

Sewing Machine Feet

By Jill Stanbro

For nearly 25 years, I had a regular presser foot and a right and left zipper foot for my industrial straight stitch machines. All of that changed when I attended an industry conference and met Sam Sloan of Sloan Machinery (800-832-0050). I was aware that cording feet existed, but I had no idea there were so many specialized feet available to make my job easier. Since that time I have learned to use the correct foot to make sewing easier and increase production time.

In this article I would like to share my favorite sewing machine feet and their uses.

Right and Left Zipper Feet (photo 1)

Used to put in zippers for upholstery, pillows and duvets. A zipper foot allows you to sew close to the zipper teeth. These feet can also be used for making and applying welt cord.

Invisible Zipper Foot (photo 2a & 2b)

The foot is specifically designed to aide in sewing invisible zippers. The small groove holds the zipper teeth away from the needle while stitching.

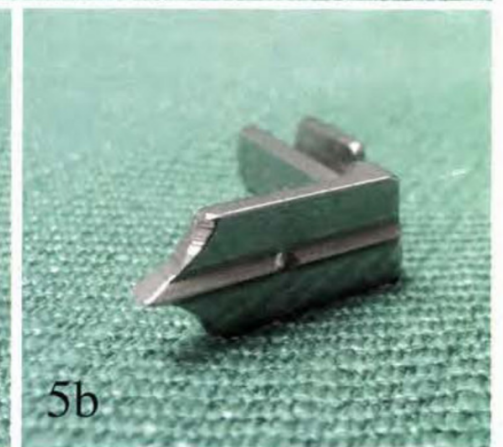
Welt Cord Feet (photo 3)

There are feet available for making and applying welt cord from 1/16" to 1/2" in diameter. The cord travels in the groove allowing for an even stitch line next to the welt cord. When using cording feet, sew the welt cord and apply it with a larger size and use a smaller size for the final stitching, this will ensure that no stitching shows. There are also specialty cording feet available which are cut out in the back to make turning corners easier which have been highly recommended by CHF Academy Instructor Jeanelle Dech for her slipcover Students. (photo 4)

Stitch-In-The-Ditch Foot (photo 5a & 5b)

This foot provides a hidden stitch when you sew down through the middle of the flattened box pleat.

I have a sample made with dark fabric and top stitched with white thread that you cannot see. This foot has a point on the front that shows you exactly where you are sewing and a "fin" on the bottom that fits right in the ditch of the pleat. This foot can also be used to stitch next to welt cord for flanged shams fabricated with applique techniques and it also comes in very handy for topstitching, as that point makes such a precise guide.



Compensating Foot (photo 6)

A compensating foot will help when stitching fabrics at different thicknesses, such as a rod pocket, where the pocket fold is several thicknesses and the body of the drapery or valance is much thinner. The lower side of the foot runs along the edge of the fold and, depending on which size you have used, the stitch is then precisely that amount from the edge. These feet come in right and left versions, in sizes from 1/32" to 1/2". CHF Academy instructor Terri Booser recommends these for sewing the hobbles for her flat back Roman shade process. I have also used these feet for topstitching a banding to a product so that I stay a precise measure from the edge.



Skinny Foot (photo 7)

A skinny foot is very helpful when sewing on shirring tape because often the top and bottom edges are very close to the first row of cords which you do not want to catch in the stitching. This foot is also great for applying snap tape for closures or Ripplefold drapery heading. Another use for the skinny foot is when machine sewing trims and braids which often have a thick center and a narrow woven edge, the skinny foot can catch the edge without sewing over the woven braid in the center. The skinny foot is available with a flat or angled edge. The angled edge allows you to stitch very close and is used for bead trims or sewing next to welt cord.



Roller Foot (photo 8)

If you do not own a walking foot machine, a roller foot will help with sewing through several thicknesses, such as the folds of swags. It is also a great foot to use when sewing velvet as it doesn't leave "tracks" like a regular presser foot. Another use for the roller foot is when machine quilting projects such as placemats as it keeps the fabric from puckering as you approach an opposing stitch-line.



While all of the feet mentioned above fit most industrial straight stitch machines, there are fewer options for walking foot and needle feed machines. Available for walking foot machines are; skinny feet, right and left zipper feet, regular cording feet sizes 1/8" to 3/4" and cut out cording feet in sizes 1/8" to 1/2". The choices available for needle feed machines are; invisible zipper feet, right and left zipper feet and skinny feet.



Jill Stanbro, of North Canton, OH, has been in the wholesale drapery workroom business for nearly 30 years. Dubbed the "Queen of Quick" she is best known for her quick and easy fabrication methods, workroom tips and tricks and simplifying swag patterns. Her byline says it best, "I love that when my job is finished, something beautiful exists."