



Welcome to Our Monthly Feature

Back to Basics

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Know Your Sewing Machine

Of course we are all familiar with how our sewing machines work, and we can even trouble shoot somewhat when they don't. But before starting a project for next year's quilt show, it doesn't hurt to review the basics.

On the following pages we present some reminders and useful resources.

All copyright acknowledgement and links are included for your personal research or refresher course at the end of this presentation.



Here is a List of Important Tips:

We are not re-inventing the wheel as there are so many resources online you can check out. But we have done some research and chosen some good articles.



First, some important things to keep in mind:

- **Needles** – So Many to Choose from – Are you using the right one for your project?
- **Thread** – again many options for different projects. What is the difference?
- What about **tension**? Do you know how to adjust it properly?
- The correct **bobbins** for your machine are important.

We are not going to go into details on the above in this short refresh, but are listing useful resources at the end for you to check out.

This is Just About Your Sewing Machine:

1. Keeping your **manual** close by to use reference and
2. Trouble shooting, cleaning and **maintenance**

1. Your Sewing Machine Manual

- If you don't have one, you can usually find them on the manufacturer's website to download free and print (but this often involves lots of pages). Try your local dealer and see if they can order you one.
- For older models try Etsy, eBay or Amazon ~ they are available to purchase. (One thing that helped me was to use the same brand of machines for familiarity).
- I take my manuals with me when I go on quilting retreats. Invariably something happens when you are away, and it's great to have the resource there.

Instruction Book



2. Cleaning, Care and Maintenance



I decided to put my money where my mouth was. This is a picture of one of my older machines that definitely needed some attention!

- Your sewing machine manual is your first resource. There will be a section about care and maintenance, cleaning the inside of the thread guide and the bobbin area, and a list of warning signs and trouble shooting tips.
- Oiling and cleaning regularly will extend the life of your machine, and your manual should tell you when and how (although some machines are self lubricating and so do not need oil).
- Heavy usage, heavy fabrics such as velvet and corduroy and the length of time between service will determine how often to clean your machine.

2. Cleaning, Care and Maintenance (cont.)

- You should have your machine professionally serviced unless you have the skill set yourself. They recommend once a year, but I do mine every two years, and alternate between machines so I always have at least one to use.
- If your thread is breaking often, check your thread guide and the bobbin area.
- Cleaning under the bobbin area is quick and easy with pipe cleaners. Don't be afraid to take out the bobbin and holder to get right in there. Make sure your machine is unplugged before you start removing parts.
- If you hear unusual sounds from the machine, it's likely time to check!



Resources and Copyright Acknowledgement for this article:

General:

[Sewing Machine Tips: 8 Things the Experts Want You to Know \(quiltingdaily.com\)](http://quiltingdaily.com)

[How to Clean, Oil, and Maintain Your Sewing Machine – Love Sew \(love-sew.com\)](http://love-sew.com)

Needles:

[Sewing Machine Needle Sizes & Types Guide \(FREE Chart!\) \(sewingmachinefun.com\)](http://sewingmachinefun.com)

Thread:

[Types of Thread: How to Choose the Right Thread for Your Sewing Project – Sewing Society](http://sewingsociety.com)



Tension:

[Sewing Machine Tension - Top 10 TIPS and Settings | TREASURE](http://treasure.com)

[Understanding Thread Tension on Your Sewing Machine \(threadsmagazine.com\)](http://threadsmagazine.com)

Bobbins: [Are All Bobbins the Same? A Guide to Sewing Machine Bobbins \(sewingiscool.com\)](http://sewingiscool.com)