

Embroidery Floss for Tatting Sheron Goldin

Why use Embroidery Floss for Tatting?

- Easily available
- Wide variety of colors
- Can be broken down to different number of strands to equal different sizes of thread
- You can make the same size item in the same color in different sizes (such as a necklace and earrings set)



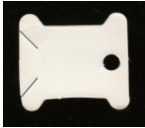
Why not use Embroidery Floss for Tatting?

- Strands separate
- Picots not as crisp as with tatting thread
- Many folks have problems separating the thread strands
- Short lengths in each skein, not enough for a larger project

How many strands of floss equal which thread sizes?

- I have seen a number of different lists of how many strands equal what size of thread. The following info is what I work with. I don't remember where I found this info.
 - 6 strands (the whole skein) is about a size 5 perle cotton
 - 4 strands is about a #10
 - 3 strands is about a #20
 - 2 strands is about a #40
 - 1 strand is about a #80 or tatting thread

How to divide the strands:

- I have seen part of this on several lists. Some I have figured out to make it easier.
- Materials needed:
 - Something to wind the floss onto as you are dividing it with slits in the edge to tuck the floss ends into. Examples of items that can be used include:
 - a cardboard tube (such as a toilet paper roll or a paper towel roll cut in 1/2 or 1/3 if desired). Take a ruler and make a line across from end to end then cut a small slit at each end. Using this you can divide the floss into 2 groups of thread strands. 
 - An index card or something similar, or even one of those a "fake" credit card, with small slits cut into the long side. I would not cut more than 3 slits in the long side. 
 - Small piece of cardboard such as a Floss Bobbin or a business card. This also needs two slits in it, one to secure the end of the floss before you wind the floss around it and a second to secure the thread middle as you are dividing it. 
 - Floss skein.

How to do it (These pictures show doing it onto the index card. The idea is similar if you are using a toilet paper roll):

1. Secure beginning end of floss to floss bobbin and begin wrapping the floss around the floss bobbin.

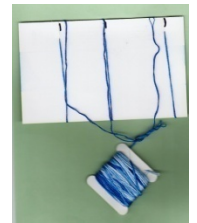


2. Continue winding the floss around the floss bobbin until about 1 yard of the floss remains hanging free, secure the thread to the cardboard leaving the last yard of floss hanging free.



3. About 6 inches from the end of the floss divide the floss strands and tuck each end into a slit on the index card or cardboard tube. On the index card you can do 3 groups of 2 strands each at one time. If using a tube and you want 2 strands you will have 2 strands together on one side and the other 4 strands together on the other side of the tube. .

4. Leave the floss bobbin with the floss wound around it sitting on the table or your lap and hold the cardboard tube or index card above the floss bobbin. Put your finger(s) between the groups of floss strands. This picture shows what you should see when you are looking at the card in your hand. You will have to imagine your finger(s) between the groups of floss strands. As you divide the floss and wind it onto the tube or index card the floss bobbin will twist, allowing the floss strands to easily divide.



5. Continue to wind the card so the floss winds around it. As the floss bobbin gets closer to the card put the card on the table and loosen more floss from the floss bobbin then replace the floss into the slit.

6. Continue until all floss is divided. See the three groups of floss on the card?



7. Wind divided floss onto a shuttle or floss bobbin to use later, or if you wound it onto an index card you can just tuck that into your tatting bag for later use.

8. Want all the floss divided into smaller groups? Repeat steps 1 through 7 until it's divided as you wish.

9. Several folks have found that winding onto the round tube is easier, that the index card can begin to flex if you are not careful. For those reasons they choose to use the cardboard tube. Others prefer the ability to divide the floss into 3 groups of 2 strands in one pass and the fact that the index card is easier to carry with you so they use the index card. Try both and see which suits you best. It may depend on what you have handy and where you are.