

Don't Get Stressed about Tension

Sewing machine tension is a vital part of sewing, and it can be tricky to get right. If the tension is too tight, the stitches will be small and puckered. If the tension is too loose, the stitches will be large and uneven.

There are two types of sewing machine tension: top tension and bobbin tension. The top tension controls the thread on the top of the fabric, and the bobbin tension controls the thread on the bottom of the fabric.

To adjust the tension, you will need to find the tension dial on your sewing machine. The dial will usually have numbers from 1 to 10, with 1 being the loosest tension and 10 being the tightest tension.

To adjust the top tension, turn the dial clockwise to tighten the tension or counterclockwise to loosen the tension. To adjust the bobbin tension, turn the screw on the bobbin case clockwise to tighten the tension or counterclockwise to loosen the tension.

The first tension to test is the top tension. With a size 80 needle and normal sewing thread when the tension is set at the mid range of 3 to 5 with the pressure foot down. When you pull on the thread the needle should deflect $\frac{1}{8}$ " to $\frac{1}{4}$ ". This simple test will confirm the upper thread has tension. If not then inspect the top thread is between the tension discs. If there still is no tension then check for lint between the tension discs.

The bottom tension in most sewing machines is 15 grams. The weight of a wooden clothes pin with 3 pennies glued to it is 15 grams. With the bobbin held up so the hole is parallel to the ground with the 15 gram weight attached to the the thread from the bobbin adjust the bobbin tension until it just lifts the weight from the table.

Once you have adjusted the tension, you will need to test it by sewing a sample piece of fabric. If the stitches are still too tight or too loose, adjust the tension again until they are correct.

Here are some tips for sewing with the correct tension:

- Use the same type of thread for both the top and bobbin.
- Use a new needle.

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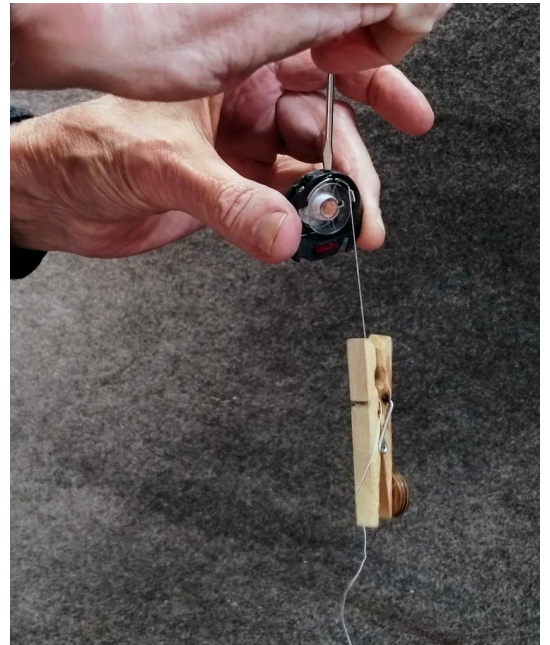
To test the top tension, you can use a simple test. With a size 80 needle and normal sewing thread, set the tension to the mid range of 3 to 5 with the pressure foot down. When you pull on the thread, the needle should deflect $\frac{1}{8}$ " to $\frac{1}{4}$ ". This simple test will confirm the upper thread has tension. If not, then inspect the top thread to make sure it is between the tension discs. If there still is no tension, check for lint between the tension discs.

The bottom tension in most sewing machines is 15 grams. The weight of a wooden clothes pin with 3 pennies glued to it is 15 grams. With the bobbin held up so the hole is parallel to the ground, attach the 15 gram weight to the thread from the bobbin. Adjust the bobbin tension until it just lifts the weight from the table.

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Here are some tips for sewing with the correct tension:

- Use the same type of thread for both the top and bobbin.
- Use a new needle.
- Use the correct needle for the fabric.
- Use the correct stitch length and width.
- Sew on a flat surface.
- Keep the fabric taut.
- Sew slowly.



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