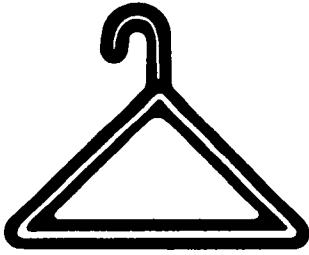


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The Sewing Machine

4-H Clothing, Skill Level 1

Learning to use a sewing machine safely and correctly begins with knowing the parts of a sewing machine and what they do. It is also important to know how to take care of the machine.

Sewing Machine Parts

All sewing machines have the same basic stitching parts even though the machines might not look the same. The guide book that came with the machine you use will tell about its parts. On the back of this page is the list of parts and a drawing of a sewing machine to show you where the parts are. Try to find the same parts on the sewing machine you use.

Selecting a Needle

The size of needle to use in a sewing machine depends on the weight of the fabric you will be sewing. The type of needle point depends on whether the fabric is woven or knit. The point of the needle should be straight and smooth, without any nicks or rough edges. The chart on this page helps you and your parents or leader choose which type of needle to use.

Type of Fabric	Example	Sizes		Type of Point
		American	European	
Lightweight woven	Chiffon	9-11	60-80	Sharp
Lightweight knit	Tricot	9-11	60-80	Ball
Mediumweight woven	Broadcloth	11-14	80-90	Sharp or all-purpose
Mediumweight knit	Jersey	11-14	80-90	Ball or all-purpose
Heavyweight woven	Denim	14-16	90-100	Sharp
Heavyweight knit	Sweatshirt knit	14-16	90-100	Ball

In Skill Level 1, you'll be using mediumweight, firmly woven fabric (such as cotton or cotton blend) or stable, nonbulky knitted fabric.

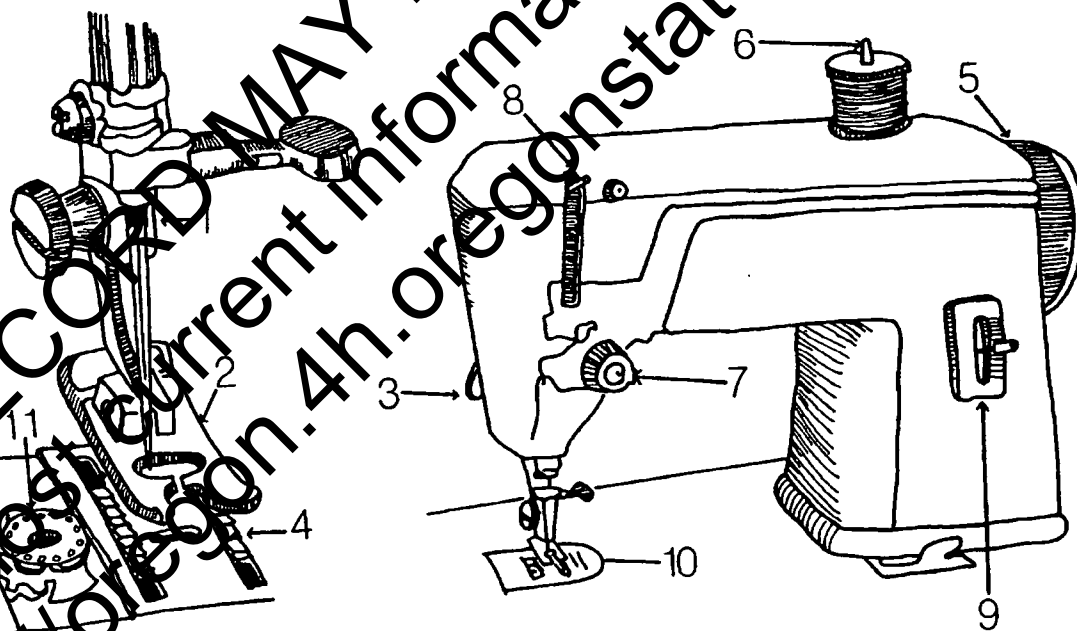
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Care of Your Sewing Machine

Keep your sewing machine clean. Remove lint often. Wipe the upper parts of the machine with a soft cloth. Use a lint brush to clean hard-to-reach parts like the bobbin area. After cleaning the machine, ask your leader or one of your parents to help you add a drop of sewing machine oil (never use household oil) to the moving parts. Look in your sewing machine guide book for a list of places that need oiling. Sew a few lines of stitching on a scrap of fabric to remove extra oil.

1. The *needle* has an eye near the point for holding the thread. It pokes the thread through the fabric and back again.
2. The *presser foot* holds the fabric while the needle passes between two toes.
3. The *presserfoot lifter* is a lever in the back of the machine that raises or lowers the presser foot.
4. The *feed dog* moves the fabric as you sew.
5. The *hand wheel* or *balance wheel* raises or lowers the needle and helps start the machine by hand.
6. The *spool pin* holds the spool of thread. The *thread guides* hold the thread in place.
7. The *needle-thread tension* makes the needle thread tighter or looser. If the tension is right, stitches will be smooth and even.
8. The *thread take-up* moves up and down with the needle. It takes up the extra thread the needle pokes through the fabric.
9. The *stitch length regulator* makes stitches longer or shorter.
10. The *throat plate* has guidelines to help you keep the seams straight.
11. The *bobbin* holds the thread for the bottom half of the stitches.



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