

You all know how much I love the feedback you're all putting in the comments below. I read each and every one at least three times every single morning. And a lot of the information that has been requested out there is how to maintain and oil and clean our sewing machines. So today I'm going to try to give you the basics. Now you have to forgive me, sewing machine maintenance and sewing machine cleaning is kind of generic and kind of universal all at the same time. I'm going to only take you as far as I want you to go. I really strongly believe in maintaining a great relationship with your local dealership to help you in the long run when you need them. So today we're going to focus on the basic cleanings, oiling and maintenance that you can do at home. Let's get ourselves started.

So whenever I'm working on a sewing machine the first thing I've got is the power is off. We'll be taking the needle out but the power is off so that I don't get wounded with the needle, right? And we're mostly dusting it first. We do all of our cleaning before we do our oiling. So I like to have these fantastic little lint brushes here. They can be bent if necessary to get into different angles. I like the nice nylon bristles in there. And I'm going to come through and I'm going to dust off all of the lint from the top of the machine. I do not use, I never, ever use, don't use, I don't like it, the cans of spray air. They build up CO₂. And they blast moisture and mud into your machine, ok? So I'm just getting off the surface lint off of here as I work my way through.

One of the first things we come to up in this area, and it is quite difficult to see is our tension disks. And our tension disks will often get a ball of fuzz inside and/or a ball of thread. So I've got a quick tip that talks about threading and I did mention in there but I'm going to say it again. We always thread and unthread our machine with our presser foot in the up position. So my foot is raised. And what that does is it opens the squeeze of the tension disks themselves. And I also always unthread the machine the same way I threaded it. So I cut here, pull the thread out because it keeps all the lint moving out of the machine. But I do periodically take a pipe cleaner like this. And I go ahead and I wiggle it inside of my tension disks while the presser foot is up so that the disks are open. And I can get any lint or thread balls or whatever out of there. And that's another reason I am not a big fan of the glazed threads. The glazed threads will build up inside.

Now if you follow me over to my Jane I have both of these machines here so you can see the different kinds of set ups. The Jane itself has an external tension assembly. So the tension assembly is out here. And I think you'll be able to see a little bit better that when I lift my presser foot you can actually see those disks opening and closing. And so I'm going to take my pipe cleaner in my threaded motion. And I'm going to go ahead and get in there and clean just like that. You want to be careful, there is a little spring. That's called your check spring. And that

check spring in there helps keep the slack out of our thread. And we do not want to bend or break that check spring. I've got a whole other video I've got on tension, we're going to talk about the check spring more there. So that will be a link at the end if you want to tune in. So as we're dusting our way down, we're moving all of our lint out.

Another place I find a lot of lint that builds up is right down on the needle bar system itself and up in our thread, our needle threaders. So we can get up in there. We can clean all of this out especially if we've done a lot of applique quilting. We get a lot of glue built up on the back of that needle, ok? So we're going to bring this around. Now I want to take my presser foot off. And I've got myself a screwdriver here. We're going to take our holder off. One of the things about maintenance when we put these back on, and periodically we want to make sure we keep that screw taut. I'm also going to pull the needle out real quick to keep ourselves safe here. And I want to show you this trick, a lot of our machines nowadays, excuse me I've got oil in the way. A lot of our machines nowadays they have these beveled screws that hold our stitch plates down. And it's really hard to even get these wonderful little screwdrivers, the wings, up inside of here to work. So ten cents will fix that problem almost every time. Sometimes you have to invest 25 cents if you know what I'm getting to. So you can drop a coin in those screws and you can use a coin to loosen those screws right up, right? I've got myself going here so let's get this out of the way. These screws are special screws. They're beveled and you do not want to lose them because you won't be able to replace them at the hardware store. So we're going to take these out here. And then we get to a point where we can loosen them by our fingers. And it's a little cumbersome in there so just take it nice and slow. Once we get this stitch plate off we're going to go ahead and we're going to dust and clean inside. Keeping track of those screws.

Ok now once we get our stitch plate off there's a couple of other things we want to look at. There's always going to be a ton of fuzz in between the feed dogs. So we really want to clean the feed dogs out completely. Talking about maintenance if you ever had a situation where your stitches just start to seem to get shorter or no matter if maybe you're going to reverse very well or your fabric is not feeding very well if you get too much lint in those feed dogs the fabric is just not going to feed correctly. So keeping the gums of the feed teeth clean is really important. We're going to take our drop in bobbin case out. And check this out, this is great, there is so much lint and fuzz in there. And that happens a lot. So as we clean that out, I'm going to be real gentle as I'm cleaning that. A lot of times we will have, now let me see I'm going to point with this red tip. Right inside of this area on some machines there will be a little wick that gets oiled often. So make sure if you're dusting that out in there if there's a little wick that comes out, looks like a long rectangle, maybe an inch and a half long, you are not losing that wick. You can pull it

out and clean it but do not lose it. It can go right back in. And we're going to clean everything out of this area as we go. Getting that all nice. So we always dust before we lubricate. And all of that is clean. And the other thing I'm going to do is I'm going to come in here too and I'm also going to clean the back edge of the bobbin case and the top edge of the bobbin case and get as much fuzz and lint off of there. There's a couple of little pads, sometimes these bobbin cases here will have little bits of felt on them that helps keep the thread. That's not debris so we want to keep that as well, ok? But I am cleaning all of that out and around. Ok so now again we've got our feed dogs all cleaned out in here. And we've got our bobbin area all cleaned out. And look at all this debris and junk all over the table. I could make myself a small sweater already just from what's in my bobbin case.

And I like said, we always want to clean before we oil. And I want to show you there is definitely a difference. Now there is lubricant and there is oil. Let's start with the lubricant because most machines nowadays really don't use this. If you have an old Featherweight at home, you are. Lubricant is that white grease. It kind of looks like bubble gum you see in gear boxes in the older machines and stuff. So the lubricant is very seldomly used. But the oil itself is used very often. And I know your manufacturers tell you not to oil the machine. And a lot of that I really do agree with. Every couple of years you should definitely take your machine in for a full service at the local dealership that handles your brand machine. They're going to lubricate all the bushings and all the gears and everything on the inside of the machine with oil. But there are spots on the outside of some machines, and I'm going to show you, that you can put oil in. And this is strictly a sewing machine oil, it is not Three In One oil. Do not use that. It's crystal clear. If you can see here, this stuff is really nice and clear. And I love this particular tube because it's got this extra long spout that you can take and you can drop a little bit of oil. Follow me down into the bobbin case area. And there's a little shelf that the bobbin case sits on. And I want to put literally just a drop of oil on that. And that's all I really need to be responsible for on a machine like this. That bobbin case is going to sit on top .

And I want to show you how to put this in. There's often some confusion. The bobbin case itself, I think of it like a manta ray. I love the ocean of course. And so I think of this as the top little parts of the manta ray. And it's going to feed on the feed dogs. So it's going to go straight into the feed dogs. So let me see if I can get this thing in here and get my fingers out of the way so you can see. And I'll have to drop it first and then move my hands because it's just the easiest way to do it. Now as you can see, there it is. The feed dogs are lined up to the manta. It sits straight in there. It's going to have a little bit of movement to it at first until we get the rest of the

stitch plate on. But it is now sitting and lubricated. And if you also had that wick down below the bobbin case you could lubricate that as well.

Now follow me over to the Jane machine because I'm going to take, I've already taken those beveled screws out over here. And I'm going to remove the stitch plate. And I should get that needle out of the way just to be careful. There's a couple of things I want to show you on this machine as well, ok? Of course there's already fuzz everywhere because I use this for quilting all the time. And it has the removable bobbin. And a lot of machines like this like the Jane or there's a Viking and Pfaff mega quilters, there's the Juki machines. There's the Brother machines. There all these kind of straight stitch side load machines and the reason I'm pointing them out is they have other spots we're going to be able to oil on them. So for this machine there's a spot right down here in the hook area, the part that's going to go around the bobbin so I can put a drop of oil in there. And I'm going to do that real quick while I'm here. Ok? Now the rest of the machine, there's little holes, and if you look in your instruction manual, they're going to show you in the instruction manual under the oiling and maintenance, that there's little holes in the top that you can put oil in, ok? And it's just a drop or two because they feed into a wick system so we don't want to overdo that.

This is what I really want you to listen to because I clean sewing machines all the time and I cannot tell you how terrible it is to have oil in the wrong spots. A lot of times I will find a machine like this, our standard home sewing machine and folks will have put a drop of oil every possible place they think they can. And they really shouldn't. They're putting it in the screw holes. They're putting it in the top covers and all of that. And it gets all over. And it really can make a big mess. And there's a lot of electronics inside of this machine. That's why I don't want you taking it apart any further. So on a machine like this you're just going to have a drop of oil down in the bobbin area. And the older the machines they are they may have some oiling ports up on the top. A lot of times if you have a real classical machine it will have like a red paint job around that circle. That red is a universal sign for this is where the oil goes. And that's something neat to look for especially if you have like that old Featherweight and you can take it across the bottom and you can look in there and see all those spots as well.

So again, no canned air. We dust before we oil. Know the difference between oil and lubricant. We don't often use lubricant unless we're servicing an older machine or a Featherweight. We're using only regular good crystal clear oil in the machines. The other thing that you can do so often, of course other than subscribing to Man Sewing, change your needle. A fresh needle goes a million miles but only lasts a few good hours of sewing. So keep that in mind while we're dreaming up new ways to maintain our machines here at Man Sewing.