

## Tatting with metallic thread(s) added, and tatting with non-cotton thread(s):

Keep in mind, metallic thread (or nylon, polyester, and other non-cotton threads) 'acts' somewhat different than cotton thread.

When filling a shuttle, try to avoid pulling on the thread - metallic thread will stretch, then when you begin to tat, you will wonder how the metallic thread got so SHORT.

Try to fill the shuttle or bobbin evenly. It may be necessary to turn the shuttle/bobbin frequently while filling it to make sure the thread is evenly distributed. If thread gets distributed in a big 'pile' on one side while filling the shuttle, sometimes it seems to twist around itself, making it seem like the shuttle was wound with more of one kind of thread than the other.

If using more than one strand of a very thin metallic thread, it is easier to wind from more than one spool at a time. If you only have one spool, you can wind thread around anything - another ball of thread, a card, a pencil, or anything else that is clean and smooth. Wind off the length you think you will need, then you will have two 'spools' to work from. Remember to avoid pulling/stretching the thread.

Feel the thread - if possible - before you buy it for tatting. Some metallic threads are coarse and rough - they will be difficult, if not impossible - to use for tatting. They are also hard on the hands/skin if you DO manage to tat with them. Look for the smoothest possible metallic thread you can find. Sulky "sliver" metallic thread is very smooth; Coats metallic machine embroidery thread is also smooth. You may find other brands in your local shops that are just as smooth, these are just the two I use quite often.

Drop your shuttle VERY often and let the thread unwind. If you forget to drop the shuttles often enough, the thread(s) can get a kink in them that can make closing a ring very difficult, if not impossible.

If you do get a kink in your core thread, stop closing the ring as soon as you notice it. Drop your shuttle, allow the thread between the ring and the shuttle to unwind, THEN open the ring a bit. This seems to allow the core thread to relax a bit. If your metallic thread stays kinked, gently rub it with something smooth and 'round' (like a pencil) and see if you can get it to relax and straighten out.

Sometimes a ring will close, but ALL the strands of thread did not 'close' with the ring. If this happens, VERY GENTLY and CAREFULLY pull on each strand of thread, while holding the ring in the pinch with your other hand. Usually this is all that is necessary to coax all the strands back to

their proper places.

Some thread(s) will stretch when trying to close a ring. If you line up the beginning and end of the ring in the position you want them, arrange the rest of the ring in roughly the shape you want, then hold the WHOLE ring in the pinch (thumb and TWO fingers may be necessary on the larger rings), usually the ring closes more easily. Once in a while you still have a ring that just does not seem to want to close fully, but with some experimentation and practice, most of your rings will close successfully.

#### Threads I've tried:

Coats 'Heavy Duty' Upholstery thread (nylon) alone, with 1 strand of metallic machine embroidery thread (I've tried it with both the Sulky "sliver" metallic thread and with Coats and Clark metallic machine embroidery thread), and with 2 strands of metallic machine embroidery thread. The Heavy Duty nylon upholstery thread gives me the same size medallion as size 40 Lizbeth. Each of the metallic threads is approximately equal to DMC cordonnet size 100.

Lizbeth size 20.

Coats & Clark machine quilting thread. I used 2 or 3 strands of the quilting thread with 2 strands of metallic machine embroidery thread added.

Size 80 thread - several strands with or without added metallic thread.

Hy-Mark Glace #12, Hy-Mark Glace #24. (Nina will probably mention these threads)

Nylon thread made by American & Efird (corporate office is in Mt. Holly, NC).

I also tried using 3 strands of Coats and Clark metallic machine embroidery thread by itself, but had trouble getting the larger rings to close. After breaking the thread several times, I decided it was not going to work. Three strands would have been a bit too small for the necklace, anyway.

#### Other comments:

If you are tatting with more than 1 strand of thread, be very careful to make sure ALL strands of thread actually are wound around the post of the shuttle when you fill it.

You want a stiff, firm foundation of tatting so it does not flop or droop when the beads have been added. Any thread you like will probably 'work' if you can get the proper size and firmness in the finished tatting. Thread size is

partially up to you, especially when making the pin - if you want a small pin, use smaller thread. If you want a large one, use larger thread. For the full necklace, I found size 20 thread gives me a necklace that fits me. For just the center 'pendant' portion of the necklace, you have more of a choice - bigger thread if you want a large pendant, smaller thread if you want a small one.

(Plan "B" - I have not tried this, but it SHOULD work: If you have trouble tatting tightly, you can probably still get the effect of the pin or the necklace if you sew the beads on, then SEW the tatted piece to a blouse or other article of clothing.)

Keep in mind, this is NOT difficult to do. The pin is rings. The necklace is rings, chains, and split rings. (Yes, there are 3 'squirrely' joins on the center 'stacked' part of the necklace, but no really scary techniques to learn.) You can always use all-cotton thread with no metallic or other type of thread added and SEW it onto something after the tatting and beading is finished - see above 'hint.' This IS completely do-able.