



Embroidery Threads Designed For Embroidery Top Stitching

Embroidery top stitching thread designed for your embroidery machine is available in a variety of types and styles. There are several types of threads that can be used for embroidery, but the most popular ones are Rayon and Polyester followed by Metallic, and Cotton.

The types of embroidery threads used today for your top stitching are;

- Rayon
- Polyester
- Neons-(Polyester)
- Metallics (Nylon Core with Metallic Polyester Wrapping)
- Nomex
- Cotton
- Moon Glo (Polyester)

Rayon Thread

Rayon thread is the most preferred thread used within the embroidery industry, but polyester is quickly becoming the thread of choice with a lot of embroiderers. If you are working primarily in the corporate market that is not using bleach, then rayon is usually the thread of choice. Rayon thread is usually colorfast but will not hold up in bleach. It has a higher sheen than the polyester and that is why many embroiderers prefer the Rayon over the Polyester. It is easier to maintain a more consistent tension with the Rayon threads.

Rayon thread is available in 60 weight, 40 weight, and 30 weight. The most popular size is the 40-weight thread. It is available in a wide range of solid and variegated colors, as well as in a new "twist" thread composed of two or more solid colors twisted together to form a single strand. This will add some automatic shading effects and dimension to a flat design.

The 60-weight thread is very fine and is popular for very small lettering and detail. The only drawback is the amount of limited colors that are available in the 60-weight thread and not all thread manufacturers offer 60 weight thread. They usually are available in only the standard colors. Madeira has a selection of 60 colors in the 60-weight rayon thread. To use the 60-weight thread you need to switch to 65/9 needles. The 70/10 or 75/11 needles are too large, and you will not get the fine detail that you are expecting unless you use the 65/9 needles.

The 30-weight thread is a thicker thread that is used mainly on jacket backs or large designs. This will give you the capability to create designs with a lighter stitch count. The 30-weight thread is also limited in the colors that are available. I personally found this thread to be helpful when I was embroidering a lot of school jacket backs. They ran much faster because of the lower stitch count, but it does not have the same fine look as that of the 40-weight thread.

Polyester Thread

Polyester is a stronger thread, but it does not have quite the sheen as the rayon. Today it is becoming the most common thread type used for most apparel embroidery applications. It is color fast and will hold up in industrial laundries. It is also available in 40 weight and 60 weight. Not all manufacturers offer 60-weight, but Madeira has a selection of 40 colors in the Polyester 60 weight thread.

There have been many improvements made to the polyester thread in the past few years, but you must make sure that you are running your tensions much tighter when you are using this thread. It has a tendency to stretch and leave loops far more often the rayon thread.

Many embroiderers claim that they can run their machines faster creating a greater volume of finished products with fewer thread breaks. In my own experience, I have not found this to be true. It all depends on your needs and those needs of your customers. If you are working with a customer that is going to be bleaching their garments, you need to use polyester thread.

Polyester thread is bleachable and the primary choice for the sports market, the children's clothing market and corporate markets where harsh laundry detergents are being used such as the medical industry. It is the thread of choice for many high-speed embroidery shops running today.

Metallic Threads

Metallic thread is more expensive than Rayon or Polyester thread but is very effective when you are trying to create accents. A metallic thread can create an effect in an embroidery design that cannot be achieved using any other type of thread. Some manufacturers offer a variety of sizes such as 30 weight, 40 weight and 50 weight, while others only offer it in the 40 weight only. Most manufacturers offer a variety of colors.

Metallic threads can be a little harder to use but learning to control them is most of the battle. Metallic threads are wiry and a little thicker than either the rayon or polyester. You will run a looser tension and use a needle that has a larger or longer eye. The correct needle to use is the DBx7ST. This needle is identical to the DBxK5 except the eye is elongated and rectangular in shape so that the Metallic thread will pass through it easily.

It is also important to reduce your stitch count in the area of the design that is being sewn with the metallic thread. If you have a design that is digitized for 40 weight rayon or polyester thread and you want to add some Metallic effects to it, use the 50 weight Metallic thread and your design should run perfect without any editing of the stitch count. You do not want to run the 40 weight Metallic thread without reducing the stitch count in your design. It will be too heavy, and you will experience thread breaks.

Metallic threads are not all manufactured the same. Some have a nylon core while others have a polyester core, but they are all wrapped with metalized polyester foil. Delicate washing is recommended as the Metallic threads will break down if you use harsh detergents. They are also dry-cleanable.

Quick Tip: Run your metallic thread thru a packing peanut before threading it into the eyelet on your thread rack. This will keep it from kinking. I learned this trick many years ago and that alone saved a lot of frustration. With some Metallic threads, this is not necessary, but if you find your thread kinking, this will prevent that from happening. If you will follow these guidelines, you should not have any difficulty using metallic thread and it is a great addition that you can offer your customers. Many embroiderers shy away from metallic threads because they are having constant thread breakage.

Super Twist

Within the Metallic thread category there is also **Super Twist** threads. Super Twist is a 30-weight thread, so you will need to lower your density and create longer stitches in your embroidery designs. If you are going to use this heavy

twisted thread, then the correct needle to choose is the DBx9ST. The eye in this needle is twice the size of the eye in the DBxK5 needles. The twisted threads that I have used required a 90/14 needle. This is an excellent thread for adding sparkle to your Holiday designs.

Nomex

Nomex is an expensive thread, but it is a must thread if you are embroidering on racing fire suits or any type of garment that must remain fire retardant. This thread is excellent in abrasive resistance along with its resistance to heat exposure. It is not affected by age, but it decomposes quickly if exposed to chlorine bleach. Nomex thread is 100%

Aramid which contains Nomex® branded fibers from Dupont®. (Nomex® is a registered trademark of Dupont®).

Nomex is available in a 40-weight thread, but it seems to be a heavier thread than the Rayon or Polyester and a larger needle such as a 75/11 or an 80/12 will work better for this application. Madeira offers Nomex or Firefighter bobbin thread on a cone as well to use with your Nomex top stitching thread. Madeira also offers a Proban Flame retardant backing that you can use for your flame-retardant embroidery.

Cotton Thread

Cotton threads are very low luster and have been used mainly by the monogramming industry. It is not as easy to find the cotton threads today as in the past. Many of the suppliers have discontinued these threads. There are fewer colors available in the cotton threads, but they are highly sought after in the heirloom market.

Robison Anton has a 100% Egyptian cotton thread that is available in 32 colors. It is a 50-weight thread, so it is finer than the 40-weight. It is a beautiful thread that works great for items such as handkerchiefs. This is a great thread to use for the bridal market.

Burmilana

Madeira's Burmilana thread is a 12-weight thread, very thick, that is used for lovely decorative effects on home decorative items as well as clothing. It is made of 30% wool and 70% acrylic. This is a thread that requires a large 110/18 needle. It has the appearance of crewel embroidery when the project is completed. The only problem with using this thread is the fact that you may have to retime your machine in order to use it. Most machines are timed

for size 8 to 14 needles. If you have a machine that you can dedicate to this thread, that would be the ideal situation.

Designs must be digitized especially for this heavy thread. You cannot use a design that was digitized for 40-weight thread. You must tell your digitizer that you will be using this thick thread so that it can be digitized in the correct manner.

I personally have never used it, but I intend to in the future. I have a design that I would like to embroider on a large pillow using this thread.

There are other threads and other names for threads that are equal to the ones that I have listed. Experimenting with different threads for your embroidery is really a lot of fun. Sometimes when you have issues with the threads and cannot seem to solve your problems, it is hair raising.

Remember the important thing is to keep your tensions balanced. If you change thread type, you also have to change your tensions. Some threads will require a tighter tension; some will require a looser tension. You can only find this out through your own experimenting because each machine, design and fabric is different and requires a different handling.