

TEN QUESTIONS TO ASK WHEN BUYING A QUILTING MACHINE

- ✓ **Is the machine a solid cast or a stretch machine?**
Stretched machines are cut and inserts are added. Glues and bonds used to secure the inserts tend to crack and fatigue. Commercial grade machines are solid cast and are not extended or stretched.
- ✓ **Is the motor inside the machine?**
Motors mounted inside the machine are safer and quieter than outside mounts.
- ✓ **Are belts or other dangerous moving parts mounted on the outside of the machine?**
Machines with exposed belts can be a significant safety hazard.
- ✓ **Does the machine run smoothly at both high and low speeds?**
Too much vibration can cause excessive noise and poor stitch quality.
- ✓ **How much does the machine weigh?**
A machine that is too heavy will cause stress on back, neck, and arms. Test any machine for 2 minutes or more to get a sense of what several hours of quilting might feel like. A comfortable weight is usually 40-60 pounds.
- ✓ **Does the machine have a “quilters” hopping foot?**
A quilting hopping foot “hops,” eliminating dragging and unwanted folds in the fabric. This foot should also be round with ¼” equal distance between the needle and the outside of the foot. The hopping foot should be thick enough to accommodate ¼” thick acrylic templates and rulers. Rulers help quilters perform very precise quilting, including stitching in the ditch or echo quilting around pieced seams. Also, a hopping foot is important to be able to “hop” over a quilt’s seams.
- ✓ **Does the machine have an available laser light for pantographs and patterns?**
Lasers provided a convenient way to trace pantographs and patterns. Make sure that the laser works from the **front** and back of machine.
- ✓ **How much quilting space is available?**
The throat space and quilting space are not equal. Be sure to ask about available quilting space. When considering a quilting machine, remember bigger is not always better. The best quilting space is always a comfortable distance for both sight and reach. The recommended distance is between a 12”-14” “stretch” for comfortably controlled quilting.
- ✓ **Is the bobbin large enough?**
M Class bobbins are the largest in the commercial quilting industry. Large bobbins save time while maintaining superior stitch quality.
- ✓ **Does the machine company provide a trusted warranty, customer service, and training?**
A trusted warranty for mechanical, electrical, and the outer casing provides you a guarantee of quality craftsmanship when investing in a quilting machine. Reputable companies will provide and stand behind their written warranty and will provide you convenient customer support services. Hands-on training should also be included by dealers or sales representatives when you purchase.



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