



A Needleart Tip by Linda Kay

Making Perle

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.

#12 perle — 2 strands floss

#8 perle — 4 strands floss

#5 perle — 6 strands floss

#4 braid — 4 strands blending filament or metallic sewing thread

If making silk perle from silk floss you will find a single strand of silk is slightly larger than a single strand of cotton. This will make resulting silk perle slightly larger than cotton perle. Also, metallic sewing threads come in different sizes so the resulting metallic thread will differ also.

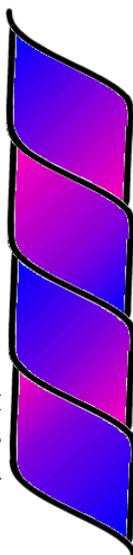
Experimentation will be necessary when working with different base threads **{the thread used as the building materials to create a new thread}**.

TWIST DIRECTION

Different threads twist different directions.



Rayon & silk have a Z-twist.

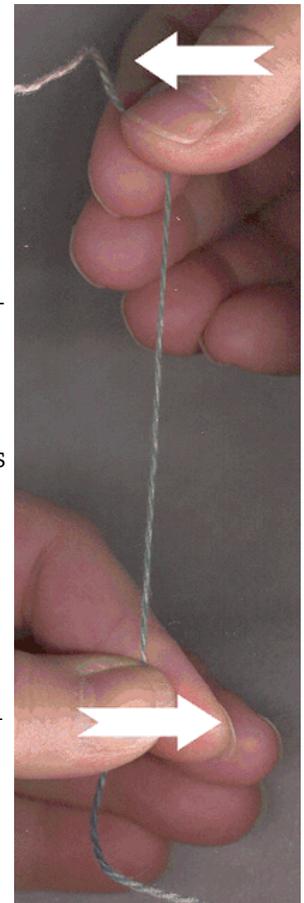


Cotton, linen, & metallics have an S-twist.

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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MAKING PERLE

Perle is made by twisting threads but the sequence and final twist are different than with twisted cord, which has a definite corded effect. In contrast, perle has a smooth twist.

Perle is made from even numbers of threads. Looking back at the formula on page 1 you will note that #12 perle needs 2 strand of floss. This could more appropriately be designated 1 + 1 as each strand must be treated individually. Consequently:

#8 perle — 2 + 2 strands floss

#5 perle — 3 + 3 strands floss

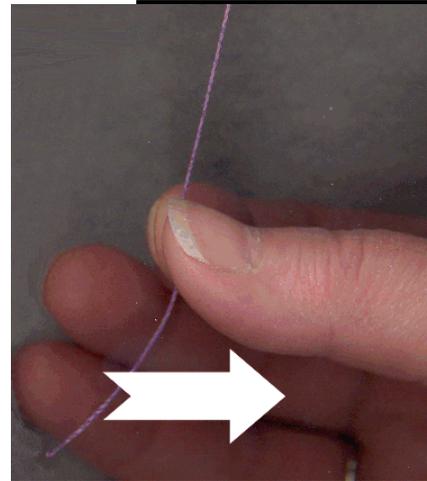
The floss can be cotton, silk, or rayon.

For purposes of simplicity I will discuss making #12 perle. In the instructions below I will refer to the right thread (RT) or the left thread (LT). If you wish to make a larger size, in your mind just remember you will be working with more than one thread on each side.

Experience will teach you the length of thread you are most comfortable working with. I suggest starting with 1 yard and adjusting up or down from there.

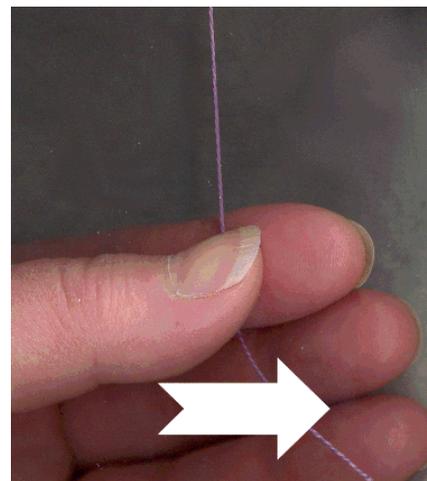
Measure out 2 1-yard lengths of floss. Tie one end to something stable. This can be a thumbtack in the edge of your frame, a cabinet knob, a safety pin attached to the arm of your couch, or even a needle anchored firmly in your canvas or fabric. Experiment to determine what works best for you.

Take the LT and anchor it someplace out of the way. Some people hold this end in their teeth. I prefer to tape it down. Sit or stand at the end of the RT, **keeping it taut**.



Hold the end of the RT between the thumb and forefinger of your right hand. It should lie very close to the end of *[first joint of]* your finger.

Roll your thumb and the RT right *[left]* along your finger until you reach the first joint of *[tip of]* your finger. This is **roll one**.



Grasp the RT between the thumb and forefinger of your left hand just above where your right hand is holding it. It should lie very close to the first joint of *[tip of]* your finger.

Roll your thumb and the RT right *[left]* along your finger until you reach the tip of *[first joint of]* your finger. This is **roll two**.

With your right hand grasp the RT just below where your left hand is holding it. It should lie very close to the tip of *[first joint of]* your finger. Repeat the roll as described above. Grasp with your left hand as described above and repeat that roll.

I make a total of **30 rolls** with the RT. You might want it a bit tighter or looser. Experiment until you are happy with the twist.

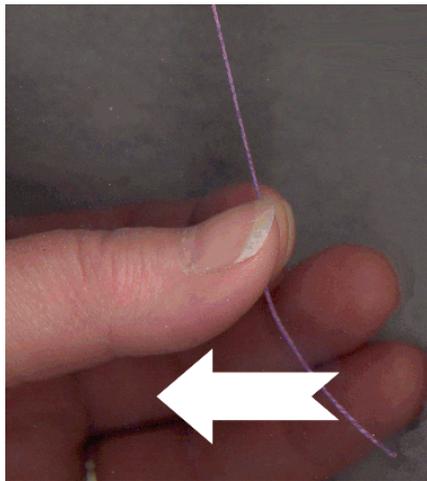


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Keeping the RT **taut** and without losing any of the twist tape this down out of the way. Grasp the LT with your right hand and repeat the steps already described for rolling the RT. Keeping the LT **taut** and without losing any of the twist, untape the end of the RT and bring the two ends together (again keeping the RT **taut** and without losing any twist).

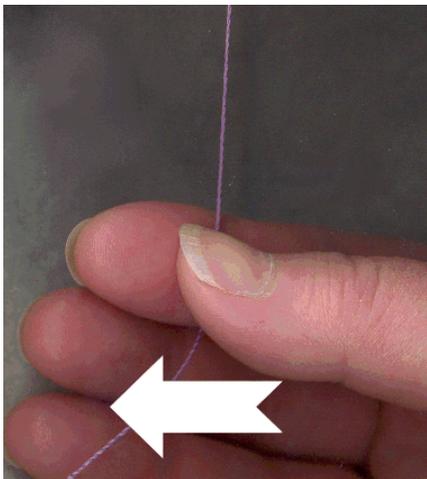
With your right hand grasp the end of the threads just below where you are holding them with your left hand. Repeat the roll as described before for the right hand. This is **roll three**. Grasp with your left hand as described before and roll. I make a total of **30 rolls**. This is a bit of overtwist to assure that the strand is twisted enough to hold together.



Hold the ends of the threads between the thumb and forefinger of your right hand. It should lie very close to the first joint of [tip of] your finger.

After the 30th roll gently drop the end of the thread. It will begin to unwind, but will stop when it loses its overtwist. Stroke gently along the length to remove any kinks. You now have a piece of perle #12. Stitch with it as with any perle you purchase. You do not have to knot the ends to keep the twist, as you do with twisted cord. The clockwise twist you give the two individual strands lock themselves against the counterclockwise twist you apply to the two strands together, forcing the thread to keep its twist.

Roll your thumb and the thread left [right] along your finger until you reach the tip of [first joint of] your finger. This is **roll one**.



Grasp the thread between the thumb and forefinger of your left hand just above where your right hand is holding it. It should lie very close to the tip of [first joint of] your finger.

Roll your thumb and the thread left [right] along your finger until you reach the first joint of [tip of] your finger. This is **roll two**.