



# Intro to Bobbin Lace

By Joan Thomas for *Lace Embrace 2022*

Can be freely shared to anyone interested in making lace!



**NOTES:** This LE class is sponsored by the I.O.L.I. Education Committee: [educationchair@internationalorganizationoflace.org](mailto:educationchair@internationalorganizationoflace.org)  
To obtain the I.O.L.I.'s beginning curriculum book donated for this event, An Introduction to Bobbin Lace, join the I.O.L.I. and for a nominal fee, purchase a hard copy from the member area of their site: <https://internationalorganizationoflace.org/>  
This book should be the go-to resource for all new lacers for complete instructions on supplies, techniques & easy patterns.

The Let's Begin Making Bobbin Lace: A Teacher's Companion book used for the key fob is available for purchase from the Lace Museum, <http://thelacemuseum.org/lets-begin-book-page.html>. This is a spiral-bound book with 78 pages of fun and colorful patterns appropriate for young lacemakers of varying levels. ***We know that all lacemakers are young at heart!***

Make-and-take instructions for paperclip bookmark are provided by Sally Jenkins and the Oregon Trail Lacemakers.

## GENERAL 'STUFF' ABOUT BOBBIN LACE - Types, Tools, Fibers, Stitches, and Resources

Per Wikipedia, Bobbin lace evolved from passementerie or braid making in 16th-century Italy. I see bobbin lace as a natural evolution of macramé and weaving with thinner threads too (like how tatting evolved from fisherman's netting).

- **Types** – Characteristic stitching and place of origin define bobbin laces. There are so many types of bobbin lace! Here are a few bobbin lace examples that use only a few pairs of bobbins (less overwhelming for a newbie):
  - **Schneeberger (Germany)** – Includes plaits and 3 pair bobbin crossing cords that change width. First picture is of a Lia Baumeister-Jonker pattern. Refer to: <https://henselproductions.com/schneeberger.html>
  - **Idrija (western Slovenia)** – Basic tape lace with many sewings (joins). Allie Marguccio is a great resource for learning this (second picture is of her DVD). <https://www.designsbymarguccio.com/>  
Also, refer to Idrija school site: <https://www.cipkarskasola.si/?lang=en> (Under Education, 2 free video/patterns)
  - **Bedfordshire (England)** – Mostly plaits with picots and tallies (like tatted cluny leaves). Picture is from the Lace Museum's virtual class by Elizabeth Peterson. <https://thelacemuseum.org/teachers/#elizabeth-peterson>

Refer to The Lace Museum site for more types of lace and virtual lace classes: <https://thelacemuseum.org/>



- **Tools** – Bobbin shapes and sizes used depend on the pillow and lace type being created, but basically anything that you can wind thread on can be used as a bobbin to get started with the understanding that some DIYs work better than others. Examples: half a cloths pin tends to snag the thread more (don't use yarn!), and spangled bobbins can interfere more when you are doing a sewing (passing the bobbin bottom end thru a loop of thread). ***Whatever bobbin types you choose - it is easy to get addicted!***

Tools can match the techniques. Two basic ways to hold bobbins – wrists down (like a piano player) or wrists up (for bolster pillows where bobbins are heavier and help with the thread tension); thread is twisted on with a half hitch.

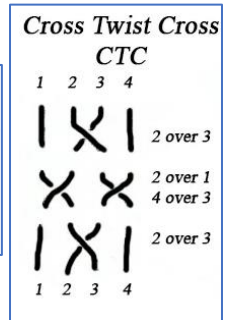
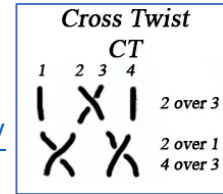
- **Fibers**– Holly Van Sciver sells a thread select chart to guide you for thread equivalents by lace type thread collection and has a full selection of supplies for sale: <http://www.vansciverbobbinlace.com/2Threads.html#Thread%20Chart>
- **Resources:**
  - Websites: <https://BobbinLace.net>; <https://www.lynxlace.com/learningbobbinlace-basics.html>, <https://alexstillwell.wordpress.com/pdf-help-files/> (child fish pattern)
  - YouTube channels (MundilloLace, <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UChz3thkHk0GaRdiahvIGOlw>)
  - DVD instructional videos by Hensel Productions (<https://www.henselproductions.com/>).
  - I.O.L.I and lace guilds have libraries with resources to loan (of course there are estate sales, [Ebay](#), [Etsy](#), etc.
  - Beginner square bobbins at the ProvoLaceShop on Etsy, [https://www.etsy.com/market/provo\\_lace](https://www.etsy.com/market/provo_lace), or get set from <https://www.blacksheepfiberemporium.com/>

- **Stitches**– Good visuals of the basic Cross and Twist stitches used in patterns are on page 21/22 of the Intro book and on these sites:

<https://www.lynxlace.com/images-bbn-diag/movement.JPG>

<https://makezine.com/2015/06/11/skill-builder-make-needle-lace-bobbin-lacemaking/>

**You really need to have them committed to muscle memory!**



## CLASS PROJECTS AND SUPPLIES

For these bobbin lace projects, we will learn to work the basic Cloth Stitch (CTC, Cross-Twist-Cross) and try out DIY bobbins.

After assembling supplies and preparing the pricking (covered cardstock, set pinholes so you can find holes by feel), create an enlarged version of the pattern and diagram out how you plan to work it. See example on next page. **Now you can start lacing!**

### Key Fob

- Pattern is from the Teacher’s Companion book (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. 2018), by Paula Harten on page 49.
  - Do it yourself bobbins: pencils, pens, clothes pins, chop sticks, twigs, etc.
  - D or small split ring (0.75” dia.) or 0.5” snap ring.
  - 2 or more skeins of embroidery floss. 1 color for the weaver bobbins and 1 or more for the passive bobbins.
- Note:** Use as is (all 6 strands). Will split off a thread to use as a magic thread when tying off the ends.

Wind 12 bobbins (6 pair – 1 weaver, 5 passives). For the weaver pair – use about 36” on each bobbin and 24” on each of the 5 passive bobbin pairs (this gives enough thread to have bobbin stayed tied to the thread). To estimate the amount of thread, it’s 3-4x the length x width of a pattern. Cloth stitch passives – are a little more than the length.



1. Size 10 Crochet Thread, Egyptian cotton, artiste brand, as-is fob pattern
2. Cotton yarn, Crafter Secret brand, as-is fob pattern
3. DMC embroidery floss, as-is fob pattern, gather to tie off without magic thread
4. DMC embroidery floss, 25% reduction of fob pattern (print at 75%), gather to tie off without magic thread
5. DMC embroidery floss, 25% reduction of fob pattern (print at 75%), bobbin pair tie offs last one with plaits and magic thread

Before you start a lacing project, don't forget to enlarge the pricking and add notes on **how you plan to work it** (start, finish, highlight where to add/remove pairs, points of sewing etc.).

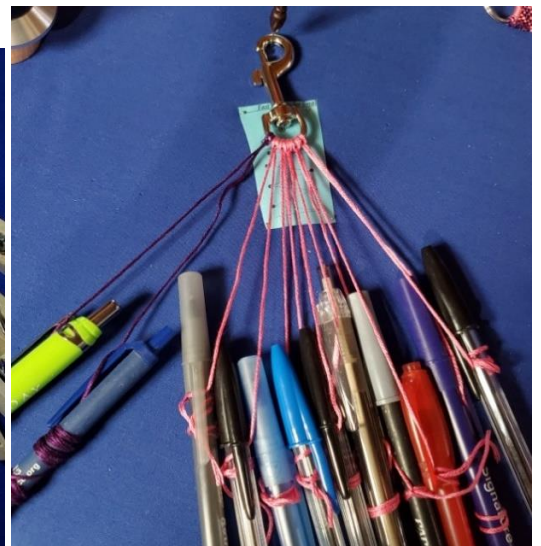
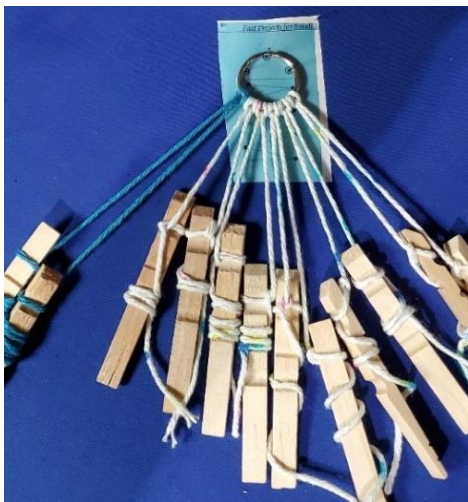
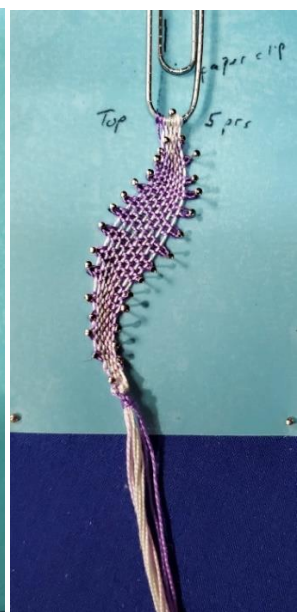
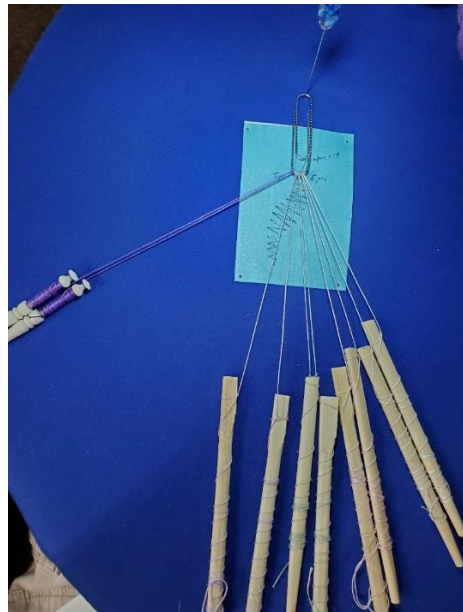
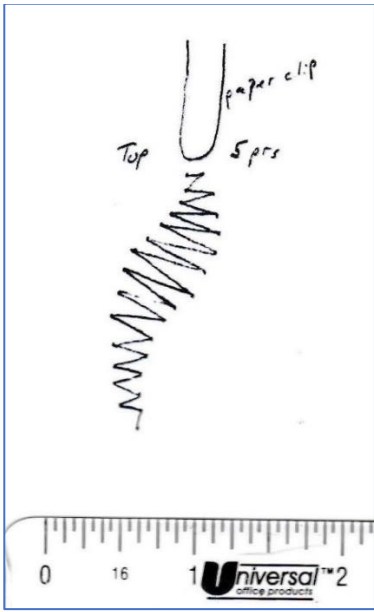
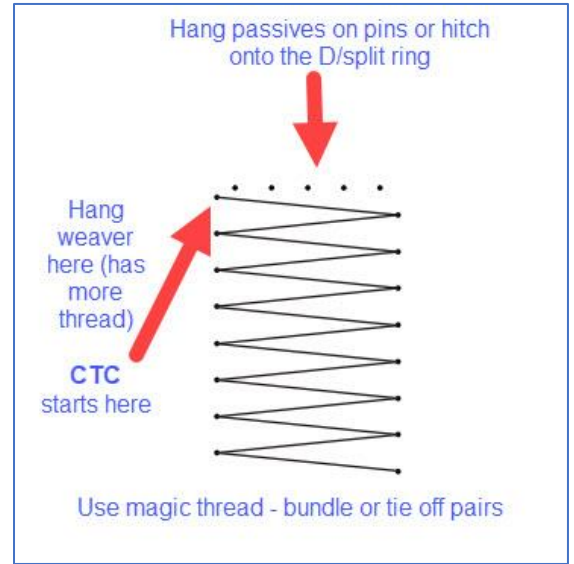
The following prep diagram example is taken from [https://bobbinlace.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Trail\\_pattern-1.pdf](https://bobbinlace.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Trail_pattern-1.pdf). This pricking is like the key fob pattern, only passives hang from pins (a more standard practice) instead of directly attaching to a safety pin or ring.

Here is the accompanying basic cloth stitch video (20 min.):  
<https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=cloth+stitch+bobbin+lance+video&view=detail&mid=8C0EF2742E7FF12265A48COEF2742E7FF12265A4&FORM=VIRE>

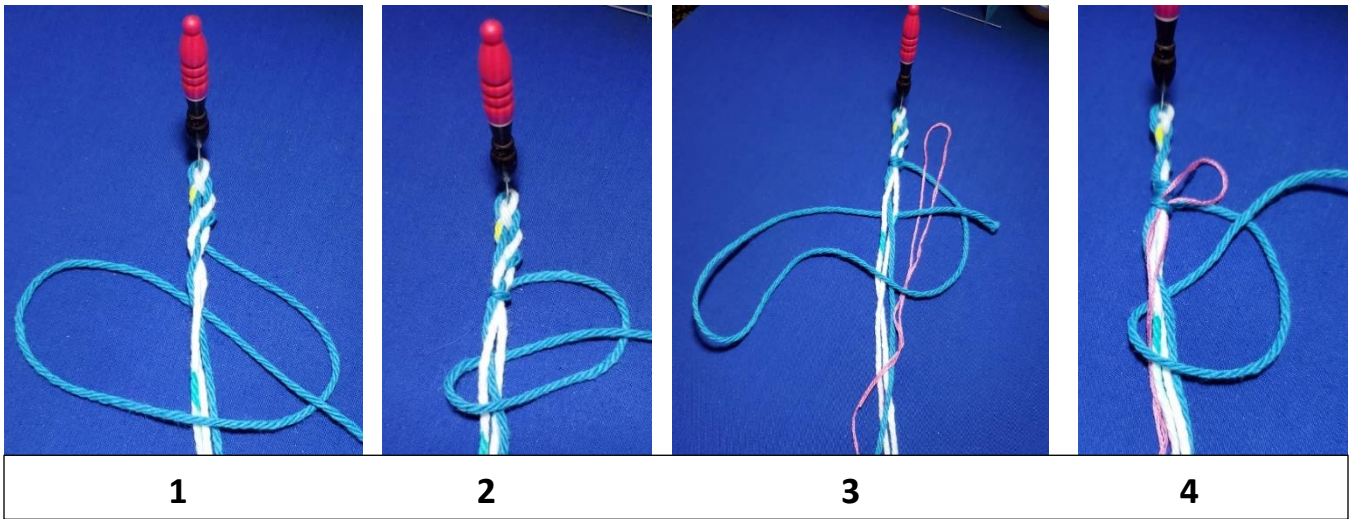
• **Make & Take Paperclip Bookmark**

- 5 pairs total
- 2 colors - size 12 pearl cotton (thinner size is ok)  
A darker color for the weaver pair
- Paper clip

This pattern is worked the same way as the key fob, but with a finer thread and closer spacing to give you a better feel for lacing!



# MAGIC THREAD TECHNIQUE FOR BOBBIN LACE FRINGE



Using a magic thread (open or closed loop of thread that is thinner than that you are working with) to pull the wrapping thread into the wrapped bundle of a pair of bobbins. Without doing this, the wrapping thread lies outside the wrapped bundle. A magic thread can also be used when connecting ends of tape lace is too tight to feed a lazy maid/hook to sew ends together. [Example](#)

**Note:** A very fine lazy maid/crochet hook may also be used to pull the thread into the bundle, but if the bundle knot is very tight, this can be difficult.

- 1 & 2. After CTCT, plaiting stitches, or granny knotting 2 pairs of bobbins, create a 3-thread bundle wrap using an outer bobbin thread and half hitch knots. Lay the thread over the bundle and through the loop, twice to create the hitch knots.
3. Lay the magic thread, loop up, parallel to the fringe, and tie a 3rd half hitch knot.
4. Tie one more hitch knot.
5. Feed the wrapping thread into the magic loop.
- 6 & 7. Pull the magic loop down tightly, drawing the wrapping thread into the bundle.
8. Unloop the wrapping thread until it lays flat with the other threads of the fringe bundle.

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*Learned from Karen Thompson; this sheet can be freely shared with others learning to lace!*

