

Q. Some threads don't seem to like my machine and others always are fine. It would be nice to know ahead if my machine will like a thread.

A. Bad news first. There is no way to know for sure if your machine will “like” a thread until you give it a try.

Here is the good news. Nearly every good quality thread, including metallic and monofilament will work in the Nolting. Good quality thread has consistent thickness, is made of high quality materials, with cotton made of long or extra-long staple fibers, and is free of slubs. Poor quality is inexpensive, varies in thickness, cotton is often quite liny, may have slubs or knots, and may be prone to breakage.

There are several keys to working successfully with threads:

- Always purchase very good quality thread designed (labeled) for machine and Longarm quilting.
- Since most thread issues are caused by the top tension being too tight which causes top thread breakage, decrease the bobbin tension, then adjust the top tension for a balanced stitch. The lower the bobbin tension within the operating range, the lower the top tension needs to be and the less stress on the top thread.
- Use a Towa Bobbin Gauge to adjust bobbin tension to the same number for consistent tension and results. L bobbin 100-125, M bobbin 200-225. Using the gauge removes guess work and frustration.
- Always set the bobbin tension first, then the top tension. It is the bobbin tension that determines the overall machine/thread tension.
- When adjusting the top tension (after adjusting the bobbin tension), tighten until the bobbin thread can be seen down in the needle hole. It should not be visible on the top of the quilt, but you should see the tip of the bobbin thread down in the needle hole. Back the top tension off just a smidge, but you should still see the bobbin thread.
- You can mix up bobbin and top thread, but if possible always use a bobbin thread the same or nearly the same color.
- Using thin batting, or cheap inconsistent thickness batting, makes adjusting the tension more difficult as there is very little space for the top and bottom thread to knot.
- Metallic and monofilament threads present additional challenges and may require omitting one or more of the holes in the three hole thread guide.
- Always test and adjust your tension before starting to stitch on the quilt and every time you change the bobbin.
- Be patient. Learning to adjust tension on a Longarm (any brand) is the biggest learning curve. Because there are a number of variables, tension adjustments must be made. It is important to become comfortable making them.