



Beginners Sewing Machine Advice

Threading your machine

- All machines (bar a select few) are threaded in the same way, with the reel of thread positioned on the right top of the machine, on a vertical spool holder this holder should be approximately 3cm plus in length, it may need to be pulled up out of the machine to extend. Alternatively your spool holder may lay horizontally and be located on the top middle of the machine and a stopper will be provided to stop the thread pulling off when you sew.
- Work the thread across the machine and down the front in a reverse N pattern to the needle through all the thread guides.

Threading the needle

- Always thread the needle from front to back (a few old ones are from side to side but these will be very vintage).
- Always use the best thread you can afford! A polyester is the best all purpose thread, but you may prefer to use a cotton if you are likely to dye your project. A branded thread is best, these include, but are not exclusive to Guttermann, Coats, Dirma, Mettler and Aurofil

Stitches

- Remember to check what stitch setting your machine is on before you start sewing.
- Stitch length: The higher the number the l-o-n-g-e-r the stitch.
- Stitch width: This setting is used mostly when using ZZZ zigzag ZZZ and embroidery stitches. The stitch width setting can on some, but not all machines be used to change the needle position.

Tension

- The tension dial will normally be set around four on most machines. The tension dial is most usually positioned on the front of the machine, closest to the thread guide and thread take up hook.
- If the top stitch is tight and the bobbin thread looks looped (the bobbin stitch underneath will look like lots of raised little bridges) alter the tension gently to a lower number.
- Equally the opposite: If the top thread is looping alter the tension gently to a higher number.
- BUT MOST IMPORTANTLY don't alter tensions until you have tried these things first - Re-threading. Changing your needle for a new one or using a quality thread.

Bobbin

- Always wind the thread onto the bobbin in a clockwise motion. Stabilise the reel on the machine to stop the thread being wound becoming loopy ensure the thread passes around the bobbin tension button (these tips can help also- either apply a little bit of pressure with your finger to the reel of cotton when it is being wound to steady it, or allow the threads to pass through your finger and thumb).
- Inserting the bobbin: Whether your bobbin is in a case or drop-in the action is the same. Place the bobbin into the drop in case or the cassette if front loading .Taking the end of the thread in your left hand bring it under the bobbin and draw around and back towards the left through the bobbin case.
- Bring the bobbin thread up through the needle plate: Make sure your needle is threaded. Using the hand wheel will move the needle down. Turn the hand wheel for a full rotation, the needle will go down and come back up catching the bobbin thread up in a loop. Pull the bobbin thread loop and draw both top and bobbin threads backwards under the presser foot ready to begin stitching.
- Remember – if using a Bobbin case the thread **MUST** be threaded through the metal tension gauge on the case.

PRE-SEWING

- Prepare to sew: Position the fabric under the machine foot. Using the presser foot lever, lower the lever to sandwich the fabric under the foot and off you go! The machine will feed the fabric. Your job is to just guide the fabric where you wish the line of stitching to be made.
- Until you feel confident practice stitching lines and curves that you can draw onto a cloth. Don't pull or push the fabric find a speed that feels comfortable

Useful information

Needles -

Needles are available for various fabric types and for the best performance should be changed after approximately 8 hours of stitching

The most appropriate needles for basic sewing of cotton and wool fabrics are Universal size 80 or 90 needles

If you are likely to be sewing denim then always use a Jeans needle size 90, the blade is designed to cut through the denim and will give the best finish especially through thick areas of hems where seams meet.

Sourcing Fabrics

Online - there are numerous all with really good unique fabrics

But these are our go to

Fabricland and MInerva Fabrics for a wide range of reasonably priced materials ideal for trying things out and first projects

For interesting and unusual materials including designer and ex designer -

Fabric Godmother

Ditto Fabrics

Guthrie and Gharni

Truro Fabrics

Stone fabrics.

Croft Mill, Linton Tweeds and Fabworks

Others we recommend locally to Bobbin Sewing School

C and H -Winchester

Franklins - Salisbury

Purple Stitches - Basingstoke

Sew Busy - Fleet

www.bobbinsewingschool.co.uk

