

Pfaff Pfeatured Pfeed #6  
Free Motion Feet  
(with thanks to Pfaff Educator Extraordinaire, Emily Baker)

Free motion sewing is a technique used by quilters, thread painters, improvisational machine embroiderers, and, yes, even those of us who occasionally need to mend holes in clothing. It allows sewing in any direction, along any path, enabling you to meander aimlessly, draw designs, write words – whatever you like. In a nutshell, here’s how it works: The feed dogs on your machine either are dropped or covered so that they are disabled; this puts you in charge of moving the fabric as stitches are formed. The speed at which you move the fabric compared with the speed at which the machine is running determines your stitch length. Practice is what gives you consistency.

NOTE: The following are general descriptions and sample pictures of free motion feet, but there are different versions available for all models of Pfaff machines. Please check with us to make sure you buy the correct foot for your machine.

### So Many Choices!

There are two basic types of free motion feet for Pfaff machines: spring action and sensormatic. Let’s start by looking at the spring feet, which are available for a wider variety of machines.



*Open-Toe Free Motion Spring Foot  
available for all machines*

**Spring** feet move with the up-and-down motion of the needle. When the needle moves down into the fabric, the foot stays down to hold the fabric in place (working like a mini embroidery hoop, giving you tension on your fabric to make a beautiful stitch); when the needle moves up, the foot bounces up to allow the fabric to move.



*Dynamic Spring Foot (Closed-Toe)  
J and L machines only*

Spring feet are tried-and-true, and perform very well on all sorts of projects, including puffy quilts, uneven surfaces (think seam allowances), and hooped fabrics.

Available in closed-toe versions for more support, and open-toe versions for more visibility, spring feet are great for preventing skipped stitches and shredded threads (of course, make sure you’re using the correct needle, too!). As they hop up and down, they essentially gauge the thickness of your quilt and adjust the pressure exerted by the foot for the perfect stitch.

If you’re quilting a project with many seam allowances, embroidered areas, appliqués, or (horrors!) lumpy batting, try a spring foot – it will handle all these issues.



*Closed-Toe Sensormatic Foot*

**Sensormatic or Floating** feet are available on only J, K, and L Pfaff machines. They hover above the surface of the fabric, without bouncing (they will bounce at very slow speeds, to keep your fabric from pulling up with the needle, but are primarily designed to float just above your work). The “float height” is adjustable, enabling you to prevent skipped stitches and shredded threads.



*Open-Toe Sensormatic Foot*

Sensormatic feet are great for even surfaces (whole-cloth quilts or ones without a lot of seams) and can provide a very comfortable quilting experience – since there’s no bouncing or hopping to distract you, it’s pretty easy to get into the Zen of free motion as you float above the surface. To prevent shredded threads and skipped stitches, make sure to use the correct needle and adjust the floating height to an appropriate level for your project. If you see the fabric pulling up with the needle, lower the height; if your fabric isn’t moving freely, raise the height.

Sensormatic feet are available in closed toe, open toe, and echo quilting versions (this one allows you to “trace” appliqué shapes, embroidery designs, seam lines, or previous lines of stitching while maintaining consistent spacing. Very cool.).

### **Which One to Choose?**

Most likely, you will end up with more than one. Depending on your project, the technique you want to use, the phase of the moon, or just personal preference, you will find that sometimes a spring foot gives the results you want, while at other times a sensormatic foot will deliver the goods. Try them all – the practice will be good for you!