

Bobbins, Threading, Sewing your first seam – beginning steps

About Bobbins:

The thing about bobbins is, you don't know until you know – your machine only uses ONE kind of bobbin, and there are many different types of bobbins out there. What's frustrating is the manufacturers never marked them or included any identification to tell you what type of bobbin is what.

If you are unsure of what type of bobbin your machine uses, please feel free to email me at info@sewingdocacademy.com and I will be happy to help you find what you need.

One trick I offer people in the Vintage Sewing Machine Mastery is to use the inventory at Sewing Parts Online (www.sewingpartsonline.com). Go to the website, and in the upper left corner, you'll find a drop down menu that lets you search for parts by machine brand and model. Select the Brand. Then it'll ask you to type in the model number, which is faster, or you can scroll through the list of models, which could be quite a few. Once you find the model of machine you have, click the link and it'll show you all the parts available. Near the top of the list you should see bobbins. If you click on bobbins, it'll tell you exactly what bobbins you need, and it'll show you a picture so you can compare the picture to the bobbins you have. This is very helpful if you have more than one machine and your bobbins are mixed up!

One big caveat to this, though, is that you won't find any listings for Japanese produced machines. In the Facebook Live video, I used an "Artcraft" machine as an example, so you won't find that brand name (same for Atlas, Morse, Precision, Good Housekeeping, Pinzess, and any number of "brands"). Almost all of these machines are front or side loading bobbins, and pretty much all of them use Class 15 bobbins.

I like to give a shout out to others on the internet that are making an effort to share valuable information, so here is a VERY HELPFUL article on bobbins and common issues – it applies to all sewing machines, not just vintage.

You'll find some helpful bobbin identification in the following pages.

[Bobbin, Uses, Instructions, and Troubleshooting](#)

About Needles:

Needles can be just as mystifying. Most machines (Kenmore, Singer, Brother, New Home, etc.) still use the same needles you are used to using today. Only with really special machines do you need something different. If you are unsure, please email me at info@sewingdocacademy.com and will be happy to help you figure that out! Here is an excellent source from ISMACS (Internationals Sewing Machine Collectors' Society). ISMACS, it is an excellent source for learning the history and function of old machines. [ISMACS Needle Information](#)

And along those lines, knowing how to insert the needle can be difficult. If you are used to using modern machines, you are likely to insert the needle with the flat side to the back. But vintage machines also can have the needle flat side to the left or right.

If you have a manual, that is the best place to start. A manual (even a PDF copy) will tell you exactly how to insert the needle. If you don't have one, do a Google search for your brand/model (i.e. Singer 201-2 user manual) and see if you can find a video or manual. *Hint: Singer and White machines have FREE user manuals at the Singerco.com website.*

[ISMACS Needle Insertion Info](#)

And of course, if you are unsure, send me an email at info@sewingdocacademy.com, and I'm happy to help.

About Threading

By following the overview in the Facebook Live, you should be able to figure out how to thread any normal home domestic sewing machine. But if you need a little guidance and can't find an actual user manual, then the next best thing is to Google the brand/modle of your sewing machine with the words "threading diagram", and you might find a really good reference. For example:

"Morse sewing machine threading diagram"

"Pfaff 130 sewing machine threading diagram"

[Stitch Nerd](#) has a fantastic blog about threading different vintage machines with pictures from manuals. You might want to bookmark her blog!

Common Issues

- Double check to make sure your needle is facing the right way. Check a manual if you need to.
- Make sure you are using the proper needle type and size with your thread.
- Make sure the thread in the bobbin is the same weight as the upper thread or adjust tension accordingly.
- Check to be sure that you are using the proper bobbin for the machine.
- Check to be sure that your bobbin is set in the machine correctly.
- Be sure to have your presser foot up when you thread, down when you sew.
- Turn your hand wheel toward you, NEVER away from you, this causes thread nests.
- Make sure your bobbin winder is not engaged when sewing.
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- If you've tried everything else and your machine isn't forming proper stitches or skipping stitches on the zig zag stitch, it's likely that the timing is unaligned (see a service person)
- Make sure your bobbin winder is not engaged when sewing.
- If you see sparks coming from the motor or smell something strong, see a service person.



Our ultimate goal to help those in our VSMM program reach the level of mastery they desire. Mastery of any skill is different for everyone, and it is not a fast or easy process. It is a consistent investment of time to develop a mental library of knowledge, intuition, patience, and creative thinking.

Our hybrid program gives folks new to vintage machines a starting point with our on-demand library, but we also host a weekly and monthly sessions to address hurdles specific to each person and machine, dive deep into specific areas of sewing machine issues, and enjoy the company of others with a common interest.

For more information: www.SewingDocAcademy.com/vsmm

Have a vintage or antique machine but not sure it's worth saving? We offer a FREE email evaluation of your machine! This is a \$50 value for FREE! Visit www.SewingDoc.Academy.com/evaluation for more info!