

MACHINE *Knit* AMERICA

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**SEASONS
GREETINGS**
From the Staff of MKA



NO OIL – NO GO - NO KNIT!

Sharon Nani continues her Knitting for Profit series.

Many variables affect a knitting machine. I have discussed yarn flow, stitch size, and weight systems in the previous three issues of Machine Knit America. The final factors that I will discuss in this category are oiling, mechanics, and quality check points. I will also give reference to what is done in a more commercial setting, such as the responsibilities of a "production knitter". Please take this information and apply the parts that affect you and your given situation.

Under average circumstances, a production knitter is responsible for keeping their machine clean, oiled and for making minor mechanical adjustments. Since a knitter in cottage industry usually does not have the luxury of having a mechanic available to them, he or she must perform these duties.

OILING AND CARE

Observation: Your knitting machine is like a car. "No Oil - No Go - No Knit".

Several problems will arise if you do not properly oil and care for your machine.

A. Heavy movement of the locks over the needles and pushers. (Only Passaps

have pushers. They tell the needle what kind of stitch to make).

B. Needle and pusher feet could break because they were not moving properly in the channel (slot on the needle bed). This, in turn, caused them to be in the wrong position when the lock (carriage) moved over them. Therefore, a metal cam from under the lock would hit the needle or pusher, breaking or bending it. Depending upon the force with which the lock hits the needle or pusher, there is a possibility that the cam could go out of alignment bend, or chip.

C. The needle channel could also get a dent in it at the point where the lock jammed on the needle or pusher. This in turn would obstruct the needle from flowing freely.

D. Soiled knitting.

See the chain reaction of possible damage from neglect of proper cleaning!!

It is not my objective to repeat the oiling instructions for each individual type of machine. You can get this information from your instruction manuals. On the other hand, it is my observation that manuals do not stress the importance of some factors. Therefore, the reader has

the tendency of passing over the information lightly.

Use the oil recommended in your manual or by your dealer. Some oils damage plastic parts. If you use the machine every day – oil once a week, or if the locks are moving heavily – oil as needed. Some yarns leave residues on the knitting machine. If this is the case, clean and oil after the project. In each situation, remember to wipe the old oil off first, before applying the new oil. Always oil your machine if you have not used it for a few weeks.

PLACES TO OIL

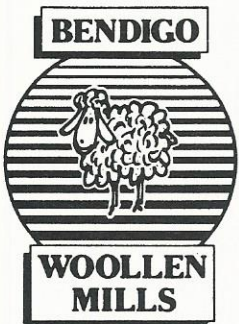
1. Needle Bed:

- a. Glide Rails.
- b. Heels of latch needles and pushers.
- c. 1 drop of oil of each white prong of the color changer. (Passap)

Note: Be very careful not to get any oil on the patterning belts of mechanical knitting machines. This could cause the belt to "slip" and therefore fault your patterning. Electronic machines – Pay close attention to the oiling and cleaning instructions in your manual. There are places where the electronic instruments will not work properly if they get dirty.

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2. Locks (Carriages):

- a. When you originally get your machine.
- b. At least once a week.
- c. If you have not used your machine for a few weeks – take the front and back locks (main and ribber bed carriages) off the bed and put a drop of oil on each metal cam under the lock. Or, you can put oil on the little brush that came with the machine and oil the paths that the needle and pusher feet will take. Never spray oil under the locks, this only puts oil in unnecessary places.

3. Accessories: Oil as directed by your instruction manuals. Remember transfer carriages, linkers, intarsia carriages, and lace carriages need oil where they contact the heels of the needles.

PREVENTIVE CLEANING

A. Vacuum yarn lint off the machine after every project, or, using a large, soft bristle paint brush, brush the lint off. (In a production situation, this would only be done as needed or when changing to a new color).

B. Before oiling, wipe the old oil off with a soft cloth.

C. Keep dust cover on the machine when it is not in use.

Special Note: Air compressors will "dry out" the needle channels and cams, or perhaps even pack dirt deeper into the channel. Use with care. Always oil generously after using an air compressor.

SOILED KNITTING

After cleaning and oiling your machine, you should knit on all needles with waste yarn. This removes any excess oil. In the rare case that you still get soiled knitting, follow these additional steps:

1. Knit on all the needles on both beds.
2. Knit two rows on as tight a stitch size as possible.
3. Push all the needles on the front bed (main bed) all the way up with the pattern ruler. This forces the knitting to go behind the latch hooks and to the backs of the needles.
4. Now push the heads of the needles with the pattern ruler back down. The knitting will just come to the back of the

latch – not back into the hook. Repeat steps 3 and 4 several times, ending with step 4. Repeat steps 3 and 4 for the back bed (ribber) needles. The small stitches clean the needles. Then remove the knitting from the machine manually with the pattern ruler by bringing the needles to out of work position (A).

Do not knit over the needles with the locks, as the stitch size is too tight on the needles! Manually remove the Knitting!

The above procedure is much quicker than removing all needles and cleaning them individually. In a production situation, use this procedure whenever you change to pastel or light shades of yarn.

Knitters often forget that their cast on combs and the wires must also be wiped clean to prevent the cast on rows from becoming soiled.

I consider oiling, cleaning, mechanics, and quality check points to be items in "The Knitters First Aid Guide" and the foundation to productive knitting. I will continue with these topics in the next issue.

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