

Overview

Step back in time and get your hands dirty in this all-day, hands-on workshop dedicated to cast iron vintage sewing machines—the sturdy, no-nonsense workhorses that built wardrobes, quilts, and entire industries. We'll focus on classic treadle, hand-crank, and early electric machines from roughly the 1880s–1950s, including beloved models from Singer, White, Wheeler & Wilson, National/Willcox & Gibbs, Davis, New Home, Minnesota, and a swath of midcentury brands manufactured in Japan. Whether your machine was rescued from a basement, inherited from a grandmother, or found at a flea market “because it was pretty,” this workshop is designed to help you understand how these marvelous mechanisms *actually work*—and how to keep them stitching smoothly for decades to come.

Throughout the day we'll cover:

- Safe cleaning and lubrication
- General care including, needles and thread
- Common wear points and tension systems
- Diagnosing “mystery noises,” and what *not* to fix with brute force or WD-40 (spoiler: almost everything).

Come prepared to learn, laugh, and leave with a machine that feels revived—and a whole new appreciation for the engineering brilliance hiding under that beautiful enamel.

Schedule

May shift due to class needs:

- 9:00-10:00am: General machine anatomy and safe maintenance practices
- 10:00am -12:30pm: Guided cover removal, cleaning and lubrication
- 12:30pm - 1:15pm: Break for lunch
- 1:15pm - 1:45pm: Electrical inspection (for relevant machines)
- 1:45pm - 3:00pm: Reassembly and test stitching
- 3:00pm - 4:30pm: Troubleshooting lab or open sewing time

Class Size

Class will be limited to 12 sewing machine owners and up to 12 “buddies” to ensure enough individual attention can be given during instruction and troubleshooting. Each “buddy” is expected to be in close quarters with the sewing machine (and its owner) so they can see inside the machine as the work is being done. This is a great opportunity to invite friends, partners, spouses, or other loved ones of the sewing machine owners to participate in the workshop!

The host guild or workshop location is responsible for ensuring the owners and buddies are paired up.

Fees and Pricing

Instruction cost: \$695.00

Mandatory Sewing Machine Owner kit fee: \$25 (see below for details)

Note: the Buddies may also purchase one of the kits, but it is not required.

While each guild or workshop owner can set their own price for the workshop attendees, I do recommend discounting the price for a “Buddy” seat at one-quarter to one-third of the full price of the workshop.

Supplies

Participants should bring:

- A working cast iron sewing machine (see [example photos and models below](#))
 - Machines operated by treadle or mounted in a cabinet should be taken out of the cabinet for class. Please leave the cabinet at home, but portable cases and their bases are welcome!
 - Be sure to bring needle, 2 colors of thread (one for bobbin and one for the top), foot pedal/knee controller/hand crack, bobbin and bobbin case (if your machine has one)
 - To get the most from the class, the machine’s handwheel should turn freely without resistance. If the handwheel is stuck, sluggish, or the machine has significant rust on it, it may be outside the scope of this class to get running again. However, the machine can still be a learning experience and students will get tips for further work to be done at home to get it running.
 - If your machine has plastic covers, it’s not a fit for this class.

- If your machine is missing parts like needle plates, belts, or other pieces critical to the operation, it's not a fit for the class. If a student needs help purchasing missing parts to be able to participate, I can help source parts and bring them to the workshop if notified 30 days beforehand.
- Screwdrivers for their machine; vintage machines usually have slotted or flat head screws, so bring 2-3 different sizes of screwdrivers, from large to small.
- A large bath towel to lay their machine on; this will get dirty
- A bright flashlight or headlamp
- Scrap fabric for test stitching, and a small project for the open sew if their machine goes back together without issue
- Q-tips (a good handful or two depending on how dirty their machine)
- A roll of shop rags or sturdy paper towels
- A sense of adventure and fun
- Magnetic tray or other tray to keep screws and parts in during disassembly
- Optional but helpful:
 - Latex gloves to protect the skin of the hands
 - Extendable magnetic wand to help find screws that may drop to the floor
 - Additional light that sits on or mounts to the table to help see inside the machine
 - A small hammer
 - A helper to carry your machine in and out of class.

The mandatory class kit will include sewing machine oil, metal cleaning solution, and some specialty tools needed for class. Kit fee of \$25 is payable to the instructor in class.

Notes

- Non-participating students can sit in on the class or buddy up with a student with a machine for a reduced rate, but the number of non-participating students cannot exceed the number of sewing machines in the workshop.
- Because of the nature of vintage machines, students who are sensitive to musty smells and chemical cleaners may want to sit this workshop out.
- Students who struggle with hand strength or upper body joint pain may find it difficult to move the machine around to access all the areas needed. They may want to bring a buddy to class to help with the stubborn screws and hauling machines in and out.

Suitable Machines

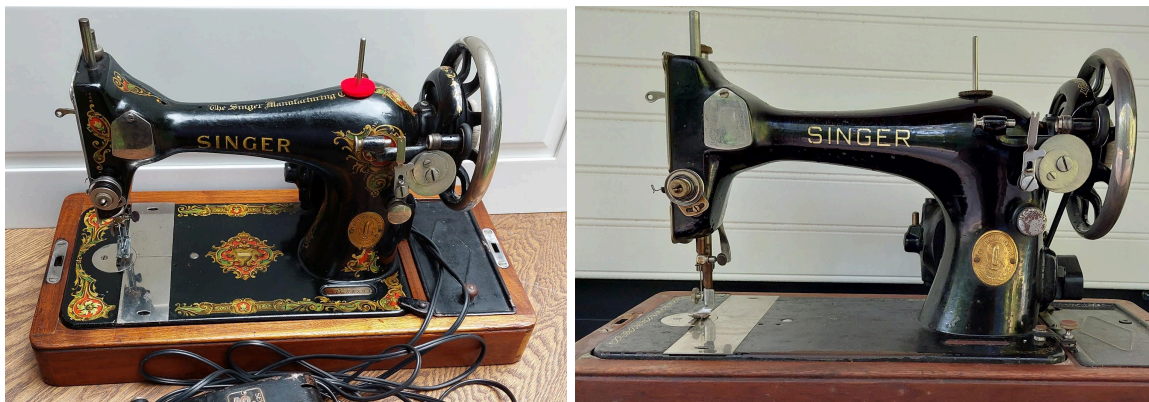
There were many manufacturers of sewing machines between 1860 and 1950, so your specific machine may not be shown here. If you are not sure if your machine is a good fit for the workshop,

please send a picture of your machine to hello@revivesewingmachine.com and reference the class workshop date and guild/organization name for help.

Singer 99 and 66



Singer 128, 28, 127, and 27



Singer 15 and 15 Clones

The clones produced in Japan usually have “De Luxe” or “Precision” as the brand name.



White or Florence Rotary Machines



Vintage Brother Machines

These may be manufactured under other brands like Atlas.

