

Supplies

- Quilt Block or Background fabric
- Stabilizer (Floriani Medium Weight Tearaway used in video)
- Heavy Weight Decorative Threads size 12 and larger in various colors
- Yarns and Cords
- Couching Foot to accommodate thread, yarn or cord diameter (see descriptions below)
- Small crochet hook or large hand sewing needle to bury cord or thread
- Circle Template or Circle Sewing tool to fit your machine

Instructions

Thread and yarn couching adds interest to quilt blocks or the fabric used to make quilt blocks. Consider how the finished quilt will be laundered and match the wash-ability of any fibers used to embellish the quilt. Specialty feet make precise placement of yarn and even multiple threads simple while stitching the fibers to the fabric. Simple zig zag stitching and decorative stitches are both useful as securing stitches. The thread used to stitch the fibers down can either blend in or add additional interest to the process.

Any machine brand will have specialty feed for couching. When choosing a foot, consider if the opening or openings will accommodate the thickness of the fiber. Consider how the fibers will be loaded onto the foot. Several different types are available:

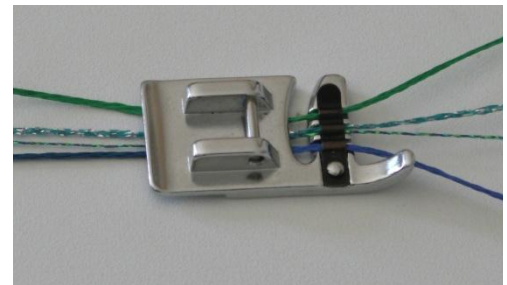
- Some feet have thread guides that need to be threaded through the permanent holes in the



foot. Thread the fibers into the guides before attaching the foot to the machine. The advantage of this foot for multiple threads is the fibers can not slip out of the guides while stitching. Even though the foot will keep the fibers in place for stitching, they can tangle just before entering the guides. Create a threading jig and hold the strands carefully to keep the threads from tangling before they get to the foot. This foot type usually will accommodate smaller threads. For ease in threading, floss threaders as shown in the photo are available in the dental care supplies section of most stores.



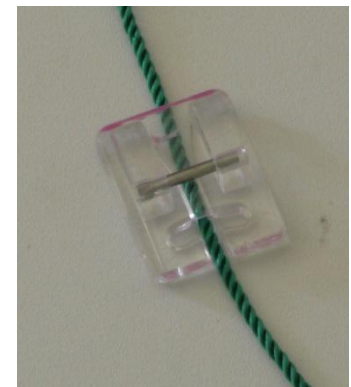
- When changing different fibers multiple times, a “snap in” couching foot will save time. This foot can be loaded while still attached to the machine. The disadvantage of this foot is the fibers can pull out of the individual channels while stitching. When using this foot, check periodically that the fibers are in the proper guides.



- Adjustable couching feet can accommodate a variety of size strands. The opening has a sliding support that can be adjusted to keep the fiber centered. Load the fiber and adjust the size of the guide before attaching the foot onto the machine.



- Piping feet are available in a variety of sizes. This foot controls the cord with a channel running under the foot. Choose a foot with a channel that accommodates the size of cord with not too much wiggle room. In the video the Baby Lock Mini Piping foot held the small cord in place.



Embellish the Fabric Before Piecing



Modify any fabric before creating pieces in your project. Apply the fibers in any pattern and density to the fabric. The fabric will need to be stabilized to support the additional weight of the embellishments. Choose a tear away stabilizer such as Floriani Medium Tearaway or a permanent fusible stabilizer such as Floriani Mesh Fusible. The ends of the fibers can be secured in the seam allowance and consider this when creating the fabric and cutting the pieces.

The pattern of the couching threads will be a bold or subtle statement depending on color choice and fiber thickness. The pattern may be the entire focus of the quilt. Stitching various threads in a circle creates endless design possibilities. To stitch a circle, either mark the shape on the fabric with a template or use a specialty circle sewing tool. Many Sew Steady Extension tables have built-in circle sewing features built in. To use an extension table circle feature, find the center of the desired circle and use the supplied pin to pierce the fabric at the center mark. Insert into one of the holes molded into the table. To create a different size circle, move the pin to a different hole. To create concentric circles, don't move the pin away from the center mark. This technique works for any pierce-able fabric such that a pin will not leave a permanent hole. Leather or vinyl are not suitable for this particular technique and must be marked for circular stitching.



Embellish the Block or Quilt After Piecing

Add fibers to a block or quilt to create interest and additional dimensionality to the project. Couching cord around a block or next to binding looks like delicate piping and is much easier to sew. Add the embellishment to completed blocks before they are joined and the fiber ends can be secured in the seam allowance. Couching can also be added while quilting the project. To bury fibers in the middle of a project, use a large eye hand sewing needle or a small crochet hook to pull the fiber end into the middle of the quilt and through the batting. Insert the head of the crochet hook carefully between the fibers and about an inch away from the desired spot. Push the hook through to the top at the point of burying the fiber. Hook the fiber and carefully pull it through. Clip the end of the fiber so that it buries inside

the quilt. When burying multiple threads or a cord twisted with multiple threads, pull the strands through one at a time. If the fiber is dark and the quilt fabric is light pay careful attention to avoid the fiber showing through the background.

