

# “COUCHING” – Tip Sheet

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Couching is the process of attaching a fiber to a fabric surface. The fibers can include yard, ribbon, trim, thick thread, lace, leather cord, etc.

## COUCHING PROCESS

- **Thread** – poly or cotton. Poly gives a NICE sheen. Color depends on if you want to highlight the thread or the couching material. Use solid or variegated colors. Variegated thread – look for ones with a short color change, Super Threads, Fantastico <https://www.superiorthreads.com/> . They come to PIQF each year.
- **Needle** – depends on the fabric. I mostly use **11 or 14 Top Stitch**
- **Feet** – my go to = standard #1 / A. There are many specialty feet for couching. I own most, but don't use as often. Types = free motion, multiple hole, looped hole.
- **Stitch types** – any can work.
  - I use ZIG ZAG the most. Always adjust down from the default. The length and width of your stitch will depend on the number of fibers / thickness
  - The zigzag stitch just straddles the yard; stitch width is just as wide as the yarn so the stitching is nearly invisible.
  - TEST first for the right thread color, stitch type and width
  - Decorative stitch – just play. Other stitches can be beautiful!
  - If using more complex decorative stitches use an interfacing to support your stitches. Stabilizer not recommended because it can weaken the threads
- Twist the threads, then stitch, continue twisting as you sew. You can also do a 2 group braid. Each of these 2 techniques produces different looks!
- For couching at the edge of quilts, knot the end to keep things under control, then begin stitching beyond the edge.
- If stitching within the project
  - Knot the group of threads, then move forward an inch or so (to get the knot out of the way), then satin stitch to lock the couching material & stitch.

- Remember to change stitch length/width back to what is desired. Cut the tails after stitching is complete.
- Cover the beginning and end of the stitching with an applique piece, bead or other embellishment, as desired. Also can leave as is and not cover the ends.

## **GETTING STARTED**

- Build your stash
  - Ask your knitting friends to save their left over yarn.
  - Check out Stitches Show, Joann's, Michael's, Yarn shops, Quilt Shows, etc.
  - You only need a minimum of 1 or 2 yards of each yarn or trim
  - Metallics are harder to find. They add great 'bling'!
- Store your stash
  - Cut a small piece of cardboard (cereal box, etc.) – 2 x 4 or slightly larger. Similar to embroidery cards.
  - Cut a notch at one end of the cardboard to secure the thread/yarn end
  - Wrap yarns around the cardboard piece and store
- PLAY, PLAY, PLAY and HAVE FUN!!
- When I first learned about Couching – I never looked at a fabric or project the same way again. 😊😊

*Presented by Rosita Thomas at AAQGO January 26, 2019 meeting*