

REVIEW OF THE RELIABLE DIGITAL VELOCITY V100 HOME IRONING SYSTEM
Cecelia Podolak, November 2009

I've recently had the opportunity to use the new Digital Velocity V100 Home Ironing System and it looks like it's going to be "the iron" for serious home sewers. Unlike other standard steam irons on the market, this is a high-tech iron with a digital display screen on the handle. In addition to a built-in boiler, two steam positions, four temperature settings, and an automatic temperature shut-off (which you may by-pass), this iron has an Eco-Intelligent feature which also shuts off the steam after 3 seconds if the iron is not moved. I feel it should be called a "Smart" iron in that it is the first iron that I have used that follows the basic premise and the secret of professional pressing: get moisture into the fabric to set creases or remove wrinkles and then let the heat of the iron dry the fabric before it is moved.

TEMPERATURE/STEAM & THEIR RELATIONSHIP TO FABRIC

One of the problems that home sewers have in pressing is that they often get too much moisture in their fabrics. This is due to the continuous steam from the irons; the fabric never has a chance to begin drying (or "set") unless the steam is manually switched to off. The result is often an un-pressed look because the fabric has absorbed the moisture but has reverted back to its un-pressed state as it air dries—especially wool.

The "Smart" iron has been programmed so that it will steam for 3 seconds when it is placed flat and held in one position on the fabric. It then automatically stops producing steam and will not resume steaming until the iron is moved. This allows the fabric to absorb the moisture and then begin drying with the heat of the iron. You may still need to turn the steam completely off to thoroughly dry certain fabrics but the iron has already done some of the drying.

The iron produces steam at any temperature setting because there are two heating elements, one 1800 watt element for the built in boiler and another for the sole plate. The water in the boiler heats quickly and independently of the sole plate. Once the fabric temperature is reached and the steam button is turned on, there is a ready supply of steam.

There are two levels of steam and four temperature settings: medium steam is suggested for the two lower temperature ranges (recommended for synthetics, wools, and silks); maximum steam is used for the two higher temperature ranges necessary to press cottons and linens. Most synthetic fabrics absorb little or no moisture and therefore don't require high steam. Wool needs a medium amount of steam as it absorbs and retains a high degree of moisture but the fabric needs to be dried out to retain its pressed look. Therefore, medium amounts of steam are suitable for both of these temperature ranges.

Cottons and linens, pressed at the two highest temperature settings, require the most moisture in order to set creases and remove wrinkles. Therefore, the maximum steam setting is best for these fabrics. The higher heat will also be needed to dry the fabrics.

In addition, the "smart" iron will not spit or drip water on your fabric because of its two heating elements. Dripping and spitting often occur on standard steam irons because the heating element in the sole plate requires a mid- to high-temperature range so the water can be converted to steam when it hits the sole plate. If the sole plate is not hot enough to convert the water to steam, the iron will dribble or spit water. The Digital Velocity V100 is the first home iron system to have the Wool Mark Seal of Approval due to its drip less feature—the water is converted to steam in the boiler so does not rely on the temperature of the sole plate. Not only is the drip less feature good for wools but it's fantastic for silk fabrics as many of them water spot and can be ruined quite easily.

OTHER FEATURES

If an iron has good weight, it will speed up your pressing and you will have to exert less pressure on the fabric. This iron is weighty and yet I find it to be quite manageable. The weight may take some getting used to if you haven't used a heavier iron but the handle is easy to grip and the iron will soon become a natural extension of your arm and hand.

An added safety feature is that the iron will shut off completely after being left for 8 minutes without being moved. Since serious home sewers want an iron that is always hot, there is an option to over-ride the 8-minute shut-off and allow

the temperature to remain constant.

The steam on/off button also allows you to use the iron in a dry mode. This is a feature I especially like as I will first steam fabrics and then switch to a dry iron to get the fabric completely dry. This may not always be necessary with the 3 second steam shut-off feature. I also prefer to set the iron flat, rather than on its heel, when I am pressing. Keeping the iron in this horizontal position allows you to access the heavier iron quickly and efficiently with less strain on the wrist and forearm. You must remember to use an iron rest. If you forget to turn the steam setting off, the iron will steam for 3 seconds more before it shuts off and may cause condensation on the iron rest. If you prefer to rest the iron in an upright position, the iron does grip the ironing board securely because of well-positioned rubber ledges on the bottom of the iron.

OPERATING THE IRON

As noted earlier, you need to adapt a high tech mind set when first using the iron as there is a digital display for the iron settings rather than traditional temperature and steam dials. I found that the digital display initially raised the learning curve for the use of this iron. However, the display is conveniently located at the front end of the handle and once you understand the icons (symbols) and buttons, the operation of the iron becomes second nature.

I highly recommend reading and studying the instruction manual thoroughly before beginning to use the iron. Coordinate the text with the iron illustrations and familiarize yourself with the icons and what they represent. One dot indicates the lowest heat setting for synthetics, two dots for wool, three dots for cotton and the word MAX for linen, which gives the highest heat setting. The one puff of steam icon gives a medium amount of steam while two puffs sets the iron for maximum steam. The iron will steam on any temperature setting but it is recommended that you use medium steam for one and two dots and maximum steam for the two higher temperature settings.

STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE TO USE THE IRON

1. Fill the iron with the maximum amount of water—it holds 1.8 cups. It is

suggested that you use either distilled, softened, filtered, or tap water, if soft enough.

2. Plug the cord into the electrical outlet. The digital display will show the vertical thermometer icon flashing in the upper left corner with one dot next to it to indicate the low temperature setting. When the flashing stops, the temperature has been reached. To change this setting, press the power on/off button indicated by the thermometer icon in the lower left corner of the display. Two dots will appear next to the flashing thermometer at the upper edge of the display. You must always wait until the flashing stops to change to another temperature setting..

3. Use the steam volume selector button in the lower right corner to set the amount of steam wanted. The one puff of steam symbol for medium steam is automatically displayed and can be changed to maximum steam by pressing the steam selector volume button. This changes the icon to two puffs of steam.

4. Push the steam on/off button, located between the power on/off thermometer and puff of steam icons, to turn on the flow of steam. When the button is pushed again, you turn off the flow of steam and the iron operates as a dry iron.

The iron can also be held vertically to steam wrinkles from clothes that are hanging from a clothes hanger. Simply select the volume of steam you want and then press the steam on/off button to allow the iron to steam.

5. Please note that if you press the steam volume selector button and hold it for 5 seconds, you can over-ride the automatic shut off and the iron will hold the selected temperature. The auto pause icon will flash in the mid section of the display to alert you that the auto shut-off function has been by-passed. Do not leave the iron unattended when you are pressing in this mode.

6. To turn the iron off, push the power on/off thermometer in the lower left of the display and hold for 2 seconds.

6. There are also symbols that will appear in the mid-section of the display that

tell you when the iron needs to be refilled and when the anti-scale cartridge needs to be replaced. The anti-scale system allows the minerals from the water to be filtered out and extends the life of the iron. The cartridge should be replaced every 6-12 months for best results.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The iron has a one-year limited warranty on the mechanical and electrical parts of the iron. There is a limited 90-day warranty on required adjustments and repairs.