

# Tatting

## Overview & Tool Basics

By Emma McConnell & Joan Thomas Oct 2018

Thanks for joining us as we share our experience about tatting and it's tools.

# Tatting – What is it?

- A form of lace making (knotted lace)
- For more tatting search the Internet:  
<http://abctattingpatterns.com/history/>



Left – “Lady Hoare” style tatting shuttle  
Top – Shuttle used for netting

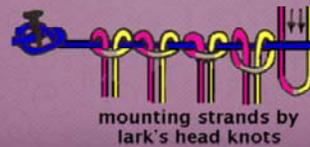
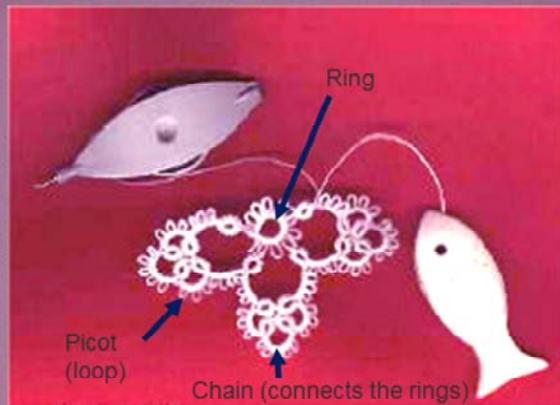
First a little on the basics of tatting for those who are unfamiliar.

There are those who believe that tatting came from a skill known as netting (which employed a shuttle very much like the shuttle used for tatting today except on a larger scale) which was used by fishermen to weave a net to harvest their crop of fish from the sea; or even to make small treasures for their significant others. Some of the more fancy rope knotting done, while at sea, had a sharp resemblance to the tatting that we are familiar with today.

Although it's difficult to fathom that tatting was not part of an ancient art, there's no references of tatting pre-1800. In fact tatting, for a period of time, has all but died out and has only in recent years become revived. You'll probably find more references on the Internet, than at your local library.

# What is Tatting?

Shuttles, wound with thread, are used to create Lark's Head (hitch) knots in either a ring or chain pattern.



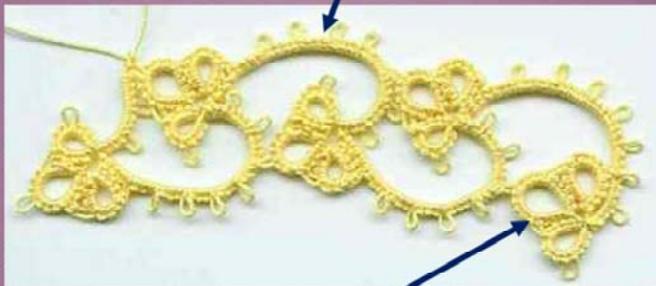
A shuttle with thread are used to make the lace. There are several variations, 2 shuttles, 1 shuttle and a ball of thread, a tatting needle, or your fingers...but basically, a shuttle with thread.

You form the stitch using your hand. While the resulting lace looks quite delicate, tatting is actually simple to do. The tatted piece is made up of basically 'two half hitch' knots which are used not as a clove hitch, but as a Lark's Head knot (also Cow Hitch) where the second half hitch is formed to vertically mirror the first half hitch. This double stitch is used over and over to form a pattern. Extra thread used between double stitches creates "picots" or loops of thread.

Tatting, unlike the crochet chain stitch, does not unravel; you have to pick it apart or cut the knot out and start again.

# Basic Tatted Stiches

A chain with 4 picots (loops are just spaced out double-stitches)



A group of 3 rings

These are the core stitches. As with other fiber arts, consistent tension is key, along with gaging and the proper threads.

Pearl cottons – 6 or 3 ply. Any thread that is smooth and doesn't break when you pull it tight is a candidate.

# Threads

- Use any fiber that has strength enough not to break when you close a ring, and is smooth enough to slide.
- Just like other fiber arts, the diameter affects stitch counts and finished size.
- Such variety now – especially on the Internet.



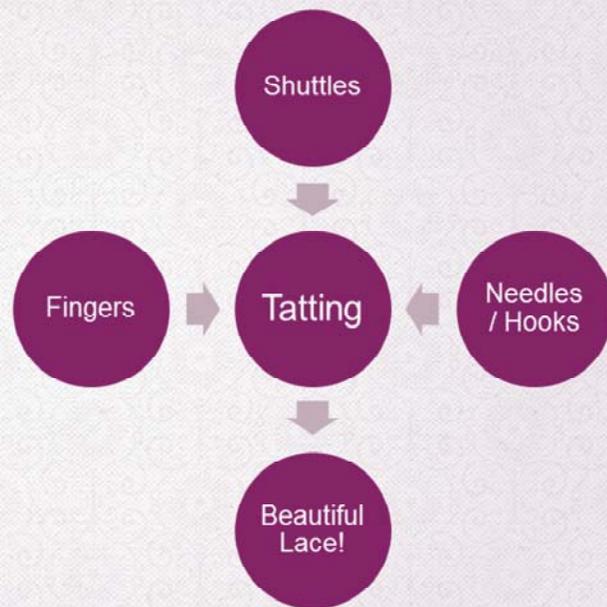
The impact of thread size on a tatted sample.

Image from the [Tatting corner](#):

My favorite brands: Lizbeth, DMC, and Hy-mark (ecru/black are the only colors)

# Tools

- Styles
- Materials
- Pros & Cons



Now lets get talking about the tools that we can use to make beautiful tatted lace.

# Fingers

Not finger tutting, but  
finger tatting.

You Tube -

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H5DKLg0ZmHA>



Why?

- When you are at the end of the thread and it's slid off the shuttle and you are close to finish your piece
- Don't have a shuttle handy and want to see how a thread would tat up
- Tatting an earring and want to put beads on as you are tatting

# Needles

- Needle size and thread size matter.
- Tatting knots on needles, and slide them off – tatting can unwind.
- You can tat with a sewing needle as if you were finger tatting.

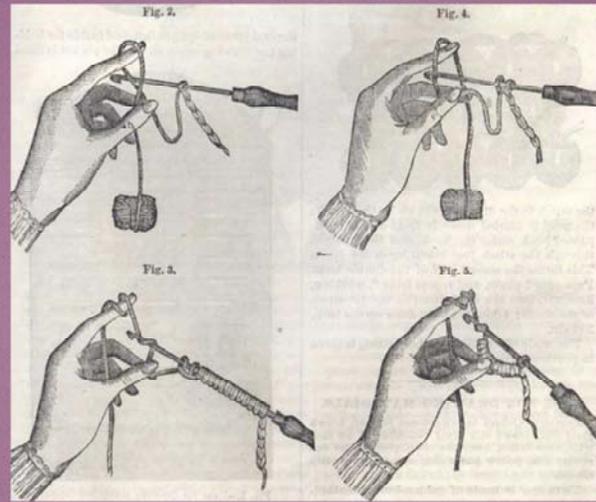


Learn needle tatting on You Tube: [TotusMel](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC6t8fZSznzcc)

Cro-tat ; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J4OSfZSznzcc>

# Crochet Hook

- “Cro-tat” is similar to needle tatting
- Tool has a long straight shank & smaller head than regular hook
- [Not a new technique](#)



Learn cro-tatting on You Tube: [J4OSfZSnzcc](#)

You may think this is a new technique, however, instructions for Crochet Tatting are given in [Harper's bazaar: Volume I, Number 17, page 261](#) and for "Tatting with a Crochet Hook" are given in 1869 Godey's Lady Book, Vol. 78, pages 271 and 272.

# Shuttles

Great reference book: *Tatting Shuttles of American Collectors*, by Heidi Nakayama

Joan's collection in 2014



Custom Aero's  
by J. Paulson  
[LaCossette](#)  
[ETSY shop](#)



Online blog:

<http://cecisfrivolite.blogspot.com/p/tatting-shuttle-collection.html?m=1>



There are so many styles & materials for shuttles. I could go on for a quite a while!  
I compiled this reference table to get us started.

# Shuttles

Material	Pros	Cons
Metal	Inexpensive, common	Can leave black marks on thread, sharp sides; tips can bend & break
Wood	Beautiful variety	Finish wears off, glue can break, ends can wear & fray thread
Bone/shell	Carved beauty, light, typically small	For thin threads only, tight ends can fray thread
Resin/Plastic/ 3D printed	Inexpensive, colorful	Can crack over time
Style	Pros	Cons
Post	Height can accommodate beads on thread	Clicking noise, end separation if overwound
Bobbin	Can preload bobbins/swap out	Not always interchangeable; waste thread if you wind too many
Flat	No worry on size and quantity of beads	Contact with fingers etc can dirty thread; thread can unwind easy
Tear Drop	Less tear on thread	Can feel small, unbalanced
Double (Pelc)	Encasing or double stitches	
Celtic	Narrow for weaving	Not as much thread; sometimes flat
Ends: Pic/hook	Catch picot joins easy & add beads	Sometimes too big for beads; Can stick into your bag, break off



Short – long – but within range of most fingers.  
Cut winder end off aers

Center is not a celtic shuttle but a netting shuttle. Net making for beginners -  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CZfWCyv1eFo>

# Other Tools

- Crochet hook to add beads, join picots
- Picot gages for consistent loops
- Awl for shaping picots when blocking
- Pillow with pins for blocking
- Needles & pics for undoing stitches
- Starch, stiffener, or just water
- Peroxide/water for cleaning



Now lets get talking about the tools that we can use to make beautiful tatted lace.

Crochet hooks for bead joins can get pretty small – like size 12-16!

Gages can be flat or round - or dots tattooed on your finger.

Just like with other textile projects, blocking gives that finished look. Awl or punches with pins are used after wetting the piece. I use my bobbin pillow sometimes as a block surface.

Needles and hooks – I like to use aero shuttles because of the tiny hook, but sometimes, I need a needle to pick the knot out.

# Emma's Favorite Tools



Emma's collection of favorites



Needles are a essential to getting out knots – but be careful not to fray the thread!



Sewing boxes make a good place to store shuttles once they start multiplying.



Some different wooded shuttles and antique ones with awls and a button hook.



Other favorites!

# Learn How to Tat!

You Tube - Search for tatting.

- [Georgia Seitz online](#)

Internet sites:

- [Sharon Briggs](#)

In person with a guild!

- [Oklahoma Lacemakers](#)

- [International Org of Lace-IOLA](#)

Uses:

- **Motifs** – snowflake ornaments, note cards, jewelry & earrings, fabric appliqués, doilies, tablecloths...
- **Edgings** – hankies, doilies, shirt collars...
- **Ornament covers**
- **Framed art**
- **Gifts** – baby cap & booties, note cards, sun catchers, etc.
- *Keep your fingers busy while waiting for the kids!*

Please take a look at my scrap book, for samples, photos of tatted pieces from the annual Finger Lakes Tatting conventions in Hector, NY, my shuttle collection, etc.



Questions?

Thank you for listening and sharing the day with us!