

# Cotton Cord Basket Basics

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*DAT Quilting place is a longarm quilting business, plus cord bowls, and crafting on the side.*

The information in this handout is from handouts that Debbie used during her presentation at Lutheran Fine Arts of Topeka Fiber Arts Workshop, 2.18.23

**This information is to equip you with the knowledge and ability to construct a basic cord bowl.**

## Supplies:

The supply list consists of items found in most of our sewing tool boxes.

**Cotton cord** - can be purchased from places such as Walmart, Big Lots, Home Depot, Amazon and local hardware stores. (It is also known as clothesline cord) Prices differ from place to place, averaging \$3.99 to \$7.99 per 100 ft. The size of the cord ranges from 1/8 inch, up to 1/2 inch. I purchase the 1,000 or 1,200 ft. spools of this cord from Amazon or Mountain Thread Company. Currently, supplies for the most popular 3/16" and 1/4" are out of stock for bulk quantities. *For beginners, I suggest using 3/16 as this fits under the pressure foot well and is easier to control zig zagging stitches.*

**Craft scissors** - you don't want to ruin your good scissors cutting this bulky cord.

**Measuring tape** - A MUST!!

**Glue stick** - any type will work. You will use this to keep ends from fraying and holding cord together while you sew it together if you need to attach two pieces.

**Painter's tape** - (blue tape) for marking where your row begins.

**All-purpose cotton thread** - color of choice is up to you. Using colored thread on white cord gives it a cool look and texture. Sulky polyester thread is a good choice if you want a decorative look.

**Heavy yarn needle** - I use this with very heavy quilting thread to connect cord ends together or when I add elements to my bowls.

**Sewing Machine** - with a zig zag stitch!! Any machine that zig zags can make a bowl.

**Open Toe or Applique foot** - is recommended for your machine, but if you don't have these, a regular **straight foot** can get the job done. The open toe foot makes it easier to see your cord and keep your stitches hitting both cords.

**Jeans needle on your machine** - This is also a MUST!! If you use smaller needles you will experience a lot of breakage. Plus, it can knock your machine out of timing if done too many times.

**Lots and Lots** - of filled bobbins. You will be surprised at how fast you use thread, and it is good to have some filled and ready to use.

## Let's get started:

### General information.

*Once you complete the coil base center you move your machine to a zig zag stitch. Set your stitch length to 3 and stitch width to 3.5. You may have to adjust more or less depending on your machine. You will want to have the needle strike one cord going down and then zag to the next cord. I don't like for it to hit the middle of the cord as it works the machine too hard. Therefore, mine hits the side of each cord. Adjust your machine accordingly.*



**1:** This picture shows how to begin your coil for the base of your bowl. This is where you use a small amount of glue to keep the end of the cord from fraying and keeping it tight in the center. Using straight pins will help you hold everything in place while you get **it under the pressure foot**.



**2:** Next, you will secure the center of your base by sewing a **straight stitch** cross in the center of your base. This picture shows the cord tail at the left side. That is ok for this step, but once you start to zig zag your cord **tail must be** on the right side so you will be sewing clockwise.



**3:** Having secured your base and made sure the cord is on the right side of your pressure foot, you will begin to attach cord with a zig zag stitch. Keep your base flat, don't pull on the cord or push the cord as it is sewing. Just gently and slowly sew the cord in a circular motion. Sew three rounds and place a small piece of painter tape at that juncture. This is where you will always start your new row. Continue sewing your base until it measures 5 inches across.

**4:** At this point we start to utilize our hands in raising the back edge of the base so it will begin the walls.



**There are Angles for different types of wall construction**

### Angle 1:

Place your fingers tips of the left hand, palm up, under the outer half of the base (don't lift up). The position of your fingertips underneath as you sew will produce the correct amount of curve around the outer edge of the coil. Stitch one row around the base, holding your hand position the same until you return to the tape mark, and then stop with the needle down. The row you just stitched should be raised slightly above the base coil. Begin and end each row at the tape mark.

### Angle 2:



position.

This angle position creates a sharper evolution from the base coil to the sides. Use this angle to gradually build the curve in the bowl where the base rises up from the base coil. With the base coil under the presser foot, lift the base coil up midway between the bed of the machine and the flat vertical side edge of the machine. Starting at the tape mark, stitch one row around the project, holding your hand position the same until you return to the tape. Sew three rows in this angle

### Angle 3:

This angle position creates a bowl with slightly angled sides. Use this angle to complete the curve in the bowl where the clothesline rises up from the base coil and continue in this position to complete the bowl. To do so you, lift the base coil with your left hand until the coil touches the vertical side of the sewing machine. Continue until you have reached your desired height of the walls.

## Finishing:



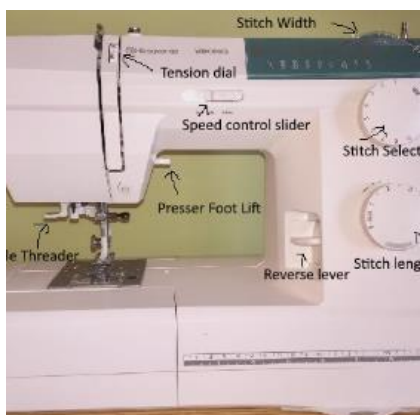
Once you have your desired height, stop sewing at the tape mark with needle down. Cut your rope leaving a tail of about 5-8 inches. You will form a loop. Take the end of the cord, place a small amount of glue on to it to keep the end of the cord from fraying, then put this cut part between the rows and sew to secure.

## Heads of the Sewing Machines



Different sewing machine heads can make a huge difference in the shape and size of your bowl.

The smaller heads allow your bowl to go straight up!



The larger head will make your bowl larger in base size and (after much practice) go straight up.



## Tips:

Sometimes the base of the bowl will start to curl up. A steam iron is your best friend to remedy this issue.

This is a helpful guide to show you how much product you will use in small to medium bowl/plates:

- 3/4 yd. of fabric for a small/med bowl
- 3/4 yd. of fabric for an 11-12 inch trivet
- 15 yds. of cord for an 11 inch plate
- 11 yds. (Or 33 ft.) of cord for a 3x4x7 inch basic round bowl

**Working with fabrics:** if you want a furry texture use raw edge 1/2 in strips. For smooth texture turn one edge over 1/8 inch before wrapping cord.

## **Advanced ideas for bowls:**



Add metal or jute rope to your bowls

Unique Shapes, different combinations of angles help shape your design.



Vases, plant holders

Unique designs with fabric wrapping





Custom fabric bottoms,  
embroidery, applique

Embellishments, pictured  
are felted flowers and  
leaves with bead work



Braided cord bowls

Hand dyed cord

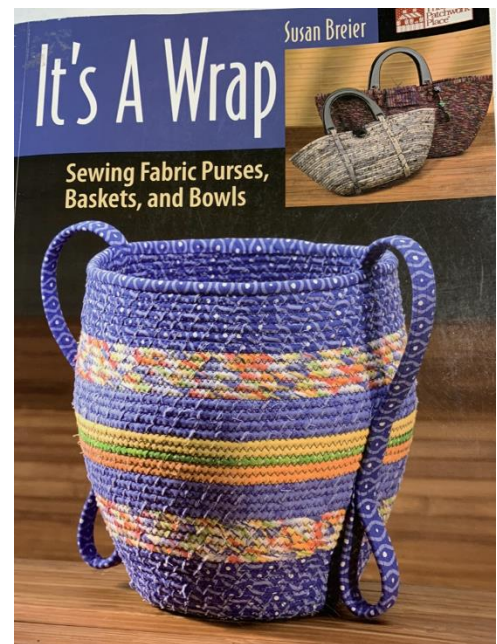


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