

## **Accessories We Love: Janome Beading Presser Feet**

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Beads are a wonderful embellishment. They add dimension *and* texture *and* color in one fell swoop. But my-oh-my, putting them on can be a struggle and a half. Hand sewing is an option, if you have a few spare days. And machine sewing can be like trying to ride your bike over a field of BBs (no... I haven't actually done that, but I know it would be tricky and very slippery). Luckily for me (and my bicycle), our friends at Janome have a cool set of presser feet made *exactly* for what we want to do: quickly attach strands of beads of various widths. Can a glittering gown for next year's Oscars be far behind?!

The Janome Beading Feet come in two sizes. The larger one is for beads from 2.5mm to 4mm and the smaller one is for beads less than 2mm. They are available in both the 5mm-7mm presser foot size as well as the 9mm size. The 5mm - 7mm size comes as a set of two. The 9mm size is sold individually.

There's a little channel at the front of the foot that precisely guides the bead strand under the foot. You feed the beads into the channel and the channel feeds them under the needle.



Simply remove your existing presser foot and snap on one of the two Beading feet. This foot set is manufactured by Janome for Janome machines, but may work on other models that accept snap-on feet. Check with your local dealer to be sure. Your sewing machine brand may have its own version of this type of foot.

As you can see, there is no opening in the front of the foot to slip your top and bobbin threads and sweep them to the back of the foot. Instead, slip a long straight pin under the foot to catch both thread tails, bringing them under the foot and out the back.



We like to draw a line to follow with our strand of beads. We simply drew a straight chalk line for our sample, but it's also helpful (possibly more so) to draw in any curved lines you may want to trace in beads.



It's very important to take the time to set-up your machine correctly and test the swing of the needle.

You should thread your machine with thread that best matches the beads first and the fabric second. For our samples, we purposefully chose white beads on a dark suede. We used white thread in both the top and bobbin and the stitches nearly disappear. We switched to black thread in both the top and bobbin when we tested a decorative strand with black rhinestone links against my navy fabric. Again, the thread is nearly invisible. If you have trouble matching, try going with a thread color to match your fabric in the bobbin and a clear monofilament thread in the top.

Set the stitch type to a simple zig zag. The thread tension should be set to automatic or in the 3 - 5 range. Stitch length should be approximately 1.5.

The *width* of your zig zag is the most critical. A width of approximately 2-3 is standard, but *always* test to be sure. Place the strand of beads on your project, place the project on your machine bed, and lower the foot over the bead strand so the channel is resting right over the beads. Using the handwheel, drop the needle to one side - it should just clear the bead. Still using the handwheel, turn it until the needle swings to the other side and make sure it just clears the bead on this opposite side. If it is too close or too far adjust your stitch width accordingly.



In the background of the photo above is a blurry white square we'd like to bring to your attention. Not because it's blurry, but because that is a piece of tape. Our personal hint is to use an overlapped piece of tape to 1) secure the ends of your strand so the beads don't slide off, and 2) to attach the end of the stand to your fabric.

Once you're confident you have the swing of the needle set and the strand of beads is in place under the foot, you are ready to stitch. We like to hold the strand from both the back and the front. This does not mean you're pulling on the beads; it's more a stability thing, allowing you to better follow the drawn line.

This is our test stitch on a strand of 3mm beads.



Here's a 4mm strand with beads spaced farther apart.



Here, we switched out to the smaller foot for a dainty 2mm strand.



And finally... all three strands sewn on. You can barely see the stitching... even quite close up. And, really, people better *not* have their faces that close to your beads!

NOTE: *Do NOT back tack at the beginning or end. It looks messy. Instead, leave your thread tails long and hand tie knots to secure the thread at both ends of your strand of beads .*



To check the foot's versatility, we tried this more unusually shaped strand of flat glass beads, using the larger foot and a needle swing just a bit wider than the package actually suggests. We went all the way up to 3.2, but it still fit within the opening in the foot and worked like a charm.



Visit your local [Janome America dealer](#) to get your very own [Janome Beading Feet set](#).

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