



Frequently Asked Questions

CLEANING/MAINTAINING MACHINE

- **What is the biggest enemy that keeps a sewing machine from running well?**
Big problems for sewing machines include dust and lint and irregular maintenance, among many others.
- **What are the very basic actions I can take to keep up with basic maintenance on my machine?**
Always unplug your machine before cleaning or oiling for your own safety and to prevent damage to your machine. See the FAQ section: *Damage of Dust and Lint*. Make sure to keep the bobbin area cleaned and lubricated according to your owner's manual. Use the proper thread and needles for your machine and for projects you work on. Make sure to change the needle when appropriate and use high-quality thread. Always refer to your owner's manual for the best information about caring for your machine.
- **What is the best way to keep my machine from rusting?**
Rust can be prevented by keeping your machine away from moisture and in a living area of your house. If possible, don't store your machine in a basement, garage or attic. Clean and oil your machine regularly.
- **When is it okay to take apart my machine and clean all of the pieces myself?**
Unless you know how to put it back together again, it is not a good idea to clean your entire machine yourself. Doing this could also void the warranty on your machine.
- **Is it ok to tighten loose screws myself?**
You should only tighten screws if you know what their functions are. Some screws affect the timing of your machine and should only be adjusted by a trained technician. If a screw is missing or very loose, it is best to bring your machine to a technician for service.
- **What about wires in my machine?**
If you notice any signs of wear on the wires inside your sewing machine or there is any issue with electrical parts that looks suspicious, always consult a trained technician. If there is something wrong with your power cord, have it replaced as soon as possible, as this could be hazardous.
- **Why should I keep thread away from my handwheel?**
Don't let thread dangle close to the handwheel. It can become caught on the wheel and get sucked into the motor. Keep extra spools wrapped or away from that side of the machine.

- **Why do I need a surge protector for my machine?**

Both under and over voltages are very hard on electronic circuits and can do some serious damage to your machine. Most surge protectors protect well against over voltages but very few also protect against under voltages. Simply turning your sewing machine off before a power outage or serious under voltage occurs is sufficient, but how do you anticipate this in time? Rest easy and plug your precious sewing machine into a high quality surge protector like the ones we carry at Pine Needles Quilt & Sew. It not only prevents surges from getting to your machine, but it also shuts off the power to your machine in the event of a power outage or under voltage—effectively turning it off for you in the nick of time!

- **How can I protect my investment?**

Only have your Bernina serviced by an authorized Bernina dealer. Service provided by unauthorized repair technicians voids your warranty. If you're thinking that your machine is out of warranty, you may be mistaken. Bernina has very generous warranties on all its machines:

- 2 year warranty on electrical
- 5 year warranty on boards
- 20 year warranty on parts

Bernina requires regular training to keep techs up to date on all the new machines. We're proud to be your authorized Bernina dealer!

DAMAGE OF DUST AND LINT

- **What are the best ways to keep dust and lint out of the machine?**

Cover your machine when it's not in use to protect it from gathering dust. Clean out nooks and crannies inside your machine and under the bobbin case regularly, such as after you finish a project. Use a Q-tip or the brush that came with your machine. We strongly recommend purchasing an attachment for your vacuum to draw out dust and lint. **Never** blow or use compressed air to move dust and lint.

- **What damage can dust and lint do to my machine?**

Dust and lint absorb oil and cause premature wear to the internal parts of your machine. They also collect moisture that creates rust inside your machine.

OILING MACHINE

- **How often should I oil my machine?**

We recommend oiling your machine every 3-4 bobbins. See your owner's manual to know the frequency that your machine should be oiled.

- **What parts of my machine should be oiled?**

See your owner's manual to know what parts of your machine should be oiled.

- **What kind of oil should I use?**

Use sewing machine oil. Refer to your owner's manual to make sure you use the proper oil for your machine.

- **Where can I purchase oil for sewing machines?**

Sewing supply stores carry oil. Pine Needles Quilt & Sew carries sewing machine oil that is appropriate for BERNINA machines.

- **How much oil should be used?**

One small drop is often just the right amount. For more specific details, refer to your owner's manual.

- **Is it possible to “clog up” my machine with oil?**

Too much oil can come in contact with your thread and be drawn onto the fabric when sewing, which could change the quality of your stitches. After oiling your machine, run the machine with no thread or fabric to circulate the oil.

- **What does oil do for my machine?**

Oil is extremely important to keep the moving parts lubricated, which prevents wear to those parts.

STORAGE OF MACHINE

- **What are the biggest problems for a machine that has sat in storage for a long period of time?**

Oil in the machine dries up and could keep your machine from operating properly. Dried oil means your machine is not lubricated properly.

- **What should be done with a machine in storage before I use it?**

Before using your machine again, we recommend that a trained technician service your machine to ensure it is well-maintained.

- **What precautions should I take to care for my machine if I plan to put it in storage?**

Make sure your storage place is a moderate temperature to prevent your machine from rusting that forms from dampness in the air. As much as possible, keep your machine away from moisture and heat, in a living area of your house. Cover your machine well to protect it from moisture and dust.

THREAD CARE

- **How important is it to pay attention to the tension of the thread?**

Thread tension is an critical factor in stitch quality, so it is very important.

- **What kinds of thread are recommended for best care of my machine and best sewing results?**

We recommend Aurifil for quilting and Isacord for embroidery.

- **What are common reasons for the thread knotting or breaking?**

Some reasons for this issue include thread/needle tension problems, the use of old or low-quality thread, the use of improper thread or needle for your project, or the incorrect threading of your machine. Consult your owner's manual to make sure your machine is threaded correctly and your bobbin is threaded and inserted correctly.

BOBBIN CARE

- **What problems can occur with my bobbins?**

If your bobbin is bent in any way, it will most likely not work properly, resulting in poor stitch quality. If your tension is loose in the bobbin case, your stitches may not form correctly or it will create looping in your stitch quality. Using improper bobbins for your machine can also cause similar problems and it could also void any warranty on your machine.

NEEDLE CARE

- **How often should I change the needle?**

We recommend you change the needle every 4-6 sewing hours.

- **What are other common indications that my needle should be changed?**

If your machine makes a popping or punching sound as the needle pierces the fabric, this is a good indication that the needle should be changed. If the machine is not stitching properly or your stitch quality is poor, a dull needle may be the cause. Try inserting a new needle to fix the problem.

- **What actions should I avoid to prevent the needle from being bent?**

Avoid forcing the material through by pulling or pushing too hard when you sew. You should also avoid hitting or stitching over solid objects, including straight pins. Always try to choose the appropriate needle for the fabric you are using. Always make sure to choose the appropriate presser foot with the stitch you are using, and make sure to use the appropriate stitch plate.

TENSION ISSUES

- **What signs indicate problems with my machine's tension?**

The following may indicate issues with tension: stitches not forming properly, anything unusual with your stitches or the construction of your project, skipped stitches, looping or gathering of the fabric.

- **What are the best ways to adjust tension in my machine and how do I test this?**

See your owner's manual for more details on adjusting the tension on your machine.

TROUBLESHOOTING PROBLEMS

- **My thread keeps knotting. What could be the problem?**

A bent or dull needle could cause your thread to knot. Issues with the top or bottom thread tension, improper threading or incorrect timing (how the needle and bobbin work together) could also contribute to this problem.

- **My stitches are skipping. What can I do?**

Try changing your needle and re-threading your machine. If you've accidentally hit a pin or bent the needle even just a little, this can affect your stitch quality. Avoid pulling or pushing the fabric through the machine, as this can bend the needle and affect your stitch quality. If these actions don't resolve your problem, there may be issues with your machine's timing. Always have a trained technician adjust your machine's timing.

- **My stitches are too loose or too tight. How can I adjust this?**

The thread tension on your machine could be causing loose or tight stitches. Consult your owner's manual to adjust thread tension. Avoid pulling or pushing the fabric through your machine, as this can affect your stitch quality. Another reason for these stitching problems could be issues with your machine's timing. Always take your machine to a trained technician to adjust your machine's timing.

- **My needle hit a straight pin while I was stitching and now something is wrong. What should I do?**

While hitting a pin sometimes does not affect your machine at all, it could bend or break your needle or even affect the timing of your machine (how the needle and bobbin work

together). Try changing a bent or broken needle, but always have a trained technician adjust your machine's timing.

- **My machine is not sewing good stitches or my stitch quality is poor. What can I do?**

Try changing your needle, re-threading your machine including the bobbin, checking your tension setting, oil your machine, and making sure the bobbin area is free of lint before calling your technician.

- **My thread is knotting or breaking. How can I stop this from happening?**

Some reasons for knotting or breaking thread include issues with thread tension, using old or low-quality thread on your machine, using the wrong thread for your project or threading your machine incorrectly. Try adjusting your thread tension. Use high-quality threads, as less expensive threads often have excessive lint, which can affect your stitching. Ensure the thread you are using is appropriate for your project. Re-thread your machine and re-thread and insert your bobbin, consulting your owner's manual if needed. If you encounter further problems, consult a trained technician.

- **My machine makes a punching or popping sound when the needle goes through the fabric. What could be the problem?**

The most likely problem is that your needle is dull and needs to be changed. We recommend you change the needle after every 4-6 sewing hours.

If you have another question about servicing your machine that is not answered here in our FAQ section, please contact our technician by emailing tech@pnqs.net.