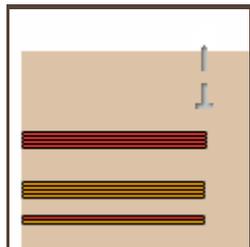


Threading the Needle

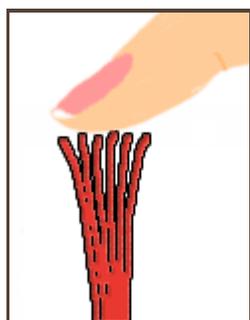
A Scarlet Quince™ Tutorial

You're going to be threading a lot of needles. Here are some helpful tips for making it easy.

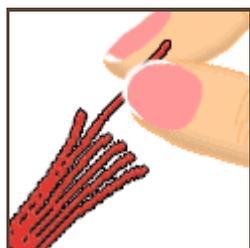


1. First, pick the length that you will use when cutting your floss, and always cut your floss to the same length. This way, no matter what colors you blend, the strands will be the same length. DMC floss comes in 8 meter skeins, which is 315 inches. We like to use 21 inch lengths because that divides a skein into 15 segments. If 21 inches seems too long for you (or you find that the floss begins to fray as you stitch), try 15 inches.

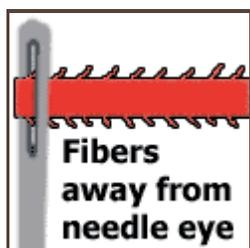
Keep a length guide handy as you stitch. Put a pin in your fabric 21 inches from the edge, or keep a marked ruler nearby, or a string cut to the right length so that you have something to measure the floss against.



2. Tap the end of the cut floss to spread the strands out so that it is easier to grasp one.

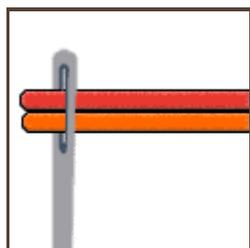


3. Even if you need two strands of the same color, pull them one at a time. They will pull out easily. If you try to pull two or more strands at once, you are likely to end up with a tangle.



4. DMC cotton floss and some other fibers have a grain that you may be able to feel if you stroke a strand of floss with your finger tips. Going one direction, it will feel smooth; in the other direction, it may feel slightly rough. Ideally you will thread the needle with the end that feels smooth when you stroke starting at it. That way, the act of stitching smooths the fibers down.

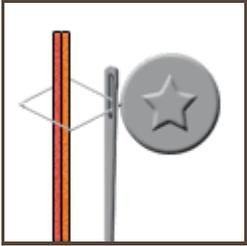
If you can't feel the grain or don't want to bother, that's fine! This is a very fine point when it comes to cotton floss. (For wool or any fiber where the grain **is** obvious, it is important to stitch with, not against, the grain.)



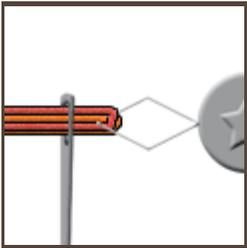
5. If your vision and manual dexterity are good, the next step is simply to put the floss through the eye of the needle. If the threads are little ragged at the end, snip them so you have a sharp end. Particularly if it is a small needle, it helps to moisten the end and flatten it between your fingers. This stiffens and sharpens the end a bit.



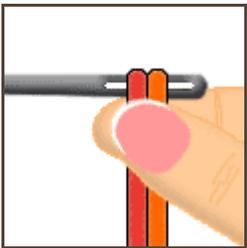
6a. If you prefer to use a needle threader, first put the wire loop of the threader all the way through the eye of the needle. The wire is very thin and bends easily to pass through the eye, then springs back.



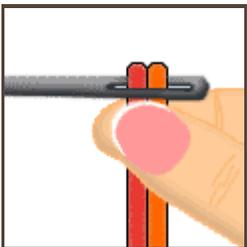
6b. Put your floss through the loop (hopefully, this is easy).



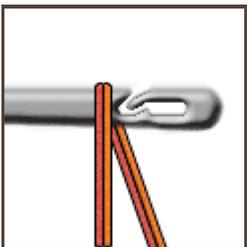
6c. Pull the loop and floss back through the eye of the needle. Depending on the size of the needle, you may have to pull hard. Then remove the needle threader, and your needle is threaded!



7a. A third way is to fold the floss and put the needle over the fold. Start by wrapping the floss around the eye of the needle so that the bend in the floss is against the side of the eye (the narrow part). Pinch the floss firmly by the needle between the thumb and forefinger so that just the tip of the loop shows. The strands should be next to each other, not stacked or twisted.



7b. Still pinching, slide the needle out, and push the eye of the needle down onto the folded floss. Now you can let go and pull the floss the rest of the way through.



8. A fourth alternative is to use a Spiral Eye™ needle. This is a special needle where the eye is in the shape of a spiral, open on the side of the needle. To thread the needle, put the middle of the floss against the needle, pulling the ends so that the floss contacts the needle firmly, then slide the floss along the needle until you feel it catch the edge of the spiral. Pull it the rest of the way into the spiral eye.

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