

HQ WEBINAR

# The Tension Tug-of-War

TENSION TIPS • BOBBIN TENSION • TOP TENSION • EASY-SET TENSION

Every quilter has experienced tension troubles. Proper tension will provide not only a nicer looking stitch but also a stronger one. Join us as we discuss tips to tame your tension and the various tools available to help you do it!

# Welcome to the Handi Quilter Education Webinar

October 8, 2015

## Tension Tug of War

**This Webinar is being recorded. You will find it on the Education tab at [HandiQuilter.com](http://HandiQuilter.com)**

**While you're waiting for the Webinar to begin, make sure your computer speakers are on, so you will be able to hear us.**

# Your presenters today are:

**Vicki Hoth**

*Handi Quilter*

*Education Coordinator*



**Marie Eldredge**

*Handi Quilter*

*Studio Educator Coordinator*



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# Tension Tug of War

A Proper tension setting provides:

1. a nice looking stitch
2. strong stitch
3. A balanced stitch



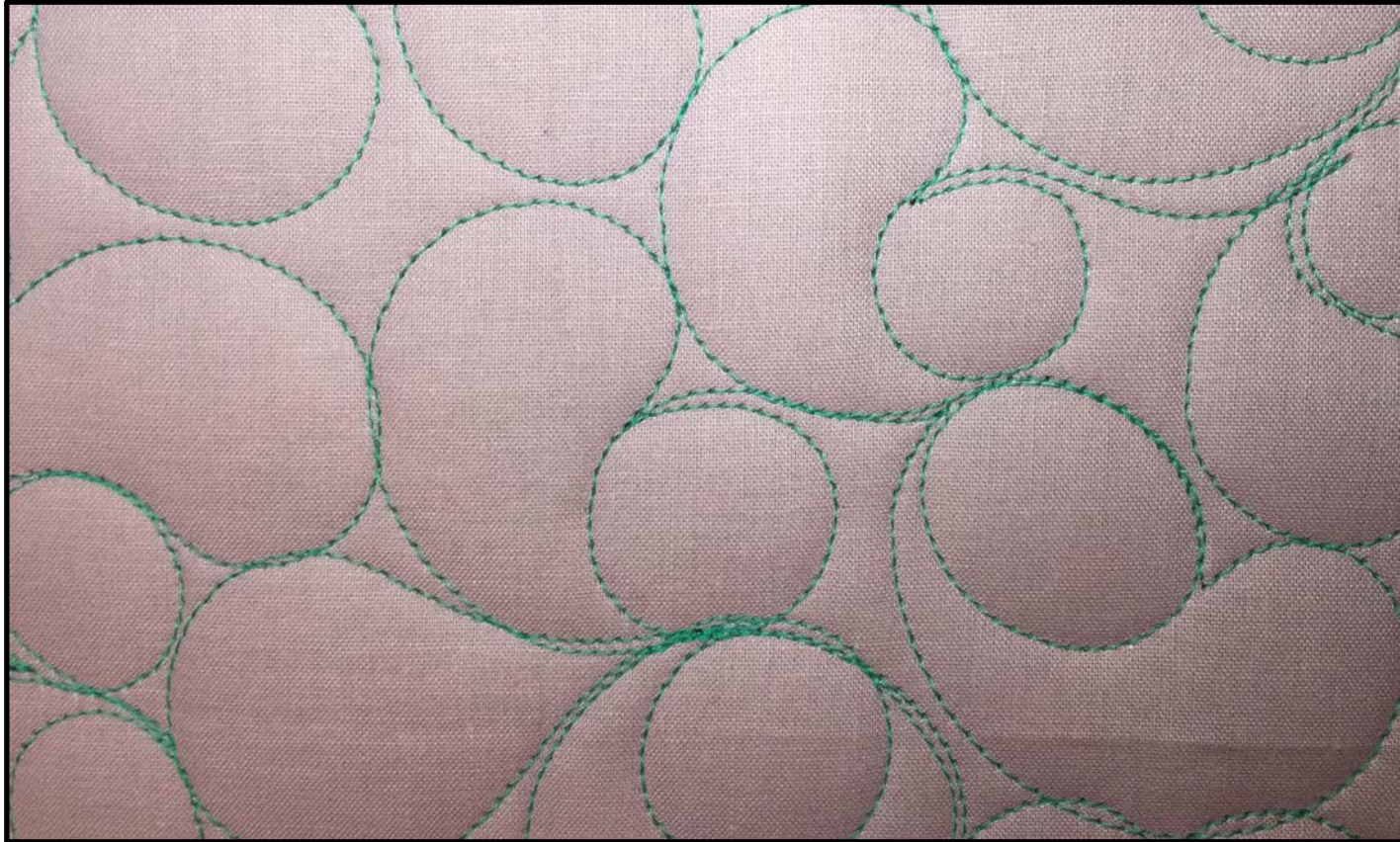
# Tension Tug of War

You can achieve that strong, balanced stitch on all Handi Quilter machines



# Tension Tug of War

And it will be beautiful!!!!



# Tension Tug of War

And you will be a happy quilter!





# Tension Tug of War

## What are the basic guidelines for tension?

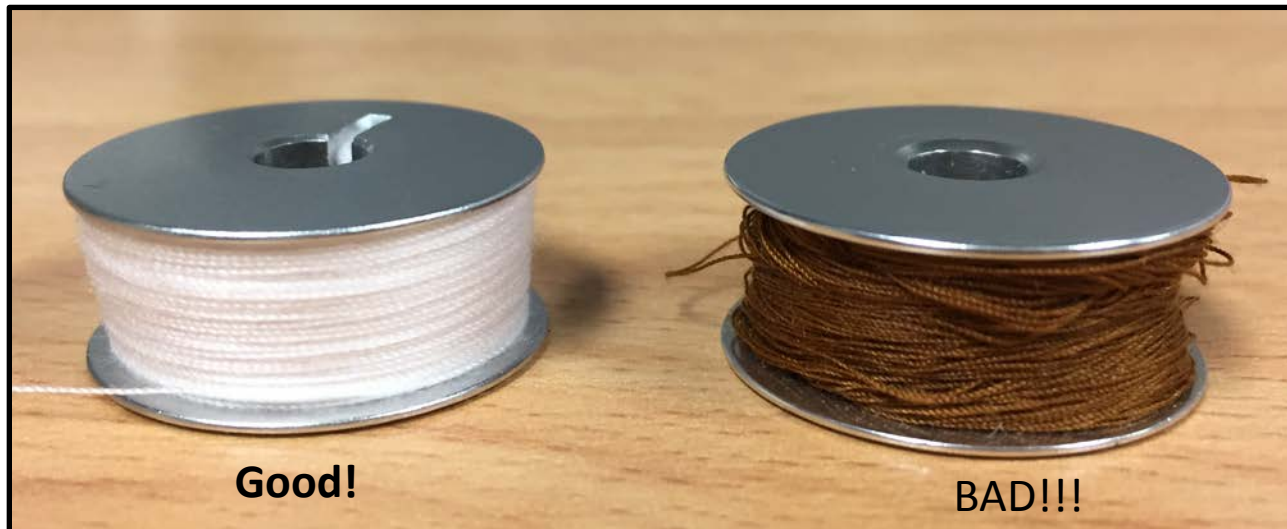
- ❖ Use the correct size needle for the thread choice on the quilt

NEEDLE SIZE	THREADS
12 (80)	Silk (100 wt.) 60 wt., monofilament, mylar, cotton, poly
14 (90)	Silk (100 wt.) 60 wt., monofilament, mylar, cotton, poly
16 (100)	60 wt., 50 wt., 40 wt., monofilament, mylar, metallic, cotton, poly
18 (110)	50 wt., 40 wt., 30 wt., metallic, cotton, poly
20 (120)	30 wt., 20 wt., 12 wt., cotton, poly

# Tension Tug of War

## What are the basic guidelines for tension?

- ❖ The bobbin must be wound consistently and evenly for good tension.



# Tension Tug of War

## What are the basic guidelines for tension?

- ❖ Clean your bobbin case with a lint brush and clean the tension spring with a pin or piece of heavy paper such as cardstock or business card



# Tension Tug of War

What are the basic guidelines for tension?

- ❖ Adjust the tension properly first! Bobbin tension is the foundation!



# Tension Tug of War

## What are the basic guidelines for tension?

- ❖ Place the bobbin in the bobbin case correctly!



# Tension Tug of War

## What are the basic guidelines for tension?

❖ Adjust the top tension for the thread used on the machine

- To tighten the top thread tension turn the knob clockwise
- To loosen the top thread tension turn the knob counterclockwise



# Tension Tug of War

## What are the basic guidelines for tension?

❖ Adjust the top tension for the thread used on the machine

- It will take a half turn or more before you see any change in the tension  
**Tip:** if your thumb is on the top of the knob, then a half turn should move your thumb to the bottom of the knob



# Tension Tug of War

## What are the basic guidelines for tension?

- ❖ Use high-quality thread. Avoid thread breaks by choosing the proper thread for your project.

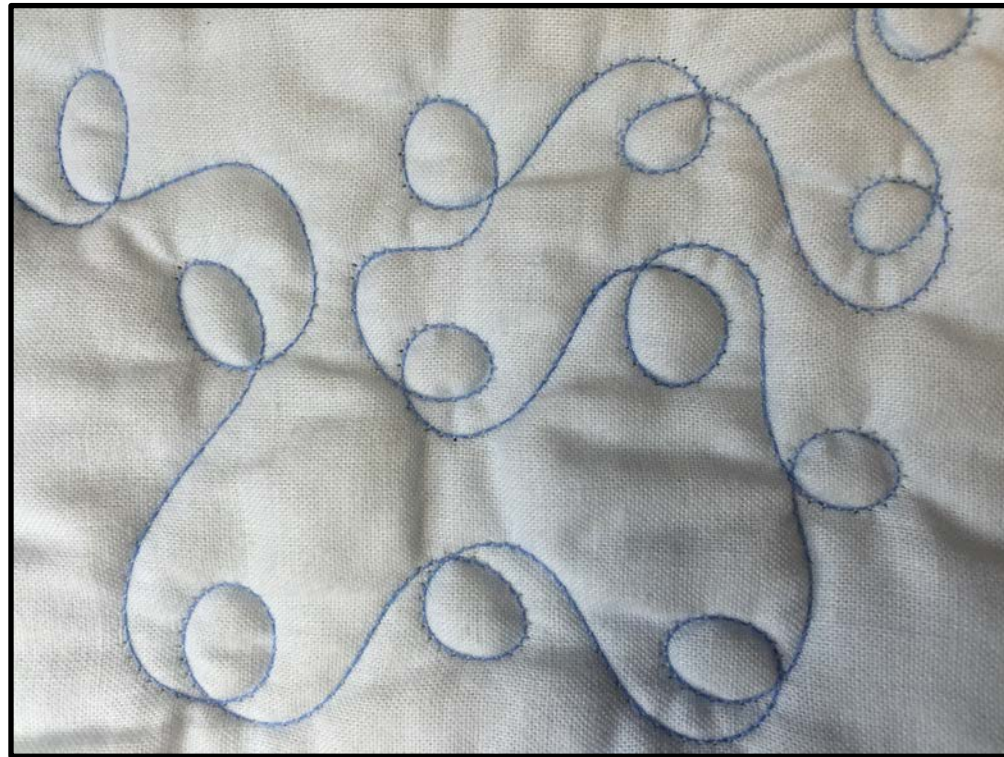




# Tension Tug of War

## What are the basic guidelines for tension?

- ❖ If both tensions are too tight, puckering, gathering or thread break will be seen.



# Tension Tug of War

## What are the basic guidelines for tension?

- ❖ If both threads are too loose or not flossed, the threads will look loose and undefined and may have eyelashes on the back.



# Tension Tug of War

## What are the basic guidelines for tension?

- ❖ For best results, match your top thread color to your bobbin thread color

Notice the dots of blue color coming through the fabric because the top thread is white and the bobbin thread is blue.



## Help! My needle broke.

- Needle not placed all the way into needle bar
- Hook out of timing
- Hook and needle bar out of timing
- Incorrect needle system for machine
- Needle struck ruler, pin, or other foreign object

## Help! My thread is shredding or breaking.

- Upper tension too tight
- Incorrect size needle for the thread
- Old thread or poor-quality thread
- Burr on hook
- Burr on needle
- Burr on needle bar thread guide
- Lint in thread guides or tension disks
- Needle in backwards
- If necessary: Rotate needle counterclockwise to 5:30

## Help! I have skipped stitches.

- Needle not facing forward
- Needle in backwards
- Needle is bent, has a burr or dull point
- Hook is damaged
- Poor-quality thread
- Tension is too tight
- Machine threaded improperly
- If necessary: Rotate needle clockwise to just past 6:30

## Troubleshooting tension issues:



### Top thread lays flat on the fabric

- Upper tension dial too tight
- Lint in upper discs
- Machine not threaded correctly
- Lint in bobbin tension spring
- Poorly wound bobbin
- Thread not in bobbin tension spring
- Bobbin tension not set correctly



### Bottom thread lays flat

- Upper thread tension is too loose
- Lint in bobbin tension spring
- Poorly wound bobbin
- Machine not threaded correctly
- Bobbin tension not set correctly



### Loops on bottom of quilt

- Thread is not flossed in top tension disks
- Top thread tension set too loose
- Machine not threaded correctly
- Burr on hook



### Fabric Puckering

- Top tension too tight
- Bottom tension too tight
- Bobbin not correct size for bobbin case
- Poorly wound bobbin
- Bobbin too full

## TENSION

### 1 Always adjust bobbin tension first!



Bobbin adjustments are minute, like ticks on a clock. Top tension adjustments can require full turns on the knob.

### 2 Stitch to check top tension

If top thread looks like this:



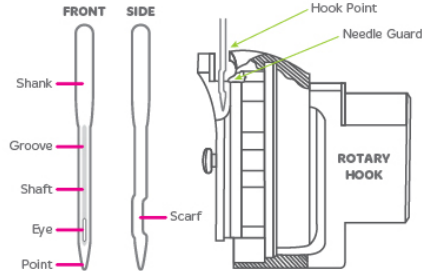
Top tension is too **TIGHT**.

If top thread looks like this:



Top tension is too **LOOSE**.

## NEEDLES



### STITCH FORMATION



## THREAD

NEEDLE SIZE	THREADS
12 (80)	Silk (100 wt.) 60 wt., monofilament, mylar, cotton, poly
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Tension is integral to successful longarm quilting!

### 1 ONLY USE HIGH-QUALITY THREAD

Avoid thread breaks by choosing the proper thread for your project.

### 2 CAREFULLY THREAD THE MACHINE

being sure to "floss" the thread between the tension discs

### 3 USE THE SAME COLOR THREAD

not necessarily the same type of thread, on the top spool and in the bobbin.

### 4 SET THE BOBBIN TENSION FIRST

then adjust top tension. Do a drop test with the bobbin in the bobbin case - <http://youtu.be/Ooz8Edtoe2E>

### 5 TEST YOUR TENSION

by quilting on piece of scrap fabric placed on top of extra batting and backing.

### Adjusting the Tension

If top thread looks like this: If top thread looks like this:



Top tension is too **TIGHT**.



Top tension is too **LOOSE**.

### Remember!

When adjusting bobbin tension, use minute adjustments, like the ticks of a clock.

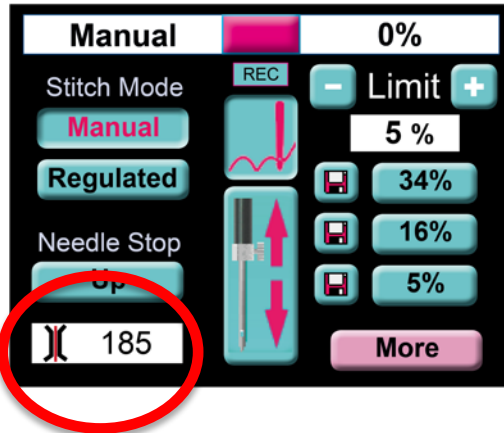
When adjusting top tension, start by using a full turn of the knob. Fine tune as-needed.

**Hint:** If you have a Handi Quilter machine with either Easy-Set Tension or Easy-Touch Tension, make a note of the tension numeric value to make it easy to set top tension when using that thread again in the future.

# Tension Tug of War

November 2014 Easy-Set Tension became available on all **NEW** Sweet Sixteen, HQ Avante, and HQ Fusion machines

HQ Sweet Sixteen



HQ Avante



HQ Fusion



# Tension Tug of War

**New  
Exciting  
Feature**

Available November 1, 2015



# Tension Tug of War

The Handi Quilter Easy-Set Tension™ Kit simplifies setting your machine's top thread tension. This kit enables you to return to your favorite thread's tension settings quickly and accurately with each thread change. The easy-to-read LCD display shows you the current setting of the tension assembly.

Easy-Set Tension Kit allows any HQ machine owner (except the HQ Infinity\* owner) to add the ease and convenience of our new Easy-Set Tension.





# **Thanks for joining us today. Can you remember all of this?**

**You don't have to.  
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**The next Education Webinar will be offered  
November 12, 2015**

**1:00 p.m. Eastern Time  
12:00 p.m. Central Time  
11:00 a.m. Mountain Time  
10:00 a.m. Pacific Time**