

PRODUCT DEMO

SEWING MACHINE FOR BOATERS

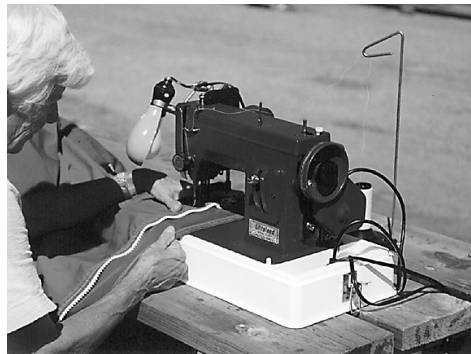
Sewing multiple layers of heavy-duty canvas demands more than a home sewing machine. Sailrite's LS-1 works as well as a commercial machine, is more compact and affordable.

By Vicki de Kleer

Finding a small, sturdy sewing machine that can handle up to nine layers of sailcloth without balking or breaking is not easy. Most, if not all, domestic machines are just not up to the task, and commercial machines are much too big and too expensive.

Sailrite's new LS-1 Ultrafeed Walking Foot machine measures without the case just 41cm x 26cm x 20cm (16" x 10" x 8") but weighs a husky 19kg (42lb). This machine means business. The significant difference between this and the average domestic model is, as the name implies, the walking foot: the upper presser foot is toothed and synchronized to move in step with the teeth on the lower plate. This sandwiches the fabric between the two and pulls it under the needle as fast as you want to run the machine. Because of cloth thickness, especially with multiple layers, it's impossible to hold layers together with pins. But this isn't necessary anyway. Just precrease seams or folds (use scissors or a ruler) then feed while the pressure of the walking foot holds the fabric in place as it's stitched.

This is a straight-stitch model;



Sailrite all-metal LS-1 Ultrafeed: "More like a piece of ultra-duty farm machinery than a light-duty domestic Singer." Thread cone and stand shown on right, Baby Lock light on left.

stitch length goes up to 6mm (1/4"). A zigzag is available but its advantage is in time saved — sewing straight requires that each seam is stitched twice but the machine is simpler and less expensive. The lever to set forward, reverse and stitch length compares to the gear lever on a small diesel. Designed for heavy and hard use, it must be maintained by the owner. The instruction manual is detailed and well illustrated — there are photographs pinpointing 28 places to be oiled on a regular basis. This looks like a major undertaking, but in fact is easy and quick to do.

There are several optional attachments. An excellent one is the Baby Lock light on a short double high arm which puts light exactly where you need it most. Another option is the Monster II Balance Wheel conversion kit that provides hand operation when

away from an AC power source. Note: the 1.5amp motor will run off a 250-watt inverter.

My first project was a sailbag followed by a sailcover. Initially the seams were not particularly straight, what with the walking presser foot grabbing and pulling the material, a long stitch and not being use to the foot pedal, I wondered who was in charge! But once use to it, it's just superb.

If you need a machine that is designed to handle heavy fabrics (sailcloth, upholstery, canvas, leather, cover fabrics, etc.) for do-it-yourself repairs or new projects, this is the answer. Included in the price of US\$499 is a plastic carrying case, thread and thread stand, needles, bobbins, machine oil, instruction book and two year warranty. Technical support line (800/348-2769), ordering and delivery were all excellent. Sailrite also supplies sail kits, canvas, hardware, tools and supplies.