

**Sewing Machine Buying Guide
presented by:**

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Important features for different types of sewing:

Quilting	Crafting	Home Dec	Garments	Heirloom
Needle up/down	Decorative stitches	Accessory feet for Piping and Cording	Automatic tie-off stitch	Heirloom stitches
Bobbin thread cutter	Ability to sew through many layers	Ability to sew through heavy fabrics	Ease of sewing zippers	Smocking Stitches
Drop feed dogs for free motion	Ability to sew on fleece, felt, and batting	Automatic tension	One step buttonholes	Ability to use Wing and twin needles
¼" stitch or foot	Extra Lighting	Ease of installing heavy and invisible zippers	Machine Embroidery features	Machine Embroidery features
Walking foot available	Machine Embroidery features*	Gathering and Ruffler attachments		
Adjustable and consistent stitch length		Machine Embroidery features		
Appliqué features				
Extension table				
Extra Lighting				

How to Choose a Sewing Machine Dealer

Always purchase a sewing machine from a dealer. You are not going to buy a car from a big-box store, you shouldn't buy a sewing machine from one either!

A dealer's job is primarily to teach you how to use your machine. They do this by offering you classes; some should be free, some will not be. Why, you ask? It's simple – not everyone does the same type of sewing. If we gave free classes on every type of sewing, we would not be able to stay in business, so we separate the various types of classes; "Owner's" classes should be free with your purchase. Different dealers offer different styles of classes so find what works best for you.

Before you purchase, ask questions about "owner's classes":

- What is covered?
- Who teaches them?
- How many students are in the class?

Chances are, if the dealer sells more than one brand of machine, your 'owners' class is going to be very basic and not geared towards your brand machine. Remember that owner's classes are designed to teach you how to use your machine, do not expect to learn to quilt, or create a wedding dress in a owner's class. *See continuing education below*

Next, ask about the warranty and service:

- How long is the warranty?
- What does it cover?
- How much does service cost? (expect price increases over time)
- Where is the service performed?

That last bullet point is important. If the machine needs to be shipped, that leaves more possibility of damage and lost machines, not to mention adding several weeks onto the turnaround time.

Ask about trade-ins. If you have an older machine you wish to trade in for a newer model, some places will take trade-ins. Don't expect to get back what you paid for it.

If you're looking to get more than book value for it, you can sell it on eBay or Craig's list. Ask about trade-ins; do they have any newer machines that were traded in and for sale? Most places give a 30 day warranty. Ask for longer; 6 months to a year is a good deal. Get clarification in writing of what that warranty covers – parts, labor, etc. The used machine is most likely going to have scrapes, dings, and blemishes – it is used!

Financing may or may not be offered. Is financing available? Some stores will have special financing opportunities. Most of the time, there is a minimum dollar amount to qualify. You can get some different plans like 3, 6, or 12 months with no interest. Be careful though, no interest could mean if it is paid off within 6 months, no interest will be added, BUT if it is not, the interest may get compounded to the first day of the sale, and will all get added after the 6th months is up. Most likely this is a credit card. The programs from the financing companies change periodically.

Continuing Education: What happens after your owner's classes are over? What types of other classes are offered? Do the classes they offer you interest the type of sewing you like to do. This is where you can develop techniques of what interests you.

The bottom line is ask the questions that are important to you.