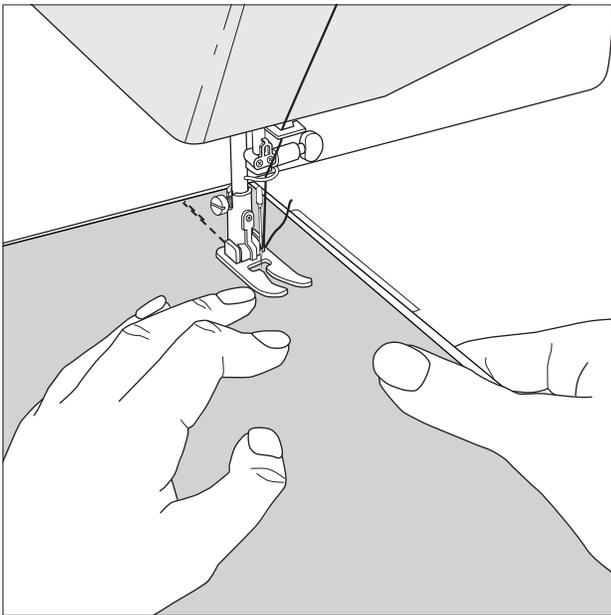


# how to sew: stitching practice

You will get the most out of your sewing machine if you are comfortable using it. Spend some time practicing stitching before beginning to work on a project. Some things you will need to get used to are:

- **Positioning your hands:** Your hands should be on either side of the needle so that you can easily guide the fabric through the machine.



- **Pace:** If you are using an electric sewing machine with a foot pedal, the harder you push the faster the machine will go. Push slowly at first, just enough to make the machine run, then gradually increase the pressure and speed as you get more comfortable.

- **Guiding the fabric:** Use your hands to steer the fabric in the right direction. To keep seam allowances even look for the marked lines on the needle plate that indicate common seam widths. Most machines will have  $\frac{1}{4}$ ",  $\frac{1}{2}$ " and  $\frac{5}{8}$ " marked, some will also have additional markings up to 1" wide. If your machine does not have the seam width you need marked, you can apply a piece of masking tape to create your own guide.
- **Securing thread ends:** Start each seam  $\frac{1}{2}$ " in from the beginning of the seam, reverse stitch to get to the edge, then stitch forward and complete the seam. Finish by reversing along the last  $\frac{1}{2}$ " of the seam.

On the next few pages are some stitching practice worksheets. You can print these out and practice sewing on paper (with or without thread) or transfer the lines to muslin or other practice fabric such as lightweight cotton. You'll be able to see if you are sewing in a straight line or if you need to work on more accurately guiding the fabric through the machine, while also getting a chance to get comfortable with your machine.

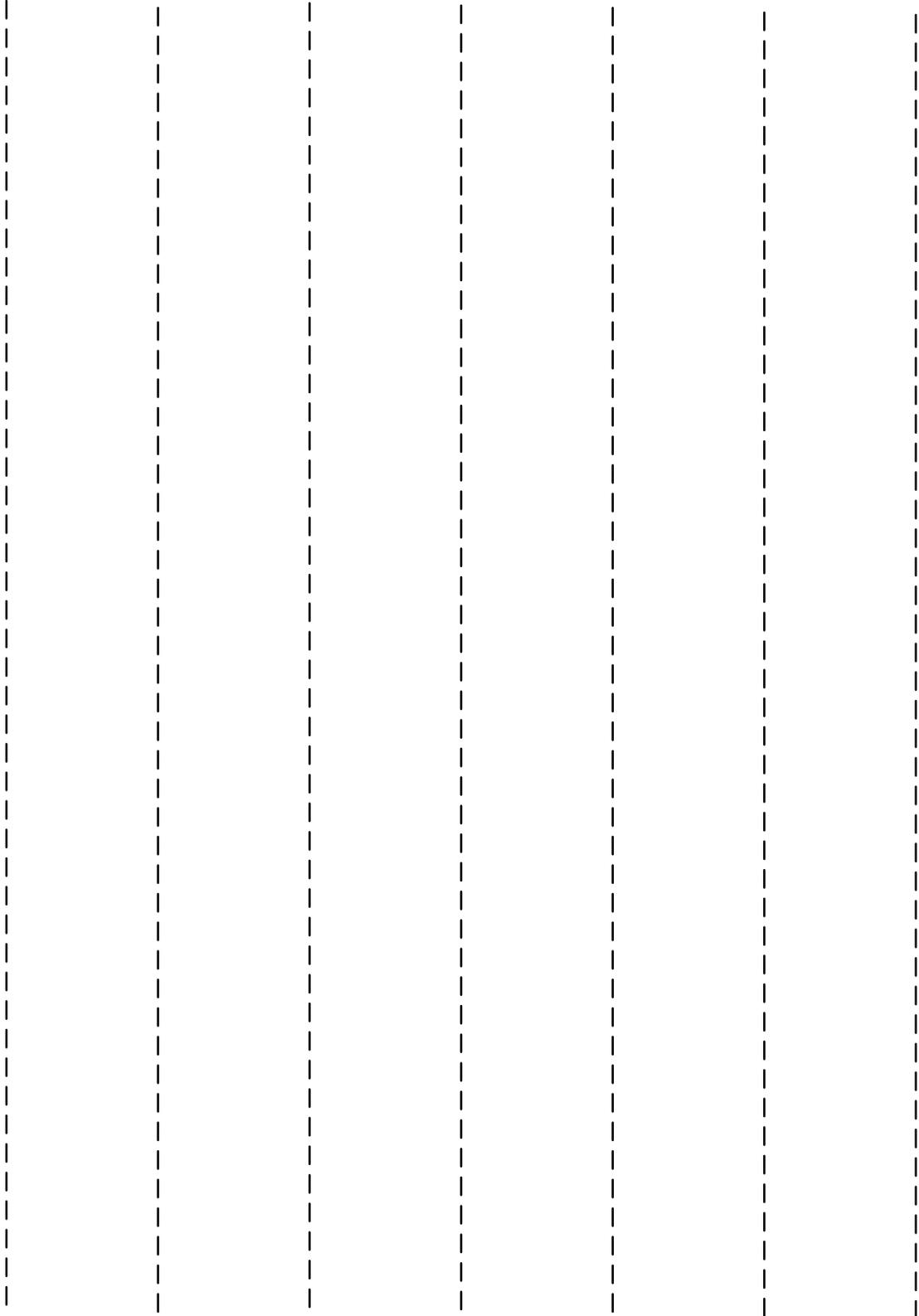
First try these exercises using a medium length straight stitch, then experiment with adjusting the stitch length and width, trying the zig zag stitch function, and other types of stitches your machine offers such as the blind hem stitch or making buttonholes.

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# practice sewing straight lines

Remember to keep your paper or fabric aligned with the seam guide.

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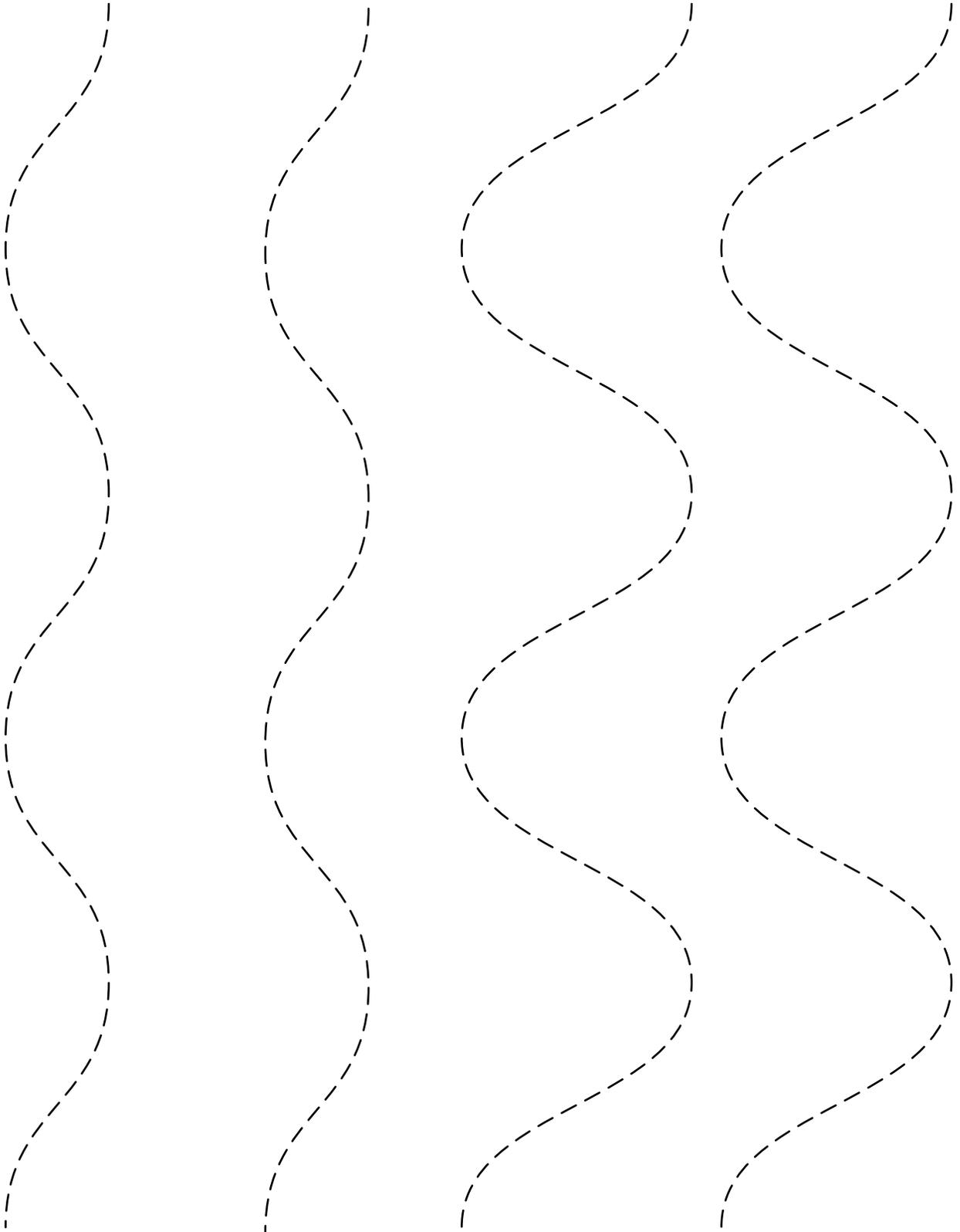


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# practice sewing curved lines

Slow down and take your time as you get used to sewing curves.

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# practice sewing turning a corner

When you are approaching a corner, stop sewing just before you reach the corner. Lift the presser foot and turn your paper or fabric to continue sewing down the other side of corner.

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