

# Pick the Right Thread

By: BurdaStyle

<http://www.burdastyle.com/techniques/pick-the-right-thread>

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Choosing the right thread can greatly improve your sewing experience. We thank our friends from Coats & Clark®, who provided us with the expertise for this How To and loads of thread for making our creations! You'll see: That little thin thread is more than just a string to keep pieces of fabric together. In the following How To, we show you some specific types of fabrics and the best thread to use with them. At the same time, as its name implies, all-purpose thread can be used for most projects. However, using a specialty thread for certain projects can give better results, smoother seams and a higher quality outcome. There are a few guidelines you should know about thread: Polyester thread is stronger and has more give than cotton thread. Thus, it can be used on woven and knit fabrics. Cotton thread can be used on woven fabrics, but not on knits, because it will not give with the fabric.

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## Step 1



**GENERAL PURPOSE:** Here's an example of a basic, medium-weight woven cotton sewn with a perfectly suitable, all-purpose, cotton/polyester blend thread that you can use for the Jakob shirt. For the sample, we used Coats & Clark Dual Duty XP® all-purpose thread. Because it is a poly

wrapped, poly core thread it will give you a strong and lasting seam, even in stress areas like underarms.

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## Step 2



**JERSEY KNIT:** When working with jersey knit, you must make special accommodations. Use a ballpoint needle, which is specifically designed for stretch fabrics, usually size 11/75. Sharp needles, like a universal needle, can rip holes into your jersey knit; a ballpoint will avoid that problem because the tip of the needle is rounded. Polyester is the best choice of thread for knit fabrics, which is very important to remember, as it stretches as your fabric stretches. If you use cotton thread it's much more likely to break because it won't give with the fabric. An example of this stitching can be seen on the Pete T-shirt. The example shows Coats & Clark Dual Duty XP® 100% polyester thread on a jersey knit.

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## Step 3



**LIGHTWEIGHT SILK:** Using too heavy a thread and/or needle on lightweight, silky woven fabric can cause seam puckering and snags. It pays to be mindful of this: the Sibylle could have hit quite a few bumps in the road. Use a finer needle, size 11/75, and a lighter thread. In this example, we used Coats & Clark Dual Duty XP® Fine polyester thread, used here on two different types of lightweight silk, needle size 11/75. Fine thread is perfect for any lightweight fabric including lingerie, bridal, specialty fabric and heirloom sewing. You can use this thread for creations like the Sibylle

dress.

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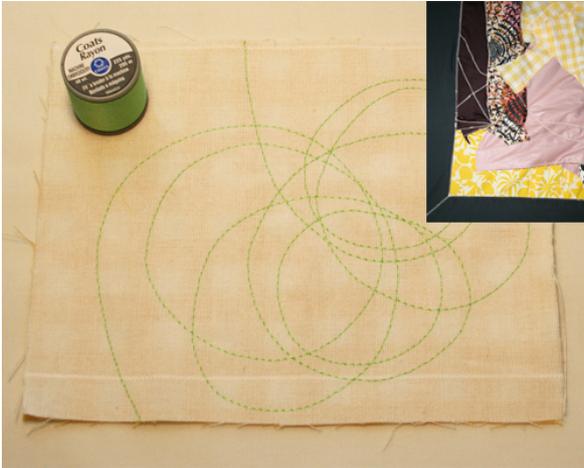
#### Step 4



**MACHINE QUILTING:** Because you are sewing through layers, a slightly bigger needle may be required, 90/14. Here we tried the Coats & Clark Machine Quilting Thread, 100% Egyptian cotton, used on 100% cotton fabric. We used this same technique on the Layla mittens. While quilting can be utilitarian, it can also be a great decorative touch.

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#### Step 5



**DECORATIVE TOPSTITCHING:** When using topstitching as decoration, many interesting threads are available to enhance your project. When topstitching on lighter weight fabrics, decorative rayon thread is a nice choice because of its silk-like appearance. We used fabric top stitch as a design element on our Fabric Scrap Quilt. Try these lustrous rayon threads with your machine's decorative stitches or use your utility stitches as a decorative touch.

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#### Step 6



**MULTI-COLOR TOPSTITCHING:** Variegated thread is available, which makes a neat effect when topstitching with it. Below, we used Coats & Clark General Purpose Dual Duty XP® Multicolor 100% polyester thread. Because this one is 'general purpose', you can use it on many different fabrics.

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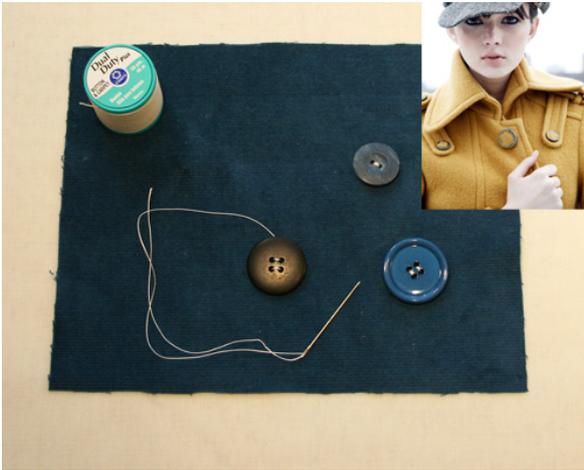
### Step 7



**HANDQUILTING AND APPLIQUE:** When hand quilting or applying appliques, like the ones on the Sadie dress, you could use an all-purpose thread, or you can use a specialty Hand Quilting thread. When hand sewing, always cut your threads, never break them. Make sure the thread isn't too long, anything over 20" will cause knots and tangles. Passing your thread through beeswax also helps prevent tangles.

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### Step 8



**HEAVY DUTY PROJECTS:** When sewing coat buttons, using an extra heavy-duty thread is a great way to prevent lost buttons. Here, we used Coats & Clark Dual Duty Plus Button and Carpet thread. Never use these extra heavy hand sewing threads in your machine, unless they specifically state they are for machine sewing. For instance a jeans and denim thread, which is also heavy, can be used for topstitching on heavyweight fabrics or rug binding using a larger denim needle and a longer stitch length. The Dual Duty Plus Button and Carpet thread was used for attaching the buttons on the Talea Coat. A heavy thread, like Dual Duty XP® Heavy, gives a bold, prominent look to topstitching. It is 3-ply and extra strong for sewing heavy upholstery or items where extra strength is needed.

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## Step 9



The "shelf-life" of thread depends on whether or not it has been stored properly. Like any textile, extremes in temperature, humidity, or exposure to light adversely affect the thread. It can literally last decades if stored properly, but if it has been in Grandma's hot, dry attic--be careful -- especially if it is 100% cotton. The best test is to break the thread. Hold it between your two hands and give it a yank. If it has some resistance before it breaks, it will be okay to sew with. If it breaks easily, it is best to discard or use for basting.

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## Step 10



Now that you know so much about thread, get to sewing, and always pick the best thread for your project!

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