

How to Braid a Skein

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What do you do with those luscious twisted skeins of thread? It's a real pain to unravel a section to work with. It's a whole lot easier to have neat lengths ready to pull off the skein and thread onto your needle.

This is a simple method to corral your skein and set it up so you can pull off a length at a time.

Step 1



When you buy a twisted skein of thread or yard, this is what it looks like. In this instance I am using a Stef Francis skein of [fine mercerized cotton](#). This is lovely thread for hand quilting and I often need several lengths at a time for a quilt.

It is secured by twisting the looped thread together, knotting the ends and wrapping them around the strands. The tail is then tucked inside the looped end.

Step 2



Pull out the tail and untwist the skein.

Step 3



You will end up with a long bundle of thread: twice the length of the original skein and half the thickness. It should still be knotted.

Step 4



Find the tiny knot securing the looped thread. DON'T cut it apart unless you get thoroughly frustrated and can't bear to fiddle with it any more. The knot is made up of each end of one very long thread.



Step 5

Undo the knot. I find using a blunted ended needle such as a tapestry needle helps. You can slip it in between the ties.

Step 6



Find a hook to hang your unraveled skein over. I use my sewing machine thread holder - works perfectly.

Make sure the untied ends are at the bottom and hook the top onto your holder.

Step 7



Snip the bottom of the loop apart.

Step 8



Cut all the threads between the two ends.

I am such a skinflint, I can't bear to waste a single bit of thread which is why I am careful to undo the knot and snip between the ends.

Step 9



Separate the hanging thread into three sections. Make sure they are centered at the top of the skein and the ends are as even as you can make them at the bottom.



Step 10

Start braiding the three strands together.

Step 11



Leave the center strand hanging. Pull the left hand strand forward over the center one. This then becomes the center strand.

Step 12



Pull the right hand strand forward and over the center strand. This becomes the center strand.

Step 13



Keep braiding until you reach the end of the three strands.

You will end up with a neatly braided skein. The ends are all cut.

Step 14



Unhook the braid from the thread holder, or whatever you are using to hang the skein over. You find it holds together nicely.

Step 15



To get a single length of thread, put on one loop at the top of the braid.

Step 16



Gently tug at the loop. At the same time start scooching the rest of the braid downwards. The skein will concertina and become smaller while you keep pulling the strand out.

Step 17



Very easily the single strand of thread comes out of the skein, leaving a tidy braid ready for you to pull out another strand when you need it.