FREE PRINTABLE · KEEP IT BY YOUR MACHINE

Sewing Machine Fix-It Chart

Trenditex

Find what your machine is doing, then try the fixes **in order** - cheapest and most likely first, the order sewing machine manuals use. Test each fix on a folded scrap of the same fabric before going back to your project. Your own manual always comes first for your model.

IT IS...	TRY FIRST	THEN	THEN	GOOD TO KNOW
Skipped stitches	1 New needle, right type for the fabric (stretch or ballpoint on knits)	2 Re-thread the top thread with the presser foot UP	3 Needle pushed fully up, flat side the way the manual shows	*Still skips on a new needle: hook timing - service shop*
Nest of thread under the fabric	1 Re-thread the TOP thread with the presser foot UP	2 Thread passes the take-up lever and sits between the tension discs	3 Hold both thread tails for the first 2-3 stitches	*It is almost never the bobbin*
Top thread keeps breaking	1 Re-thread; check the spool cap and thread path for snags	2 New needle (a burr in the eye cuts thread)	3 Loosen top tension a little; use good polyester thread	*Old or cheap thread sheds and snaps*
Needle keeps breaking	1 Let the feed dogs move the fabric - never pull it	2 Bigger needle for thick fabric (jeans 90/14-100/16)	3 Right presser foot, screwed on tight	*Hand-turn the wheel over thick seam humps*
Bobbin thread will not come up	1 The bobbin type your manual names (class 15, 66 or L)	2 Drop-in bobbin unwinds the way the arrow shows	3 Brush lint out of the hook area	*Re-thread the top thread too*
Fabric will not move	1 Feed dogs up (drop-feed switch off)	2 Stitch length above 0	3 Presser foot lowered before sewing	*Thick layers: walking foot, longer stitch*
Seams pucker	1 Shorter stitch and a little less top tension	2 Fine needle and thread on light fabric	3 Do not pull or push the fabric	*Sew slippery fabric over tissue paper*
Loops on top of the fabric	1 Bobbin seated and threaded through its tension spring	2 Correct bobbin type, evenly wound	3 Re-thread the top thread with the foot UP	*Then adjust top tension in small steps*
Jammed / handwheel stuck	1 Unplug. Remove the needle plate and bobbin case	2 Pull out trapped thread; brush out lint	3 Turn the handwheel TOWARD you only	*Skips after a jam: timing - service shop*
Loud clunking or grinding	1 Clean lint from the hook and feed dogs	2 Oil only where the manual shows (many need none)	3 New needle - a bent one strikes the plate	*Grinding after cleaning: service shop*

The 6-8 hour rule

Change the needle every 6-8 hours of sewing, and at the start of every big project. It fixes more problems than anything else.

Foot up to thread

The tension discs only open with the presser foot up. Thread with the foot down and the thread sits outside them.

When to call the shop

Needle hits the plate with a new needle, skipping after a jam, or grinding after a clean: the timing needs resetting.

Turn the machine in 3D and click the trouble spot: **trenditex.com/sewing-machine-doctor**

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FREE PRINTABLE · NEEDLE, THREAD & STITCH

Needle & Thread Cheat Sheet

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Match the needle to the fabric first, then the thread, then the stitch length. Needle sizes are **European/US** (80/12): the higher the number, the thicker the needle. Thread weight works backwards: **30 wt is thicker than 50 wt**. Stitch length is in millimetres.

FABRIC	NEEDLE SIZE	NEEDLE TYPE	THREAD	STITCH LENGTH
Chiffon, organza, silk	60/8 - 70/10	Microtex (sharp)	Fine polyester or silk, 60 wt	1.8 - 2.2
Quilting cotton, poplin, lawn	75/11 - 80/12	Universal or quilting	All-purpose polyester or 50 wt cotton	2.2 - 2.5
Linen, shirting, rayon	80/12	Universal or microtex	All-purpose polyester	2.5
Jersey, T-shirt knit	75/11 - 80/12	Ballpoint (jersey)	All-purpose polyester	2.5 - 3, stretch or narrow zigzag
Spandex, swimwear, activewear	75/11 - 90/14	Stretch	Polyester; woolly nylon in serger loopers	2.5 - 3, stretch stitch
Fleece, minky, sweatshirt	80/12 - 90/14	Ballpoint or universal	All-purpose polyester	3 - 3.5
Denim, twill, duck	90/14 - 100/16	Jeans (denim)	All-purpose; topstitching thread for seams	3 - 3.5
Canvas, upholstery, outdoor	100/16 - 110/18	Jeans or heavy-duty	Heavy polyester 30-40 wt or bonded nylon	3.5 - 4
Leather, vinyl, faux leather	90/14 - 110/18	Leather (wedge point)	Bonded nylon or heavy polyester	3.5 - 4.5
Machine embroidery	75/11	Embroidery	40 wt rayon or polyester; 60 wt bobbin	Set by the design

Stitch lengths

2.5 mm for most seams · 3-4 mm for topstitching and thick fabric · 4-5 mm for basting · stretch stitch or narrow zigzag on knits.

Points, not just sizes

Ballpoint slides between knit loops, stretch stops skips on Lycra, microtex pierces fine weaves, leather needles cut a clean slit.

Test first

Sew a line on a folded scrap of your fabric. Skips, puckers or loops? Change the needle before you touch the tension.

Pick your fabric and see it to scale: **trenditex.com/needle-and-thread-finder**

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