

All That Glitters by Christen Brown

Metallic Threads 101 The Sewing Machine

Know your Threads

Metallic embroidery thread is a blend of two fibers, a rayon base thread wrapped with a thin strand of metallic thread. This thread is used for topstitching, with a bobbin thread such as a rayon or lingerie thread. Products: **Sulky Metallic Threads**, **Sulky Tinsel Sliver** or **Holographic Ribbon** metallic ribbons; **Kreinik Cord**; **YLI Fine Metallic Threads**. **Coats and Clark**, **Superior** and **Madeira** also make metallic threads.

Metallic embroidery ribbon is flat a ribbon made from a polyester film that has been treated with aluminum to create a reflective surface.

Rayon threads are shiny and fine and durably made from viscose rayon fiber. This thread can be used for topstitching as well as in the bobbin.

Metallic threads, metallic ribbon and rayon threads come in a variety of solid and variegated color ways. Products: **Sulky Rayon Threads**; **Coats & Clark** and **Madeira Rayon Threads**.

Bobbin Thread: **YLI** makes a lightweight rayon thread that can be used in the bobbin when topstitching with metallic threads. A fine lightweight cotton bobbin thread can also be used; or use any color of rayon thread that will match your metallic threads.

The Thread Holder and Your Threads

The thread that you choose will have to be compatible to the thread holder of your machine. The thread holder is devised to allow the thread to pull off the spool without tangling.

1. Horizontal thread holders work best with threads that are wound diagonally on the spool.
2. Vertical thread holders work best with threads that are wound sideways on the spool; use a felt pad under the spool of thread.

The Bobbin Thread

Sulky, Coats & Clark, and Madeira all make rayon threads that are compatible with the metallic thread. Sulky makes a cotton bobbin thread.

- Wind the thread onto the bobbin as you would normally, though at a slower pace so the thread does not stretch out.
- Bobbins wound with thread specifically for machine embroidery can also be purchased.

The Needle

The proper needle will make all the difference in the world! The eye of a metallic embroidery needle is longer than that of a regular sewing needle. Use a **90/14** Schmetz Embroidery needle.

The Correct Presser Foot

The correct foot should correspond with the type of stitching that will be done.

- A straight stitch foot is use for basic single line stitching.
- A zigzag foot is used when the stitch width is adjusted for zigzag or decorative stitches.

Helpful Products

Sewer's Aid is a lubricant that is used on a metallic thread to ease it through the thread path as you stitch. I can't say enough about this product; it virtually eliminates any kinking, fraying or breakage, which can occur when sewing normally with metallic thread.

- Squirt a thin line down the length of the spool of thread.
- Repeat often while sewing on the same project if kinks or breakage occur.
- Repeat every time you sew with that spool of thread.

Keep in Mind

Some machines do not like metallic threads. If you find this is the case, I would suggest that you use the rayon threads, they are extremely pretty and will work just fine as the topstitching thread.

Have fun and Happy Stitching! ~Christen

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