

Sewing Machine Health Checklist

Every interval of care on one page — the quiet habits that keep a machine sewing for decades.

From the bench of Daniel Hanson

RULE ONE Hand near the needle? The plug comes out of the wall — before you clean, oil, or change a thing.

MACHINE Make / model: _____

Manual says oil it myself? Yes / No

Last serviced: _____

EVERY SESSION

The 5-Minute Routine

- ☐ **Look.** Open the bobbin area — lint? Scan the thread path and needle for anything loose or bent.
- ☐ **Listen.** Run it a few seconds. Smooth hum is good; grinding or squeaking means investigate first.
- ☐ **Clean.** Quick sweep of loose lint from the bobbin area.
- ☐ **Check.** Right needle, sharp? Bobbin even and seated? Threaded with the presser foot up?
- ☐ **Test.** Sew a few inches on doubled scrap and read both sides — balanced, no skips or puckers.

EVERY MONTH OF REGULAR SEWING

The Deep Clean

- ☐ **Photograph first.** Unplug, then shoot the bobbin area before parts come out — your reassembly reference.
- ☐ **Deep-clean the bobbin area.** Needle, plate, bobbin, and case out; brush outward, vacuum, tweeze wrapped thread gently off the hook.
- ☐ **Oil the listed points** (if your manual lists any), fit a fresh needle, reassemble from your photo.
- ☐ **Snug the screws** on the needle clamp, presser foot, and plate — then sew a test scrap.

EVERY FEW SESSIONS

The Weekly Habits

- ☐ **Thorough lint clean.** Plate off — brush the bobbin area and feed-dog slots outward, then vacuum the lint away (don't just move it).
- ☐ **Wipe the thread path** and clear any fuzz from around the tension discs.
- ☐ **Judge the needle.** Dull, bent, popping through fabric, or ~8 hours of sewing on it? Replace it.
- ☐ **Check your bobbins** — wound evenly, correct class for your machine.

A FEW TIMES A YEAR

The Long Game

- ☐ **Full service pass.** Complete deep clean plus every oiling point the manual names.
- ☐ **Inspect belt, cord, and pedal** for wear, cracking, or loose connections.
- ☐ **Log it.** Date, what you did, anything odd — patterns caught early are failures prevented.
- ☐ **Book professional service** if your manual calls for it — dust off the cover, keep it stored dry.

ONLY IF YOUR MANUAL SAYS SO

Oiling, Done Right

- ☐ **Sewing-machine oil only.** Never WD-40, 3-in-1, or household oils.
- ☐ **Clean before you oil** — never oil onto lint or debris.
- ☐ **One small drop** on the points your manual lists — then run slowly, wipe excess, test on scrap.

Manual says don't oil it? Then don't — that call is the manual's.

NOT A CHECKBOX — A PHONE CALL

Stop and call a technician for:

- Internal timing — needle and hook meeting at the wrong moment
- Anything behind the casing: motor, wiring, gears
- Grinding that cleaning and oiling don't fix
- A burning smell or erratic power — unplug immediately