



A Needleart Tip by Linda Kay

# Making Twisted Cord

Twisted cord can be made out of any thread or fiber. What you choose for your twisted cord depends on what color, texture, and properties you want in it, which are in turn determined by the project the cord will go on.

## FORMULAS

Formulas are handy when creating threads as they give you a starting place to make the size you want. However, it is wise to remember that some adjustment may be necessary at times.

The general rule of thumb for twisted cord is start with **3 times the finished length you need**. Experiment with the number of strands to get the thickness you need.

Experimentation will be necessary when working with different base threads *{the thread used as the building materials to create a new thread}*.

## TWIST DIRECTION

Different threads twist different directions.

Rayon & silk have a Z-twist.

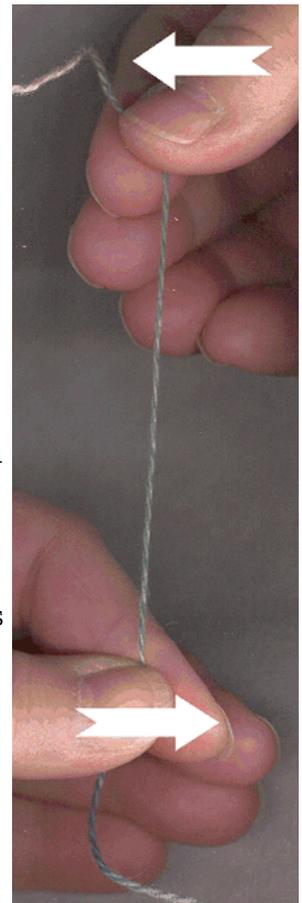
Cotton, linen, & metallics have an S-twist.



This will determine which direction you twist a thread to create a new thread.



Before creating a new thread analyze the base thread carefully to determine the twist. Grasp a length of thread between the thumb and forefingers of each hand.



Roll your thumbs toward the tips of your fingers. If the thread twist gets tighter as you roll, the thread is an S-twist

If the twist loosens as you roll, the thread is a Z-twist.

In the instructions following I will give the direction you need to work when dealing with an S-twist thread. Immediately following *[in brackets and italicized I will give the direction for a Z-twist thread]*.



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## ONE COLOR

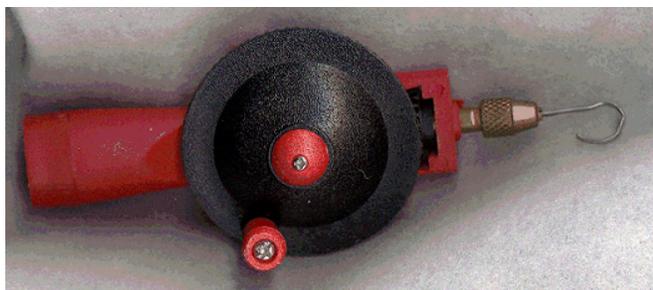
An S-twist thread will make a Z-twist cord and a Z-twist thread will make an S-twist cord.

Select the base thread you wish to use. A #12 perle makes a nice twisted cord for scissors fobs. For something larger, such as finishing a box or edging a wall hanging, try #8 perle. I prefer to use six strands of my base thread as it is an easy number to work with. For a thicker cord I usually change to a thicker base thread.



Cut six strands of base thread 3 times the finished length you need. For example, if you need 10" of finished cord begin with 30" of base thread. Tie an overhand knot in both ends of the strands.

Have someone hold one knotted end or attach firmly to a kitchen knob or cup hook.



Attach a twisting device to the free knot.

A twisting device can be a pencil, a small hand drill with a cup hook inserted in the end, or a small hand mixer with a slow speed.

**Keeping the strands taut**, turn the knob so the strands twist in a clockwise [counter-clockwise] direction until the strands begin to kink in the middle. Still keeping the strands as

taut as possible, have someone grab the middle of the strands and pull down as you bring the two knotted ends together. **Keep the strands taut while you do this!**

When the knotted ends are together, have the person holding the middle slowly release it, letting the strands twist around each other. The twisting needs to be controlled to keep it even along the length of the twist. Stroking along the length of the cord helps keep or smooth kinks out.

When the strands have finished twisting around each other, tie the two knotted ends together just inside the knots. Cut the two original knots off the cord.

The cord can now be used for many different projects. Just remember the ends must always be secured in some way as the cord will untwist if they aren't.

## TWO COLORS

Measure out **half** the proper length and the correct number of strands of two different colors. For example, if you need a 10" twisted cord measure out 15" of each color and the desired number of strands of each. Tie a knot in one end of each color.



Tie the loose ends to each other to create a cord twice as long - i.e. in the example your would now have a cord approximately 30" long. Now treat the tied together strands as a single strand.



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Anchor one end (have someone hold or attach to a knob). Attach the twisting device to the other end. **Keeping the strands taut**, turn the knob so the strands twist in a clockwise [counterclockwise] direction until the strands begin to kink in the middle. Still keeping the strands as taut as possible, have someone grab the middle of the strands and pull gently down as you bring the two knotted ends together. **Keep the strands taut while you do this!**

When the knotted ends are together, have the person holding the middle slowly release it, letting the strands twist around each other. The twisting needs to be controlled to keep it even along the length of the twist. Stroking along the length of the cord helps keep or smooth kinks out.



This will produce a cord with two distinctive colors.

If you want two colors (or any number of colors) but want them to be more integrated, do **not** treat the colors as two separate strands.



Instead, knot all the strands together as if they were the same color. Then twist as you did for one color.



The resulting cord will have both colors interspersed throughout its length. This gives a lovely variegated effect and is especially effective when one color is a metallic.

This can be done with any number of colors. Just remember to adjust the number of strands of each color to keep the finished cord the size you want it.

## THREE COLORS

Begin just as you did for two colors. Measure out **half** the proper length and the correct number of strands of three different colors. Tie a knot in one end of each color. Tie the loose ends of two of the colors together.

Twist just as you did for the two colored cord, **keeping the strands taut** as you twist.



Still keeping the strands as taut as possible, have someone tie the unknotted end of the third color to the place where the first two colors are knotted together.



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Have that same person (this is really a two or three person job) grab and tightly hold the end where the twisting device is while you remove the twister. Attach the twister to the knot at the free end of the third color. While your helpers hold **very** tightly to the already twisted two-color strand, twist the third color in a clockwise [counterclockwise] direction until the strand begins to kink in the middle.

Have someone grab where the three colors are knotted together and pull down gently while the ends of the three colors are brought together. **Keep the strands taut while you do this!**

When the knotted ends are together, have the person holding the middle slowly release it, letting the strands twist around each other. The twisting needs to be controlled to keep it even along the length of the twist. Stroking along the length of the cord helps keep or smooth kinks out.



This produces a beautiful three-color cord where each color is a distinctive part of the cord.

## FOUR COLORS

Begin just as you did for two colors. Measure out **half** the proper length and the correct number of strands of four different colors. Tie a knot in one end of each color. Tie the loose ends of two of the colors together. Twist just as you did for the two colored cord, **keeping the strands taut** as you twist. Keep these strands taut while you proceed to the next step. Extra hands are very helpful at this point. Tie the loose ends of the remaining two colors together and twist, keeping the strands taut as you twist.

Keeping all strands taut, place the two twisted strands together so the knots where the colors are tied together match. Have your helpers hold very tightly to the ends of both twisted strands.

Grab the knots where the four colors are tied and pull down gently while the ends of the two strands are brought together. **Keep the strands taut while you do this!**

When the knotted ends are together, slowly release the middle, letting the strands twist around each other. The twisting needs to be controlled to keep it even along the length of the twist. Stroking along the length of the cord helps keep or smooth kinks out.

Tie knots in both ends to keep the cord twisted.