



SEW-lutions Guidelines

Your Guide
to
Successful
Sewing

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Bobbinwork

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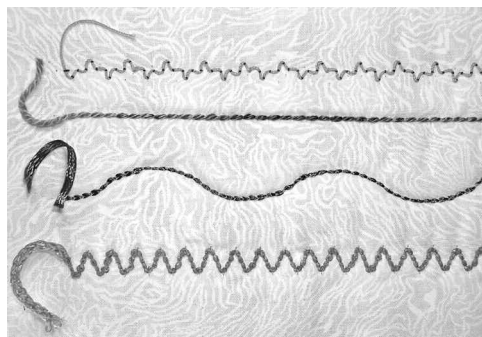
Turn your sewing experience upside down! Bobbinwork is used for threads too large to pass through the eye of the needle--simply wind decorative thread on the bobbin and sew with the fabric face down. The oversized thread is held against the fabric surface by the needle thread.

Fabric Options

Bobbinwork may be used to embellish clothing, accessories and home décor projects. It shows well on most all fabric surfaces; and is a good solution to the challenge of decorating textiles that are difficult to mark. When stitched through a layered quilt, bobbinwork actually quilts and embellishes at the same time. As with most embellishing, a permanent stabilizer is needed when stitching on any stretch fabric. Lightweight woven fabrics may require tear-away stabilizer to avoid puckering.

Thread Tales

Bobbin-friendly fibers include fine braid or cord, RibbonFloss, tape yarn, fingering-weight yarn, as well as pearl cotton and similarly weighted threads normally intended for handwork (1).



- (1) Top to bottom
Fine braid with contrast needle thread, utility stitch.
Sock yarn with clear monofilament needle thread, straight stitch.
Flat braid with metallic needle thread, decorative stitch.
Metallic chainette yarn with clear monofilament needle thread, 3-step zigzag.

Tightly-twisted fibers produce the most predictable results. Yarns that are loosely plied, slubby or fuzzy require testing to make sure they'll feed through the machine without snagging. For the most invisible attachment, match needle thread color to the bobbin thread or use clear monofilament thread in the needle. To play up the needle thread as an accent, choose one of contrasting color or texture.

Machine Set-Up

Install a zigzag stitch plate and presser foot. The large opening in both allows you to use the maximum width of the machine's built-in decorative stitches. To improve visibility, use an open-toe presser foot. A walking foot is helpful for multiple layers.

To prepare for bobbinwork, wind the bobbin at a slow speed, hand guiding the fiber to fill the bobbin evenly. It may be necessary to wind the bobbin by hand. Keep in mind the larger the fiber, the more space it takes up on the bobbin and the shorter the distance you'll be able to stitch.

For heavy thread to flow smoothly off the bobbin, adjust or bypass the tension slot in the bobbin case. Investing in a dedicated bobbin case eliminates the necessity of resetting the correct bobbin tension for normal sewing. Ask your machine dealer if a specially configured bobbinwork bobbin case is available for your machine model, or purchase a second regular bobbin case and mark it with a dot of nail polish.

If you don't bypass the bobbin tension, some tension adjustment may be needed to tweak the stitching quality. Zero tension is not necessarily a bad thing, as it can produce interesting results.

Marking Methods

Because bobbinwork is sewn from the wrong side, any marking device may be used to draw stitching lines freehand, through a stencil or against a ruler.

If your project requires stabilizer, mark the stitching lines on it; many stabilizers can be run through an inkjet printer. Affix the stabilizer securely with pins, hand-basting or temporary spray adhesive.

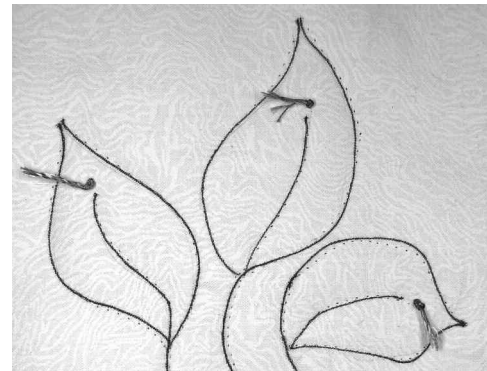
A project with a wrong side destined to hide behind a lining may be marked with "hidden assets". Back the cloth with gingham for no-mark straight lines. Or, cut individual motifs from a fabric print, baste them to the fabric wrong side, and stitch around the outlines. Once the project is finished, no one will ever guess the source of your design lines!

Stitch Wits

To avoid thread jams, choose a stitch length of 4mm or longer. Bring the bobbin thread up through the stitch plate; and pull out a tail. Place the fabric face down under the needle and take a single stitch. Hold the bobbin thread tail out of the way as you begin stitching. At the beginning and end of each stitching line, pull both threads to the underside and knot them together (2) or thread them into a hand-sewing needle and bury the ends between the layers of a quilted project.

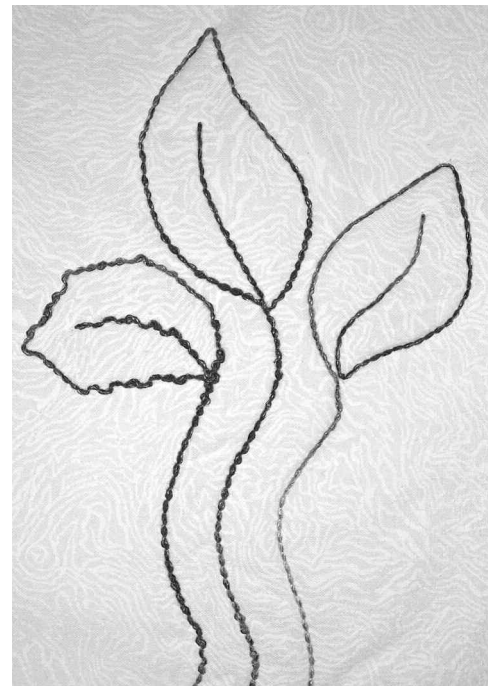
Test-sew, and examine the results. The bobbin thread should be relaxed on the fabric surface. If it's too loosely attached, increase the needle tension. If the line of stitching is too textured for your taste, increase the bobbin tension to straighten the thread. If the bobbin thread is stretched so tightly that it causes the fabric to pucker, lessen the bobbin tension. Increasing the stitch length or reducing machine speed may also improve stitch quality. Note the differences in thread tension and resulting stitches in photo 3.

Try decorative stitch patterns, especially those that can be elongated and/or widened. Don't overlook utility stitches; they can produce impressive results in bobbinwork. Avoid stitch patterns with frequent backward/forward motion or those penetrating repeatedly in the same spot as they may cause thread jams. Keep it simple--intricate stitch details don't show in bobbinwork and complicated stitch patterns are difficult to match if you run out of bobbin thread in the middle of a line of stitching. 🍷



(2)

Pull thread tails to the back and knot, or bury between fabric layers.



(3)

Left to right, the same variegated thread set at zero, light and moderate tension.