

GillyMac Top 5 Simple Machine Maintenance Tips Information Sheet

1. **BOBBIN AREA** - Every stitch we make leads to tiny fragments of the fabric being torn off and these build up in the bobbin holder. Additionally, dust and fluff from your sewing thread add to this build up and if not cleaned regularly your machine will become noisy and performs less effectively.
 - a. For a top loading machine, remove the needle plate, bobbin and case and use a brush to capture the dust and lint, and remove it from the machine.
 - b. For a front-loading machine, raise the needle to its highest position and open the hook cover (bobbin area door), remove the bobbin case, open the race ring holders and remove the ring and clean in that area.

Be careful not to push dust further away or blow it into the machine further. A soft lint brush or good quality paint brush (non-shedding) regularly swiped through the bobbin area to collect the dust in this way will keep it clean. **DO NOT VACUUM YOUR SEWING MACHINE (EVER)**

2. **FEED DOG TEETH** - If left too long before cleaning, the dust and lint can become impacted between the feed dog teeth and consequently prevent them from feeding the fabric through. To clean the feed dog teeth, remove the needle plate, needle and presser foot and, using a soft toothbrush, push the lint out from between the teeth on either side, catching and removing it completely.
3. **TENSION DISCS** - The two tension discs have thousands of metres of sewing thread skimming between them. These threads are possibly shredding (especially poor-quality threads) and metallic threads with all their little bits being stripped off as they go between the discs.

To clean the discs, use a long bristle lint brush or a very good quality paint brush. Unthread the machine and leave the presser foot up which automatically releases the tension discs allowing the brush to get between them. Brush firmly up and down between the discs. You can also place a thin piece of cotton between the discs, lower the pressure foot and carefully pull it through the discs in the direction the thread normally travels through them. This will remove any final bits of lint or dust.

4. **OILING MACHINE** - Most top loading machines are self-oiling and do not need to be oiled. Front loading machines normally do need oiling - on average once a year, but this depends on the frequency of use. **ALWAYS**



refer to your sewing machine manual to check on the oiling requirements of your machine.

5. **QUALITY THREADS AND NEEDLES** – Fluffy and low-quality thread will lead to more lint build up and more potential problems with your machine. Treat yourself to a small supply of good quality threads (my choices are Guttermann, Filtec, Isacord and Superior. If it doesn't have a name on it or if it's been hanging around for years, it's time to splash out on new threads. Similarly, always use needles from known high quality manufacturers, for example John James, Schmetz and Superior are my go-to needle manufacturers, Finally, change your needle often. It is worth it – I promise.

I know I have got to 5 tips, but I have an extra two to share with you....

- When moving or transporting a sewing machine, always do so with the presser foot down and a piece of fabric underneath the presser foot.
- When not in use, pack your machine away or always cover it. Dust is circulating around in the air and this will only add to the lint and dust you have to remove the next time you clean your machine if it's not covered up

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