

# Bullion Knot VS. Roll Tatting

1) This message was posted by Shirley-2 in our Chatzy Tatting Designers Classroom:

Is a BULLION KNOT the same as ROLL TATTING?

At designers' class LESSON 9 we were talking about making "lines" in tatting. The "**bullion knot**" came up in discussion. Georgia Seitz' page has a picture of a line of bullions and a paragraph about bullion knots. Georgia suggested that it the bullion knot is possibly what we now call roll tatting.

The roll tatting that I'm familiar with involves wrapping the shuttle thread around the thread in a ring. There is at least one stitch before and after the rolled section to stabilize the ring. In the bullion knots in the photo (on Georgia's page) there are no stabilizing double stitches and the finished product looks like a blip, not a ring.

I suggest that a bullion knot is actually a single "stitch" copied from the EMBROIDERY stitch called a bullion knot stitch. <http://pintangle.com/2012/05/15/take-a-stitch-tuesday-week-20/>

To TAT a bullion knot, one wraps the shuttle thread around the core thread of a ring and flips all the wraps to the shuttle thread very carefully before closing the ring. There are no stabilizing double stitches before or after the wraps. The ring is closed gently -- completing one bullion knot stitch on a bare thread.

1. To get the wraps to lie neatly -- close together, the same size, no overlaps or gaps -- one must wrap in the direction according to the twist of the thread. If the thread is cooperating, the ring will close smoothly. When working with shuttle and ball, I wrap the shuttle thread by going under the hand (ring) thread.
2. The link about the embroidery bullion knot stitch (above) shows the wraps being lined up and brought together with a needle ("working the belly"). I imitated this with the fingers of my shuttle hand (while holding the pinch in place with my other hand). This step requires patience and practice to do with fingers alone. It has to be done before closing the ring.
3. To get the bullion knots to lie close together on the bare thread: The first bullion knot is a special case. For practice, I made a ring of 4DS as an "anchor" for the first bullion. When the wraps were close together and lined up, I pushed all of them at once to the anchor (then closed the ring). For successive bullions after the first, the previous one acts as the anchor.

## DISCOVERY PROCESS

- ❖ I tried to make bullions in conjunction with a variety of stitches, half stitches, rings, chains, self-closing mock rings, and anchors. I started with Lizbeth #10 and for a while I was using 2 colors. [I made a rather pretty chain with bumps on it, but I finally got the desired combination by making a few embroidery bullion knots (new technique to me) and going to DMC#50 thread.] It was with #50 thread that I knew I could make the bullion comfortably. I switched to #20 to practice the steps and close the distance between bullions.
- ❖ I have successfully used as few as 5 wraps per bullion, but 6-10 works better.
- ❖ My string of bullion knots gently spirals. I don't know if the spiral will go away with practice or not.
- ❖ It is important to use the natural twist of the thread. Try it clockwise and if that isn't working, try it counterclockwise.

## DESIGN IDEAS

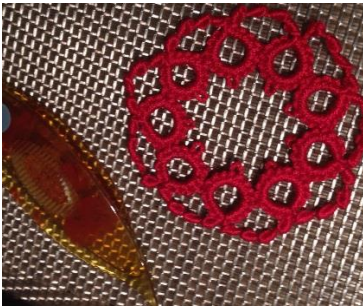
Initially, I thought the bullion would be a blip on a ring or chain or between chains. I never developed a tatting rhythm doing this. Instead, I think a series of bullion knots could substitute for a straight-line element like a chain.

Joining the line of bullion knots to other parts of a pattern could firm up the line. I don't know where to put the joins – beginning, end, middle – to best show off the bullions.

I prefer thread that is #30 or coarser for bullion knots.

Bullion knots in embroidery can be used as "fill." I'm not sure how this translates to tatting (without a fabric backing).

I might substitute a single bullion knot for a bead.



[Georgia Seitz](#)

BellaOnline's

[Tatting](#) Editor

Bullion Knot <http://www.bellaonline.com/articles/art386.asp>

The Bullion Knot compared to the Josephine Knot and the vintage "dot" formation.

Needlecraft LTD, UK published their first tatting series as "Needlecraft Practical Journal #99" ©1914-ish. They had already published over 150 journals covering crochet, knitting, embroidery, bead work, netting, lacis, smocking and other types of lace. And as with many other publications of the era, the patterns were given as an inducement to purchase products, especially thread.

The usual vintage illustrations are included showing the basic movements of tatting for one shuttle work (rings only) and for two shuttle work (rings and chains.) The photos show the first half stitch, second half stitch, double stitch, picot, and the traditional up join. This was followed by a description of the Josephine knot,

Bullion knot, and "dot." (I think this was the first time I encountered the term "bullion knot in tatting.")

I puzzled on this for a while and forgot about it for a long time. Then I encountered roll tatting. And I finally made a connection. If you read the directions for the bullion knot, it directs the tatter to move the shuttle over and over the thread

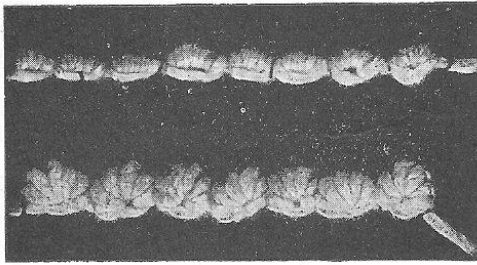


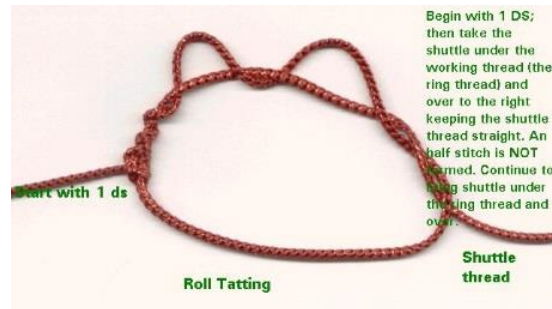
FIG. 11—BULLION KNOT.  
Needlecraft First Tatting Series 99 pg 5

Josephine Knots are sometimes used in old designs, and are made by working 7 or 8 single stitches and drawing them up about half (see Fig. 9).

Bullion Knots are sometimes used in old fashioned patterns and are made by passing the shuttle thread over and over the loop and drawing it up tight so that the Bullion is formed by the top thread (see Fig. 11).

Dots are made by working 5 double stitches and drawing up nearly close (see Fig. 10).

(multiple times) and draw it up tight. So I feel this should really be called roll tatting instead of bullion knot. However, I did not find any patterns in the magazine which actually used the bullion knot. Dots" is a term often encountered in the earliest vintage tatting patterns. It is slightly different from the Josephine knot is which made by tatting just one half stitch in repetition. This creates a ring or chain with a "twist" built into it. Instead the dot is made by tatting a full ds but usually only 5 or fewer so that when the ring is closed, it looks like a bump, i.e., "dot" in the thread. Compare to the roll stitch:



### Answered by the Editor

PLEASE tell me how to do roll-tatting or roll-stitch in tatting. — Mrs. B. M. J., New Hampshire.

(Very much, as to the winding, as you would make roll stitch in crochet. Make a double knot, as usual, to hold by; then pass the shuttle back of the loop around fingers of left hand, and through the loop toward you, much after the manner of the movement used in overcasting that is, you wind one thread around the other, or twist the two, holding the shuttle-thread tight so that the other will coil around it. Make as many of the "overs" as called for by your directions, push them up together carefully, roll the coil a little between thumb and forefinger of right hand to make it smooth and even and take up any extra thread, then — holding it between thumb and forefinger of left hand, make 1 double knot, picot, 1 double knot, and continue. In roll-tatting picots are mainly used for joining, and a double knot precedes and follows each. Push the work well together and hold it firmly until a joining is made so there will be no danger of unwinding; after this there is little trouble. It is not difficult, once the "knack" is caught, which is done with a little practise; and the roll-stitches are combined with ordinary tatting in many pretty ways.)

In this issue I also encountered two more surprising items. "Twine" was suggested as suitable for tatting in several patterns which were for tatted belts or waistbands. One pattern was called a "plastron." What is a plastron? Well, that is a topic for another day. Happy Tatting.

**Sue Fullers Research:** It's taken me 2 days and I finally learned how to Tat a Bullion Knot (BK). thanks to information from Shirley-2, Georgia Seitz and Karen Cabrera's Video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XBDh8SIh3bE>.

### A Bullion Knot (BK)

- It is a Single Shuttle Ring with Wraps (I used counterclockwise/under-over) around the Ring Thread.
- It is Similar to a Rolled Tatting Ring but there is Not a DS (double stitch) before the 1<sup>st</sup> Wrap and after the last wrap.
- And there are only Wraps not Half Stitches like a Josephine Knot (JK).
- There is a Transfer of the Wraps (a flip) from the Ring Thread to the Shuttle Thread as in tatting a regular ds. This transfer can be done after all the wraps are completed or as each wrap is made.
- It's very important to hold the 1<sup>st</sup> couple stitches tight in the pinch so the wraps do not unroll. I hold them under the base of my thumb so there's room in front of the previous wraps for the next ones to slide under the thumb in the pinch with them.
- The Rings need to be closed completely.
- The next Tatted Bullion should be snug to the previous one but not so tight it pulls out the 1<sup>st</sup> wrap.

Name	Stitches Used	Tatting Element	Connection Type	Uses
Rolled Tatting	DS and Wraps	Rings or Chains	Straight Line Curved Line	Decorative; in place of Regular Ring
Josephine Knot	Half Stitches – either all 1 <sup>st</sup> Halves or all 2 <sup>nd</sup> Halves	Rings	NA	Decorative; in place of Regular Ring
Bullion Knot	Wraps	Rings or Chains	Straight Line Curved Line	Decorative; in place of Regular

				Rings or Chains or bare Threads
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