

Tatted lace jewelry

Learn to knot beautiful lace jewelry with a convenient plastic shuttle.

by **Marilee Rockley**

Tatting is a knotting technique that originated in the 19th century and results in beautiful, durable lace. Tatting consists of just one knot, called the double stitch (ds), which is formed into rings and chains that are joined with picots, creating a marvelous variety of patterns. Tatting can be done with either a shuttle or a long, thin needle. This workshop explains shuttle tatting.

stepbystep

Preparing the shuttle

To prepare the shuttle, hold it so the pointed tip faces up and to the left. Insert your thread into the hole in the center of the shuttle, and wind the cord up and over toward the back. Bring it up toward the front, and continue winding until the shuttle is full. Don't trim the thread from the spool.

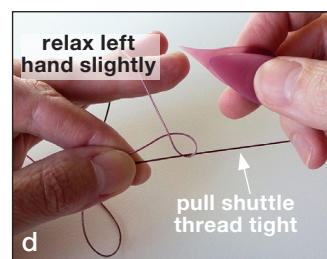
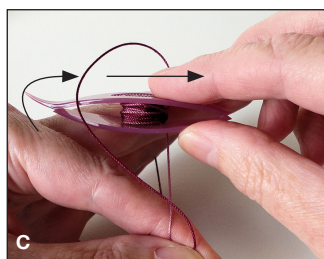
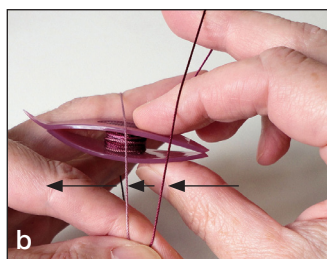
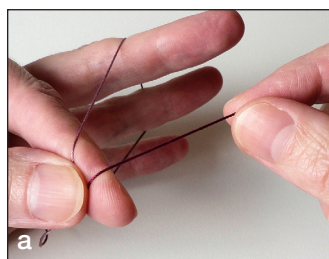
Whether you are making rings or chains, the double stitch is made of two halves. The process for making the double stitch is the same for both rings and chains, but there is a difference in how you arrange the working thread. It is best to practice making rings, chains, and picots before trying a project. I'll explain the double stitch in the context of rings first.

Tatting a ring

[1] To tat a ring (R), wrap the thread coming from the shuttle (the "shuttle thread") clockwise around your left hand to form the "working thread." Pinch the thread into a ring with your thumb and forefinger (**photo a**). Leave about 5 in. (13 cm) of thread between the pinch and the shuttle, which you will hold in the right hand.

[2] To tat the first half of the double stitch, pass the shuttle under both the shuttle thread and the working thread (**photo b**), and then bring it back over the working thread and under the shuttle thread (**photo c**). Pull the shuttle thread tight with a quick jerk to the right, while closing the left hand slightly to loosen the tension on the working thread (**photo d**). This action will cause the loop just formed to transfer or "flip" over to the working thread. This flip is the key to successful tatting and requires some practice to master, but when learned is very easy to do and happens automatically. Pull the loop snug around the shuttle thread, which is now the core that slides inside the stitch.

[3] To tat the second half of the double stitch, let the shuttle thread hang down

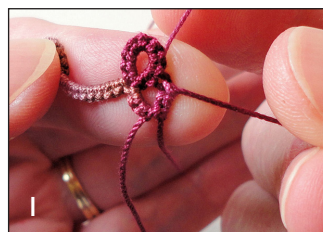
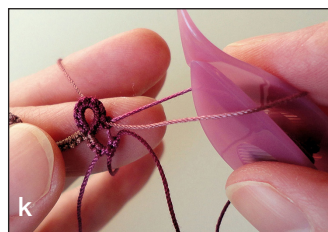
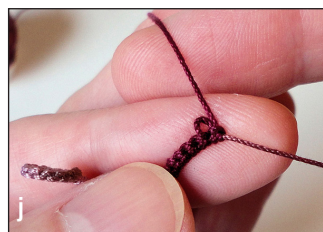
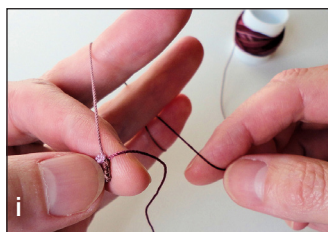
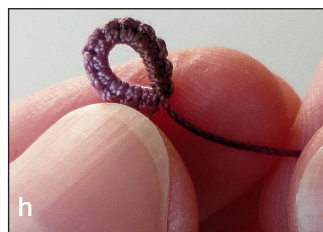
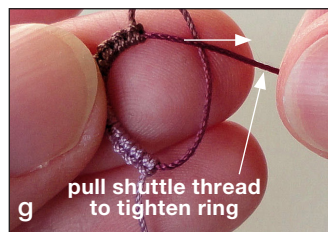
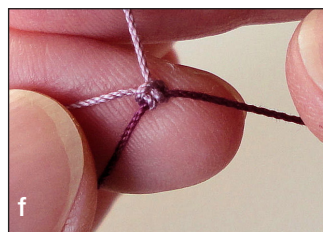
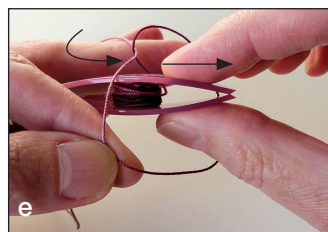




A wide range of designs can be achieved with tatting, as seen in Marilee's beautiful examples.

below the shuttle, and pass the shuttle over and then back under the working thread, and over the shuttle thread (**photo e**). Flip the loop just formed to the working thread as you did in the first half. You now have a completed double stitch (**photo f**).

[4] Repeat steps 2 and 3 for the desired number of double stitches. As you tat, the circle of working thread around your left hand will become smaller because it is being used up to form the double stitches. Whenever necessary, pull the core thread below your thumb to make the circle of working thread bigger. When all the double stitches required for the ring are done, pull the shuttle thread (**photo g**) until the stitches meet to close the ring completely (**photo h**).



Tatting a chain

When tatting a chain (Ch), drape the thread from the spool over your left hand, and wrap it around your pinkie a few times to control the tension (**photo i**). This will be the working thread. The process of making the double stitch is the same as in a ring. When the chain is completed, slide the stitches together to form a curve.

Picots

To form a picot (-), pinch the working thread about $\frac{1}{8}$ – $\frac{1}{4}$ in. (3–6 mm) from the last dou-

ble stitch. Work the first half of a double stitch, and hold it in place while making the second half. Slide the completed double stitch next to the previous double stitch; the small loop created between them is the picot (**photo j**).

Bead picots

To make a bead picot, slide one or more beads adjacent to the previous double stitch, and work a double stitch.

Joining

To join (+), use the point of the shuttle or a small crochet hook to pull the working thread through the picot you are joining to. Continue pulling the working thread through the picot until there is a large enough loop for the shuttle to fit through. Pass the shuttle through this loop (**photo k**), and then tighten the loop so that it lies around the core at the same tension

materials

tatting samples

- crochet cotton, size 10
- tatting shuttle

"Points in time" earrings, p. 26

- 6 8° seed beads
- 2 6 mm jump rings
- 2 4 mm jump rings
- pair of earring findings
- 5 yd. (4.5 m) crochet cotton, size 10
- tatting shuttle
- steel crochet hook, .7 mm (optional)
- sewing needle
- 2 pairs of pliers

Marilee Rockley discovered tatting as a girl when she found a needlework how-to guide stashed among her mother's art books. Between those sketchy instructions, library books, and trial and error, she taught herself and fell in love with the art. To see more of her work and watch her tatting videos, visit yarnplayertats.blogspot.com.



as the first half of a double stitch (**photo l**). In my patterns, I usually complete the join with the second half of a double stitch and count the completed join as the first double stitch in the next part of the pattern.

"Points in time" earrings

[1] String three 8° seed beads onto the thread, and then wind about 1 yd. (.9 m) of

Reading a tatting pattern

Many tatting patterns consist of little more than lines of abbreviations, much like a crochet or knitting pattern. Each line in a tatting pattern indicates a new section.

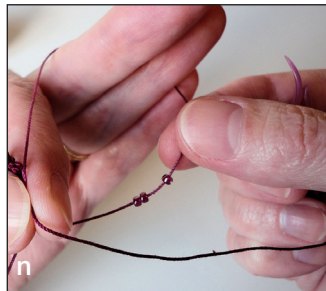
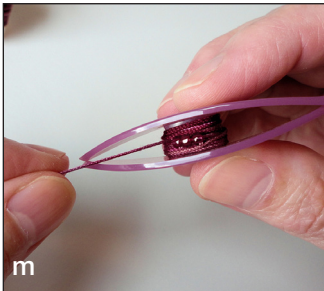
- **Chains and rings** will be indicated by an abbreviation (**Ch** or **R**) and a number. The number tells you how many double stitches to make in that particular chain or ring. For example, R 12 means to make a ring with 12 double stitches. Ch 9 means make a chain with nine double stitches.
- **Picots** are indicated with a dash (-). R 8-2 means make a ring starting with eight double stitches followed by a picot and two double stitches.
- **Joins** are indicated with a plus sign (+). R 2+8 means make a ring starting with two double stitches, and then join and make eight more double stitches. In some patterns, the location of the join is indicated with text, otherwise it is often assumed that the element should be joined to the picot in the previous chain or ring.

Different actions within a section will be separated by commas. For instance, R 2+9, bead picot, 9-2 means: Begin a ring with two double stitches, join to the picot of the previous ring, and then work nine double stitches. Next, make a bead picot. Finally, work nine double stitches, make a picot, work two double stitches, and close the ring.



Many sections end with the abbreviation **RW**, which stands for "reverse work." This means to turn the work upside down, so that the threads are in correct position for the next part of the pattern.

These are just the basic terms, though you can create many wonderful designs with these few techniques.



thread onto the shuttle. Do not cut the thread from the spool. Slide the three 8's onto the shuttle, and wind them back a few turns to keep them out of your way until needed (**photo m**).

[2] Begin tatting the earring at the top. Close each ring after it is finished.

- R 12. RW.
- Ch 9. RW.
- R 8-2. RW.
- Ch 3. RW.

[3] You are now about to work the bottom ring. Before you do, slide the three 8's from the shuttle onto the working thread around your

left hand before starting the ring. Keep the beads at the back of your hand until needed (**photo n**).

- R 2+9 (join to the last picot of the previous ring), bead picot, 9-2. RW.
- Ch 3. RW.
- R 2+8 (join to the last picot of the previous ring). RW.
- Ch 9.

[4] To finish the earring, sew the core thread through the base of the first ring (**photo o**). Tie the core thread and the shuttle thread with a square knot (How-Tos), and hide the ends by sewing under the tops of a few

double stitches. Pull the threads tightly, and trim.

[5] Open a 6 mm jump ring (How-Tos), and attach the top tatted ring. Open a 4 mm jump ring, and attach the 6 mm jump ring to an ear-ring finding.

[6] Make a second earring. •

