

# Troubleshooting Your Sewing Machine

These GENERIC solutions will help with most sewing problems of most brands of machines. Machine failures account for about 10% of problems. **Operator Error account for 90%.**

## CHECK YOUR THREADING - FIRST !!!!

| PROBLEM                            | SOLUTION                                                                                                                                                     |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| WON'T PICK UP THREAD               | Needle in reverse, needle bent, threaded incorrectly, wrong needle for fabric.                                                                               |
| SKIPS STITCHES                     | Bent needle, wrong needle, wrong presser foot for the fabric, check throat plate.                                                                            |
| MACHINE SEIZED                     | Tread jammed into shuttle or hook area. Clean. Oil machine. Look for foreign object under throat plate. (children put things in there).                      |
| MACHINE TURNS HARD                 | Thread in the shuttle area, wrapped around inside of rotary hook. Pull out thread. Oil machine thoroughly.                                                   |
| MACHINE RUNS WHILE WINDING BOBBIN  | Bobbin not set correctly to wind. On some machines, loosen clutch on hand wheel.                                                                             |
| KNOCKING NOISE                     | Broken spring on hook driver .....the part that forces the hook to turn. (shop service)                                                                      |
| MOTOR SMELLS                       | "O" zone odor caused by excessive wear of carbon brushes in motor. Too much oil will also smell and smoke (see sewing machine cleaner section).              |
| DOES A ZIG ZAG ON STRAIGHT SETTING | Oil machine and exercise all knobs several times                                                                                                             |
| STITCH ISN'T STRAIGHT              | Needle and fabric weave.....Oil machine and exercise all knobs several times                                                                                 |
| BREAKS NEEDLE                      | Too small a needle for work. Operator "helping" to fast. Shuttle re-assembled improperly. Too tight top tension or <b>mis-threaded</b> .                     |
| WON'T SEW HEAVY MATERIAL           | Get a bigger needle or the correct point on the needle. More pressure on the presser foot. Use proper presser foot for the fabric.                           |
| ELECTRICAL SHOCK                   | Foreign object in motor. Lamp wiring or motor short (shop service).                                                                                          |
| WON'T FEED SMOOTHLY                | Lint under throat plate, wrong presser foot, feed dogs not in "up" position, insufficient pressure on presser foot.                                          |
| PUCKER FABRIC                      | Stitch length too long. Scoring on bottom of presser foot, needle marks on throat plate. Loosen top tension. Lessen bottom tension of secondary bobbin case. |
| FINISHED SEAM "TURNS UP"           | Upper tension too tight.                                                                                                                                     |

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|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| STITCH IS LOOSE REGARDLESS OF TENSION ADJUSTMENT                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Needle not all the way "UP" into the needle bar. Lint under throat plate.                                                                                                                                       |
| SLOPPY ZIG ZAG                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Change presser foot. Change thread, check threading route ( <b>re-thread</b> ).                                                                                                                                 |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Improper type of foot for purpose.                                                                                                                                                                              |
| SATIN STITCH IS TYING KNOT ON TOP                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Upper tension is too tight or bobbin tension is too loose. Only change bobbin tension on secondary bobbin.                                                                                                      |
| BREAKS NEEDLE ON REVERSE ONLY                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Upper tension is too tight, links keep upper tension spring from functioning properly.                                                                                                                          |
| FABRIC WILL NOT STEER GOOD                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Presser foot tension, wrong presser foot, feed dog must be "UP".                                                                                                                                                |
| MACHINE JAMS UP FREQUENTLY                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | <b>Improperly threaded</b> , burr on hook beak, bent bobbin, improper winding of bobbin.                                                                                                                        |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Check bobbin case spring. Upper tension spring not functioning or dirty with thread residue. Bent needle due to improper selection of size.                                                                     |
| NEEDLES WON'T LAST VERY LONG                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | One dress = one needle. Less than that - look for correct point style, needle size, operator "helping" the fabric through the machine (usually by ex-power machine operators.)                                  |
| FABRIC WILL NOT PULL -OUT AFTER STITCHING                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Presser foot lever should activate the release of the upper tension to allow the thread to pull easily, should release with needle in uppermost position. (shop service)                                        |
| MACHINE EATS MY FABRIC                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Wrong needle - presser foot - throat plate combination. Check for scoring on throat plate. Check front of throat plate section. Feed dogs too high for thin fabric or there is too much pressure foot pressure. |
| TEARS FINE FABRIC AND SILK                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Feed dogs too high, too much pressure on presser foot, feed dogs have broken tooth, throat plate has needle marks or burrs.                                                                                     |
| PRESSER FOOT ISN'T HIGH ENOUGH                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Most machines have a second lift. Let repair shop adjust for additional height.                                                                                                                                 |
| BASTING STITCH PUCKERS FABRIC                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Assist (don't pull) fabric out the rear. When basting (longest stitch) lower upper tension to about #1 or loose.                                                                                                |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| The above should solve most general and generic problems. Certain brands have specific problems and solutions inherent to that brand only. If you have a particular obstinate problem send a S.A.S.E. with machine I.D. and disorder description. We will be glad to R.S.V.P. with a likely solution. |                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
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| <b>THE SEWING EMPORIUM - WE'RE HERE TO SERVE YOU - (619) 420-3490</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
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