

Welcome to our January 1997 meeting

CLEANING YOUR MACHINE

Cleaning your machine is something that should be done thoroughly once a year. Most people seem to pick January for that job since they have knitted so hard in November and December trying to complete Christmas presents. This meeting was devoted to how to clean your machine. Keep in mind, I am talking about the Brother electronic machine, this is my method and may not be the method preferred by others but it's worked for me:

1. With the needles in A position, remove the sponge bar by pushing on one end with the back side of your latch tool until you can grab it from the other end and pull it out.
2. Take all the needles from the middle (L 50 to R 50) out and place them in a jar labeled "inners"
3. Take all the remaining needles and place them in a jar labeled "outers"
4. Put a little sudsy amonia in the jars with some warm water and let the needles soak.
5. While the needles are out, take your long "cat tail" brush (a brush that resembles a very long bottle brush) Put the brush in the sponge bar slot and slowly twist the brush always twisting toward the front of the machine and push it through from one end to the other. When it gets out the slot on the other end, it will probably be full of dirty fluff. Take a piece of paper towling and clean it off. Now twist the brush again toward the front as you pull it back out. Again, clean it off. Continue pushing and pulling the brush until it comes out clean.
6. Now it's time to wash your needles. I clean my needles as if they were silverware. Using a piece of paper towling I take each needle individually out of the amonia solution and wipe it. If it's especially bad I clean it with an old toothbrush.
7. Each needle gets rinsed very well and then I dry it with a dry paper towel and lay it on a dry towel. Once I have all the needles clean and dry (still separated as inners and outers) I spray them well with quite a bit of Lori Lin Lube. The amonia takes all the oil off the needles but you'll find they don't knit very well until their latches are oiled.
8. When each needle is cleaned, dried, oiled, I reinsert them into the machine but this time I put the old Inners into the outer slots and the Outers in the inner slots. Each needle gets a wipe between my fingers to remove excess oil before I insert it. (leaving a little on won't hurt the machine but too much might). I like them to feel oily but not to be dripping with oil. Check each needle before you replace it in the machine. If it's bent from the butt to the back end, replace it with a new needle. If it's a little bent in front of the butts, it may be possible to straighten it but if you can afford it, this is the time to replace any bent needles.
9. Now that the needles are nice and clean and back in the machine, have a look at that sponge bar. Is it worn out? If it's just a little ragged, you can cut off any pieces of torn thread on the edges and replace it in the machine but if it's lost a lot of it's spongy qualities, replace it. If it's at the questionable stage, it's possible to put it aside for a while and it will fluff back up and be usable again. Some people always have 2 sponge bars, one resting and one working. (Hint: If you have a machine you aren't presently working on, take the sponge bar out of it and lay it on top. Remember, they can wear out just sitting with needles pressing on them).
10. Now that the needles and sponge bar have been cleaned, trimmed and replaced, take a look at your carriage. It can get pretty dirty underneath. Get a clean cotton swab and put some oil on it. I use Bellodor Oil (available from your dealer). I dip the swab in Bellodor and then I squeeze off any excess. You don't want to get too much oil on the swab but enough to clean out the crevices in the carriage. Again, with a clean cotton swab I oil the front rim of the carriage, where metal meets the metal bed. I also oil the back rim of the carriage, where metal meets the metal bed. It's important not to get oil on the carriage where it's going to run down into the machine but any place where metal rubs on metal can be oiled with the cotton swab (squeezed after dipping).
11. Spray some lube or pour a little Bellodor on a rag and wipe the whole machine. I wipe all the plastic parts as well as the metal bed. Remember, a little goes a long way here, just use enough oil to clean the machine, you aren't trying to give it a lube job.
12. After you've got everything nice and clean and oiled, pull all the needles all the way out to E position. Your carriage should be a little oiled and the needles should have a little oil on them. Run the carriage across a couple times. Now turn the KC button on and with all the needles in B position, run the carriage back and forth a couple times. Next, push the Tuck buttons in and again run the carriage back and forth a couple times. I feel like this oils any little levers in the carriage that I might have missed without putting too much oil anyplace.

- 13. Work is all done. Doesn't the machine look great? It should knit just like a brand new machine. Between now and next year, wipe the machine off with your oily rag occasionally. If you do a particularly fuzzy job, take the sponge bar out and run the cat tail brush through. Check under the carriage and make sure it's not getting dirty. Remember, you've oiled the machine and oil gets dirty. Giving the machine a drink of clean oil occasionally will make it happy. Giving it too much oil at any one time might make it sick!

GARTER CARRIAGE MAINTENANCE: Don't oil the garter carriage. DO clean out fluff and dust after each use and replace the brush when it gets old. I use my latch tool to catch the fluff out of the crevices. You can get away with trimming the brush for a while but finally, replace it, it's cost is less than \$15 and your garter carriage will reward you.