

**How to Needle Model a Masculine Chest for An Elf Named Stretch**  
By Gloria J. "Mimi" Winer

If your elf is going shirtless, you may want to needle-model his chest. If he is going to wear a shirt, this won't show, so don't bother.

**General Instructions:**

Use an air soluble marker for your guide marks. The purple one not the blue one. The blue one will come back and your doll will look bruised and abused.

Don't bother counting the dots. The number is not important. Neither is the stitch sequence. The dots are only a guide.

Think directional stitching. Where do you need to take the needle to make the fabric do what you want it to do?

Remember that the stuffing is your medium and the needle is your sculpting tool. The thread holds it all in place.

Most of the stitches that form the pectoral muscles go to the spine, which will also define the spine. The spine is

always deeper than the rest of the back. Some of the stitches will go into the nearby or opposite armholes.

The biggest mistake beginner to this technique make is to pull the stitches too tight. Watch the area you are stitching into rather than where the needle is coming out and stop pulling when the fabric is where you want it to be, then lock stitch to secure it.

To form a lock stitch simply put the needle through the loop twice forming a knot just before finishing the stitch.

If you travel to another part of the body for the next stitch, be sure to lock stitch after the just completed stitch and again when the needle gets to the new location. This prevents the new stitch from distorting the previous one.

Use a 3-1/2" (9-10cm) doll needle where possible. If the distance is too far switch to a 5" (12-13cm) needle. If the distance is shorter switch to a long darning. The rule of thumb is to use the smallest needle

whenever possible. It does less damage. Needles make holes and a smaller needle makes a smaller hole.

Use a drapery or a thinner nylon thread. Nymo thread comes in many colors and several weights. It is strong and works well for needle modeling. It is available in bead shops or at [www.firemountainbeads.com](http://www.firemountainbeads.com). If you use a white thread, (as I do most of the time), the stitches that show can be colored with colored pencils.

Now, Lets give Stretch his manly chest:

Mark the guide marks as shown in the picture below:



Thread a three-inch needle with a single thread about 2 yards (2 meters) long.

Begin at the center of the chest. Pick up a small stitch and make a French knot.



Stick needle through the fabric and wrap tail of thread twice around the tip of the needle. Hold onto the tail and push needle up to the back of the neck. Do not cut tail.



Make several stitches from the dots under the breast to the top of the spine,



Pull to depress the stitch on the front



The front stitches are rather small but the spinal stitches are much larger some as long as a quarter inch (6mm).



and take a small stitch, (about 1/8<sup>th</sup>” (3mm) back to the where the thread begins at the front

While you are pulling the thread squeeze the torso don't make the thread do all the work. Only squeeze it as deep as you want the stitch to be. You will learn quickly not to pull too tightly.

To force the needle to come out exactly where you need it to; press the area deeply with your thumb just in front of the spot you are trying to get it through,

Always keep your thumb or finger in the loop of thread being pulled to prevent knots. If your thread is tangling run it over the top of some Thread Heaven™ available at bead shops. **Do not use bee's wax.** It pulls stuffing through with the thread.

As you work your way around the curve of the chest, the stitches near the center can go to the spine. As you get around to the outside these stitches can go either to the spine or to the opposite armhole. Put the stitch were you think it needs to go to accomplish your objective.

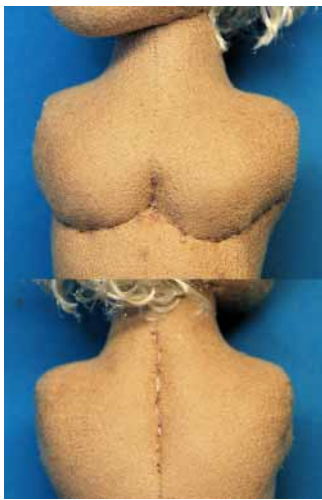
If a stitch doesn't work, use the eye of the needle to remove it. If you have already tightened it pull the thread and watch to see which stitch moves. That's the one to remove.

After the first few stitches, cut off the thread tail Cutting too soon may cause the stitches not to hold.

Try not to put stitches where they will show when the arms are stitched in place. (Fit the arms in place and draw

around them. When you remove the arms you will have a marked area to hide many stitches.

If your thread is less than 8 or 10 inches long go into an armhole and tie off. Begin next thread by burying knot in armhole on side being worked.



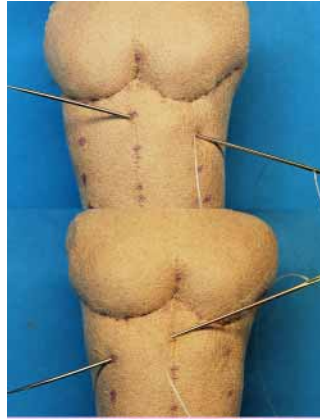
To define the Abs, mark as shown in photo.



Thread needle and bury knot in either armhole.

On side you chose bring needle out at top outside dot. Take a small stitch,

Dig deep into the stuffing and come out just barely on the other side of the center front seam.



Cross over the seam and again dig deeply to come out again at the top dot on the other side.

Pull the thread slightly until it looks right. Then stitch back to the center front seam. This time cross over the center front seam and bring the needle out at the next lower dot on the same side you began.



Take a stitch and bring the needle to the center of the second row. Stitch over the seam and bring needle out at

middle dot on the other side.



Move from the center over to the opposite dot on the same row. Then back to the center.

From the center move to the bottom row on the outside, and repeat.

Only the outside dots are anchored to the spine. Stitch each outside dot to the spine once only; then from the spine to the next dot.



Work one side, all three dots then move from the spine to the other side.

End with thread at the spine. Bring needle into the navel.

**(PLEASE PUT SLUB HERE. THANK YOU.)**



Squeeze to form navel and bring needle back to the spine. If you can't get the rest of the spine stitched through the navel bring stitches from the spine down behind the genital area between the legs. Use a hemostat to get needle in and out if necessary. Spine is stitched all the way down to buttocks cleavage.



**Nipples:** Draw two small circles with marker just over the outside abdominal stitches.



Thread a short sharp needle with a fine thread, single strand. Do not knot.

Use doll-sculpting needle to pull stuffing up under circle.

Bring needle under stuffing on the bottom of the circle. Leave about a three-inch (7-1/2cm) tail.

Stitch back to the same spot; wrap thread tail around the needle once. Hold onto the tail and stitch back to the first stitch. Pull thread on both ends. Do not snip off tail until you have made two or three stitches.

Continue stitching around the circle with tiny stitches, pulling slightly just until the thread stops, no more. Stitch around as you did on Stretch's eyeball. After last stitch bring needle to any part of the body, pull thread snugly

and snip off. Thread will disappear inside the doll. Repeat for other side.



That's all folks...  
Happy dolling,  
Love,  
Mimi

