

21 Different Sewing Thread Types: Choose the Right Thread Types for Perfect Stitches

Whether you're new to sewing or a seasoned expert, understanding thread types is key to achieving perfect results. In this guide, we'll explore everything about threads, from their weight and construction to the variety of fibres available. With this knowledge, you'll be ready to choose the right thread for any project—no matter your skill level!



Sewing Thread Types

Why Choosing the Right Thread Matters

The thread you use can make or break your sewing project. High-quality threads ensure strong seams, smooth stitching, and a polished look, while poor-quality threads can cause breakage, tension issues, and frustration. Different projects call for specific thread types—metallic threads add sparkle but need careful handling, while heavy-duty threads offer strength for upholstery or outdoor items. Selecting the right thread for your fabric and design ensures durability, ease of sewing, and professional results every time.

Sewing Thread Types Based on Weight Construction & Twist Direction

The type of thread used in sewing greatly affects the quality and life of your projects. Knowing

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about thread weight, construction, and twist direction is key for top-notch results. Let's explore these basics to help you choose the right thread.

Thread Weight and Thickness Explained

Thread weight is the thickness of the thread, measured by weight per length. You'll see sizes like Tex, denier, and commercial. Thicker threads, like 30-weight, are great for heavy fabrics and topstitching. Thinner threads, such as 50—or 80-weight, are better for delicate materials and detailed stitching. Please note that the weight numbers 30, 50, or 80 refer to thickness. In the world of sewing thread, a lower thread weight number means thicker thread and a higher weight number means thinner thread.

Thread Weight	Weight Number
Light	100
Regular	40-50
Topstitching	30
Quilt Handstitching	12
Heavy duty	3

Thread Construction Methods

There are different ways to make sewing thread. The most common are corded and core-spun. Corded threads are strong and durable because they're made by twisting multiple threads together. Corespun threads have a core wrapped in an outer layer, giving them a smooth look.

Right vs Left Twist in Threads

The thread's twist direction is also crucial. Z-twist (left-twist) threads are best for single-needle machines, and S-twist (right-twist) threads are better for double-needle machines. The right twist direction ensures the best tension and stitch quality.

Understanding these basics helps you pick the right thread for your project. Whether you're looking at a *sewing thread types chart*, *thread weight*, *thread construction*, or *thread twist*, knowing the fundamentals boosts your sewing skills.

Sewing Thread Types Based on Material & Purpose

Understanding the material of your sewing thread is essential for achieving the best results. Threads are broadly categorized into natural and synthetic types, each offering unique characteristics and benefits. Natural threads, such as cotton and silk, provide a soft, traditional feel and are excellent for specific projects. On the other hand, synthetic threads like polyester and nylon are versatile, durable, and widely used in modern sewing.

Cotton threads, known for their matte finish, can vary in quality—premium options like Egyptian-grown cotton offer smoothness and strength. Polyester threads, popular for embroidery and general sewing, add a beautiful sheen to projects. For a touch of elegance, metallic threads,

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crafted from synthetic materials with foil wrapping, are perfect for decorative stitches. Choosing the right thread material ensures your project's durability, appearance, and ease of sewing.

Thread Material

Cotton Thread

Polyester Thread

Metallic Thread

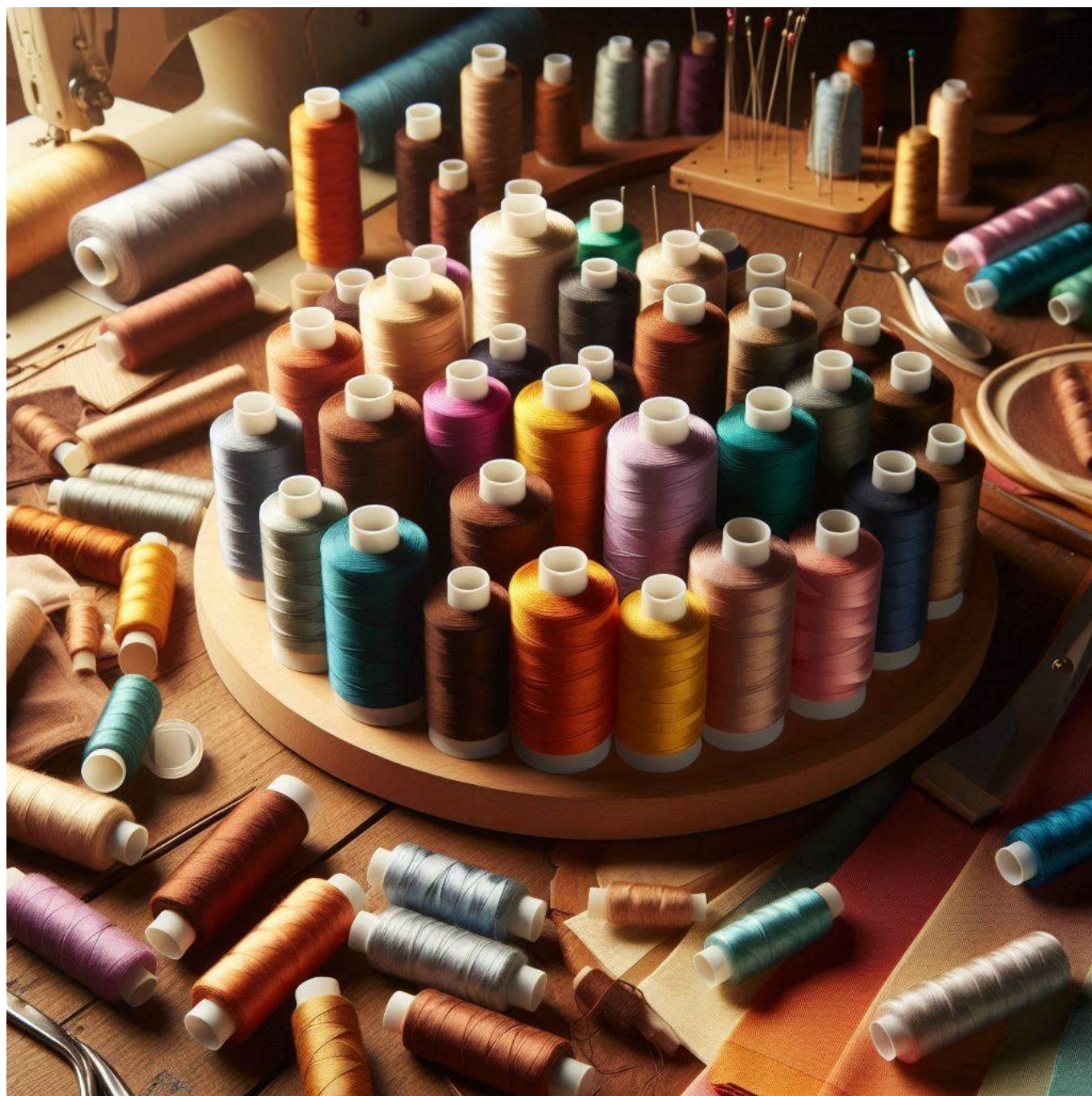
Key Characteristics

Matte finish, can be linty, high-quality Egyptian cotton is smooth

Shiny, versatile, available in various finishes

Synthetic core with foil wrapping, strong and decorative

#1 General Purpose Threads



General Purpose Polyester Threads

General-purpose threads are versatile and suitable for most sewing projects, covering around 95% of tasks. Typically made from polyester, they are compatible with a wide range of fabrics and can be used for both hand and machine sewing. These threads are ideal for seams, edge stitching, and even quilting.

Polyester threads are durable and long-lasting, making them a favourite for everyday use. However, general-purpose threads might not perform well with very thin or thick fabrics and are less suited for items exposed to prolonged sunlight or high heat. Choosing the right thread for your project ensures better results and a polished finish.

[Buy All Purpose Polyester Threads from Flipkart](#)

Thread Type	Suitable Fabrics	Key Features
All-Purpose Polyester Thread	Lightweight to heavyweight fabrics	Strong, durable, and versatile
All-Purpose Poly-Cotton Thread	Lightweight to medium-weight fabrics	Breathable, natural fibre

#2 Essential Cotton Thread Varieties for Everyday Sewing

Cotton threads are soft, breathable, and perfect for sewing with delicate fabrics and natural fibres. Mercerized cotton threads are shinier, absorb water better, and hold dye longer, making them ideal for quilting, home décor, and stable projects. Mercerized cotton threads are also known as crochet threads. Crochet threads are mainly used to make decorative items like doilies or filet crochet.

[Buy Crochet Threads](#)

While versatile, cotton threads lack stretch and aren't suitable for knits or activewear. Available in various weights and finishes, they range from fine threads for detailed work to thicker ones for heavy-duty tasks.

Cotton Thread Type	Suitable for	Needle Recommendation
<i>Mercerised cotton thread</i>	Crochets	Universal, sharp, or microtex
Organic cotton thread	Eco-friendly sewing, quilting	Universal, sharp, or microtex
Cotton-wrapped polyester	General sewing, garments	Universal or sharp

Or PolyCotton thread

[Buy Cotton-wrapped polyester Thread](#)

#3 Embroidery Thread

Embroidery threads come in many fibres, each with special qualities. *Rayon thread* is popular

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for its shine and low cost. *Polyester embroidery thread* has improved in strength and colour, making it versatile.

is better for heavier ones. Machine embroidery threads are different from hand embroidery floss, which comes in 6-strand skeins.

[Buy Embroidery threads](#)

#4 Tatting Cotton Head



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Tatting Lace Making

Tatting cotton thread is essential for lace-making. It is designed to be finer and smoother for easy knotting. The ideal thread sizes for tatting are 70 to 80, offering a perfect balance of strength and softness for durable, intricate designs.

Tatting Cotton Thread's mercerized finish ensures vibrant colours even after repeated washing. Thread size affects the thickness of your tatting; for example, Size 50 is thinner than Size 10. Popular options like Anchor Mercer and Finca Bobbin Lace thread come in various sizes, with Finca offering up to 900 meters per spool.

Choosing the right thread ensures that your tatting holds its shape, allowing for detailed, lasting designs.

[Buy Tatting Thread](#)

#5 Quilting Thread Types

These threads are typically made of cotton, polyester, or a blend and are treated to increase strength and colour and reduce lint, making them ideal for quilting. Many quilting threads are suitable for machine and hand quilting, with 40-weight threads offering control over stitches. Cotton thread is ideal for natural fabrics, while polyester is better for tougher projects.

[Buy Quilting Thread](#)

#6 Poly-Cotton Sewing Thread

Poly-cotton thread blends the strength of polyester with the softness of cotton, making it perfect for a wide range of fabrics, including synthetics and knits. This thread often has a wax or silicone finish, allowing it to glide smoothly through the fabric while sewing. The balance of polyester and cotton gives it strength, durability, and a soft, natural feel.

Poly-cotton thread is ideal for sewing clothes, home décor, and other projects. Its versatility and smooth sewing qualities make it a favourite choice for sewists at all skill levels.

[Buy Cotton-wrapped polyester Thread](#)

#7 Heavy-Duty Thread Types for Upholstery

Heavy-duty threads are designed for strong, durable sewing projects like upholstery and outdoor gear. Made from cotton, nylon, polyester, or silk, they are built to withstand the stress of furniture making and repairs.

These threads are stronger than regular threads, making them ideal for thick fabrics like canvas and duckcloth. Polyester threads are a great choice for outdoor projects as they resist UV rays,

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water, and wear, ensuring your items last longer.

[Buy Heavy Duty Threads](#)

Thread Type	Strength	UV Resistance	Outdoor Suitability
Polyester	High	Excellent	Highly suitable
Nylon	Exceptional	Limited	Suitable for some outdoor applications
Monofilament	Extremely high	Limited	Mainly for indoor use

#8 Rayon Sewing Thread

Rayon thread, also called viscose, is made from cellulose and is known for its shine and softness. It is ideal for decorative stitching and embroidery. While rayon threads look beautiful and flow smoothly, they are not as strong or colour-stable as polyester or cotton. They work best with light to medium fabrics and are perfect for creating silky, elegant garments. However, polyester is a better option for everyday clothing due to its durability and colour retention.

When using rayon thread, which is more delicate than polyester, it's important to adjust your machine settings for less tension. Thicker rayon threads make stitches more visible, so machine adjustments may be needed for the best results.

[Buy Viscose Rayon Thread](#)

Thread Type	Characteristics	Best Use
Rayon Thread	High sheen, soft, not as strong as polyester or cotton	Decorative stitching, embroidery, lightweight to medium-weight fabrics
Polyester Thread	Strong, colourfast, resistant to UV rays, rot, mildew, and chemicals	Everyday garment construction, all-purpose sewing
Nylon Thread	Extremely strong, rot-resistant	Various applications, including invisible sewing and upholstery

#9 Nylon Thread

Nylon thread is a strong and flexible choice, perfect for projects that need to stretch and endure. Its strength allows it to handle a lot of tension without breaking, and its flexibility ensures that stitches last longer as they stretch with the fabric.

[Buy Nylon Thread](#)

Nylon Thread Characteristics	Benefits
Exceptional Strength	Ideal for projects requiring durability and resistance to tearing
High Elasticity	Allows for stretch and recovery, making it suitable for indoor upholstery and cushions

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Nylon Thread Characteristics

Abrasion Resistance

Lack of UV Resistance

Benefits

Stands up well to repeated use and friction

Not recommended for outdoor projects with prolonged sun exposure

#10 Silk Sewing Thread

Silk thread is a luxurious choice known for its shine and smooth texture. It's ideal for delicate fabrics, fine details, and high-end sewing projects. Silk thread is flexible, preventing it from leaving fabric marks when pressed. This makes it perfect for fabric like silk and wool and for intricate work such as buttonholes and embroidery. It glides smoothly for a flawless finish.

Although silk thread is more expensive than other threads, its quality justifies the cost. It's versatile for delicate and sturdy projects and is available in various weights and colours. Silk thread requires careful handling and storage to maintain its quality and performance over time.

[Buy Silk Thread](#)

#11 Wool Sewing Thread



Wool for Knitting

Wool is a natural fibre obtained from the fleece of sheep, commonly used in knitting due to its warmth, elasticity, and versatility. It is soft, durable, and can retain heat, making it ideal for creating cozy garments like sweaters, scarves, and hats. Wool's natural elasticity allows it to stretch and return to its original shape, while its ability to absorb moisture without feeling damp makes it comfortable for wear in various climates. It comes in different weights and textures, catering to a wide range of knitting projects.

[Buy Wool for Knitting](#)

#12 Invisible Thread or Clear Thread or Monofilament Thread

Take your sewing to the next level with invisible thread. It looks like a fine fishing line and makes stitches almost invisible. This is great for projects where you want the fabric to be the main focus, not the thread. It's perfect for quilting, upholstering, Bead work or making gemstone jewellery.

[Buy Monofilament Thread](#)

This thread is made from nylon and comes in clear and smokey shades. It's *strong and durable*, perfect for sewing that needs to last. Its *smooth and pliable* texture makes it easy to use without snags or breaks.

For the best results, use it with a thread net and a metallic needle. This combo helps the thread feed smoothly and makes your sewing look professional and seamless.

Feature	Benefit
Nylon monofilament construction	Zero breakage and high durability for various applications
Clear and smokey tint options	Blends seamlessly with both light and dark fabrics
Smooth, pliable texture	Easy gliding through the fabric, reducing snags and breakages
Recommended use with thread net and metallic needle	Ensures smooth thread feeding and professional-looking results

#13 Metallic Sewing Thread or Zari Thread



Zari Metallic Thread

Metallic thread is perfect for adding sparkle to your sewing projects. Its polyester core is wrapped in shiny metal foil, making it ideal for embellishments, crafting delicate jewellery, Aari work, and hand embroidery.

While it adds elegance to clothes, home décor, and quilts, metallic thread requires special care. It can break easily, so if you use it for a machine stitch, adjust your machine settings and choose the right needle to avoid issues. Avoid using it with high heat or steam, as the metal coating can be damaged.

[Buy Metallic Sewing Thread](#)

Start by testing it on scrap fabric and practice to master it. With the right techniques, metallic thread can become a key part of your sewing toolkit, bringing a touch of sophistication to your creations.

#14 Variegated Thread

Make your sewing stand out with variegated thread. These threads mix colours in a way that looks like an ombre or kaleidoscope. They're perfect for quilters, embroiderers, and topstitchers who want to add a pop of colour. Variegated floss is mainly used in hand embroidery.

Variegated threads come in many colours, from bright to soft pastels. They're made from different fibres and weights, so they work well in many sewing projects. This makes them very versatile.

[Buy Variegated Floss](#)

#15 Elastic Sewing Thread

Elastic thread is a must-have for sewing. It makes fabric stretchy and form-fitting, making it great for waistbands, cuffs, and smocked designs. This thread shrinks with steam, making gathers more defined. It's perfect for smocked clothes, where stretch is vital.

The elastic thread goes in the bobbin, while the regular thread is on top. This setup allows the fabric to stretch as you sew.

[Buy Elastic Sewing Thread](#)

#16 Cotton Perle Thread

Cotton perle thread, or pearl cotton, is a non-divisible, twisted embroidery thread with a lustrous finish. Available in various sizes (commonly sizes 5 and 8), it's ideal for hand embroidery, decorative stitching, and needlework.

Heavier sizes (3 and 5) are used for needlepoint and surface embroidery, while finer sizes (8 and 12) are great for tatting and crocheted edges. With proper adjustments, they can also be used in machine embroidery.

[Buy Pearl Cotton Thread](#)

#17 Linen Sewing Thread

Linen thread is strong and durable and has a natural, slightly textured finish. It is mainly used for book binding and gift wrapping, but it's also used for sewing heavy fabrics like canvas, denim, and linen.

Linen thread can be used for hand stitching and is often used in embroidery, as it holds its shape well. It's great for projects that require strength and structure, like upholstery and heavy-duty sewing.

[Buy Linen Thread](#)

#18 Topstitching thread

Topstitching thread is a thicker, decorative thread used for visible seams on garments, such as pockets or bags. Typically weighing 30 and made of 3 tightly wound strands, it adds a bold, professional finish to projects.

Due to its thickness, a topstitching thread requires a topstitching needle and should be paired with an all-purpose thread in the bobbin. It's perfect for creating standout seams that highlight your craftsmanship.

[Buy Topstitching Thread](#)

#19 Jeans Sewing Thread

Jeans thread is a heavy-duty, thick thread specifically designed for denim and other heavy fabrics. It is typically made of polyester or cotton and is known for its durability and strength.

This thread is ideal for sewing seams on jeans, jackets, bag closures, seat covers, and other sturdy materials. Its robust construction ensures that seams can handle the stress and wear typical of denim clothing.

[Buy Jeans Sewing Thread](#)

#20 Serger Thread (Overlocker Thread)

Serger thread, also known as overlocker thread, is designed for use with overlock or serger machines. It is finer than regular sewing thread, allowing for efficient, stretchable seams and edge finishes.

The texture filament thread described in the next section is also used in overlock machines.

[Buy Overlock Thread](#)

#21 Textured Filament Thread

Textured filament thread, often referred to as "wooly nylon," is a highly elastic, soft thread with a fluffy texture and luxurious sheen. This thread creates stretchy, flexible seams on knit fabrics and other stretch materials.

Commonly used in **overlock machines**, textured filament thread is ideal for rolled hems. Its texture allows for excellent coverage, ensuring raw fabric edges are neatly hidden for a professional finish. Its soft, elastic nature also provides stretch without compromising the durability of seams.

[Buy Wooly Nylon Thread](#)

#22 Basting Thread

Basting thread is a temporary thread used to hold fabric pieces together before the final stitching. It is also known as a tacking stitch. Any general-purpose thread can be used for this purpose.

Basting thread is lightweight and usually of contrasting colour, making it easy to spot and pull out after use. It's often used in hand sewing or with a sewing machine for temporary stitching, such as tacking hems, pleats, or fitting muslins.

Conclusion

Understanding the different types of sewing threads is essential for achieving the best results in your sewing projects. Whether you're stitching delicate fabrics, creating bold embroidery, or working on heavy-duty materials, the right thread can make all the difference. From cotton to woolly nylon, metallic to basting threads, each type serves a unique purpose, ensuring your creations are strong, beautiful, and long-lasting.

If you're eager to learn more about essential sewing tools, be sure to explore our other blog posts. Dive into guides on cutting tools, measuring tools, and the must-haves for beginner sewing kits. These resources will help you build a solid foundation and take your sewing skills to the next level! Happy stitching!



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