6. FREE-MOTION STITCHING

In free-motion stitching, you sew without a presser foot and instead control fabric movement (and hence stitch length) yourself, by means of an embroidery hoop. Either a straight or a zig-zag stitch setting can be used. Because you can move the hoop in any direction — forward or backward, from side to side, or even diagonally — free-motion stitching is extremely useful for intricate embroidery designs. On the other hand, it is equally useful for that most humdrum but necessary task, darning.

If you are embroidering, you can vary the length of stitches simply by moving the hoop faster or slower. The faster you move it, the more open the stitches will be. A slow hoop movement will produce closely packed stitches. You can also vary the width of the stitches, from a hairline to the full width of whatever stitch width setting you have chosen, simply by moving the hoop. If you move it sideways and stitch in a horizontal line, you will get a hairline; if you move it forward and backward and stitch in a vertical line, you will get full stitch width. Thus, you can produce a ribbon-like effect in script lettering or create delicate flower designs. This takes practice, but you can achieve some lovely effects that look much like hand embroidery. See the next page for specific directions.

For darning, the embroidery hoop used in free-motion stitching enables you to hold the fabric taut — a real advantage when your fabric is lightweight or soft and thus is likely to pucker. See page 62 for directions.

preparation

1. Get an embroidery hoop large enough to encompass the entire design or area to be darned.
2. Remove presser foot.
3. Raise throat plate to DARN position.
4. Raise stitch length selector to FINE area.