

Professor T.H. Read's

☆ Lessons in Carefree Embroidery ☆



How to Use an Upper Thread Tension Gauge

Take the guess work out of setting thread tensions.

Using thread tension gauges makes it easy to adjust both bobbin and upper tensions. It's quick, easy and will help you eliminate unsightly bobbin thread showing on top, looping top stitches and thread breaks. Your embroidery will look its best with consistent, balanced thread tensions. Here's how to use a bobbin tension gauge to take the tension out of setting tensions!

Instructions for Use:

1. Pull approximately 6 inches of thread through the needle and presser foot.
2. Wrap the thread around the gauge hook (sometimes it's necessary to wrap it several times so it won't slip).
3. Steadily pull the gauge towards you with the window of the barrel facing up.
4. As you pull, take note of the reading. These represent tension readings in grams. Polyester threads require higher tensions than Rayon:

Classic Rayon #40	120-130 grams
Polyneon #40	140-150 grams
Classic Rayon & Polyneon #60	100-110 grams
Polyneon #75	95-100 grams

5. Adjust your machine main tension knob until you get the desired reading.

Final Testing:

Once you have adjusted your thread tensions, it's always a good idea to run tests. You are welcome to download and run Madeira's free tension test design. It consists of a 1 inch square with fill stitches and three columns of varying width satin stitches. Go to www.madeirausa.com, under the Services banner, drop down to the Special Thread Designs and scroll down.

1. First run the fill stitch test pattern.
2. If you experience any top stitch looping, slowly tighten the main upper tension knob until this looping goes away (looping can also occur if your bobbin tension is too tight).
3. Proper tensions for satin stitches should reveal 1/3 bobbin and 2/3 top thread color on the underside of the embroidery.

Note: *Too much bobbin showing on the underside and/or showing on the topside usually means either the bobbin tension is too loose or the top thread tension is too tight.*

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