



What kind of sewing machine should I buy? How about for kids?

The two most important pieces of advice are 1) get the best machine that your budget allows and 2) buy from a local sewing machine dealer (instead of a discount house). A dealer will help you with questions or issues that come up with the machine and also service the warranty work locally instead of having to ship the machine.

For kids and new sewers, a good strategy would be to buy a cheaper machine to see if they stick with sewing long enough to wear out the machine, then get a nicer one according to their skills and sewing interests.

What brand of sewing machine do you recommend?

The brand and model of sewing machine that is right for you depends on your long-term sewing goals and budget. However, here are some facts about the two main categories of home sewing machines:

1) High-end European-made machines like Bernina, Pfaff, Viking, Elna and Janome (Japanese) in the \$500-\$9000 price range for computerized machines (non-computerized versions are available and a lot cheaper). These machines last a very long time and the accessories are extensive which make the machine more versatile and suitable for many kinds of sewing tasks. We teach our classes using the Swiss-made Berninas. These models are their most basic computerized machines.

2) Economy machines made in Asian factories like Singer, Kenmore, White, Brother, etc. The higher priced models of these brands are quite good and have lots of features, but they may have less durability than a European brand. A mid-range machine will cost between \$250-500 and should be able to handle most home-sewing tasks.

What features should be included in my new sewing machine?

We consider the following to be must-have features on a home sewing machine:

Free arm

Speed control

Needle stopping up/down

Needle position adjustments

One-step (automatic) buttonholes

Minimum 8-12 construction stitches

Speed regulator in the pedal

Basic accessories should include a set of presser feet (buttonhole foot, zipper foot, blind hem foot)

Take this list with you while shopping for your new machine. A dealer will be able to tell you which machines have these features.