

THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW BEFORE YOU BUY AN OVERLOCKER

With so many machines available in today's market, choosing an overlocker can be confusing and frightening. It is important that you get the right machine. The following information will help you to distinguish between a good buy and a potential sewing disaster.

THE THREADING NIGHTMARE

How long does it take to thread the machine and can it be threaded in any sequence? Many people avoid using their overlocker because it is a nightmare to thread. When you are shown a machine, pay attention to how easy it is to thread the loopers, particularly the lower looper, as this is where much of the trouble begins. If the sales-person is reluctant to let you thread the machine yourself, reconsider buying as you will probably experience problems with threading at home.

NEEDLE POSITION

Whilst many overlockers have slanted needle positions, overlockers with completely vertical needle positions are preferable. They are able to penetrate thick fabrics and greatly reduce needle deflection resulting in less needle breakage.

Ask about other accessories which are available for your overlocker. Some accessories like industrial attachments give you a commercial finish while accessory feet allow you to do more with your machine.

BLADE

Ensure that the overlocker has a built-in blade which is easy to operate and able to cope with the thickest of fabrics.

THREAD CUTTER

A thread cutter in an easy access position will save you even more time as you are sewing.



THE PROBLEM WITH TENSIONS

Generally speaking, you get what you pay for. This is particularly true for the quality of stitch you will get from your overlocker. A balanced stitch should not loop off the fabric or contain inconsistencies. Tensions play a big part in creating the perfect stitch. Nowadays, there are machines available which have solved the difficulties of tension adjustments. Overlockers with ATD (Automatic Thread Delivery) allow you to create a perfectly balanced stitch with just a flick of the dial. Make sure you SEE this in action.

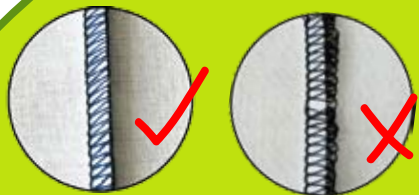
A good machine should come with free lessons so make sure you enquire about these.

DIFFERENTIAL FEED

As essential for stitching knitwear as it is for gathering, differential feed is a major function of an overlocker. Be careful of overlockers which claim to have a 2 to 1 ratio differential feed as this is not always accurate. Ask if the overlocker has a TRUE 2 to 1 differential feed and ask to see the proof.

ROLLED HEM

Think twice before you buy a machine where you need to change the needle plate and foot to do a rolled hem. There are overlockers available today which operate in a more time efficient manner. In particular, look for a machine which has a built-in rolled hem stitch which can be activated by a simple turn of a dial.



Make sure you see a perfect stitch formation on both heavy and delicate fabrics.

If price is the most important factor, buy the best you can afford even if you do not use all of the settings to start with. You may want to do different kinds of sewing at a later stage. If you make a mistake and purchase the wrong machine, the resale value will only be a fraction of the original price. Buy wisely.