

Getting to Know Your Sewing Machine (T003-1)

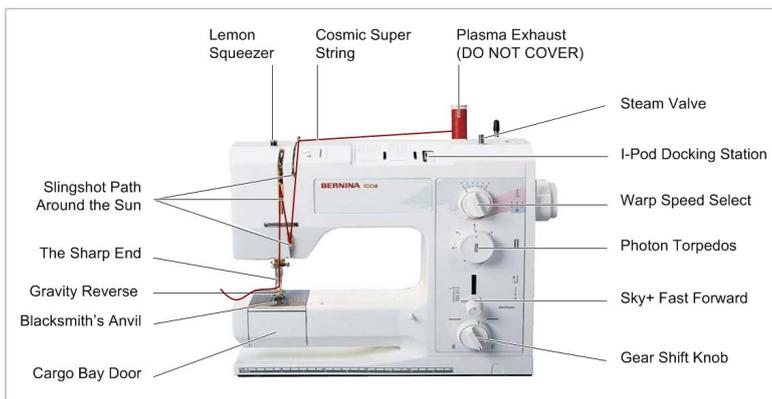
You've bought the machine of your dreams, got it home and unpacked the box. Now it's sitting there waiting for you to make the first move. What do you do?

1. Read the Manual

Before you do anything else – READ THE MANUAL - especially the sections on threading and winding the bobbin. Also, check that you have all the bits the book says you should have.

2. Learn How to Thread Your Machine

Thread the machine top and bottom with a good quality polyester thread with a dark colour on the top and a lighter shade on the bottom. Threading really is the most important thing you need to know. Practise it until you can do it with your eyes shut.



3. Set the Default Stitch Settings

Set the stitch length control to 2.5 mm and the stitch width to 0. These are the usual settings for an all-purpose straight stitch.

4. Prepare a Practice Piece

Cut a large square of strong, white cotton or calico. Iron, fold in half and iron again. This will be your practice piece.

5. Practice Stitching Some Straight Lines

Line up the edge of your presser foot with the edge of the fabric. Sew a line of straight stitching keeping the foot lined up with the

edge of the fabric all the way to the bottom. Repeat these lines of stitching, lining up the presser foot with the previous line of stitching until you have a collection of perfectly straight lines.

6. Check Your Tension

If you can see the bobbin thread on the top of your work, your top tension is too tight. If you can see the top thread on the reverse of your work, the bobbin tension is too tight.

If you have a machine with a top-loading bobbin, you will only be able to adjust the top tension. Experiment with this until your stitches look balanced, i.e. cannot see the bottom on top and vice versa.

7. Check Your Fabric Passes Through the Machine Freely

Support the fabric. Hold it loosely in front of the needle bed with your right hand and loosely at the left of the needle bed with your left hand. Do not try to pull or push the fabric through the machine, just guide it gently.

8. Learn to Maintain a Steady Speed

An uneven and jerky speed will produce uneven and jerky stitching. You do not need to be going at full speed but going too slowly will make it difficult to keep your stitching straight.

9. Try Out the Reverse Lever

When you have a line of straight stitches try the same thing again but start and finish each line with a few stitches using the reverse lever on your sewing machine.

10. Try Some Other Stitches

Experiment with the built-in stitches provided on your sewing machine. Try altering the stitch length and width controls on each stitch. Don't forget to keep your stitching straight.