

1956

EC56-408 Satisfaction from your Sewing Machine

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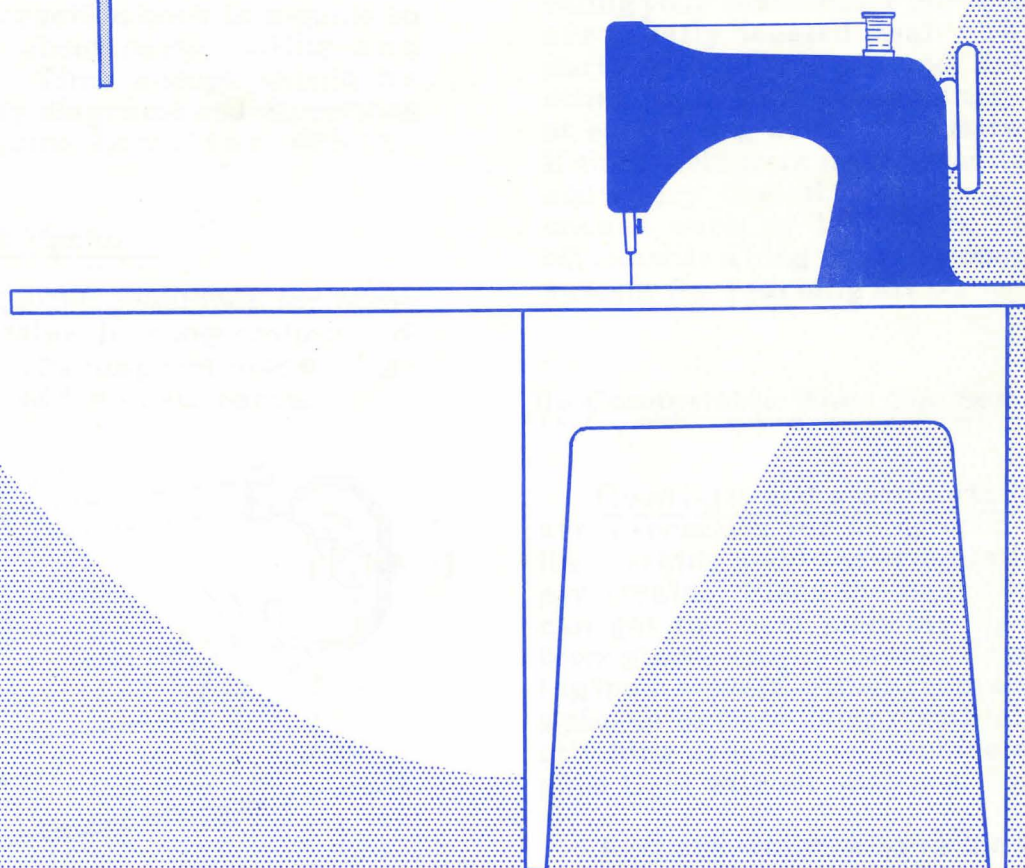
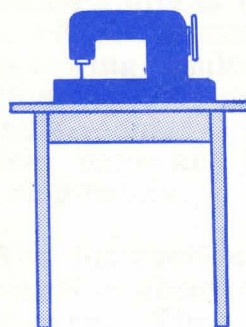
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Satisfaction FROM YOUR *Sewing Machine*



Extension Service
University of Nebraska College of Agriculture and Home Economics
and U. S. Department of Agriculture Cooperating
E. F. Frolik, Dean E. W. Janike, Director

Satisfaction From Your Sewing Machine

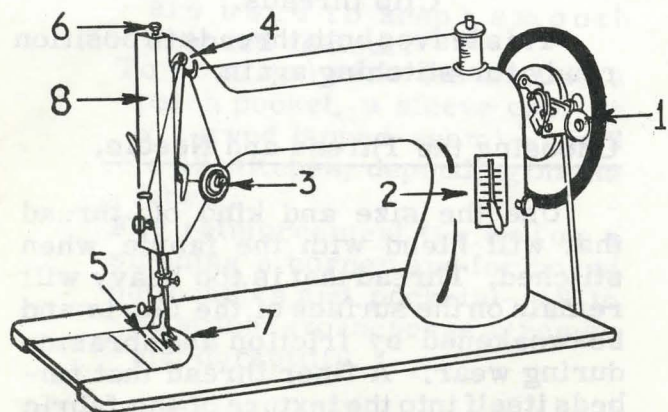
Helen Rocke

The pleasure and satisfaction that you can get from your sewing machine depends on whether you know how to handle it and the amount of care you will give it. A clean and properly regulated machine will carry through the stitching of the seams of a new dress or reduce a pile of mending in a short time. A professional quality in machine sewing results from knowing how to adjust the basic operating parts of a machine--tension, stitch regulator, presser bar--and in developing good stitching habits.

The instruction book is a guide to information about parts, oiling and other care. Time enough should be given to study diagrams and directions so as to become familiar with the machine.

Parts of the Machine.

All lockstitch machines for home use are similar in construction and operation. The diagram below illustrates some of the basic parts.



- | | |
|----------------------|------------------|
| 1. Bobbin winder. | 5. Feed dog. |
| 2. Stitch regulator. | 6. Presser bar. |
| 3. Tension. | 7. Throat plate. |
| 4. Take-up. | 8. Face plate. |

Care of the Machine.

A small paint brush kept with the sewing equipment is convenient to remove dust and lint from moving parts of the machine. At regular intervals, and especially after stitching fabrics which shed lint readily, it is advisable to remove the throat plate to clean thoroughly around the feed dog. A heavy accumulation of lint and dust here hampers the action of the feed and may result in imperfect stitching.

Refer to your instruction book for oiling your machine. Points for oiling are usually located near the moving parts. Remove dust and lint before oiling. Use good oil sparingly. A drop at each oiling point is usually enough. If the machine is used steadily all day and every day oil it daily, otherwise, once a week or less often. A small oil can with a long curved spout is convenient for reaching all oiling points.

Be Comfortable When You Sew.

Good light and a comfortable chair are essentials for doing good work at the machine and to prevent fatigue and eye strain. Place the machine so you can get the best possible light, free from glare, on your work. Light coming from the left, either from a window, a pin-up or floor lamp, will fall on the stitching area of the machine and give good light without shadows.

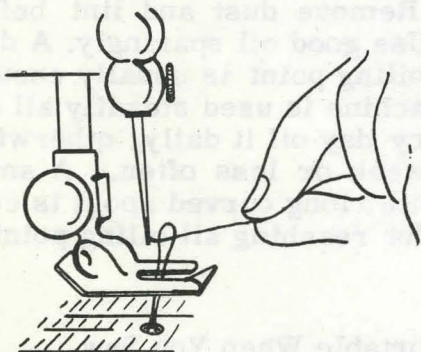
A chair which allows the feet and back to be comfortable is also important. Your posture has a direct influence on your comfort and the results of your sewing. Sit squarely in front of the machine so you can easily operate it.

If a treadle machine is used, one foot is forward and the other slightly back. If the machine has a knee or foot control, establish a comfortable position in which you can control the speed of the machine in an even rhythm.

Preparation for Stitching.

Use the same kind and size of thread in the bobbin as on the spool pin. The bobbin should be smoothly wound in level layers and not so full that it bulges over the sides.

1. Thread the machine needle.
2. Bring the bobbin thread through the needle hole by holding the needle thread lightly with the left hand and turning the balance wheel with the right hand so the needle goes down and up, bringing the bobbin thread with it.



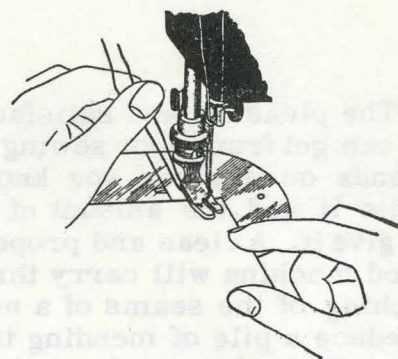
3. Place both threads back and toward the left under the presser foot.
4. Turn the balance wheel so the take-up lever is at its highest point.

This is the correct starting and stopping position for all sewing machine work. If you have not made this a habit, practice until it becomes one. It will save time, motions and much annoyance for you.

How to Start and End a Seam.

1. Place the fabric under the presser foot just far enough back so the needle will go through the cloth where the first stitch is to fall. Keep the bulk of the material to the left.

2. Hold the thread ends lightly and lower the presser foot.



3. Stitch at moderate even speed.
4. Always stop the machine before running off the edge of the cloth.
5. To slow down or stop, place the right hand lightly on the balance wheel.
6. When end of seam is reached, stop the machine.

Turn balance wheel so the take-up lever is at highest point.

Raise presser foot.

Draw fabric back away from you and to the left. Keep the needle thread under the presser foot to prevent bending the needle. Clip threads.

This leaves both threads in position ready for stitching again.

Choosing the Thread and Needle.

Use the size and kind of thread that will blend with the fabric when stitched. Thread that is too heavy will remain on the surface of the fabric and be weakened by friction and abrasion during wear. A finer thread that imbeds itself into the texture of the fabric will have more strength and give longer service.

The needle is chosen in relation to both the fabric and thread; large enough so the thread passes through it freely.

but fine enough so that it does not mar the fabric by punching large holes as stitching is done.

Adjusting Your Sewing Machine.

Your sewing machine can be adapted to stitch fabrics of different weight, texture, and elasticity, mainly by three adjustments: stitch length, tension and pressure.

Regulating length of stitch.

Proper stitch length and adjustment is a mark of quality and beauty in the construction of a garment. High quality garments are stitched with shorter stitches and appropriate weights and types of thread. Learn to use your stitch regulator and remember the length of stitch should be changed for different processes in construction.

Some of these are:

Basting-- requires a long stitch
6 to 8 per inch.

Curved seams--a shorter stitch than for straight stitching to give more elasticity and strength. Use 15 stitches per inch if 12 stitches have been used for straight stitching.

Scallops--20 stitches to the inch are used to keep a smooth rounded contour.

To control ease (as around a patch pocket, a sleeve cap, or a curved lapped seam)--use 8 to 12 stitches, depending on the fabric.

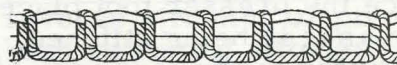
For reinforcement (as before slashing a corner and for bound buttonholes and pockets)--18 to 20 stitches to increase strength and durability.

Tension Adjustment. Upper tension is the control placed on the spool thread as it passes between the closely fitted discs. Lower tension is the control on the bobbin thread as it passes under a spring on the bobbin case. In stitching,

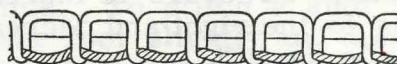
when the pull on both threads draws them into the fabric equally and they lock together in the center of the fabric; then we say the tension is balanced. Stitches are rounded on both sides and do not pucker or pull the fabric.



TENSIONS BALANCED



UPPER TENSION TIGHTER THAN LOWER



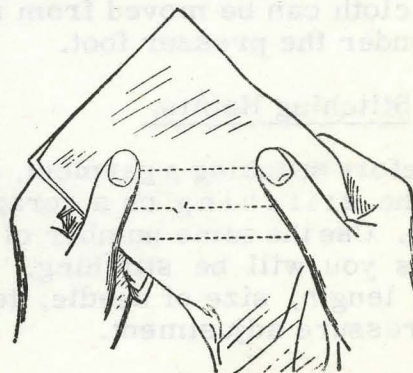
UPPER TENSION LOOSER THAN LOWER

The degree of tension needs to be adjusted to different fabrics. The weight of the fabric, closeness of weave and elasticity are some of the determining factors.

Adjustments are made on the upper tension first by turning the thumb screw on the tension unit. Turning to the right tightens the tension, to the left loosens it.

The lower tension is adjusted by a small screw on the bobbin case. It requires only a slight turn of this screw to change the bobbin tension. Once this has been properly set, it is seldom necessary to change it.

The balance and elasticity of the tension adjustment may be tested by stitching five or six inches on the bias through two thicknesses of fabric and using the same size and kind of thread on both spool and bobbin.



The stitch will look the same on both sides if the tension is balanced. If the stitching is elastic enough, it will stretch and not break under a moderate pull. For testing to see if tensions are even, pull harder until the stitching breaks. The thread which breaks first has the tighter tension. Readjust the tension if the difference is too great, working with the upper tension first.

Pressure adjustment. Pressure is the force the presser foot places on the fabric as it is being stitched. It is regulated by the screw at the top of the presser bar. Pressure is increased by turning to the right and decreased by turning to the left.

Correct pressure is just enough to hold the fabric firmly, to prevent it rising with the needle and to keep it moving smoothly and evenly. Too much pressure causes the machine to run hard and too little allows the fabric to shift from side to side and causes irregular joining of seam edges, and an irregular stitch.

When the pressure is regulated to the right degree for the fabric it can be handled smoothly and evenly. A medium light pressure is used for following curved lines that require constant turning of the material and for stitching fabrics like velvet which mar easily.

More pressure may be required to hold bulky fabrics, like coating, in contact with the feed dog. For darning and some special stitches, the pressure can be almost entirely released so the cloth can be moved from side to side under the presser foot.

Good Stitching Habits.

Before stitching a garment, always test the stitching on a scrap of the fabric. Use the same number of thicknesses you will be stitching. Check stitch length, size of needle, tension, and pressure adjustment.

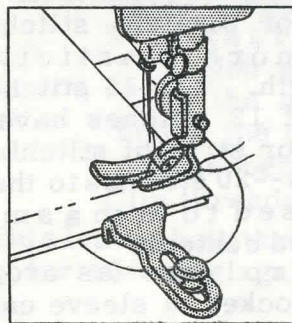
Guide the cloth through the machine with the left hand but let the feed dog do the work of carrying it. Do not push or pull the cloth through the machine, as this will result in imperfect stitches and may cause bending or breaking of the needle.

Sew at an even speed. The ability to control the machine to produce a steady, even stitching is the mark of a skillful seamstress.

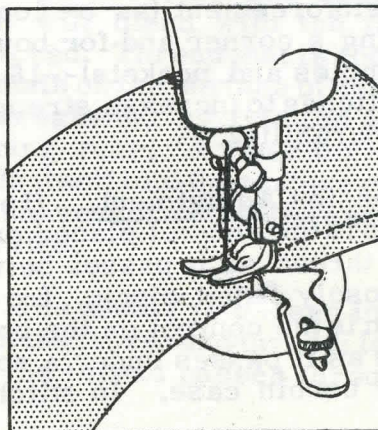
Adjust the position of the cloth as needed so its weight never pulls against the needle. When stitching heavy fabric, do not allow it to pull the needle while you are stitching. Use a table or chair pulled up to the machine to support the fabric.

To turn a corner smoothly, leave the needle in the cloth, raise the presser foot and start stitching again.

Use the seam guide or a piece of adhesive tape as an aid for keeping seams an even width or making straight rows of stitching.



The seam guide may be set at an angle for stitching around a curve.



Do not stitch over bastings or knots, as they will be difficult to remove without damaging the permanent stitching.

When stitching over heavy seams, raise the presser foot slightly rather than pulling the fabric.

When stitching stretchy fabric, like knitted goods and crepes, stretch the seams slightly as you stitch. Use a light equal pull on the fabric behind and in front of the presser foot.

If a small amount of ease needs to be worked in one seam, hold the piece to be eased next to the feed dog. The "easing in" action of the feed dog increases when the stitch is lengthened and the speed of the machine increased.

In turning and stitching raw edges of seams and facings, keep the raw edges against the feed dog and stitch close to the turned edge. By carefully turning the raw edge under and easing the fabric forward, puffing it slightly in front of the needle, even curved and bias edges can be turned and stitched without rippling.

Circular and bias or stretchy fabrics should be stitched $1/8$ inch from the edge through a single layer of the fabric, then turned along the stitching line and edge stitched. Use this same method before turning edges for narrow hems.

Stitch sheer fabric, narrow bias strips or bias sections over paper. This prevents marring the fabric, puckering, and loss of shape. The same method may be used to prevent puckering when stay stitching seam lines and thread marking garment sections.

A curved line that is to be attached to a straight line, or a seam line with an inward corner should be kept uppermost when stitching. This allows one to adjust the shaped lines.

Always stitch with the grain of the fabric, from the wide to the narrow part of each garment piece.

For machine gathering use matching thread and lengthen the stitch. Pull the bottom thread to draw up the gathers; the top thread breaks more easily.

Ends of stitching may be fastened by: reverse stitching or pivoting material and retracing stitches for $1/4$ to $1/2$ inch, or by stitching a knot on the machine. To stitch a knot raise the presser foot slightly and take several stitches in the same place.