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## **Types of hand stitches and their use**

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**Objectives:** At the end of this lesson you shall be able to

- **name and classify hand stitches**
  - **describe their use.**
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Basic stitches are divided into constructive and decorative stitches which are used in embroidery. Constructive stitches are further divided into temporary and permanent stitches.

**Temporary stitches:** Basting or tacking is a temporary stitch used for holding two or more layers of materials together before the permanent stitches are made. Usually this stitch is horizontal and is worked from right to left. This is the only stitch, which is started with a knot. For basting use a contrasting colour thread so that it can be easily seen and removed. The length of the stitch will vary depending on the weight of the fabric and how securely the pieces are to be held together. To end basting make two stitches, one on the top of another. There are several types of basting stitches.

**Even basting** is used for short length of seams and folds.

**Uneven basting** is used for long length of seams and folds.

**Diagonal basting** is used when several layers of fabric are to be held securely.

**Padding stitch** is used in coats to hold the lining and inner lining.

**Tailor's tacks** – Thread marks are basically uneven basting stitches. They are used to transfer marks on a lower layer of fabric.

**Permanent stitches:** In permanent stitches avoid using knots, while starting and ending the stitches. Begin with a small back stitch if it can be concealed under the permanent stitches or leave a short length of thread (about 2 to 3cm) extending on the wrong side which can be caught and held under the first few permanent stitches. To end the stitch take the thread to the wrong side and secure with loops.

**Running stitch** is the simplest of all the hand stitches, used for sewing hand made seams, tucks, gathering, quilting and mending.

**Back stitch** is strong and sometimes substituted for machine stitching.

**Pick Stitch** (Half back stitch) is used on fine materials.

**Overcasting** is used on raw edges, either single or double to prevent them from fraying.

**Hemming** is used to secure a folded edge of material. Its most common use is for hems. Hemming appears as small, slanting stitches on the wrong side and sometimes on right side. These stitches should be fine and spaced close enough to hold the hem securely in place. Before starting the hem, fasten the thread with several tiny stitches on top of each other. Finish the hemming with several stitches to fasten it securely. Don't use too long thread for stitching. The maximum length should not exceed 70 cm to avoid knots in thread, it also helps to avoid accident with the needle while pulling the thread.