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How to fix bobbin winder on singer sewing machine

Photo: ShutterstockIf you've dug out your sewing machine for some quarantine crafting, now is a terrible time to have to lug it to a repair shop if something goes wrong. Fortunately, a lot of the common sewing machine glitches are things you can fix yourself in just a few minutes.I love this checklist from the blog She's a Sewing Machine Mechanic; as a veteran crafter I can attest that I've run into several of these problems, and these suggestions often do work. Read through that list for more info, but here are the top takeaways: Adjust the thread and bobbin tensionIf the thread keeps bunching up or if the stitching just looks wrong, chances are something's too tight. A standard sewing machine uses two threads: one that unwinds from a spool on top of the machine and goes through the needle, and one that comes from a tiny spool underneath. When the machine is adjusted correctly, these two threads wrap around each other to create each stitch.If one of these threads is tighter than the other, it can pull the resulting stitch out of whack. For example, if the bottom of your fabric looks like one tight thread with a bunch of loose little loops running around it, either your bobbin thread is too tight or your top thread is too loose. So check both threads. Did you run the top thread through all the places it's supposed to go when you were threading the machine? Did you load the bobbin correctly? If those both seem okay, check the tension settings for both threads. The top thread will have a tension selector—often a knob on the front of the machine. The bobbin thread's tension is usually adjusted with a screw on the bobbin case (righty-tighty, lefty-loosey).Check your needleThe needle has to be straight, sharp (usually) and installed correctly if you want it to do its job. Check that it's not bent and replace it if you can't remember when you last changed it. One side of the needle is flat where you attach it to the machine; usually that side should be toward the back, but it depends on your machine. When in doubt, check the manual.Different fabrics require different needles, so make sure you're using the correct one. Machine needles come in different sizes, and some are sharp while others are ballpoint. It's hard to tell just from looking if you're not familiar, so check the package. If the machine keeps skipping stitches, there's a good chance you're using the wrong needle. Here's a guide to choosing the right one.Make sure the settings will allow you to sewIf the machine won't sew at all, you probably forgot to flip a switch somewhere. First, check the obvious things: is it turned on? Is the pedal connected? Is the presser foot down? If the machine hums and whirs but the needle doesn't move, you may have your bobbin winder turned on. This is a feature that lets the machine's motor wind a bobbin for you, and it deactivates the whole sewing apparatus while you do that. Look for a switch. On an older machine turn the wheel that's inside of the hand wheel on the side of the machine. If the needle moves but the fabric doesn't, check the feed dogs. These are the spiky bars underneath the needle that move to slide the fabric along as you sew it. There's a switch that turns them off; you may have hit it accidentally, so just turn it back on.Actually clean the darn thingThere are a few more things to check in the guide, but we've been through the big ones. One final thing to consider: If the machine is working more or less okay, but just acts a little weird sometimes, clean it! Open up the bobbin case and any other area that's reasonably accessible, brush out the lint and apply a few drops of machine oil as the manual instructs. This is mineral oil; it's not WD-40. If all else fails, you may eventually need to call up a repair shop or get really in-depth with YouTube sewing machine repair videos. But in most cases, a misbehaving machine will do its job just fine once you check that everything is set up correctly. Copyright © 2021 HowStuffWorks, a division of InfoSpace Holdings, LLC, a System1 Company Getty Images / by_nicholas Winding and inserting the bobbin of a sewing machine is not a difficult task if you follow the instructions in your sewing machine manual to take the thread through the necessary guides and tension controls so the thread is smoothly and evenly wound on the bobbin. Even and smoothly wound bobbins will assist in properly formed stitches. Just remember, looping or tangled bobbin thread when sewing is usually not caused by the bobbin. The culprit is often incorrect upper threading of the sewing machine. Spool of thread Empty bobbin As always, the sewing machine manual for your sewing machine is the best guide for operating your particular sewing machine. Place the spool of thread to be used for the bobbin on an upper spool pin and hold it in place with a spool cap if you have one. Some machines also have a small piece of felt, foam, or a plastic cone on the spool pin - leave this under the spool to help stop excess vibration. Pull the thread through the guide specified in your sewing machine manual - it may look like a button or disk that the thread will go under or between. This puts tension on the thread before reaching the bobbin. Make sure the thread is wrapped in the correct direction per the instructions. If the bobbin has a hole in the side of it, thread the hole from the inside to the outside of the bobbin and place the bobbin on the bobbin winder spindle. If the bobbin sides are solid, place the bobbin on the spindle and wind the thread around the bobbin a few times, leaving just enough loose thread to give yourself a tail to hold onto when winding. For the thread to be wound on the bobbin, the bobbin-threading mechanism must be engaged on the sewing machine. All machines are different but they all need you to engage the bobbin winding in one way or another. The brake or stopper might move toward the bobbin that is about to be wound or the bobbin on the holder might move toward the brake. The center of the handwheel at the end of the machine might need to be loosened to engage the winding process on your sewing machine. The Spruce Crafts / Debbie Colgrove Power the machine via the foot pedal or a start button on electronic machines, holding onto the thread tail if you left one. You can pause winding once the loose tail is secured and trim it, or let go of that thread tail and allow it to wind on the bobbin. If the brake is properly set, on most machines the machine will stop winding automatically when the thread fills the bobbin. If the initial thread tail is still loose, trim it close to the bobbin, so that the thread will not catch or cause tangles when sewing. Refer to your sewing machine manual to insert the bobbin in the sewing machine and bring up the thread. Machines with a vertical bobbin: Remove the bobbin case, insert the bobbin as directed, and pull the thread through the slot and guide in the side of the case to the outside. Pull the thread to make sure the bobbin spins smoothly and in the proper direction. Machines with a horizontal, drop-in bobbin: Remove the needle plate, insert the bobbin, and pull the thread through the guide following the threading pattern shown on the machine's threading diagram (often printed on the needle plate or machine bed for easy reference). The bobbin must be inserted and threaded correctly for the upper thread to form stitches properly with the bobbin thread. The Spruce Crafts / Debbie Colgrove The thread on a bobbin should be as smoothly wound as the thread on a purchased spool of thread. The thread on a bobbin should not exceed the size of the bobbin. (The brake may have been adjusted if the thread on the bobbin exceeds the edges of the bobbin and will need to be readjusted according to your manual so the threading stops before the bobbin is over-wound.) Never use a rough, cracked, or rusty bobbin in a sewing machine. If you are desperate to use a rusty bobbin, sand off any rust and oil the bobbin enough to prevent it from rusting again until you can purchase a replacement bobbin. There are several different types and sizes of bobbins, and each machine only uses a specific type so consult your manual if you are unsure what type you need. Visit a local dealer or a reputable online dealer to get the bobbin that is correct for your machine. Bobbins are inexpensive so purchase extras for each machine you own so you will have plenty of empty bobbins ready to wind to match your top threads. Thread labeled "bobbin thread" in stores is a very lightweight thread used for machine embroidery or machine basting. It shouldn't be used for normal sewing. For regular sewing, use the same type of thread that you use in the upper threading of the sewing machine. When you are sewing and the bobbin thread knots up or creates wads of thread, as much as it may seem like it is caused by the bobbin, it is usually caused by the top threading of the machine or the sewing machine needle. See more on machine troubleshooting and solutions to loopy, knotting bobbin thread. how to fix my bobbin winder. why is my bobbin winder not working. how do you fix the bobbin tension on a singer sewing machine

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