



LIVE YOUR PASSION

**What does it
take to become a
Sewing Machine
Operator?**



A sewing machine operator is a textile worker who sews fabric with an electronic sewing machine. A sewing machine operator threads the machine, which is a very intricate process on many machine models, adjusts the tension settings based on the type of thread being used, selects stitch settings and then gets down to sewing. Depending on the type of job, they assemble pieces of garments by matching patterns and dye lots and joining sections of garments or other articles into finished products on a piecework, or production basis. Some sewing machine operators do their work on machines identical or similar to those commonly used in domestic sewing projects. Others use larger, more powerful machines that are faster and able to handle thicker fabrics easily. Sewing machine operators operate, inspect, and repair sewing machines.

Skills and Knowledge

The field requires physical dexterity and a close eye for detail. Experience is the most valuable asset for a sewing machine operator. There is no substitute for it; even those who hold degrees in fashion design won't be able to sew well without practice and repetition. Good eyesight and small, thin fingers are ideal; those with larger, thicker fingers must exercise extra caution so that they don't get caught by the sewing needle. Patience is a virtue for a sewing machine operator; these professionals must also be able

to visualise a three-dimensional garment as it takes shape from a pile of flat pieces of fabric. Operators must be well-organised so pattern pieces don't get damaged or lost. Critical thinking skills are also helpful for determining alternative methods of production and increasing output.

Training

Sewing Machine Operator training includes both theoretical classes and practical classes and lots of practice on sewing machines. Key competencies trainees have to master include stitching and sewing fabrics and synthetic materials; work accurately with the sewing machines; perform handwork; identify quality defects; and perform improvements to avoid defects. Typically, training courses cover aspects such as threading, cutting, machine control, and garment design. After completion of training, trainees are expected to operate a sewing machine on their own in sewing garments. Many textile factories offer in-house 'on-the-job' training.

Working Conditions

Sewing machine operators who work for large clothing manufacturers often work in a huge warehouse environment, where the focus is on churning out garments as quickly as possible. Many sewing machine operators work in cramped conditions, hunched over their machine for hours at a time.

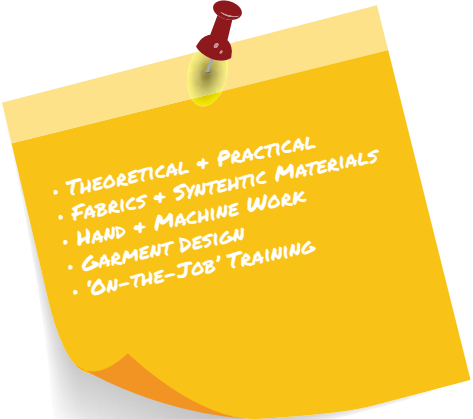
Good health and a strong back are helpful; those who need a bit of extra help in this area may be most comfortable in a lumbar support chair, which reduces pressure on the tailbone and lower spine. Sewing machines generate moderate noise, so conversation is impractical when they are running. Sewing machine operators must therefore be comfortable working in solitude; even if there is another person working close by.

Job Prospects

Most sewing machine operators work in the garment industry, although tough industrial sewing machines are also used to make boat sails, curtains and upholstery. Although many fashion couture companies employ hand sewers to do delicate beading and embroidery, most continue to keep a legion of sewing machine operators on their payroll because using the machine speeds things up dramatically. Some operators opt to work as private service providers, specialising in garment alterations and in the manufacturing of specific gowns and garments for weddings, fancy-dress parties and costumes. Others specialise in costumes for athletes that must be durable, comfortable, have an attractive appearance, and must also not interfere with the athlete's movements. Many factories categorise sewing operators, based on skill and experience.


You too can live your passion and become a Sewing Machine Operator. If you are creative, enjoy working with fabric and have a passion to make others look good, you are a good candidate.


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- FABRIC SEWING ON MACHINE
 - MATCH DYE LOTS
 - ASSEMBLE GARMENTS
 - BASIC MACHINE REPAIRS

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- THEORETICAL + PRACTICAL
 - FABRICS + SYNTHETIC MATERIALS
 - HAND + MACHINE WORK
 - GARMENT DESIGN
 - 'ON-THE-JOB' TRAINING

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- PHYSICAL DEXTERITY
 - CREATIVITY + VISUALISATION
 - BASIC MECHANICAL SKILLS
 - CRITICAL THINKING

That is what is beautiful about technical and vocational training. You can use your skill set to become a job creator, and not a job seeker.



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- CRAMPED CONDITIONS
 - MODERATE NOISE
 - HIGH PRESSURE ENVIRONMENT
 - PRECISION + FOCUS

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- STRONG DEMAND
 - DIVERSE SETTINGS
 - SPECIALISATION
 - SELF-EMPLOYMENT / CATERING