

ILLUSTRATED STEPS / SAVE IT. FIND IT. BUILD IT.

SEW A CUT

A last-resort field guide: make saline, heat-treat a needle and thread, place simple stitches, and know when NOT to sew.



STOP / DO NOT SEW IF THE WOUND IS: FULL STOP RULES / PAGE 03
Deep, dirty, bitten, punctured, gaping, spurting, numb, old, or on the face, eye, joint or hand.
Last resort only: leave it open, cover it, and get help.

START HERE

01

GET READY

Tools + clickable build map

02

FOLLOW THE STEPS

One clearly numbered stage at a time

03

FIND IT AGAIN

Quick reference + PDF bookmarks

For a clean, shallow cut when no medical care can be reached. An open, covered wound is always an acceptable choice.

NUKE ON TIKTOK

MORE FREE BUILD GUIDES

SOURCES / Merck Manual (professional): simple interrupted sutures · Merck Manual (consumer): first aid for cuts and wounds

BUILD MAP

NEXT

YOUR BUILD MAP

Tap a step to jump there. The printed page numbers work offline too.

HAVE THESE READY

- Sewing needle
- Strong thread
- Table salt and a teaspoon
- Lighter; clothespin or pliers
- Pot with a lid; clean water
- Clean squeeze bottle
- Clean gauze or cloth
- Small scissors
- Soap and bright light

READ IN ORDER

PREP	Stop: when NOT to sew	03
PREP	Set up a clean station	04
01	Make saline and flush the cut	05
02	Boil the thread, flame the needle	06
03	Stitch it: simple, separate stitches	07
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QUICK REFERENCE / PAGE 11

BEFORE YOU START

LAST RESORT ONLY. Deep, dirty, bitten, punctured, gaping, spurting, numb, old, or on the face, eye, joint or hand? Do not sew. Cover it; get help.

KEEP THIS COPY

Save the PDF with its guide ID. Use the build map, bookmarks, or your PDF reader's search to find a step later. Video and source links need internet; the instructions do not.

SETUP

Stop: when NOT to sew

READ BEFORE STEP 01

PREP

Stitches trap whatever is left inside a wound. Check every rule before you pick up the needle.



DO NOT SEW

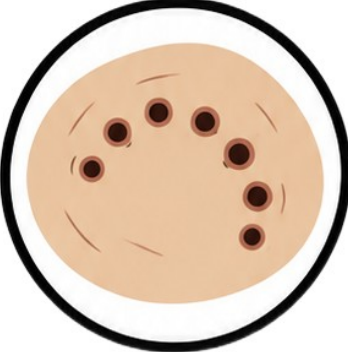
IF ANY OF THESE IS TRUE, STOP:



DEEP



DIRTY



BITTEN

Also: punctured, gaping, spurting, numb, old, face, eye, joint or hand.

STOP RULES / DO NOT SEW IF ANY IS TRUE

- If even one of these is true, do not sew.
- Deep, dirty, bitten or punctured.
- Gaping: the edges will not meet without pulling.
- Spurting or heavy bleeding.
- On the face, near an eye, over a joint, or on the hand where tendons run.
- Numb, weak, or hard to move past the cut.
- Old: more than about 6 to 8 hours, or already contaminated.

WHAT TO DO INSTEAD

- Leave it open: rinse it, cover it with clean gauze, and change the dressing daily.
- Heavy or spurting bleeding: press hard with a clean cloth and get emergency help now.
- Get medical care as soon as you can.
- This is a last-resort improvised technique, not a substitute for care.

SOURCES / Merck Manual (professional): simple interrupted sutures · Merck Manual (consumer): first aid for cuts and wounds · NHS: cuts and grazes

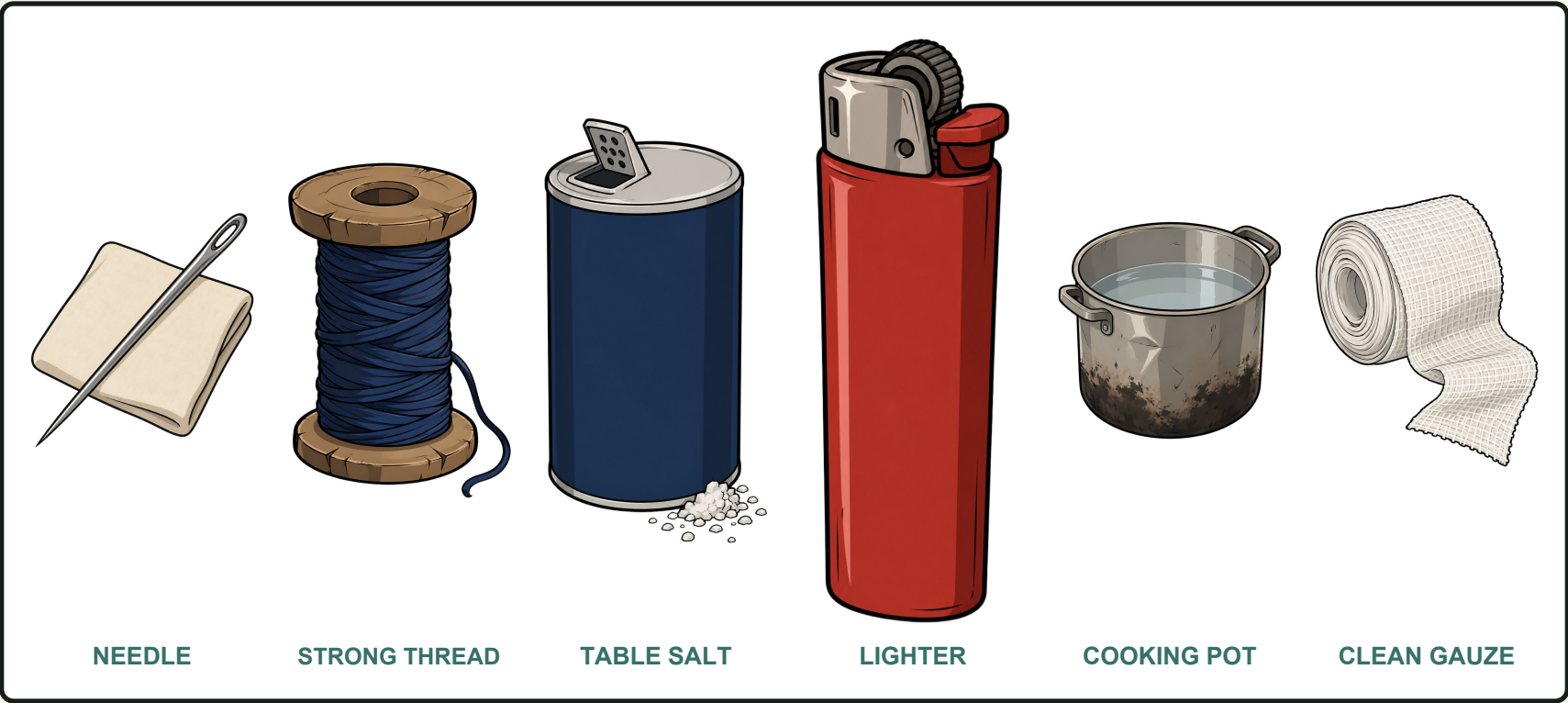
SETUP

Set up a clean station

READ BEFORE STEP 01

PREP

Clean hands, a clean surface and good light, with every tool ready before you start.



NEEDLE

STRONG THREAD

TABLE SALT

LIGHTER

COOKING POT

CLEAN GAUZE

WASH AND LAY OUT

- **Scrub your hands with soap and clean water.**
- Sit in bright light on a clean cloth, with the cut supported and easy to reach.
- Lay out the needle, thread, salt, lighter, a pot with a lid, clean gauze, small scissors and a clean squeeze bottle.

LAST RESORT, NOT A SHORTCUT

- **Use this only when no medical care can be reached and the wound passes every stop rule on page 3.**
- An open wound kept clean and covered heals more slowly, but it is less likely to trap infection inside.
- When in doubt, leave it open.

SOURCES / Merck Manual (consumer): first aid for cuts and wounds · NHS: cuts and grazes

STEP

Make saline and flush the cut

1 OF 4 / READ IN ORDER

01

Boiled, lightly salted water, cooled, then a strong rinse. Clean drinking water works nearly as well.



MAKE IT, THEN FLUSH

- **Boil water for 1 minute (3 minutes above 6,500 feet).**
- Stir in about 1 teaspoon of table salt per quart, cover it, and let it cool.
- Squeeze it over the cut from a clean bottle or a clean bag with a pinhole.
- Keep flushing until the cut runs clean.

STOP / DEEP, DIRTY OR BITTEN

- **Deep, dirty, bitten, or dirt you cannot rinse out: do not sew it.**
- Leave it open, cover it, and get medical help.

WHY IT WORKS

- **Boiling kills germs in the water.**
- About 1 teaspoon per quart is roughly 0.6% salt, near the body's own 0.9%.
- The stream's pressure carries the dirt out; the salt is a bonus.

SOURCES / CDC: how to make water safe in an emergency · AHA / American Red Cross: 2024 first-aid guidelines · Merck Manual (consumer): first aid for cuts and wounds

STEP

Boil the thread, flame the needle

2 OF 4 / READ IN ORDER

02

Heat kills germs. Treat both before either one touches the wound.



THREAD, THEN NEEDLE

- **Boil the thread in a covered pot for 10 minutes, then lift it onto clean gauze with a utensil that boiled with it.**
- Hold the needle with a clothespin or pliers in the lighter's flame until it glows.
- Let it cool untouched.
- Thread it without ever touching the point; if the point touches anything, flame it again.

WHY IT WORKS

- **A 1-minute rolling boil makes water safe, so 10 minutes gives thread fibers a wide margin.**
- A glowing needle is far hotter than boiling water.
- Alcohol is not used because it does not kill bacterial spores.
- This is cleaner, not hospital sterile: keep every stop rule.

SOURCES / CDC: how to make water safe in an emergency · CDC: chemical disinfectants (alcohol limits)

STEP

03

Stitch it: simple, separate stitches

3 OF 4 / READ IN ORDER

Each stitch is its own loop, tied off on its own. Work slowly.



ONE STITCH, THEN REPEAT

- **Push the needle straight in about 1/4 inch from one edge.**
- Bring it out on the other side, the same 1/4 inch from that edge.
- Pull the edges together until they just touch: never tight, never puckered.
- Knot it beside the wound, not on top of it, and trim the ends, leaving short tails.
- Repeat about every 1/4 inch to the end.

STOP / IF IT GAPES

- **Edges will not meet without hard pulling: do not force them.**
- Leave it open and cover it.

WHY IT WORKS

- **Equal bites on both sides line the edges up so they heal flat.**
- Tight stitches cut in and choke the blood supply as the wound swells.
- Separate knots mean one loose stitch does not undo the rest.

SOURCES / Merck Manual (professional): simple interrupted sutures

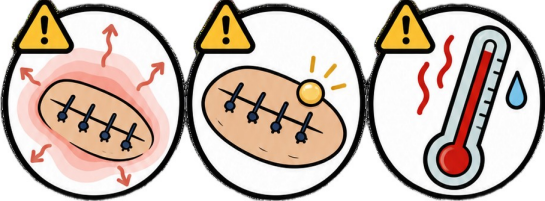
STEP

Cover it and watch it

4 OF 4 / READ IN ORDER

04

Clean, dry and covered, with a look at the wound every day.



DAB DRY

WRAP IN CLEAN GAUZE

CHANGE DAILY

REDNESS / PUS / FEVER

COVER AND CHANGE

- **Dab it dry with clean gauze.**
- Wrap it in clean gauze and change the dressing daily, or sooner if it gets wet or dirty.
- Check the wound at every change.

STOP / GET A REAL DOCTOR

- **Spreading redness, pus, red streaks, fever, or pain that gets worse instead of better: get to a real doctor.**
- These are signs of infection; do not wait them out.

WHY IT WORKS

- **A clean cover keeps new dirt out while the edges seal.**
- Daily checks catch infection early, while it is easier to treat.

SOURCES / American College of Surgeons: wound home care · Merck Manual (consumer): first aid for cuts and wounds · Merck Manual (professional): simple interrupted sutures

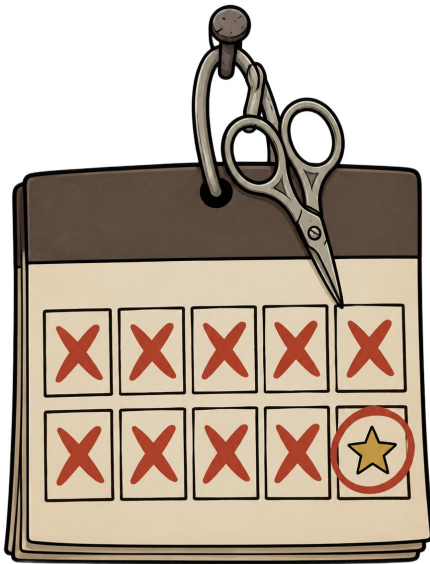
NOTE

Taking the stitches out

KEEP THESE LIMITS WITH THE STEPS

REF

Most stitches come out in roughly 7-14 days.



ABOUT 10 DAYS ON A LIMB



SNIP ONE SIDE, PULL BY KNOT



SEE A CLINICIAN SOON

- WHEN
- **About ten days on an arm or leg.**
 - Face stitches come out sooner and stitches over a joint stay longer, which is one more reason those spots belong to a clinician.

- HOW
- **Wash your hands and clean the skin.**
 - Lift each knot, snip the thread on one side close to the skin, and pull the stitch out by the knot.
 - If the edges start to open, stop and cover it.

- KEEP IN MIND
- **Ask about tetanus protection when care is available.**
 - Heat-treated sewing supplies are cleaner, not hospital sterile.

SOURCES / Merck Manual (professional): simple interrupted sutures

NOTE

Sources and limits

KEEP THESE LIMITS WITH THE STEPS

REF

Checked September 29, 2026. Tap a source in the box to open it.

SOURCES / TAP A TITLE TO OPEN IT

Merck Manual (professional): simple interrupted sutures

<https://www.merckmanuals.com/professional/injuries-poisoning/how-to-care-for-wounds-and-lacerations/how-to-repair-a-laceration-with-simple-interrupted-sutures>

Merck Manual (consumer): first aid for cuts and wounds

<https://www.merckmanuals.com/home/injuries-and-poisoning/first-aid/first-aid-for-cuts-scrapes-and-wounds>

CDC: how to make water safe in an emergency

<https://www.cdc.gov/water-emergency/about/index.html>

CDC: chemical disinfectants (alcohol limits)

<https://www.cdc.gov/infection-control/hcp/disinfection-sterilization/chemical-disinfectants.html>

American College of Surgeons: wound home care

<https://www.facs.org/for-patients/recovering-from-surgery/home-skills-for-patients/wound-management/wound-home-care/>

AHA / American Red Cross: 2024 first-aid guidelines

<https://cpr.heart.org/en/resuscitation-science/2024-first-aid-guidelines>

NHS: cuts and grazes

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/cuts-and-grazes/>

ABOUT THIS GUIDE

- This is an editorial source review, not clinician certification or a tested procedure.
- The numbers follow the video and stay approximate: about 1 minute, about 1 teaspoon per quart, about 1/4 inch, roughly 7-14 days.

STOP / WHERE THIS GUIDE ENDS

- Deep, dirty, bitten, punctured or gaping wounds, heavy bleeding, and face, eye, joint or hand injuries need medical care, not these steps.
- This guide does not replace a clinician, tetanus care, or antibiotics.

SOURCES / Merck Manual (professional): simple interrupted sutures · Merck Manual (consumer): first aid for cuts and wounds · CDC: how to make water safe in an emergency · CDC: chemical disinfectants (alcohol limits) · American College of Surgeons: wound home care · AHA / American Red Cross: 2024 first-aid guidelines · NHS: cuts and grazes

QUICK REFERENCE

Read the full steps first. Tap any row to return to its instructions.

BEFORE STEP 01

LAST RESORT ONLY. Deep, dirty, bitten, punctured, gaping, spurting, numb, old, or on the face, eye, joint or hand? Do not sew. Cover it; get help.

- 01

Make saline, flush it clean

P05

Boil 1 minute, about 1 teaspoon salt per quart, cool. Flush until clean. Deep, dirty or bitten: do not sew.
- 02

Boil the thread, flame the needle

P06

Thread: boil 10 minutes. Needle: flame until it glows, cool untouched. Never touch the point.
- 03

Stitch, knot, repeat

P07

In 1/4 inch from one edge, out 1/4 inch on the other. Edges just touch. Knot beside the wound. Repeat every 1/4 inch.
- 04

Cover, change, watch

P08

Clean gauze, changed daily. Spreading redness, pus, red streaks, fever or worse pain: real doctor. Out in about 7-14 days.

NUKE SAYS

Spreading redness, pus, red streaks, fever or worsening pain means a real doctor. Stitches come out in roughly 7-14 days: about ten on an arm or leg.

STOP / DO NOT SEW IF ANY IS TRUE

FULL STOP RULES / PAGE 03

▪ Deep, dirty, bitten or punctured

▪ Gaping: edges will not meet

▪ Spurting or heavy bleeding

▪ Old: over about 6 to 8 hours

▪ On the face or near an eye

▪ Over a joint

▪ On the hand (tendons)

▪ Numb or hard to move

Instead: leave it open, rinse it, cover it with clean gauze, change it daily, and get medical help. Heavy or spurting bleeding: press hard and get emergency help now.

SOURCES / Merck Manual (professional): simple interrupted sutures · Merck Manual (consumer): first aid for cuts and wounds · CDC: how to make water safe in an emergency · CDC: chemical disinfectants (alcohol limits) · American College of Surgeons: wound home care · AHA / American Red Cross: 2024 first-aid guidelines · NHS: cuts and grazes

BUILD MAP

PREVIOUS

FIRST EDITION / SEPTEMBER 2026 / HLT-006

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