

TATTING MATTERS

Tatting is considered a form of lace needlework because of its light and airy designs that are frequently used for borders and edgings. Tatting, however, can be and is used in other ways.

Historically, tatting is an old, old form of lace made with a shuttle or, more recently, a tattle needle. In terms of formation, tatting is the making of knots (a double stitch) that are formed on the ends of the finger. Tatting was called “The Poor Man’s Lace” because it was made with cotton thread.

ABBREVIATIONS AND TERMS

Like most other needlework, tatting patterns make use of a lot of abbreviations. In order to read pattern instructions, it is necessary that “aspiring tatters” learn the abbreviations as well as how to do the specific techniques.

beg	Beginning
ch	Chain
cl	Close
d or ds	Double stitch
j	Join
p	Picot
p ch	Picot chain
lp	Picot – long
sm p	Picot – small
rw	Reverse work
r	Ring
lr	Ring – large
sr	Ring – small
sep	Separated
sk	Skip
sp	Space

- * Repeat instructions following asterisks as many times as specified.

WINDING THREAD ON THE SHUTTLE

This procedure must be done properly. Fasten the thread with a knot to the bar or bobbin inside the shuttle. If there is a hole in the bobbin, put thread through it and tie a knot. If bobbin is removable, wind it before replacing it in the shuttle. Always wind the thread evenly, layer upon layer, and never let the thread extend beyond edge of the shuttle.

JOINING AND FINISHING THREAD ENDS

Sometimes it becomes necessary to join threads in a tatting project. Fasten the new or joining thread close to the base of the last ring or chain with a square knot. It is not possible to join a new thread in a ring because the knot won’t pass through a double stitch. Plan ahead by adjusting your tatting so that it can be joined in the manner just described.

TWISTED THREADS

If thread becomes twisted, let the shuttle dangle and the thread will untwist itself.

To make sure the tatting project has a nice and neat finished look; fasten any loose thread ends to the wrong side of the work. Use a regular hand-sewing needle (with a large eye) to work the thread into the tatting.

BLOCKING AND PRESSING TATTING

Blocking a piece of tatting is essential to give a finished look. Blocking is actually the shaping and pressing of a piece of tatting. Sometimes it is necessary to wash the article that has been tatted. If so, launder the item first and then place the article on a well-padded board or folded terry cloth towel. Place the right side down. Smooth out until the shape and measurements are correct.

Pull the picots out and pin each one in place (only use rust-proof pins). If the tatting is still damp from laundering, cover with a dry cloth. If the tatting is dry, cover with a damp cloth. Press with a warm iron, avoiding pins. Do not remove the pins until the tatting is thoroughly dry.

DETERMINING RIGHT SIDE OF TATTING

- If the design has more rings than chains, the side with the most rings becomes the right side of the finished article.
- If the design has more chains than rings, the side with the most chains becomes the right side of the finished article.

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