

Basic Shuttle Tatting Instructions

Materials:

Tatting shuttle
Fine Yarn, Size 10

Yarn

Yarn should be smooth for ease of knotting. The higher the size number, the finer the yarn. Size 10 is considered best for beginners. A thicker yarn can be trickier for learning. Size 20 is also common. Size 100 is for very detailed crafts, such as jewelry.

Winding the Shuttle

Insert the thread through the hole and tie. Wind thread counter-clockwise around the shuttle until full, but not overflowing the sides. Winding the shuttle and during a project, the yarn will get twisted during the tatting process. Periodically let the shuttle dangle loose to let the yarn untwist.

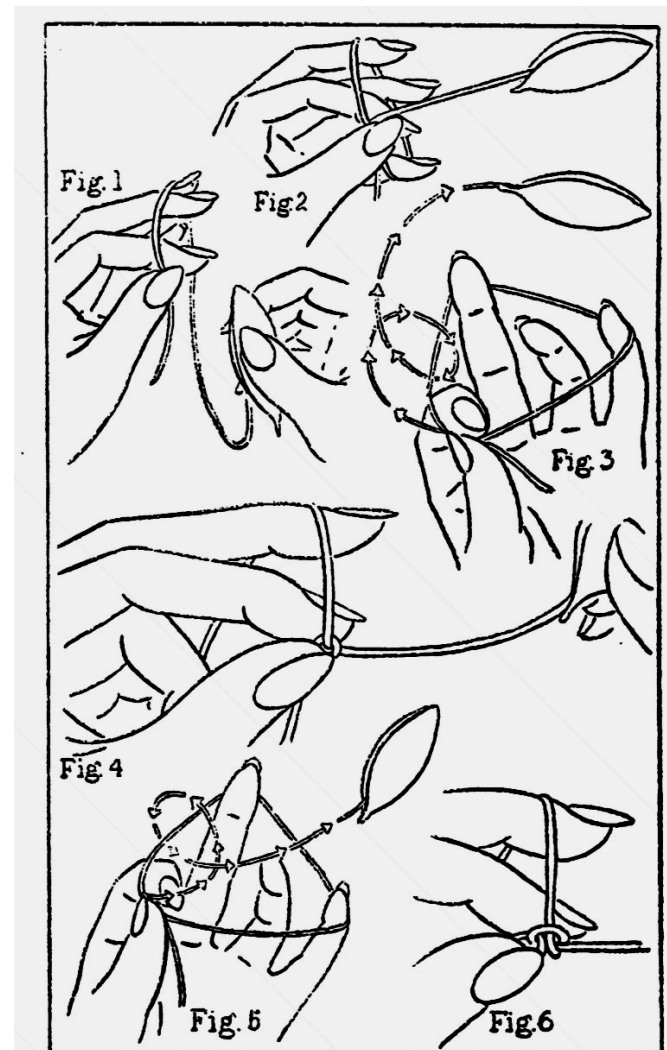
Hand Positioning for a Ring (R)

With the left hand, pinch near the end of the yarn between your thumb and forefinger. (Fig. 1)
With the right hand, hold the shuttle between your index finger and thumb. Unwind yarn from the shuttle as you go. Wrap the yarn over then under the left hand. Those fingers should be splayed. Add that yarn to your finger pinch. (Fig. 2) This will be the wrapping thread. Unwind enough yarn for about 12 inches/30 cm. This will be the core thread.

The Double Stitch (DS), core technique of tatting

Also known as the Lark's Head Knot, Lanyard Hitch, and Baggage Tag Loop, among others. This is formed in two halves, also called Single Stitch (SS).

Wrap the yarn under the right hand while you move the shuttle under the yarn stretched between your index and middle fingers. (Fig. 3)
Move the shuttle beyond and above the yarn and pull through the loop around your right hand.



Soften the tension of your middle finger. Pull the shuttle back until the core thread yarn coming from it is tight. The loop of the knot will transfer from the core thread to the wrapping thread. Reestablish the tension. Slide the knot loop over the core thread toward your pinched fingers until it is snug. This is the first half of the stitch, or Single Stitch (SS). (Fig. 4)

Wrap the yarn over the right hand while you move the shuttle over the yarn stretched between your index and middle fingers. Slide the shuttle behind and below the yarn and pull through the loop around your right hand.(Fig. 5)

Pull the shuttle back until the core thread yarn coming from it is tight. Reestablish the tension. Slide the loop of yarn toward your pinched fingers until it is snug. This is the second half of the stitch. (Fig. 6)

Repeat these two actions until you've reached the number of Double Stitches (DS) called for in the pattern. Unwind the shuttle whenever you need more yarn. The yarn around your left hand should slide smoothly as you make the knots. If it doesn't slide at all, you may not have pulled the core thread taut enough during a stitch to transfer the loop to the wrapping thread. Undo your stitches until you get to the problem and correct it.

Closing the Ring (R)

When you finish the pattern of stitches for a ring, check to make sure you got them correctly. A ring can be reopened, but it's annoying. The ring is closed by removing your left hand from the loop of yarn. Hold the stitches in place with your left hand as you tug steadily on the core thread with your right hand. The loop will get smaller until the two ends of the stitches meet. You can use your fingers to even out the spacing of the stitches along the loop. The pattern will direct you whether to leave a space between loops or not.

Making a Picot (p)

Picots are functional or decorative gaps in the stitches that form loops when drawn tight. The gap is formed during the first half of the stitch. Varying the length of the gap can lend different effects. Placing your thumb on the loop of the first half helps hold the size of the picot while you make the second half of the double stitch. Pull the yarn snug. A picot counts as the first stitch for its segment of the pattern.



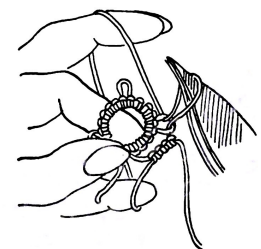
Open picot



Closed picot

Joining Rings with Picots (j)

Joining rings makes for a more cohesive design. Joins are made where picots would go. After you complete one ring, the next ring uses a picot space to join to the designated picot instead of making its own picot in that location of the pattern.



When you get to the join location, place the designated picot over the wrapping thread yarn. Insert the point of the shuttle through the picot and scoop through that top piece of yarn. Draw enough of the wrapping thread through the picot to slide the shuttle through the ensuing loop. Pull the yarn snug, so the loop rests against the previous stitches. This counts as the first half of the double stitch. Then do the second half of the double stitch.

This counts as the first stitch in that section of the pattern, just as the picot would. Continue the pattern.

Starfish Instructions

First ring: make 2DS, p, 6DS, p, 6DS, p, 2DS. Check and close the ring.

Second ring: start this ring as close to the previous as possible. Make 2DS. Join to the third p on the previous ring, 6DS, p, 6DS, p, 2DS. Check and close the ring.

Third and fourth rings: Same as for second ring

Fifth ring: make 2DS. Join to the third p on the previous ring, 6DS, p, 6DS. Join to the first p on the first ring. THIS MAY BE AWKWARD.

Instead of pulling the loop thread through to the front of the picot, pull it from the front of the picot towards the back. You can flip over the starfish if that makes it easier. Make sure the core thread still slides easily. Make 2DS. Before closing the ring, hold the two end threads together to simulate the ring. If the final stitches seem to twist a little at the picot join, you'll want to correct them first. It's much less work to undo stitches before closing the ring. When you think it's good enough, close the ring. Tie off threads.

What now? You can paint your starfish or leave it pristine and attach to a garment or accessories.

Resources:

YouTube: @Frivolité, @SparrowSpite, @BryceHistorically

AntiquePatternLibrary.org Keyword search: tatting

Tatting instructions illustration from The Work Basket. Vol. 9, #4, p 6, 1944, Antique Pattern Library, Do Not Sell

Picot illustrations from The Priscilla Tatting 1. p 4, The Priscilla Publishing Company, 1909, Antique Pattern Library, Do Not Sell

Joining illustration from Star Book 42: Revised Beginners Manual: Knitting, Crochet, Tatting. p 29, The American Thread Company, 1944, Antique Pattern Library, Do Not Sell

Starfish pattern adapted from "Tatted Pointed Edging" p. 8, Tatting and Netting. Butterick Publishing Co, 1895, Antique Pattern Library, Do Not Sell