

know YOUR STUFF

FIND YOUR WAY AROUND A QUILTING MACHINE WITH OUR AT-A-GLANCE GUIDE

Ever wondered what all of those buttons and dials do on quilting machines? You needn't feel daunted by all of those controls – they are, after all, there to help you. Follow our guide to find out the where's, why's and how's of a quilting machine.



Find all of these features and more in the Janome Memory Craft 6600P, priced £1099. www.janome.co.uk, 0161 666 6011.

1 Sliding Speed Control

Whilst traditionally machines would use the pressure exerted on the foot pedal to raise or lower the speed, many modern models make use of a sliding speed control on the body of the machine in conjunction with a start/stop button. This allows greater control for exact results, as well as pedal-free sewing.

2 Bobbin Winder

Many stitchers will agree that having to stop mid-seam and rethread the machines to wind an empty bobbin is both time-consuming and annoying. Hence many models now feature an independent bobbin motor, allowing the user to wind thread onto the bobbin away from the rest of the thread.

3 Alphabet Font Stitches

Embroidering someone's initials or an important date onto a quilt – for example, the birth date of a new baby – is a fantastic way to customise designs with ease and create fast family heirlooms. Machine fonts take the time and stress out of hand embroidery.

4 Decorative Stitches

All quilting machines will feature a myriad of stitches, both utility and decorative. Most will include stitches specifically suited for quilting – for example, decorative edge stitches or tough straight seams for adding binding. Many also include stitches made to look like hand sewing for a traditional finish!

5 Drop Feed Control

The feed dogs or teeth of most machines can be dropped to allow for friction-free stitching – for example free-motion embroidery and quilting. This can often be achieved by the flick of a switch, such as shown on this machine.

6 Knee Lift Attachment

Effectively giving an extra hand to control the machine with a knee-lift lever is extremely useful when working large scale projects such as quilts. It allows the user to raise and lower the presser foot without taking their hands off the work – perfect for hands-on projects such as free-motion quilting.

7 Thread Trimmer

This snips threads at the end of long seams without having to disturb the work and take hands away from the machine with a handy thread trimming button.

8 Large Working Bed

The larger the project, the more space the stitcher will need. For this reason, many machines are now provided with large clip-on quilting tables that can increase the working area of the machine by huge amounts – some, such as the machine pictured, also feature larger free arms for more sewing space.

9 Variable Needle Positions

Quilts require a number of different types of seams – the user may want to 'stitch in the ditch' (sew down the seam line inbetween two quilt pieces) or work free-motion designs. Having a variety of different needle positions makes working these variable seams much easier.

10 Pressure Gauge

Sometimes bulky layers of fabric (such as those used in quilts) need more pressure from the foot; sheer fabrics need less. Some machines allow the user to control how firmly the foot is pressing on the fabric for a precise and even finish.