



Sewing Machine Guide

Janome SUV1108



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Before You Start

What does a sewing machine do?

A sewing machine is a device that uses a needle and thread to join pieces of fabric together with stitches. It automates the process of hand sewing, allowing you to create strong, even stitches much faster than sewing by hand.

The Janome SUV1108 is a mechanical sewing machine, meaning it uses a **foot pedal** to control the speed of the needle. The machine uses two threads—a **top thread** and a **bobbin thread** (a small spool underneath the fabric)—that loop together to form each stitch.

The machine offers several built-in stitch patterns and an adjustable stitch length, giving you flexibility for different types of projects and fabrics.

What can you make with a sewing machine?

With a sewing machine, you can create a wide variety of fabric-based projects, including:

- **Clothing & Accessories:** Tote bags, pouches, aprons, garments, scarves, headbands.
- **Home Items:** Pillowcases, cushion covers, curtains, table runners, cloth napkins.
- **Repairs & Alterations:** Hemming pants, patching holes, replacing seams, fixing zippers.
- **Craft Projects:** Stuffed toys, quilting squares, fabric gift bags, cosplay pieces.

What to Expect

- **Average project time:** 30–90 minutes for simple projects (depending on complexity and experience).
- **Skill level:** Beginner-friendly with patience and practice.
- **What to bring:** Your own fabric and any patterns or project ideas. Thread and basic tools and supplies are available at the Makerspace.

If you're new to sewing, consider starting with a simple straight-stitch project. Staff can help you get set up, but hands-on practice is the best way to learn. Burlington Public Library also offers sewing programs that can help you build your skills.

Hardware Overview

The Janome SUV1108 is a mechanical sewing machine. All settings are controlled directly on the machine using dials and switches—no software or digital files are required.



A photograph of the Janome sewing machine with labels of the key components.

Key Components

1. **Reverse switch:** Hold to sew backward and lock stitches at the start and end of a seam.
2. **Stitch selector:** Choose from several built-in stitch patterns (straight, zigzag, etc.).
3. **Stitch length dial:** Controls how long each stitch is. A medium setting works for most projects.
4. **Handwheel:** Manually moves the needle up or down. Always turn it toward you and never force it to turn.
5. **Thread path and tension dial:** Guides the top thread through the machine and controls how tightly the thread is held.
6. **Presser foot, feed dogs and bobbin holder:** The presser foot holds fabric in place while sewing. The feed dogs are the little teeth that move the fabric through the machine. The bobbin holder sits beneath it and holds the bottom thread.
7. **Power switch and connectors:** Located on the right side. This is where the power cord and foot pedal plug in.

Supplies & Material

You must bring your own fabric. The Makerspace does not sell or provide fabric for sewing projects.

What the Makerspace Provides

- Thread (white or black)
- Sewing machine needles
- Bobbins
- Basic sewing tools (scissors, pins, seam ripper)

What You Should Bring

- Your fabric, pre-washed and ironed if possible.
- Your sewing pattern (if using one).
- Any specialty thread or notions your project requires (e.g., zippers, buttons, elastic).

If you are working from a sewing pattern (paper or printed), bring it with you to the Makerspace. Patterns provide the cutting and stitching guides for your project.

Sewing Machine Safety

The sewing machine is safe when used with care, but there are a few important hazards to be aware of.

Needle and Pinch Risk

- The needle moves rapidly when the foot pedal is pressed. Always keep your fingers clear of the needle area while sewing.
- The presser foot can pinch skin if fingers are placed too close during operation.
- **Always turn off the machine** before threading the needle, changing the needle, or adjusting.

Pin Risk

- Never sew over pins, as they can damage the needles, and throw the machine out of timing and in rare cases launch broken pins towards your face.
- Pins should be removed before reaching the presser foot.

Thread Cuts

Thread under tension can slide across skin and cause small cuts similar to a papercut. Handle thread carefully, especially when pulling it through guides or cutting it.

General Rules

- Keep the machine turned off when not actively sewing.
- Do not pull or force fabric through the machine — let the feed dogs (the small teeth under the presser foot) move the fabric for you.
- Ask staff for help with needle changes or any machine adjustments you're unsure about.

Getting Started

This section walks you through setting up the sewing machine from scratch. If the machine is already threaded and ready, you can skip ahead to Step 5 (Start Sewing).

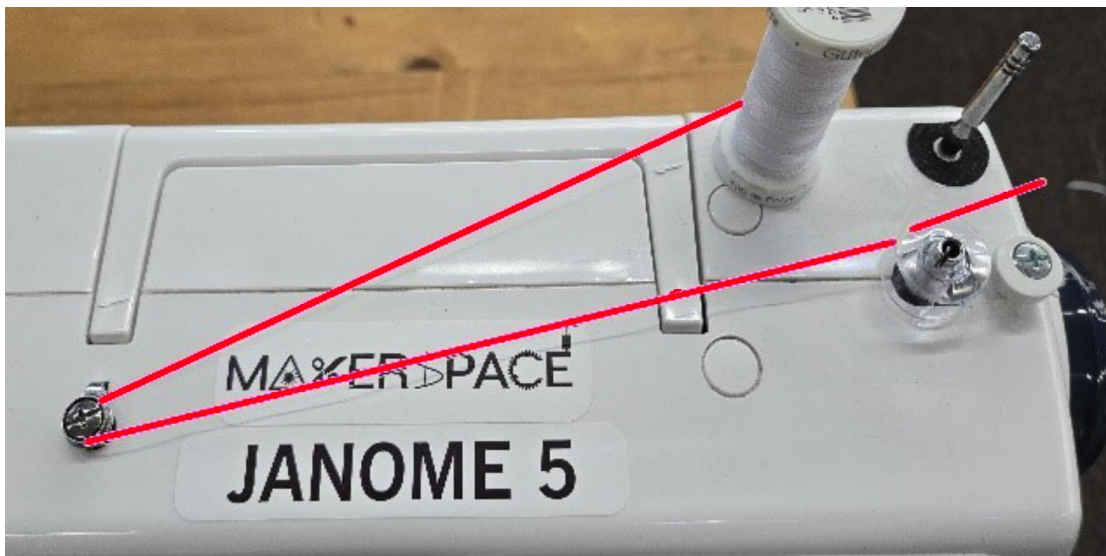
1. Set Up the Machine

- A. Place the sewing machine on a sturdy table with enough room for your fabric to feed through.
- B. Plug the power cable and foot pedal into the right side of the machine.
- C. Plug the power cord into a wall outlet.
- D. Turn the power switch to ON (located on the right side).

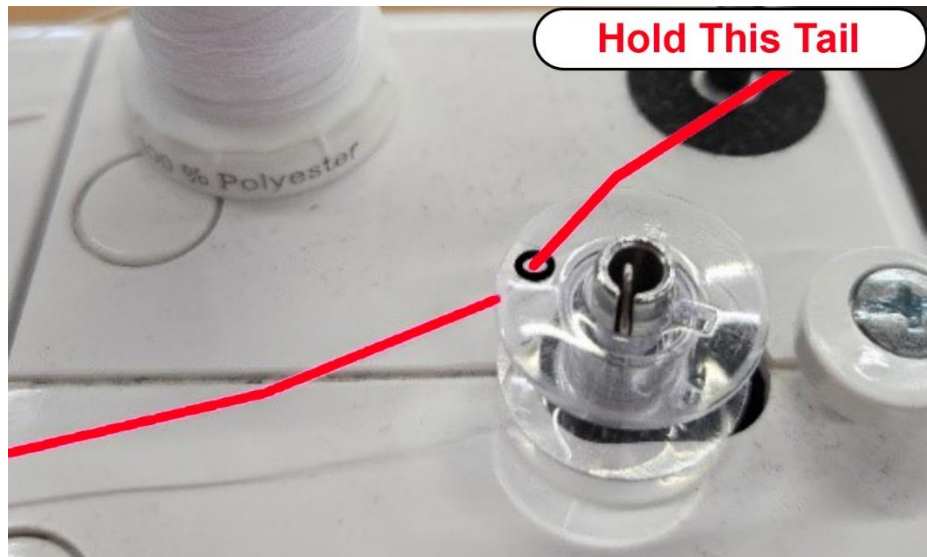
2. Wind a Bobbin

A bobbin is a small spool that holds thread underneath the fabric and works together with the top thread to form each stitch. Before sewing, the bobbin must be wound with thread. Bobbin thread is different from embroidery thread—it is typically lighter weight, thinner, and stronger. It should generally be either white or black, rather than matching the embroidery thread.

- A. Begin by placing the empty bobbin on the protruding holder at the top right of the sewing machine and the thread on to the thread post. Run the thread around the silver tension screw and towards the bobbin.



A photograph showing how to wind a bobbin.



A photograph showing a close-up of step 2.

- B. Pull the thread toward the centre of the bobbin and up through the small hole in the top of the plastic bobbin.
- C. Pull the handwheel outward and push the bobbin on the holder to the right.



A photograph showing how to pull the handwheel outward and push the bobbin on the holder to the right.

- D. While holding the thread that passes through the bobbin carefully and slowly begin to depress the foot pedal. This drives the motor and allows the bobbin to spin and wind itself.

Note: The bobbin should automatically stop as the pressure from the thread pushes the bobbin and post back to the left position. You can also stop winding at any time by releasing the foot pedal and moving the bobbin and post back to the leftmost position.

- E. When done ensure that both the bobbin post and the handwheel are returned to the leftmost position.

3. Load the Bobbin

The bobbin needs to be inserted into the **bobbin holder** prior to loading the bobbin holder into the machine.



A photograph showing the parts of the machine from 1-7.

- A. Locate the Bobbin Holder in the bobbin storage compartment inside the sewing machine (#6 on the image).



A photograph of the Bobbin Holder.

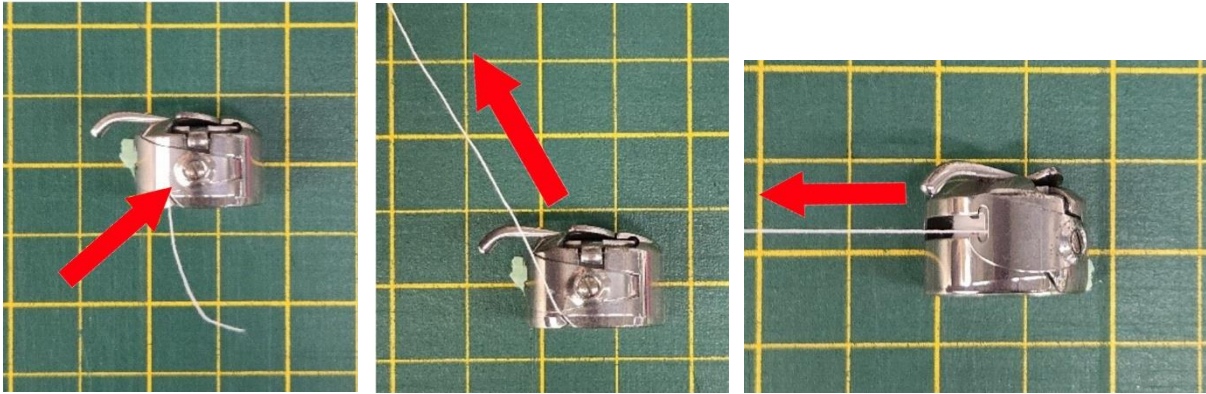
- B. Remove the Bobbin Holder from its appropriate spot, by **pulling the small metal lever**, and pull it out of the machine.



A photograph showing the removed Bobbin Holder.

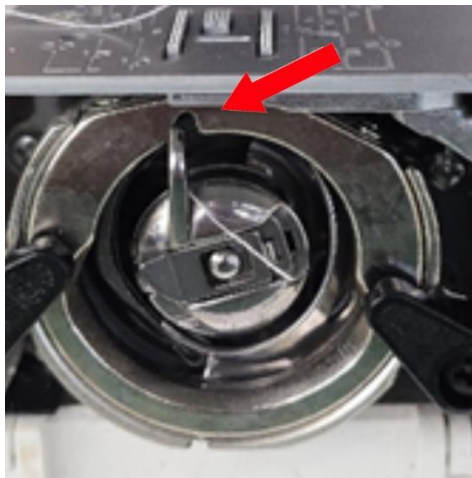
- C. Arrange the bobbin holder and the bobbin so that the arm of the bobbin holder points to the left and the thread wraps in a clockwise direction with a tail leading off to the right.

- D. There is a thin groove on the bobbin holder that you will want to pull the thread tail through. Continue to pull the thread tail through the groove in the direction of the bobbin holder arm and under a thin metal plate.



A series of photographs showing how to pull the thread tail through the groove.

8. Pull the thread directly to the left until it enters a space in the centre of the bobbin holder, allowing for 4-6cm of thread to extend out of the opening.



A photograph showing the direction to pull the thread.

9. Insert the loaded bobbin holder back into the machine.

4. Loading the Top Stitch Thread

- A. The thread follows a numbered path that passes through a tension hook then down into a channel at the front of the unit, back up towards the thread arm and finally down again, terminating at the needle and foot. Please use images as a reference.

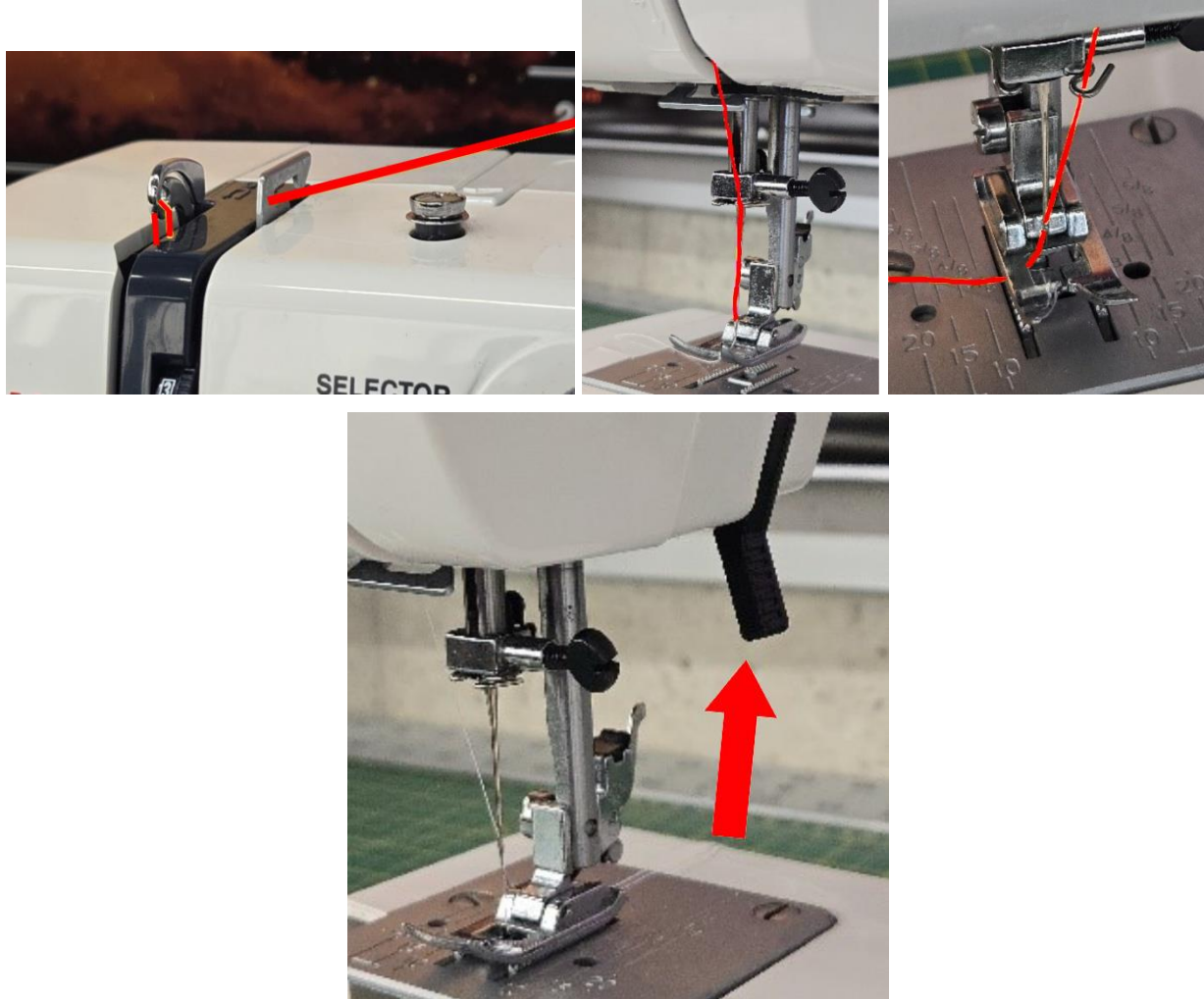


A photograph showing how to load the thread.

- B. As the thread passes through the channel at the front of the machine and towards the needle it will need to be threaded behind a guard, through a clip and finally through the eye of the needle.

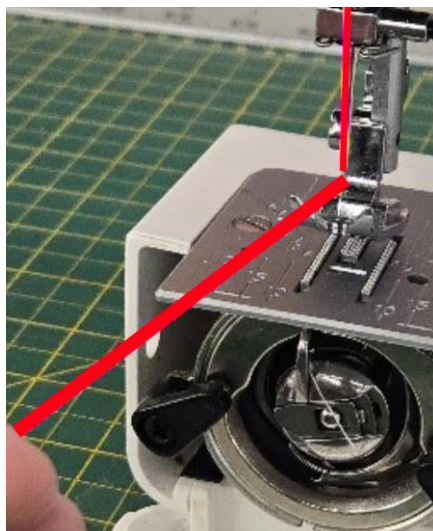
5. Drawing up the Bobbin Thread

After the bobbin holder is in the machine and the top stitch is threaded the bobbin can be drawn up to prime the machine.



A series of images showing the steps for the bobbin to be drawn up to prime the machine.

1. Ensure the foot is in the elevated position. If it is not raised the lever located to the back right of the needle can be used to raise the foot.
2. Gently grab the thread and pull it forward a few inches. You want to maintain a slight tension while avoiding pulling the thread further through the machine.



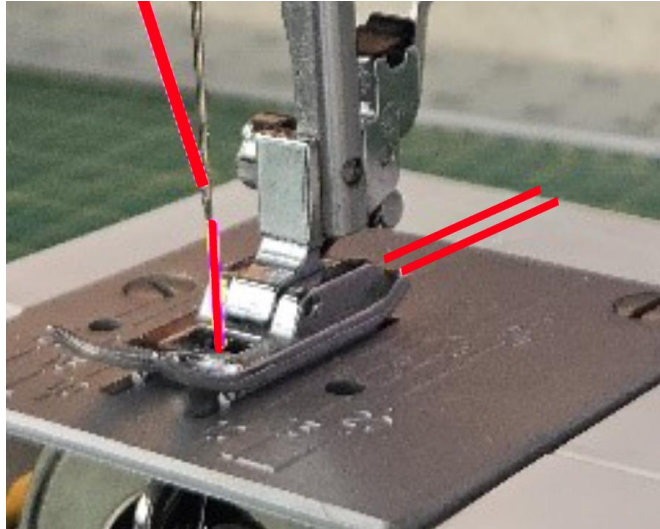
A photograph showing how to pull the thread.

3. While holding the thread slowly turn the handwheel (right side of the unit) towards you (this is a counterclockwise motion when viewed from the right side). The thread will be drawn into the lower part of the machine and after a few turns of the handwheel you will see the bobbin thread appear as a loop.



A photograph showing how the bobbin thread will appear as a loop.

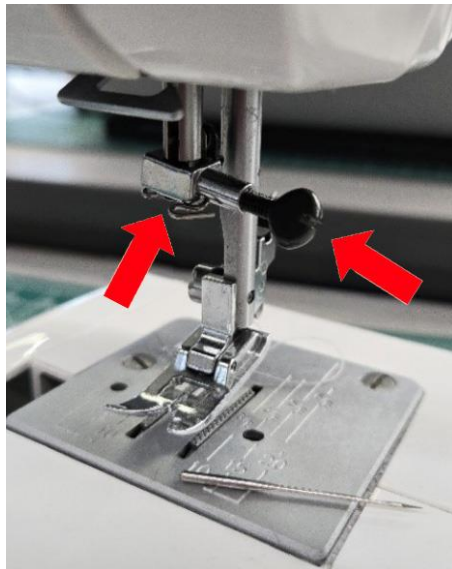
4. With a small stick or similar tool, you will want to pull both threads out toward the back of the machine.



A photograph showing how to pull the threads out toward the back of the machine.

6. Changing the Needle

- A. First raise the foot by lifting the foot lever.
- B. Rotate the small thumb screw until the needle drops out of its holding shaft.



A photograph showing how to rotate the small thumb screw.

- C. Take the new needle and carefully insert it up fully and into the shaft.

- D. While holding the needle fully inside of the shaft, tighten the thumb screw. Use a small screwdriver to ensure the thumbscrew is properly tightened.

Note: The needle is both sharp and shaped in a way that requires the flat side of the needle to face away from the user during insertion. **For most applications a type 11 needle will work. Seek staff if you require assistance.**

Tips for Success

Start with a simple project. A straight-stitch project like a tote bag or pillowcase is a great way to get comfortable with the machine.

Test on scrap fabric first. Before sewing your actual project, run a few test stitches on a scrap piece to check your thread tension, stitch length, and needle choice.

Don't force the fabric. Let the machine's feed dogs move the fabric through. Pulling or pushing can cause uneven stitches, jamming, or broken needles.

Backstitch at the start and end. Press the reverse switch for a few stitches at the beginning and end of each seam. This locks the thread in place and prevents unravelling.

Keep fingers away from the needle. Guide the fabric from the sides, not directly in front of the needle.

Use the right needle for your fabric. A needle that's too small for heavy fabric will break; one that's too large for light fabric can leave visible holes. Refer to the needle chart in the Supplies section.

Check your bobbin thread. If stitches start looking loose or uneven on the underside of your fabric, the bobbin may be running low or improperly seated.

Common Issues & Quick Fixes

Problem	What to Do
Needle keeps breaking	You may be using the wrong size needle for your fabric. Try going up a size (e.g., from 11 to 14). Also check that the needle is inserted correctly with the flat side facing away from you.
Fabric is bunching or puckering	The thread tension is likely too tight. Turn the tension dial down slightly and test on scrap fabric.
Stitches are loose or uneven	The tension may be too loose, or the bobbin may not be seated properly. Check both and re-thread if needed.
Thread keeps breaking	Clean the thread path and bobbin area. Old lint or debris can cause friction. Also check that you're using the correct thread weight for your needle and fabric.
Machine is making clunking noises	The machine may need cleaning and lubrication. Ask staff for assistance.
Bobbin thread is not catching	Re-do the "Drawing Up the Bobbin Thread" step. Make sure the presser foot is raised before you start, and turn the handwheel slowly.

If the issue persists after trying these steps, ask staff for help. Some problems may require a deeper clean or a machine adjustment.

Need More Help?

If you need additional support:

- Ask Makerspace staff for assistance at All Levels Access hours.
- Attend a BPL sewing program to build your skills with guided instruction.
- Refer to the Janome SUV1108 owner's manual for detailed machine specifications and advanced settings.