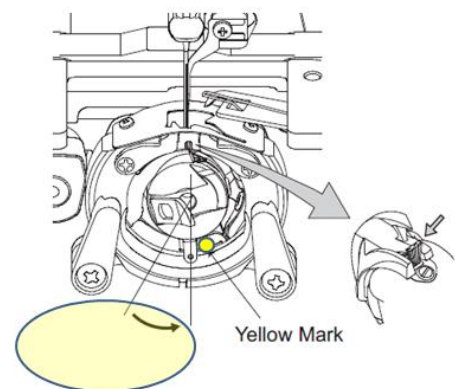
Insert the end of thread through the double-eye guide from the inside to the outside of the bobbin case

Pull off approximately 10-12 inches of thread



Make sure machine is in the bobbin loading position
Align double-eye thread guides on bobbin case at 7 o'clock position

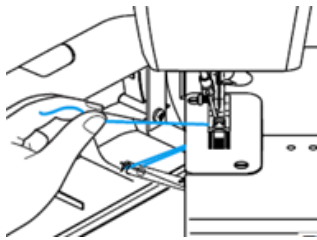
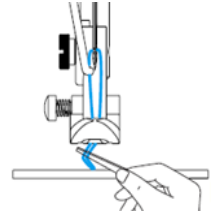
Insert bobbin case and rotate counterclockwise so double-eye thread guide is in alignment with the groove (yellow dot)
Insert bobbin case



Pulling up the Bobbin Thread

Turn hand wheel towards you several times until thread catches in the eye of needle; this is usually 2 complete revolutions

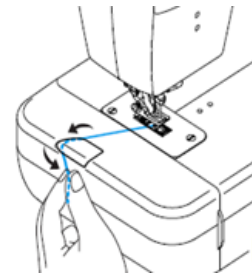
Slide tweezers under the foot to clear the thread off the needle



Hold the thread taut with left hand, turn hand wheel towards you until the thread catches on lower thread take-up lever, one more complete revolution

Use right hand to close side cover. Pull thread into the thread cutter/holder

Cut off excess thread



A Few Need to Knows Before We Start

Before you start working with your Sashiko, there are a few things you should know.

The Sashiko is a very precise and does not tolerate lint well, so always start with a clean and oiled machine. Most problems that occur with the Sashiko are due to a dirty machine. How often you need to clean your machine depends a lot on the fabric and threads you use. If you sew a lot with cotton thread and fabric build up can occur very quickly and you may need to clean your machine after every bobbin.

You should always use the needle up/down button to raise and lower the needle, never the handwheel.

The thread needs to be held taut for the stitch to form, so make sure that the thread is secure in the Cutter/Holder on the side of the machine.

When the machine is threaded, there should always be fabric under the pressure foot when you sew. Do not start off the fabric or sew off the fabric.

Do not push or pull the fabric through the machine. Let the feed dogs do their job. Adjusting the Presser Foot height and pressure will make pivoting and sewing curves easier.

Always press and hold the needle up/down button to go into the bobbin loading position-light next to bobbin symbol will be lit-before opening the side door to remove or insert the bobbin.

Threads



Threads for the Bobbin

The Sashiko can use threads from 100wt to 30wt. Thread weight can be a bit confusing. With thread, the larger the number, the thinner the thread, 100 wt. thread is very fine and will give you a very delicate stitch, while 30 wt. thread will give you a much bolder looking stitch.

Most of the threads that work well in your sewing machine will work in the Sashiko. Polyester and Cotton wrapped polyesters will give you the most consistent results because of their strength, uniform thickness and minimum amount of lint produced.

Some of my favorite threads are Madeira Aerofil, solid and variegated quilting threads from Madeira, YLI and Superior and Sulky 30 wt. solids and Blendables

Threads and Yarns for Couching

Couching is a term for laying a heavy decorative thread on top of your fabric and sewing it to surface in some way. This is where you can really get creative, mix variegated threads from the bobbin with fun decorative threads you stitch down. Some of my favorite decorative threads and yarns are Madeira Decora and Glamour, YLI Shimmer, Designer 7, Pearl Crown Rayon, Candlelight, Friendship Bracelet Cords, Embroidery Floss, Novelty Yarns and Narrow ribbons

The Basic Stitch

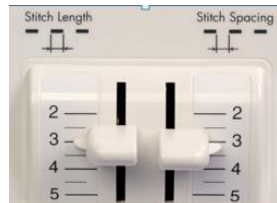
Let's start by playing with Sashiko stitch.

Before you start stitching, I suggest stabilizing your fabric. My two favorites are No Show Mesh Fusible when I want to leave the stabilizer in the project, or a light weight tear away when the stabilizer needs to be removed.

Straight Stitching

Set the pressure foot height dial at 0-1

Stitch Length 3
Stitch Space 3



Put fabric under foot and lower the pressure foot
Needle will stop in Up position
Machine will take a space and stitch when foot control
pressed.
The top light will be blue



When you get to the end of the fabric, raise the pressure foot
Grasp the fabric and pull thread to the back of the machine and into the
Cutter/Holder

Remember the stitch length and stitch space can be
adjusted independently of each other.

Continue to sew some rows, adjusting the stitch and
space. See how many variations you can come up
with.

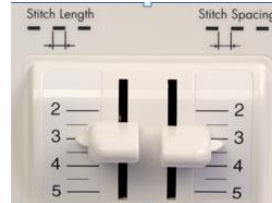


Pivoting and Curves

When you want to pivot and or sew curved line, you will find it easier if the foot stops in the down position and the foot rise slightly.

To have the foot raise when you stop sewing, set the pressure foot height dial between 1.5 to 2.5. The foot will now rise slightly when the machine stops with the needle down in the fabric

Set the stitch length and stitch space at 3

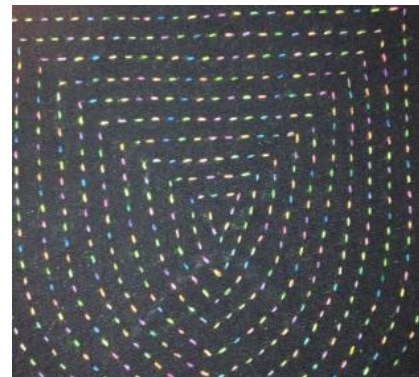


Put fabric under foot and lower the pressure foot
Press the Needle Up/Down button once. The needle will stop Down position. The machine will take a stitch and space foot control pressed
The center light will be **green**



This will allow you to pivot your fabric and sew curves without having to manually lift your pressure foot

When you finish sewing, press the Needle Up/Down button one time to bring the needle to the up position.
Lift the pressure foot
Grasp the fabric and pull the thread to the back of the machine and into the Cutter/Holder



Decorative Techniques

The Flip Stitch



The Flip Stitch is one of my favorite stitches.

It is great when you want a bolder more defined line, outline and add definition to appliques plus it has several variations.

Types of decorative threads and trims

Madeira Decora, Glamour

YLI Shimmer, Pearl Crown Rayon, Candlelight

Friendship bracelet cord

Narrow ribbon, fine rattail, novelty yarns and other trims

You will want to do some test samples changing your stitch length, stitch space and different threads to see what variations you can get

You want your stitch length to just be long enough to go over the decorative thread-a thicker thread will require a longer stitch length

Changing the stitch space will give you a wavy or twisted look

Place fabric under the pressure foot. Put the pressure foot down

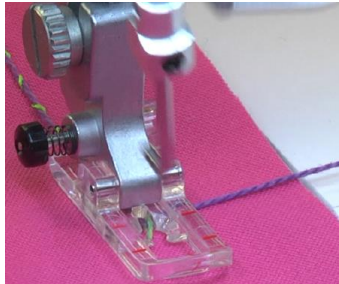
Press the Needle Up/Down button twice quickly to go into Specialty Mode



The center light will be **flashing green and the pressure foot will be slightly raised. The machine will take one stitch and one space and stop. You will need to lift your foot off the foot control, and press down again for another stitch and space.**

Let's start with our Stitch Length at 2 and Stitch Space at 3 Pressure Foot Height between 2 and 3 to accommodate your decorative threads

**Starting with about a 3" thread tail, lay your decorative thread under the foot so that it just touches the needle.
Step on foot control so that the machine takes one stitch and one space, anchoring the decorative thread down**



**Gently pull the decorative thread across the front of foot so that it touches the needle. Do not pull the thread tight.
Take a stitch and a space**

Flip the decorative thread to the other side of the foot. Again don't pull the thread too tight, take a stitch and a space.



**Continue "flipping" the thread back and forth across the foot. When finished stitching, press the Needle Up/Down button one time to raise the needle
Lift pressure foot
Gently pull the fabric and thread to back of the machine and into the Cutter/Holder**

Decorative Techniques

Making Fringe



The Fringe Stitch is a variation of the Flip stitch and is a great way to add texture and dimension

Types of decorative threads and trims

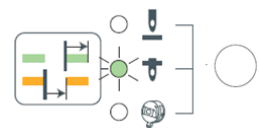
Madeira Decora, Glamour

YLI Shimmer, Pearl Crown Rayon, Candlelight

Friendship bracelet cord

Narrow ribbon, fine rattail, novelty yarns and other trims

Place fabric under the pressure foot. Put the pressure foot down.
Press the Needle Up/Down button twice quickly to go into Specialty Mode.



The center light will be **flashing green** and the pressure foot will be slightly raised.

The machine will take one stitch and one space and stop. You will need to lift your foot off the foot control, and press down again for another stitch and space

Pressure Foot Height between 2 and 3 to accommodate your decorative threads

The fringe stitch starts out like the flip stitch. Start with about a three inch thread tail. Take your decorative thread and put it under the foot so that it just touches the needle.

Step on foot control so that the machine takes one stitch and one space, anchoring the decorative thread down

Loops should be as close as possible, so try to keep the Stitch length at 2

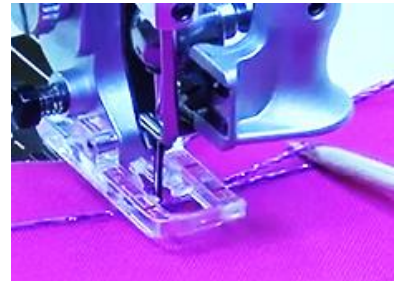
This time, when you flip the yarn and place it against the needle you will be forming a loop either to the left or right of the needle. I find using a wooden skewer very helpful in keeping my loops even

Take a stitch and space, anchoring the thread to the fabric.

Continue forming the loops on the same side of the needle. When you finish making your fringe, press the Needle up/down button to raise the needle

Raise the pressure foot

Gently pull the fabric and thread to the back of the machine securing the thread in the Cutter/Holder



If you want a fuller look to your fringe, repeat the fringe stitch right next to the first row.

You can also create the fringe with more than one thread at a time

You can leave the fringe as loops, or cut all or

part of the loops for more interest as they were around the center of this flower.



Fringe added to an embroidered dress designed By Evy Hawkins

Decorative Techniques

Attaching Beads



Attaching beads in another variation of the Fringe Stitch

Types of decorative threads and trims

Madeira Decora, Glamour

YLI Shimmer, Pearl Crown Rayon, Candlelight

Friendship bracelet cord

Crochet cotton

Any decorative thread that you can string beads onto

You will want to do some test samples changing the stitch length and stitch space along with different threads and beads to see what variations you can get. By changing the stitch length and space you can get your beads to lay in a straight line or be a bit wavy.

**Place fabric under the pressure foot. Put the pressure foot down
Press the Needle Up/Down button twice quickly to go into Specialty Mode.**



The center light will be **flashing green and the pressure foot will be slightly raised.**

The machine will take one stitch and one space and stop. You will need to lift your foot off the foot control, and press down again for another stitch and space

Let's start with our Stitch Length at 2 and Stitch Space at 3

Pressure Foot Height between 2 and 3 to accommodate your decorative threads

You will need to pre-string your beads onto your decorative thread. A looper threader or dental floss threader makes this easier



**Starting with about a 3 tail, take your decorative thread and put it under the foot so that it just touches the needle.
Step on foot control so that the machine takes one stitch and one space, anchoring the decorative thread down**



**This time, when you flip the yarn and place it against the needle you will be forming a loop to the left of the needle, sliding a bead up onto the loop
Take a stitch and space, anchoring the thread to the fabric**



**Now slide another bead up and make a loop on the right side of the needle
Take a stitch and space, anchoring the thread to the fabric**

**Continue making a loop on each side of the needle sliding one bead up on each loop
When you have finished stitching, push the Needle Up/Down to bring the needle up
Lift the pressure foot
Gently pull the fabric and thread to the back of the machine and secure the thread in the Cutter/Holder**

Now the fun begins. Start pulling the decorative thread, this will tighten the beads against the fabric



Decorative Techniques

Double Flip Stitch



The Double Flip Stitch is another decorative stitch that can be used to add a bold line or outline an applique or design on a pre-printed fabric

Types of decorative threads and trims

Madeira Decora, Glamour

YLI Shimmer, Pearl Crown Rayon, Candlelight

Friendship bracelet cord

Narrow ribbon, fine rattail, novelty yarns and other trims

You will want to do some test samples changing your stitch length, stitch space and different decorative threads to see what variations you can get

You want your stitch length to just be long enough to go over the doubled decorative thread-a thicker thread will require a longer stitch length

A long stitch space will create a more obvious loop, a short stitch space will create more of a braided look

Place fabric under the pressure foot. Put the pressure foot down
Press the Needle Up/Down button twice quickly to go into Specialty Mode.



The center light will be **flashing green** and the pressure foot will be slightly raised.
The machine will take one stitch and one space and stop

You will need to lift your foot off the foot control, and press down again for another stitch and space

Let's start with our Stitch Length at 2 and Stitch Space at 3

Pressure Foot Height between 2 and 3 to accommodate your decorative threads

This stitch uses a doubled thread. To determine the length of decorative thread needed, measure the distance to be stitched and add a couple of inches

**Take your decorative thread, fold it in half and put it under the foot so that it just touches the needle at the half way point
Step on foot control so that the machine takes one stitch and one space, anchoring the decorative thread down**

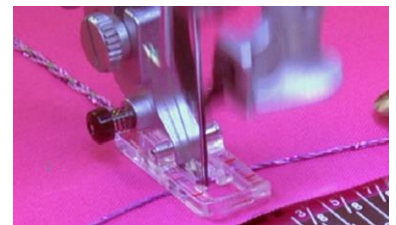


**Cross the decorative threads under the front of the foot and hold snug against the front of the needle. Do not pull the decorative threads tight
Take a stitch and a space**

**Continue crossing decorative threads in front of the needle and stitching it down
When finished, press the Needle Up/Down button to raise the needle.**

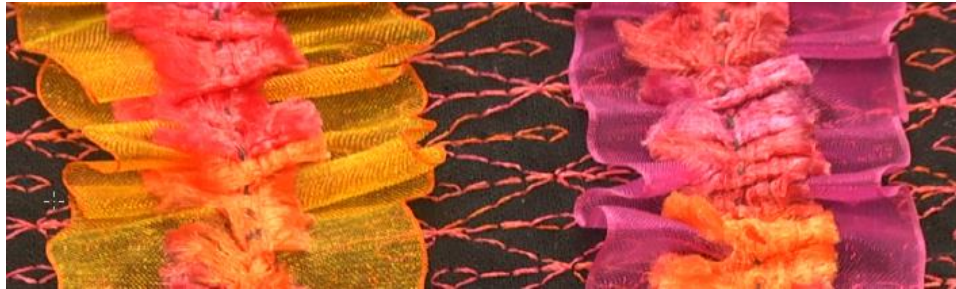
Lift the pressure foot

Gently pull the fabric and thread to the back of the machine securing the thread in the Cutter/Holder



Decorative Techniques

Pleating Fabric



Pleating fabric and ribbons with Sashiko is very easy.

Fabrics that will pleat: Silk, cotton, velvet, sheers, sheer ribbon, etc.

Place fabric under the pressure foot. Put the pressure foot down

Press the Needle Up/Down button twice quickly to go into Specialty Mode.



The center light will be **flashing green** and the pressure foot will be slightly raised.

The machine will take one stitch and one space and stop. You will need to lift your foot off the foot control, and press down again for another stitch and space

Let's start with our Stitch Length at 3 and Stitch Space at 3

Pressure Foot Height between 2 and 3 to accommodate your decorative threads

To start, butt center of ribbon against the needle. Take one stitch, one space

Using a wooden skewer or stiletto, push a small amount of ribbon under the foot and up against the needle, forming a small pleat. I like to place skewer at the very front of the foot, then push my ribbon of fabric back. This helps me to keep my pleats even.

Take one stitch, one space to secure pleat



Continue until your finished pleating the fabric or ribbon

When you are finished pleating, press the Needle

Up/Down button to raise the needle

Raise the pressure foot

Gently pull the fabric and thread to the back of the machine and secure the thread in the Cutter/Holder

Thank you for joining me as we explored the possibilities of the Baby Lock Sashiko.
I look forward to seeing what you create with your Sashiko.

Let Your Creativity Soar-Make Some Beautiful
Debi

Sources

Baby Lock Sashiko 2-

Visit your local Authorized Baby Lock Retailer or
go to www.babylock.com "Where to Buy" to locate your nearest Retailer

Embroidery design for fringed dress-

Flouncy Frocks by Evy Hawkins www.abitofstitch.com

Sashiko Techniques and Garden Motifs by Evy Hawkins

Visit your local Authorized Baby Lock Retailer or
go to www.abitofstitch.com