

Sewing Machine Tips, Tricks, Care, Use and Troubleshooting

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Introduction: Jess Tubbs has run J&H Sewing & Vacuum, Inc. since 1989. The business has two locations, one in Anchorage and another in Soldotna. Jess started working with his dad at age 11.

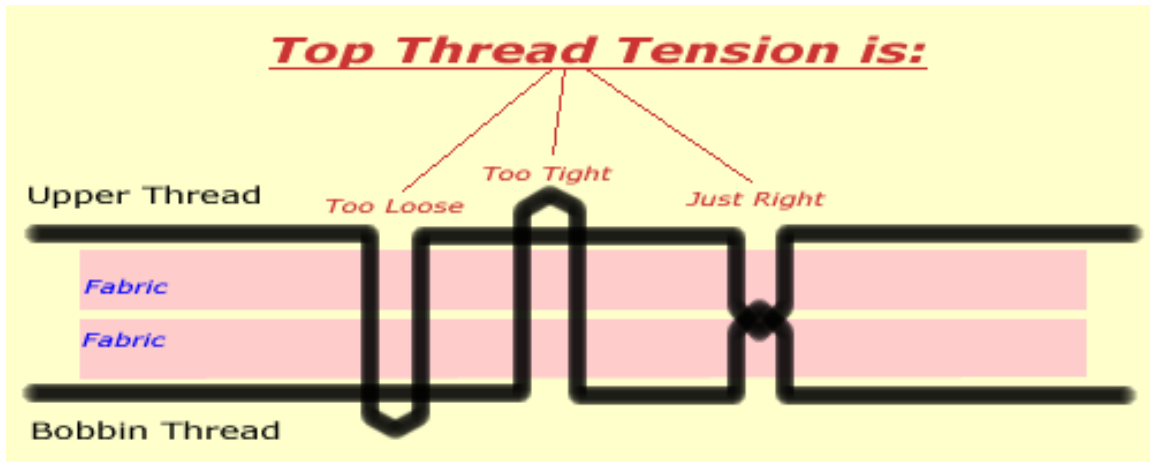
Needles and Threading:

- Use the correct needle for the job, then match the thread to the needle.
 - If thread sticks in the needle groove, then the thread is too big for the needle.
- Always thread toward the needle scarf.
- Signs that the needle size is wrong include frayed thread, broken needles and skipped stitches.
- Go up one needle size (or 2 or 3 sizes) to stop frays, broken needles or skipped stitches.
- If changing the needle size does not work, get the machine serviced.
- Buy quality, high carbon steel needles.
 - A high carbon steel needle if bent, will flex back into its original shape and lasts longer.
 - An inexpensive/poorly made needle will bend and stay bent before it breaks. Bent needles damage machines.
 - Recommended needles for sewing machines include Schmetz, Klasse or Inspira.
 - The recommended needle for long arm quilting machines is Groz Beckert.
- Machines with needle threaders need needle size 11 or larger. The needle threader hook is too large for smaller needle eyes.
- Thread fraying problems always occur below the needle plate.
- Change the needle often, particularly if you hear popping noises while sewing.

Thread:

- Cheap thread leaves more lint in machines
- Cone threads are more cost effective but you must use a cone stand.

Tension Problems: “Thread tension problems are the most reported sewing problem, however, most of the time the thread tension is not causing the problem. Also, when attempting to correct the problem, often times, the wrong correction can be used. Please feel free to use the following diagram to help with thread tension adjustments. And remember, if you adjust your thread tension and still have difficulties, thread tension may not be the problem.”

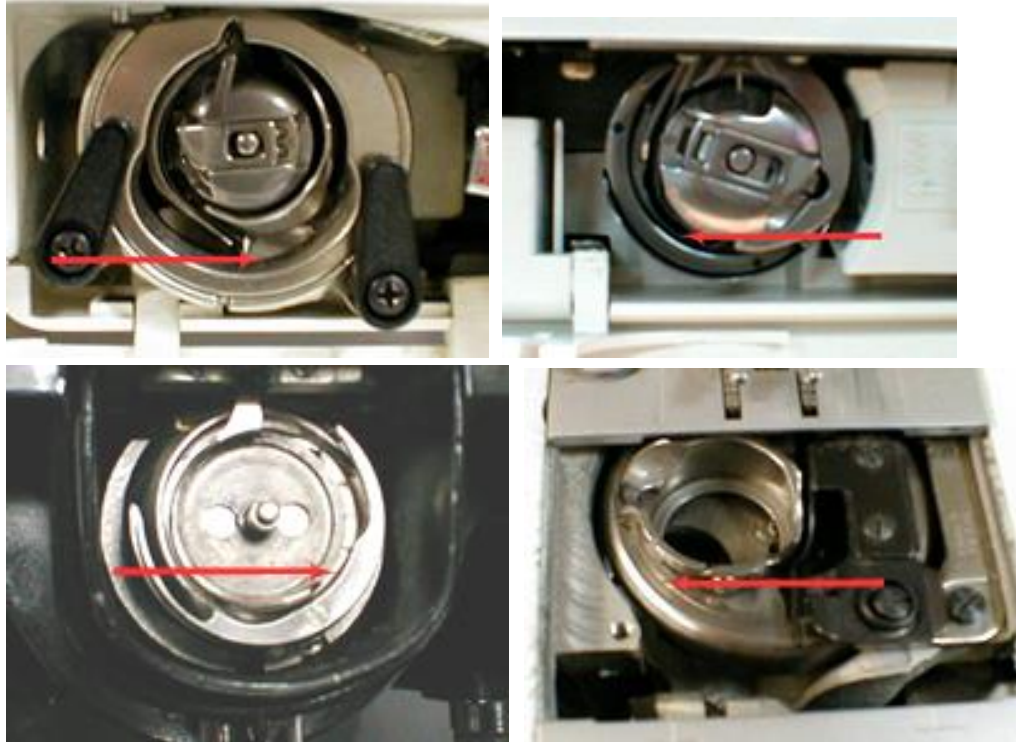


J&H Sewing & Vacuum, Inc., <http://www.sewnvac.com>, accessed 6/5/2023.

- Tension problems occur in less than 10% of the machines brought in for repair.
- When adjusting the upper tension knob, turn 1-2 full numbers at a time to see changes.
- When threading the machine, hold the thread spool with your right hand and thread with your left hand to ensure thread is passing through the tension disks and guides properly.
- If the thread is the same on the spool as it is on the bobbin, tension should not need to be changed.
- Bobbin case tension does not change. Check for debris. The **last** step solving a tension problem should be adjusting the bobbin case tension.

Bobbins:

- Metal Sewing Hook Oiling. Use clear oil (not yellow).
“All metal sewing hooks NEED oil occasionally. Here's where the TINY drop of oil should go:



Tiny drop often is better than a gallon once in a while. Make sure to sew a small piece of fabric to remove any excess oil before sewing on your project.” J&H Sewing & Vacuum, Inc., <http://www.sewnvac.com>, accessed 6/5/2023.

- Buy quality bobbins. Some newer metal bobbins are poorly pressed.
- Make sure the bobbin is spinning in the correct direction by pulling the thread. Most drop-in bobbins spin counter-clockwise.

Domestic machine quilting:

- Occasionally oil the hopping foot with the spring.
- You should not have to adjust the presser foot pressure when using a spring-loaded hopping foot.
- Ruler feet don’t hop, so the presser foot pressure must be lowered.

Miscellaneous Advice:

- Use a Jean-A-Ma-Jig or Hump Jumper to go over thick seams to avoid skipped/bunched stitches.
- Don’t sew off the end of the fabric. Doing so dulls the feed dogs.

Maintenance:

- Clean out underneath the needle plate often. Built up lint damages the feed dog nylon cams.

- If you use air to blow debris out of the machine, take the covers off and make sure the lint leaves the machine and is not blown into the machine body.

Embroidery:

- Hoop holds the fabric drum tight.
- You must use a cutaway stabilizer. Do not use tearaway.

If you need service:

Bring your machine, standard presser foot, standard needle plate, foot control, power cord, bobbin and bobbin case. Provide a sample of the problem left in the machine. For embroidery machines, bring the embroidery unit and hoop.

Notes from presentation compiled by Juli Comer, Secretary.