



How To Guide - Needlecraft Thread Types

There are so many different types of needlecraft thread that it can be difficult to know which to choose for which type of project, and for the type of effect you are hoping to create.

Download a pdf version of this guide for offline reading.



STRANDED COTTON

Stranded cotton, also known as cotton floss or embroidery floss, comes in many different varieties, but the best known and popular are probably DMC and Anchor. There are usually eight metres of thread in a skein, which would normally consist of six strands. The strands are usually split into one or two for cross stitching (depending on the fabric count you are using and the depth of coverage you want to achieve). Back stitch on a cross stitch project would usually be done in one strand, but sometimes a pattern or kit will specify two for a bolder look. Most kits and patterns will specify how many strands to use on different areas of the design.



DMC Etoile: Etoile thread is mostly cotton but is mixed with small flecks of metallic to give a sparkly effect. It uses the same colour codes as DMC stranded cotton but with the addition of the letter C at the beginning, enabling stitchers to replace one with the other, if a little additional shimmer is what your stitching needs!



DMC Light Effects/Anchor Lamé Thread: This thread is typically a purely metallic thread, with the exception of a couple of fluorescent and glow-in-the-dark options (which are a little easier to work with than standard metallic thread). This floss also contains six strands and can be tricky to work with because the strands tend to become unwound from each other the more it is handled. Mixing one strand with one strand of cotton floss makes this less likely, and stitching on aida fabric can also help to keep the thread from fraying too badly. Using a thread conditioner or beeswax can also help to prevent the thread from unravelling as you stitch. The DMC version (Light Effects) is a 100% polyester thread whilst the Anchor (Lamé) is a viscose/metalized polyester mix.



DMC Coloris and Variations/Anchor Multicolour: For the DMC options, both types are variegated threads, but there is a difference between the two ranges. Coloris has a more “camouflage-esque” style, with brighter colours and bolder changes between the colours.



Variations threads have less prominent colour changes and are more tonally matched and muted than Coloris. They are also slightly softer to the touch than Coloris.



Anchor Multicolour cover both the DMC varieties, in that they have both tonal matches and brighter, disparate colour changes in the selection.

DMC Satin: Similar to stranded cotton, but made from 100% rayon, this thread gives a gorgeous glossy sheen when stitched, but is prone to tangles and snags, and can also unravel as you use it. Thread conditioner can help with this, as can stitching with shorter lengths than you would normally use for cotton floss.



COTON PERLE

Coton Perle (or Cotton Pearl) is a non-divisible twisted cotton thread which will give a satin sheen and silky texture to your needlework. The soft and silky texture makes it perfect for all needlecraft, embroidery, punch needle and creative stitching. It will not tangle or knot, and will keep its shape and elegant twist all through your stitching project. It is available in a range of weights from 3 (the heaviest) to 12 (the lightest). The 5 and 8 weights are also made in variegated shades and in metallics. The 12 weight can be used on 14 count aida in place of 2 strands of regular cotton floss.



COTON A BRODER

This thread is made from 4 non-divisible strands and is soft and gentle to the touch. It is also durable, making it perfect for delicate, intricate embroidery on tablecloths and furnishings. It is available in a range of neutral shades.



CREWEL WOOL

Crewel wool is a fine, 2-ply wool that is perfect for hand and surface embroidery on any woven fabric. It can be used to create bold designs in all embroidery stitch techniques. Traditional crewel work patterns include animals, floral designs and intricate borders and the use of this wool allows large design areas to be filled quickly with stitching and colour.



TAPESTRY WOOL

Tapestry wool is thicker than Crewel Wool (4-ply compared to 2-ply), and can be used for weaving, and also for needlepoint or tapestry on 10 or 12 hpi (holes per inch) canvas. This type of heavier wool gives greater depth of colour to your stitching.



TAPESTRY COTTON

DMC Soft Cotton is a matte tapestry thread, perfect for needlepoint tapestry, crewel work and weaving. It is a soft, 5-ply non-divisible thread which will stitch smoothly.



DMC DIAMANT THREAD

DMC Diamant thread is a smooth metallic thread which glides through fabric easily without kinking or tangling. It is non-divisible, so that you use it as if comes off the spool, and is equivalent to two strands of regular cotton embroidery floss. It is a good choice for adding a little colourful shine to your cross stitch or embroidery project.



If you find any of these instructions unclear, or just need a little extra help, don't hesitate to email us at sales@woolwarehouse.co.uk or give us a call on 01926 88 28 18.