

# Great Scott!

By Scott Goodman



Scott Goodman, owner of Sewing Machine Warehouse & Kneedle.com has been servicing the sewing public since 1976.

## An Apple a Day...

*An Apple a Day, keeps the doctor away, Stitch in Time saves nine.* How are you preventing unexpected repairs on your embroidery machine? Here are some tips that will keep your machine running smoothly until its next checkup.

Contrary to an anecdote I heard at a craft show, lint from recent projects will not keep your machine warm and cozy. So, let's roll up our sleeves, don our safety glasses and perform some between-service maintenance.

### Remove the bobbin cover, bobbin case and needle plate from your machine in whatever order is right for your model.

My BERNINA peeps can remove their shuttle hook, if appropriate for your model. Sewing and embroidery combination machines have feed dogs. Feed dogs are not an animal reference. Feed dogs are the part, usually with "teeth" or gripping serrations that move fabric under the presser foot. Machines that only embroider, do not have feed dogs. Remove the old needle and use it like a toothpick to remove compacted lint buildup from feed dogs. Dust bunnies from projects past may be hidden within your machine: First, remove the larger bunnies with a vacuum cleaner and small pastry brush. A controlled blast of canned air will finish the process. Some models by BROTHER and BABY LOCK must be reassembled in the correct sequence. Needle plate first, then the bobbin case (aka the inner rotary hook assembly). Otherwise the bobbin case can become pinched in place, creating havoc for your machine, project and deadline.

### Fight the urge to put oil on things.

With a few exceptions, though quieter, oil rarely makes your machine sew better. Manufacturers are specific about where to oil and what kinds of lubricants are used in your machine. Some machines use several different lubricants. Generally, machines with a metal bobbin case have races that need lubrication and should be oiled sparingly. Machines with synthetic bobbin cases should not.

*Terminology alert: Race, it is the groove or channel that rotary or oscillating parts move in. Please consult your owner's guide for specifics.*

**Sticky Hoops?** Over time, spray adhesive can build up; turning your hoops into untouchables. If the sticky buildup is light, use a moist diaper wipe. For heavier gunk, spray your hoops with WD40® or similar lubricant. Let the lubricant work its magic for a few minutes and wipe away the goopy buildup with a rag or paper towel.

### Thread grooves, rough edges and nicks can trap threads.

Some threads, like popular monofilaments nylon or polyester used in quilting techniques, can wear grooves in plastic and metal parts. Thread can get caught and pinched in these grooves. Check spool caps for thread-snagging rough spots that grab your pretty embroidery thread at the wrong time causing breaks and jams. Use very fine sandpaper and give your spool caps a mani-pedi.

## Some LCD screens love your fingers, others prefer a stylus.

Check your owner's guide to be sure. Good news, some brands offer a custom screen cover similar to those made for smart phones and tablets that may protect your machine from the errant scissor-grab or visiting grandkids. If your screen is not on the short list, purchase an oversized sheet from the phone kiosk at your local mall and personalize it. Just cut it to fit your display.



## Errant broken thread ends can get caught between the hand wheel and cover.

It amazes me to see how much thread can empty before the user notices an empty spool. This picture shows a recent example and one would guess that Elmo lost a limb in an unfortunate accident. On most machines, the hand wheel can be removed by a firm pull away from the machine. Excess threads can be cut and removed with scissors or a craft blade. When finished, look inside the hand wheel for alignment notches or grooves. Properly align the hand wheel, then push it firmly back in place.

*Happy machine = Happy embroiderer. Working on an unusual project? Had a strange encounter with your embroidery machine? Great Scott! loves to share. Send me a message. [GreatScott@kneedle.com](mailto:GreatScott@kneedle.com) or Like Me on Facebook. Google my email address and click on the Facebook link.*