

# 10 Reasons To Have A Sewing Machine

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If you visit any department store or second hand store, you are bound to find more clothes than you know what to do with. No matter where you look, it seems like there is no end to cheap clothes that can be used for every occasion.

As a result, most people see sewing as a "hobby" or a skill that they don't really need to learn. But many clothes will vanish very quickly after a disaster, so you might have a reason to buy a sewing machine and learn how to use it.

Here are ten things that may just change your mind on this matter.

## What Kind of Sewing Machine is Best?

If you sew on a regular basis, choose a good quality, heavy duty sewing machine. Personally, I have always preferred Singer over any other brand. Modern sewing machines can be programmed for embroidery as well as many other complicated tasks. Do your research to make sure that the internal parts are sturdy enough to meet the challenges of stiff, bulky, or very thick material.

There are also many vintage models that still have metal gears and motors powerful enough to last for decades more. Just make sure that you have a finger guard installed if the machine doesn't already have one.

It can be very dangerous if you don't pay attention to where your fingers are in relation to the needle. As dainty as the sewing machine and needle may look, the motor is strong enough to push the needle right through your finger.

In addition, sewing by machine can also be a very hypnotic task. It seems simple enough to keep your fingers away from the needle, but it is all too easy to lose track and wind up with a serious, and very painful injury.

As a prepper, think about what you will do with devices that require electricity. It does not matter whether this loss comes from an EMP or a hurricane. The fact remains that modern sewing machines require electricity in order to run. If you are not confident in generators or DIY power generation methods, then look for foot or treadle powered sewing machines.

Today, you can choose from antique machines as well as newer ones. For example, the Janome 712T does not have a motor and runs without electricity. It is more expensive than motor powered machines, however the expense may be worth it if you want to be sure you can sew regardless of the electricity situation.



## As Clothes Wear Out You can Remake Them

Not so long ago, you could buy a sweater or pair of jeans and expect them to last for several years. Today, even more “rugged” garments wear out in just a year or two.

Since you will not find new garments in the post collapse world, you will have to find some way to make your clothes last a bit longer. In this case, you can take apart old clothes and use a sewing machine to piece together parts that are in better condition.

Here are some things you can do with a sewing machine that are difficult, if not impossible to do by hand:

- Many fabrics today have a good bit of stretch to them. When these fabrics are sewn by machine, it is much easier to create sturdy overcast stitches (a stitch commonly used to prevent fabric from raveling) that will not come apart. Even though it is possible to make overcast stitches by hand, it is hard to control the spacing and tightness of each stitch when dealing with stretchy fabric. No matter whether you are trying to sew together pieces of jersey knit, spandex, or some other stretchy material, a sewing machine makes the job much easier.
- When people make garments with elastic in them, they usually fold the fabric over and then sew the seam so that a column is left to draw the elastic through. If you look carefully at commercial garments, you will often see the elastic is sewn directly onto the fabric. Since there is no margin or extra material to work, it will be impossible make a column for the elastic to go through. This, in turn, means that you would have to try and resew the elastic onto the garment by hand if you did not have a sewing machine. I can tell you from personal experience that there is no pin in the world and no elastic stretching device that makes this a comfortable, let alone feasible task. On the other hand, when you have a sewing machine, the weight of the foot and the tractors beneath the fabric easily keep the fabric in position while you manually pull the elastic so that it fits properly on the material.

## Easier to Darn Socks and Other Items That Develop Holes

Have you ever just tossed a sock in the trash because it developed a hole? If so, then you may also be very unhappy with the fact that modern socks really do seem to wear out a lot faster than ones made just a few years ago. While it is not especially difficult to darn sock holes by hand, this task is also much easier to accomplish with a sewing machine.

You will also find that it is much easier to use a sewing machine to patch small holes in other kinds of garments without using additional material to make a patch.

When you use a sewing machine to stitch across a flat piece of fabric, you don't worry about the fabric bunching up or becoming uneven. If you have never done embroidery on thinner fabrics by hand, you won't realize just how hard it can be to repair holes on garments without a sewing machine.

Even if you try to put the fabric in an embroidery hoop to keep it from bunching, you will have a hard time getting good quality stitches that don't rub at your skin when wearing the garment.

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## Sew Heavier and Coarser Fabrics

Before sewing machines were invented, our ancestors routinely sewed together furs and other thick, heavy materials. If you have denim garments, or clothes made from other heavy, coarse materials, you will find it very hard to make, let alone repair them without a sewing machine.

You will face problems associated with manufacturers that compensate for using less fabric by using stronger stitches or patterns of stitches to make a durable garment.

During crisis, you'll face constraints on the nature and amount of fabric that you have on hand to work with. If you'll be using old garments as a pattern for new ones, then you can also use smaller margins and come out with a functional garment.

If you try to duplicate these stitches by hand, you will find that it takes more fabric. Since sewing machines also use two threads (one under the fabric from the bobbin, and one from above on thread spool), the stitches will always be stronger and tighter than ones done by people who have limited experience with sewing.

Many people feel they can sew heavy fabrics by hand as long as they take their time and focus on making even stitches. In most cases, it will take 2 – 3 times longer by hand, and leave you with both eye and hand strain.

You won't have time to spare in a survival situation. If you don't have time to mend clothes or make them by hand now, don't expect to do it then. A sewing machine would solve this issue and leave time for other tasks.

## Make Money as a Seamstress or Tailor

There is no question that people are becoming more frustrated with commercial garments that do not fit right (since when does a petite woman of 5'3" have an inseam of 32 - 36"?!), look hideous, cost a lot, and do not last for very long.

The cost of fabric, patterns, and notions aren't as cheap as they used to be, but many people are taking up sewing in order to have nicer clothes. If you become proficient as a seamstress, you can make money now as well as after a social collapse.

## Custom Design Clothes that Meet Your Needs

When you go on a shopping expedition for prepper clothes, you are bound to be overwhelmed by all the coveralls, heavy jackets, Thinsulate gear, and camouflage prints. What happens when you are in an actual disaster and find out that you need to move to a warmer climate, or that most of the clothes in your stockpile won't meet your needs?

A sewing machine can be used to make any kind of garment, [including camouflage](#). Store away patterns in different sizes as well as a range of fabrics to meet all your needs, rather than completed clothes. From waterproof fabrics to denim and fleece, it is easy enough to add these items to your stockpile and then use them as needed.

Being able to design clothes is also very important if you have children or expect to have a baby after a major crisis. Given how many growth spurts children go through, you'll need clothes that can be let out at the seams, or adjusted as needed.

When you buy modern clothes, there is no extra fabric let alone a way to modify larger garments for smaller sizes. And if you look at modern patterns, you will find many places where you can cut the pieces a bit larger, and then simply leave more fabric at the seams.

As a prepper, you know that your body is going to change a lot after a major crisis occurs. If food is scarce, or you get very sick and lose a lot of weight; or you may wind up putting on a lot of water or edema.

Either way, all those clothes you stocked away may not fit properly, and worse yet, may restrict your movement. It is very important to have a sewing machine and fabric on hand so that you can make new clothes that fit properly.

## Make Blankets and Quilts for Many Purposes

Do you have blankets and quilts hanging around that have been part of your life for decades? If so, then you may not give much thought to the availability of these items during crisis. Both novice and advanced preppers have been known to only keep a foil emergency blanket in their bug out bag.

But what happens when disaster strikes, you are on the road, and need something a bit warmer and sturdier? Even if you can find fabric and some kind of filler to make the blanket warmer, it can take days or even weeks to sew a quilt or blanket by hand.

In most cases, however, you can sew the exact same blanket or quilt using a sewing machine in just a few hours. You can use anything from worn clothes to fabric set aside in your stockpile to make blankets and quilts with ease using a sewing machine.

Here are just a few situations where you might wind up needing more blankets than you have on hand:

- If you are trying to shelter animals that no longer have a building to live in. Blanket can offer warmth and comfort to stressed animal. They can also be used to temporarily restrain the movement of animals that need medical care, or for other reasons.
- As a temporary shelter when there are no materials available for a tent.
- To cover supplies or anything else that needs to be protected from dirt and dust.
- All the blankets in your stockpile were stolen, burned in a fire, or ruined in a flood involving municipal sewage or other contaminants. At the very least, if you had a few clothes or some fabric that escaped the destruction, you can still sew them into blankets or quilts with a sewing machine.

## Get More Out of any Fabric You Come Across

Surviving a social collapse is going to involve a lot of innovative thinking and action. Regardless of how much you have in your stockpile, or how well run your homestead is, just about anything can come out of the blue and send you into a tailspin.

Once you are in the situation, the things you underestimated are apt to stick out like sore thumbs and hurt just as badly. In this case, not having a sewing machine can make it difficult or impossible to make use of any fabric that may be available.

Consider a situation where you are moving through an area with very little vegetation. You have a sewing machine with you and a portable power system that can be used to run the motor. As you pass through an abandoned junk pile, you find a stack of clothes that cannot be worn; but not the rope that you so desperately need.

To resolve this situation, all you have to do is cut the garments up into strips and sew them together into longer pieces to make a rope. When you have a sewing machine, you can make use of pieces that are only a few inches long and about 2 inches wide.

If you tried this same task with hand sewing, you would not be able to consistently make strong enough seams in a reasonable period of time.

## Make Or Repair Furniture Covers

Do you have an old couch or recliner that either needs to be thrown out or reupholstered? As trivial as this problem may seem when compared to others, it will only get worse after society collapses.

In particular, if you are bugging in, there is a chance that floods or other disasters may ruin your furniture to the point where you can no longer use it. For example, if you have a couch, the cushions and any other soft parts will have to be discarded.

Rather than throw the entire piece of furniture out, you can at least try to salvage the wood or metal frame that supported all the soft parts. Once the frame is repaired and safe to use, just about any fabric and soft stuffing can be used to "reupholster" the furniture. If you have a sewing machine, you can also sew much heavier fabrics or layers of fabric in order to make something more durable.

Similar to many other things, there will be a time in the post crisis world when people will do as much as they can to make pre-existing items last for as long as possible.

This, in turn, means that you can barter or trade your furniture repair skills for other things that you might need. As time goes on, you can also shift your furniture repair trade to actively making furniture from raw materials that others begin putting together in larger quantities.

## Build Shelter Covers and Carrying Aides

One of the worst things you can do as a prepper is think that bugging in means you will have shelter and that you won't need to bug out for some reason or other. It is very important to understand that a crisis can come from where you least expect in.

For example, while the vast majority of preppers focus on problems that will affect the entire society, something may come along that affects only you or your family. This may include job loss, illness, or the sudden passing of a family member that enabled you to have shelter and security.

Even if you do a minimal amount of research on homeless people, you will find that it became impossible for them to afford shelter and the basics of life. No matter whether these people suffer from illness, addiction, or just plain bad luck, the fact remains they were not prepared for personal financial collapse.

Given the angst in our society these days against our incoming president, sabotage by those who dissent is entirely possible. Under these circumstances, you may find that one disaster after another will arise that leaves you without shelter.

Let me be clear in saying that a sewing machine won't solve all your problems. However, you can use it to your advantage while you still have some assets to work with.

You can take old garments and sew them into blankets, carrying aides, and anything else that will make it easier for you to travel. If you can find a safe place to store the machine, then you may also be able to make some money with it and get back on your feet.

There is also no question that many homeless people today live in cars and trucks. While this may not seem like a good place to have a sewing machine, you can still use it to make shelters outside of the vehicle. If society does collapse further because of internal or external pressures, you will still have a viable trade and an important tool to work with.

## Make Toys and Other Items for Children

When I was a little girl, the battery powered toy craze was just getting started. I remember my parents being unhappy about all the "plastic battery powered junk" that cost a lot and didn't seem to last.



To this day, some of my fondest memories are of my mother sewing little stuffed toys for me.

From iron on appliques to furry teddy bears, I spent hours watching these creations unfold on my mother's sewing machine.

Later on, we did these projects together and had far more quality time than we would have had if she just bought me a bunch of plastic toys.

During illness or great distress, it is normal to look back on safer and more peaceful times. These days, it often seems like our children will have no such peaceful times to look back on. Even if they do remember their childhood, it is likely to be filled with violent video games, nonstop social pressure, and all sorts of other worries.

Sewing toys with your children is a simple, inexpensive way to give them, and you, peaceful times to look back on. While that may not seem important right now, just think back to the times when you were in crisis and what memories like this meant to in terms of helping you get through the situation.

Making toys for children isn't just something that works well in a time of social collapse. It is something you can start doing now that will build bonds and give you and your children a chance to enjoy time together. Building custom toys can also give you a chance to innovate and perhaps come up with something marketable that other children might like to have. Perhaps off topic, but never doubt the possibility that you can make a fortune with a sewing machine and a good idea for a toy. Anyone that remembers the Cabbage Patch Doll craze can certainly relate to the fact that sewn toys can easily become very popular in a short period of time.

As you will recall, the Cabbage Patch Kids were invented by Martha Nelson Thomas, a woman who learned quilting from her mother. Just remember, if you do come up with something that becomes popular, you will need to copyright patent, and trademark the design so that no one else can steal it and profit from theft of the design.

In the arena of prepping, there is always a sense that time is limited. When you don't know what will happen, or what challenges must be overcome, it is very tempting to cut corners. For example, when it comes to clothes and other fabric based items, you will more than likely buy what you need or hope that you can make do with what you have.

Even though sewing by machine is often relegated to a "craft" or a "hobby" it is a vital survival skill that you may wind up needing. Today, you can increase the chances of surviving long after a major catastrophe by learning how to use a sewing machine and having one in your stockpile.



## 10 Things Cowboys Carried With Them In The Wild West To Survive

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