



## Buyer's Checklist:

### Choosing the Best Sewing Machine Under \$400

#### Part 1: Define Your Needs

- **Primary Use:** What will you sew most? (Circle) Garments / Quilting / Home Decor / Heavy-Duty Crafts
- **Fabric Types:** List the fabrics you use often (e.g., cotton, denim, knits, canvas). \_\_\_\_\_
- **Must-Have Features:** List 3-5 features you cannot live without (e.g., automatic threader, speed control). \_\_\_\_\_
- **Skill Level:** Where are you now and where do you want to be in 2 years? Beginner -> Intermediate

#### Part 2: Core Machine Features (The Non-Negotiables)

- **Frame Construction:** Is the interior frame made of metal? (Ask or check specs).
- **Bobbin System:** Is it a top drop-in bobbin? (Look for the clear cover near the needle).
- **Stitch Control:** Can you adjust both stitch *length* and *width*?
- **Presser Foot Pressure:** Is the pressure adjustable? (Crucial for knits and delicate fabrics).
- **Included Feet:** Does it come with a Zipper Foot, Buttonhole Foot, and a Blind Hem Foot at minimum?
- **Lighting:** Is the workspace lit with a bright, cool LED light?
- **Free Arm:** Does the machine have a removable section for sewing cuffs and sleeves?

#### Part 3: In-Store Testing (If Possible)

- **Bring Fabric Swatches:** Test the machine with your own fabric, especially tricky ones like denim and knits.
- **Stitch Quality Check:**
  - Sew a straight stitch. Does it look even on both sides? Are the stitches a consistent length?



- Sew a zig-zag stitch. Are the points sharp and clean?
- **Buttonhole Test:** Use the one-step buttonhole function. Is it easy to use? Is the result consistent?
- **Listen to the Motor:** Does the machine sound smooth or does it rattle and strain, especially at high speeds?
- **Thread the Machine:** Go through the full threading process, including the automatic needle threader. Was it intuitive?

#### Part 4: Long-Term Value

- **Warranty:** What is the warranty period for (1) the body, (2) electrical parts, and (3) labor?
- **Local Service:** Is there an authorized service center in your area for future tune-ups?
- **Accessory Availability:** How easy is it to buy extra bobbins, needles, and specialty presser feet for this model?