

%%%

(from the Utah Technology-Life Careers Core Home Economics curriculum)

THE SEWING MACHINE

A sewing machine uses two threads to form a stitch. It has helped families to have better and less costly clothing. In factories, it has helped make possible the mass production of clothing. Elias Howe is considered the inventor of the sewing machine as we know it today. His model was patented in 1846 and was the first practical machine sold. Elias Howe struggled with the problem of how to get the needle to pull the thread through the fabric. Finally, he decided to think about something else for a while. One night, he solved the problem as he was dreaming. Experts who have studied problem solving theorize that even while we may be doing something quite unrelated to the problem, the brain is still working on solutions. Remarkable discoveries have often been made this way.

The first sewing machines were powered by people using their feet or hands. Machines made it possible to produce clothing and household goods much more easily. Before machines were invented, everything had to be stitched by hand. This was a very slow process. Most people had only two sets of clothes; one for best and one for everyday. Clothing was made at home until the sewing machine was invented and then factories began to make clothing.

People who work in factories can make clothing very quickly because they cut out many articles at once, using one pattern. Each person does only one job. For example, one person sews all the collars and another sews all the buttonholes. The sewing is divided up so that one person will sew one seam on many articles made out of the same pattern. Another factory worker will set in sleeves, while others sew collars, make buttonholes, and sew on buttons. This is called "assembly line production." The workers may never see the garment completed, only the part they sewed. They use very sophisticated machines which have been developed to do specific tasks, such as sewing on elastic, making buttonholes or hemming. Clothes made at home go through the same process as in a factory, but you have the satisfaction of seeing the fabric become the finished article. Both men and women sew in factories for wages, as well as at home for their own pleasure.

THE SEWING MACHINE

(from the Utah Technology-Life Careers Core Home Economics curriculum)

The procedures and/or rules for using the sewing machine are:

1. Before beginning to sew, pull threads **UNDER** and **BACK** behind the presser foot about 3 or 4 inches.
2. The hand wheel always turns toward you, even when stitching in reverse.
3. Keep fingers away from stitching line; keep them to the sides of the presser foot.
4. The presser foot must always be in the "down" position for sewing.
5. Don't force or pull the fabric--the machine will feed it automatically.
6. Use the thread cutter to cut the thread tails or trim threads with scissors as you work.
7. The take-up lever should always be at the "top" when beginning and ending a line of sewing.
8. Report any repairs needed.
9. **NEVER** sew paper in the sewing machine.
10. Take pins out as you sew; **DO NOT SEW OVER PINS.**
11. Maintain a slow, even speed with the foot control.
12. Watch the seam guide as you sew (**NOT THE NEEDLE**) to produce an even sewing line.
13. When stopping in the middle of a line of sewing, put the needle down into the fabric to prevent thread loops.
14. Keep the bulk of the fabric to the left of the needle when sewing so you can see the seam guides on the needle plate.