

EMBROIDERY MACHINE MAINTENANCE TIPS

You do need to understand the importance of maintaining your machine, and what is involved in order to do this. Most embroidery machine problems can be traced to poor general maintenance or neglect. With some simple tools and just a few minutes daily, weekly, or monthly, you can help keep your machine running smoothly.

Whether you are new to the industry or a veteran embroiderer, you cannot afford to operate your equipment without performing basic, manufacturer-recommended maintenance and cleaning procedures. Equipment breakdowns requiring factory-trained technicians are costly, and regular maintenance is an owner's best preventative.

Wind bobbins correctly

Be sure there are no thread tails hanging from the bobbin when it's inserted into the bobbin case. They can jam the machine and cause the upper thread to break. And note that there's no such thing as a generic bobbin. Always use a bobbin designed for your machine in order to avoid skipped stitches, loose threads, and noise, as well as permanent damage to the bobbin case.

Regular cleaning and oiling is essential

Get in the habit of cleaning your machine after each project. Follow the instructions in your manual, or ask your machine mechanic to show you how.

If you look closely at the tension mechanisms and bobbin case, they are close fitting areas. Lint left in these areas can destroy machine parts. You will also find that inexpensive thread builds up lint much faster than expensive thread. Remove dirt and always oil the rotary hook. This actually should be done almost everyday. A medium size paintbrush or canned air can do the job very well by brushing and cleaning (blowing) the area that has dust and wasted thread.

Oiling is essential and the embroiderer should not leave the hook dry.

Take off the needle plate, clean the lint from the rotary hook, and then oil it. Because the rotary hook is the hardest working part of the embroidery machine, daily oiling is very important. At the end of each eight hours of operation remove the needle plate, clean the lint and remove thread pieces from the rotary hook and then apply the oil. Oiling the machine not only lubricates your moving parts, to prevent wear. It reduces the risk of rust. Rust forms rapidly with any dampness, even just the humidity in the air. Surface rust can act just like loose sand granule in your machine, and create excess wear.

Cleaning The Bobbin Case

A thorough cleaning and inspection should also include the bobbin case. Clean the bobbin case in side and out. Be sure to teach your machine operators to take care of the bobbin case because dropping the case can damage it.

The bobbin case tension spring is the curved piece of metal on the outside of the case and is held in place by two screws. The screw on the end of the spring holds the spring in place, and the screw in about the middle of the spring allows you to adjust the tension. An accumulation of lint under the bobbin case tension spring can cause erratic tension or no tension on the bobbin thread. Cleaning the bobbin case periodically can increase the life of your tension spring. When you clean the bobbin case and spring, you may find that all of a sudden the bobbin tension stabilizes and the overall sewing quality improves. It's an extremely good idea to keep a dozens of backup bobbins in case some break up.

Felts. Most machines use felts in their tension assembly to retard the thread. After years of dust accumulation, they need to be replaced.

You'll also find needle bar felts at the base of needle bars. These hold the oil close to the needle bars and soak up excess oil so that it doesn't drip onto the machine.

Needle screws. Over time, all needle screws — the ones used to replace needles — become grooved where they tighten against the needle. This causes the needle to slip out, even after tightening. If the needle drops into the hook at high speed, the machine will stop.

Take your machine to be serviced about every two years. Have the service professional perform a basic service, which includes cleaning, oiling, balancing the tension and a quick once-over of the machine. They should provide a stitch out of both straight and zigzag stitches to show the tension balance.