



My Straight Stitch Tension Is Off

Do your maintenance to eliminate problems with your machine.

Start fresh on a plain 4" square piece of fabric and a needle that is correct for the thread weight and fabric. Thread the needle thread with the presser foot up (this opens the tension disks in all machines) and follow your machine's instructions.

Using the same brand thread in the bobbin, if possible use a different color. The color makes it easier to tell if the top thread or the bottom thread is the problem.

Check your bobbin to make sure that it is wound properly and placed in the bobbin holder in the correct direction. Draw up the bobbin thread. Straight Stitch a row on the fabric's bias, leaving thread on each end, do not use the backstitch or thread cutter.

What does your stitch out look like?

If there are loops on top:

- Check to see if the bobbin thread is in the bobbin holder's tension. Tug the thread, can you feel some tension?
- If there is tension, check to see where your needle thread tension is set. If you have Automatic Tension, place the presser foot in the down position and tug the needle thread. Is it too tight? Check your Instruction book for adjusting your tension.

If the loops are on the bottom:

- Check to see if the needle thread is in the tension and that it is correct.
- If it is loose, make sure that you have cleaned your tension disks of any loose thread or lint. Stitch out again.

It looks better than it did, but still needs to be adjusted, what do I do:

- Both needle and bobbin thread need to lock between the layers of fabric. Adjust for a balanced thread tension.
- Pull the fabric on the bias to snap the threads, if both threads snap, the stitch is balanced. If only 1 thread breaks you can adjust the tension. If the top thread breaks decrease the tension, 1 number at a time. If the bobbin thread breaks increase the top tension. Adjusting the top tension rather than the bobbin is easier.
- Many machines have multiple bobbin holders/cases to accommodate different thread weights. If you only have 1 bobbin case it is easier to adjust the top tension as you change fabrics and thread.

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<https://aagcontracosta.org/special-events/my-tension-is-off/>