



How to fix your Thread Tension

HOW TO FIND THE PERFECT TENSION FOR YOUR SEWING PROJECTS!

WHEN I FIRST STARTED SEWING I SPENT A LOT OF TIME TRYING TO FIND THE RIGHT THREAD TENSION, MY STITCHES WOULD EITHER COME UP TOO SLACK OR TOO TIGHT WITH LOOPING ON THE UNDERSIDE OR THE BOBBIN THREAD SHOWING BETWEEN STICHES. I OFTEN FOUND MYSELF GETTING FRUSTRATED AND GIVING UP BECAUSE NO MATTER HOW MANY TIMES I ADJUSTED THE SETTINGS IT STILL WOULDN'T WORK! SOUND FAMILIAR?

NOW I'VE LEARNT THE BEST SETTINGS FOR MY SEWING MACHINE AND HOW TO ADJUST THE THREAD TENSION ACCORDING TO WHAT I'M SEWING...BUT BEFORE WE GET ONTO ADJUSTING THE TENSION, HERE'S A FEW THINGS TO CHECK FIRST.

1. CHECK THE MACHINE IS CLEAN AND FREE OF DIRT AND LINT INSIDE THE BOBBIN CASE.
2. MAKE SURE YOUR NEEDLE IS SHARP AND NOT BENT.
3. USE A STRONG QUALITY THREAD (OLD THREADS CAN OFTEN BREAK EASILY AND CAUSE GATHERING AT THE EYE OF THE NEEDLE) DON'T USE OVERLOCK THREAD WITH A SEWING MACHINE, AS THIS IS THINNER THREAD QUALITY.
4. USE THE RIGHT SIZE NEEDLE FOR YOUR FABRIC QUALITY.

TENSION SETTING

SEWING MACHINES OFTEN HAVE A DIAL NUMBERED 1-10, THIS IS ALSO KNOWN AS THE 'TENSION KNOB'; GOOD TO KNOW, RIGHT?! THE HIGHEST NUMBER ON THE DIAL IS THE NORMALLY THE TIGHTEST THREAD SETTING, AND THE LOWEST NUMBER IS GENERALLY THE SLACKEST. I HAVE FOUND THAT THE HAPPY MEDIUM IS SOMEWHERE BETWEEN 3-6.

THIN, SLIPPERY MATERIAL SUCH AS SILK AND NYLON MAY NEED A DIFFERENT TENSION SETTING TO THICKER FABRIC SUCH AS KNITS, THE TYPE OF THREAD MAY ALSO AFFECT THE WAY THE STITCHES FALL. IT'S OFTEN A CASE OF TRIAL AND ERROR WHICH IS WHAT WE ARE GOING TO COME ONTO NOW!

TOP TIPS

TIP 1: ALWAYS PUT THE PRESSER FOOT DOWN WHEN ADJUSTING THE TENSION KNOB.

TIP 2: WHEN THREADING YOUR MACHINE, ALWAYS HAVE THE PRESSER FOOT UP (NOT DOWN). OTHERWISE YOUR TENSION DIAL WILL GET PULLED WHEN YOU PULL ON THE THREAD.



TIP 3: APART FROM THE TENSION SETTING THERE MAY BE OTHER REASONS FOR IRREGULAR STITCHES, SUCH AS THE BOBBIN MAY BE LOOSE IN THE BOBBIN CASE OR THE THREAD WOUND TOO TIGHT. ALTERNATIVELY, THE SEWING MACHINE MAY BE SET TO THE BOBBIN RE-FILL SETTING. IT IS BEST TO CHECK THESE FIRST BEFORE ADJUSTING THE TENSION.

TIP 4: THE THREAD SHOULD ALWAYS GO CLOCKWISE IN THE BOBBIN CASE, SO THERE IS A RESISTANCE TO CATCHING THE THREAD IN THE BOBBIN CASE. AS WELL, MAKE SURE YOUR THREAD "CLICKS" INTO PLACE WITH THE BOBBIN, SO YOU'RE SURE IT'S ALL THE WAY IN. (THIS IS TRUE FOR BOBBINS WHICH LAY FLAT AS WELL AS SIDE ENTRY BOBBINS.)



TIP 5: IF YOUR BOBBIN IS A SIDE ENTRY BOBBIN (AS OPPOSED TO A FLAT LAYING BOBBIN): HOLD THE THREAD IN THE CASE AND SHAKE LIGHTLY TO ALLOW THE BOBBIN CASE TO BOUNCE A LITTLE. THE BOBBIN SHOULD DANGLE DOWN AND EVER SO SLIGHTLY UNWIND.



IF IT IS TOO LOOSE, THEN TURN THE SCREW ON THE BOBBIN CASE AS NEEDED TO MAKE THE THREAD TIGHTER. (VS. VERSA IF IT'S TOO TIGHT AND THE BOBBIN CASE DOESN'T MOVE, THEN MOVE THE SCREW THE OTHER DIRECTION.)

TIP 6: ON OLD MACHINES (FROM THE 1980'S OR EARLIER), ALWAYS MAKE SURE MAKE SURE THE "THREAD TAKE-UP" AND NEEDLE ARE IN THE UP-RIGHT POSITION BEFORE PULLING THE THREAD AFTER SEWING. IT WILL BE ABOUT 80% UP, NOT 100% UP TO THE TOP. (THIS IS AUTOMATIC NOW ON NEWER MACHINES)

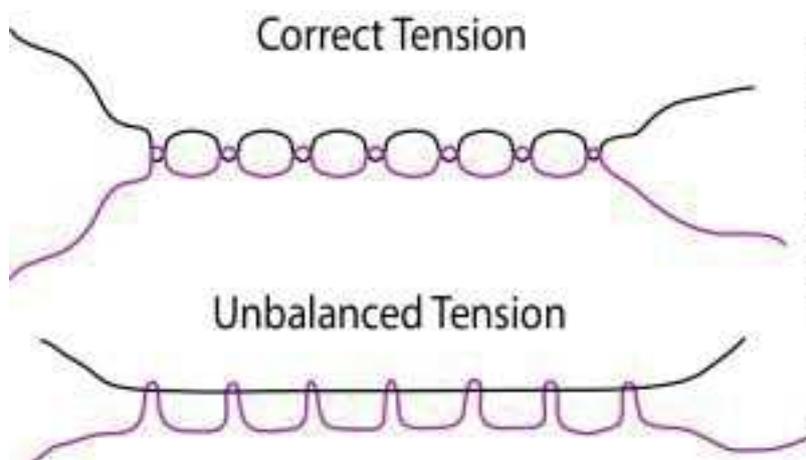


MASTER YOUR THREAD TENSION!

THE BEST WAY TO GET THE RIGHT TENSION IS TO TRY A PRACTICE RUN ON AN OFFCUT OF THE FABRIC YOU ARE WANTING TO USE FOR YOUR SEWING PROJECT. FIRSTLY, TRY THE TENSION SETTING ON 5 AND RUN A LINE OF STITCHES WITH THE FABRIC FOLDED (AT DOUBLE THICKNESS).

CHECK THE STITCHES ON THE TOP AND UNDERSIDE OF THE FABRIC, IF THE STITCHES ARE TOO TIGHT YOU ARE LIKELY TO NOTICE THE BOTTOM THREAD (FROM THE BOBBIN) VISIBLE ON THE TOP OF THE FABRIC, OR THE FABRIC HAS GATHERED AND WHEN PULLED THE THREAD MAY BREAK. IF THE STITCHES ARE TOO SLACK YOU ARE LIKELY TO SEE THREAD GATHERING OR LOOPING UNDERNEATH.

IF IT'S TOO TIGHT, TRY MOVING THE SETTING TO 6 AND RUN A LINE OF STICHES AGAIN. EVALUATE THE STITCHES AGAIN TO SEE IF THEY HAVE IMPROVED. IF THE STITCHES ARE TOO SLACK, TRY ADJUSTING THE DIAL IN THE OPPOSITE DIRECTION AND KEEP PRACTICING UNTIL YOU FIND THE PERFECT TENSION SETTING! THE BEST TENSION SETTING WILL PRODUCE STITCHES THAT LOOK THE SAME ON BOTH SIDES OF THE FABRIC.



TOP TIP: ONCE YOU'VE FOUND THE BEST SETTING WRITE IT DOWN IN YOUR JOURNAL OR A POCKET DIARY ALONG WITH A NOTE OF THE TYPE OF FABRIC YOU ARE USING FOR FUTURE REFERENCE. POP IT INSIDE YOUR EXTENSION TABLE FOR SAFE KEEPING!

NOW YOU'VE MASTERED THE TENSION, YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO ENJOY MANY HOURS OF SEWING!