

A Speedy Stitcher™ Sewing Block, Version 1.2

By R. G. Sparber

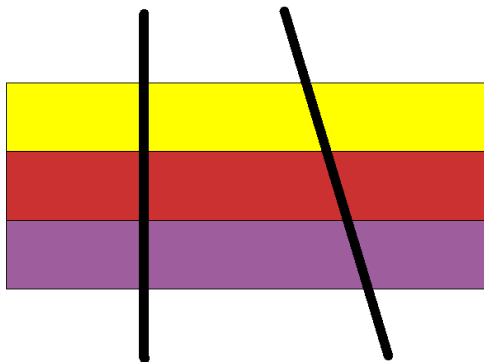
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My Speedy Stitcher is perfect for sewing woven straps and heavy material. The needle is sharp, and the handle gives me plenty of area to push down hard. I can go through just about any soft material.



Yes, *any* soft material. One slip, and it would go right through to the bone. This is problem number 1.



If I am going through a thick stack of material, it is easy to keep the stitching in line on the top. But when I look on the other side, it often looks like I was drunk. The stitching is all over the place. The reason took me a bit to figure out: Unless the needle is perpendicular to the surface, it will travel sideways—problem number 2.

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Both of these problems are solved by making this “sewing block.” I made it by gluing two pieces of 2 by 4’s to a third block. The gap is around 1/8-inch. I then sawed down a little more so



the collet would hit the material before the needle struck wood. I want to protect my flesh and the needle from damage.

Why a slot rather than a hole? I can place the strap across the slot to achieve my alignment.

There are times when a hole is needed to provide better support. Start with the strap on

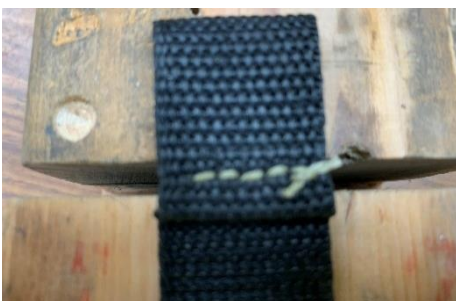
the surface of the block. Gently push the needle through until it hits the wood. Then reposition the strap over a hole and

push the needle through.



I line up the point of the needle on the material and push the awl straight down. No drama, no blood. The wood flanking the gap provides good support for the fabric.

I’m happy with the front,

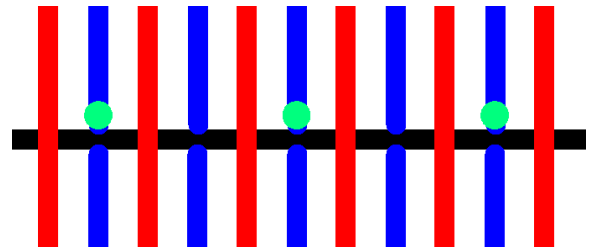


And I’m happy with the back.

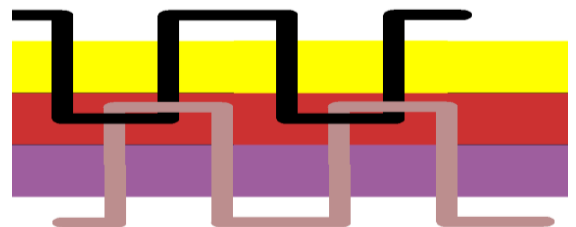
Problems solved.

Over time, I learned a few things:

- The gap in the Sewing Block is a little too wide. I think about 1/16-inch narrower would provide more support without making it too hard to align the needle over it.
- When near an edge of the strap, one of the holes in the block provided better support than the slot.
- If the weft (those cross-threads) are not perpendicular to the edges of the strap, my stitching, which follows one of these threads, will also not be square. One solution is to place a piece of self-adhering label on the web. Then mark the hole location on it. See <https://rick.sparber.org/SewingStrap.pdf> page 7 for details.
- It can be hard to keep all of the layers aligned when I start to sew. One way to minimize this problem is to first put a dot of Cyanoacrylate glue on the facing surfaces of the straps. Then align and hold until set. This prevents any shifting.
- Make a rule as to where you will insert the needle. For example, you might choose to always go above the weft and every forth warp. Make a similar rule when following the weft and jumping over the warp.



- It would be best to not pierce the weft or warp, but I don't know how to do that except on the top layer.
- Focus on each stitch before moving on to the next one. You can't go back. Be sure the top and bottom are tight, and the knot is buried in the stack-up.



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