Great Scott!

By Scott Goodman

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Troubleshooting 101: *Thread breaks*

Aargh! The bane of my existence. It always happens at the worst possible moment, or conversely, there is never a good time for thread to break. Take a moment and find your happy place. Let's reflect on the possible reasons and a linear path toward solving your problem.

Possibility 1:

The phase of the moon, tidal status, wind direction or feng shui. Thread just breaks. Sometimes it breaks for no apparent reason. A 1,000 meter spool has a thread length spanning 2/3 of a mile. It is a miracle of science that breaks do not occur more frequently.

Solution:

Rethread…Keep calm and carry on.

Possibility 2:

Mis-threading. Not rocket science, I know; but most thread breaks are due to threads hanging up on spool ends, rough edges or improper engagement in the tensioning system.

Solution:

Waste a little thread. Rethread. Draw on the thread as you thread your machine. Thread should draw smoothly. Any hang-ups will become apparent.

Possibility 3:

Your needle seems like such a simple device, but don't be fooled by its shiny coat. Microscopic burrs, flakes in the plating, or other microscopic aberrations in its finish can snag the delicate fibers that constitute your thread.

Solution:

Change out your needle. Be sure to use the right needle for your project. Remember; all the way up with flat side to the rear.

Possibility 4:

Thread quality. Good brands make bad batches, bad brands make good spools. Some thread colors are more prone to breakage due to harsh chemicals used in the dye process.

Solution:

Spool Roulette. Try a different spool.

Possibility 5:

Design density. Improperly digitized or re-sized designs may be too dense to sew correctly. You can rule this out by sewing one of the many built-in designs that are included in your machine. These designs all sew out correctly.

Solution:

Enlarge the design 5-10%. This will loosen up tight fills and clumps. Density programs can automatically solve issues and make adjustments for fabric types. To compensate for loose designs, a colored topping can give the appearance of tighter fills while using a more reasonable stitch density.

Possibility 6:

Speed. The velocity of thread as it passes through your needle, causes heat generating friction that can melt synthetic fibers like polyester or mylar.

Solution:

Dial your sewing speed down a notch or two.

Possibility 7:

Needle strikes can pit, scar and otherwise damage your precision parts. These pitted precision parts put pressure on the pretty plies (sorry, I couldn't resist the alliteration). The rough edges snag, abrade and cut thread.

Solution:

Tech time. Let your trusted technician tweak rough edges, replace damaged parts and smooth the thread paths. Also, it is a great excuse to see and compare exciting new features on the latest models at your local dealership. When you do, tell 'em Great Scott said "Hi".

Do you have a solution that I missed? Drop me a line: GreatScott@kneedle.com