



# 10 Questions To Ask Before Buying a Longarm Quilting Machine System

## 1. Does the machine have stitch regulation?

Survey results show that stitch regulation is the #1 requested feature on a longarm quilting machine. Stitch regulation provides even-length stitches at a variety of quilting speeds. There are different modes of stitch regulation. In one mode, the machine stops stitching when the quilter stops moving the machine. The other mode allows the needle to continue stitching at a chosen minimum speed, allowing for precision positioning of stitches at corners and along rulers. A machine that offers both modes of stitch regulation offers the most versatility.

## 2. Does the machine company provide an authorized Rep who will provide personal training and is customer service readily available?

Hands-on training should be included by trained dealers or sales representatives when you purchase. A trusted warranty for mechanical, electrical, and the outer casing provides you a guarantee of quality craftsmanship when investing in a quilting machine. Reputable companies will provide you convenient customer support services.

## 3. How much quilting space is available?

The throat space and quilting space are not equal. Be sure to ask about available **quilting space**. When considering a quilting machine, remember bigger is not always better. The best quilting space is always a comfortable distance for both sight and reach. The recommended distance is between a 12"-14" "stretch" for comfortably-controlled quilting.

## 4. Does the frame system require constant adjustment as you roll your quilt?

Making adjustments to your quilting surface, by either raising or lowering your quilt frame to provide a flat surface on which to stitch, each time you roll your quilt, becomes very inconvenient and extremely time consuming.

## 5. Is the machine upgradeable with integrated computerized quilting capability?

Machines that are built with the ability to upgrade when new technology or components are available provide you a better value as you will not need to purchase a new machine. Many machines can be retrofitted for computerized quilting. **Integrated computerized quilting functions** provide you better control, increased functionality and more quilting options.

## 6. Are there dangerous moving parts mounted on the outside of the machine?

Machines with exposed belts can be a significant safety hazard. Motors mounted inside the machine are safer and quieter than outside mounts.

## 7. Does the machine have integrated functions as well as additional add-on accessories such as laser light, electronic micro handles, additional lighting?

Lasers provide a convenient way to trace pantographs and patterns. Make sure that the laser is not battery operated and can work from the front and back of the machine. Micro Handles provide you with a way to have additional stability and control when doing detailed work. Adjustable lighting and electronic fingertip controls are important features.

## 8. How much does the machine weigh? Does the machine run smoothly at both high and low speeds?

A machine that is too heavy will cause stress on back, neck and arms. Test any machine for 5 minutes or more to get a sense of what several hours of quilting might feel like. A comfortable weight is usually 65 pounds or less. Too much vibration can cause excessive noise and poor stitch quality.

## 9. Does the machine have a hopping foot and a large bobbin?

A quilting hopping foot "hops," eliminating dragging and unwanted folds in the fabric. This foot should be round with 1/4" equal distance between the needle and the outside of the foot. The hopping foot should be thick enough to accommodate 1/4" thick acrylic templates and rulers. Rulers help quilters perform precision quilting, including stitching in the ditch or echo quilting around pieced seams.

M Class bobbins are the largest in the commercial quilting industry and hold nearly 3X as much thread as an L Class bobbin (depending on the thread weight). Large bobbins save time, while maintaining superior stitch quality.

## 10. Where is the machine manufactured and is there a trusted warranty?

If it's important to you that your quilting machine is manufactured in the USA, then ask the question. A trusted warranty for mechanical, electrical, and the outer casing provides you a guarantee of quality craftsmanship when investing in a quilting machine. Reputable companies will provide and stand behind their written warranty and will provide you convenient customer support services.

# Checklist of Questions

HQ<sup>18</sup> Avanté®

HQ<sup>24</sup> Fusion®

Competitor

Available quilting space	15" Depth/8" Height	21" Depth/9.5" Height	
Stitches-per-inch range	4 to 18	4 to 24	
Stitches-per-minute (maximum)	up to 1800	up to 2200	
Stitch-regulator modes	Precision & Cruise/Standard	Precision & Cruise/Standard	
Variable speed control	Standard	Standard	
Auto-needle positioning (Needle up/down)	Standard	Standard	
Integrated laser light (front and rear mount)	Standard	Standard	
Start-up accessory kit (bobbins, needles, thread, leaders, oil, brush, etc...)	Standard	Standard	
Training and quilting educational DVD	Standard (120 mins)	Standard (120 mins)	
Quilter's hopping foot	Standard	Standard	
Simple tension adjustments	Standard	Standard	
Full, half- and walking-stitch selections	Standard	Standard	
Bobbin size	Large M Class	Large M Class	
Use either metal bobbins or pre-wound bobbins	YES	YES	
Capable of computerized quilting	YES	YES	
MP3 player	NO	YES	
Manufactured/Assembled	USA	USA	
Machine weight (with handles)	54 lbs	65 lbs	
Solid-cast machine?	YES	YES	
Stretch or cut machine?	NO	NO	
Internal belts and motors?	YES	YES	
Quilt from front and rear of machine with INCLUDED front/rear handles?	YES	YES	
Vibration at high and low speeds	NO	NO	

Integrated, adjustable lights	Standard - LEDs	Standard - Adjustable LEDs	
Ultraviolet lights ("Black" lights)	Available	YES	
Lights simple to replace	YES	YES	

Basic machine maintenance	Self-lubricating bearings	Self-lubricating bearings	
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Dedicated customer service/support	YES	YES	
Dedicated technical support	YES	YES	
Dedicated educators on staff for support	YES	YES	
Online support and training and social networks	YES	YES	
Interactive website (education, tips, videos, gallery, products)	YES	YES	
Trained/certified local HQ retail locations	300+ locations	300+ locations	
Rigid quality checks during manufacturing	7 major tests (5 hrs)	7 major tests (5 hrs)	
Machine passes an in-depth quilting test by a quilter prior to shipping	YES	YES	
Initial training and set-up	Local Reps	Local Reps	
Trusted manufacturer's warranty	YES	YES	
Casting defects	10 Years	10 Years	
Mechanical	2 Years	2 Years	
Electrical	1 Year	1 Year	

## Frame System

4-roller frame system with NO adjustments needed after loading	Standard	Standard	
Frame and table options (4-12 feet)	Various Options	Standard	
Smooth aluminum/plastic track system with V-track wheels	Available	Standard	
Heavy-duty marked leaders are included	Standard	Standard	
Adjustability in height and length	Standard	Standard	
ALL accessories are included (poles/track/rollers)	YES Standard	YES Standard	

Delivery method	UPS	UPS or Freight	
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Price			
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