

# Using Giant Thread Cones on a Serger

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My serger is an industrial model, and all it does is finish edges . . . which is okay with me, since that's what I mainly use it for. Lately I've been using it a lot, to clean-finish miles and miles and miles of edges on my current projects -- namely dozens of tote bags, reusable shopping bags, and drawstring gift bags.

As you can imagine, that uses a \*lot\* of thread, especially in the loopers, and can get kind of expensive if you're buying cones.



A couple of years ago I was lucky enough to find some super large reels of synthetic thread at a thrift store. The large one on the right is enormous compared to a regular cone of serger thread, but the giant one dwarfs even that.

They were such a good price -- under \$10 for the gigantic one

and about \$3 for the large one -- that I couldn't resist. What a bargain!!

I intended to use them in the loopers on my serger, but when I got home and threaded them up, I ran into a problem.



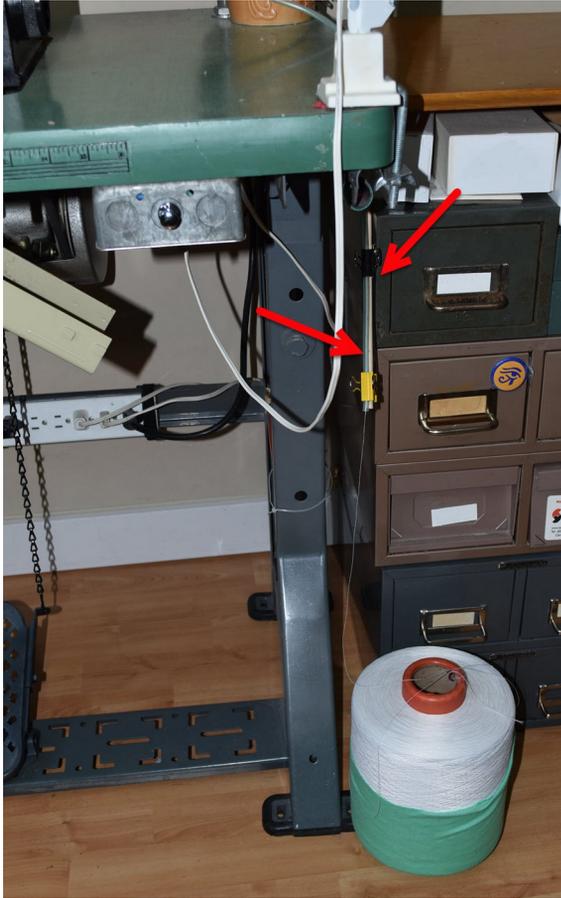
Because the centres aren't conical, and the synthetic thread is slippery, it tends to fall off the surface of the reel and puddle around the bottom, where it gets drawn in below the spool, then catches and breaks, and I have to keep re-threading the serger –

a major pain. Needless to say, after several attempts I almost gave up on using the big reels, until it struck me that something like a thread net might work on those great big reels of synthetic thread.

Obviously you can't get a thread net anywhere near large enough for such gargantuan spools, so I made my own large sleeve from a remnant of t-shirt fabric. I used it to enclose the bottom of the gigantic thread reel. (It folds over the very bottom to contain the thread from sliding down around the cardboard core.



Presto! The thread no longer slips and puddles around the bottom, and I can now successfully use both of these huge reels in the loopers of my serger. Here you can see the large reel placed on the thread stand.



The giant reel is much too large for the spool holder, so it sits on the floor beside the serger. I rigged up a length of plastic tubing to carry the thread so that it doesn't get caught on anything else as it traverses the distance to the thread guides. (You can see the tubing above the reel, indicated by the red arrows in the photo. The other end is visible in the photo of the serger on the first page of this article.)

When I'm making clothing, or on any project where the serging will be visible, I'll switch out the looper thread to a colour that matches my fabric. However, for the gift bags and totes I've been making recently, I mostly don't mind that the thread isn't colour-matched, since it isn't really seen on the outside of the project.

Given the amount of clean-finishing I've been doing as I make dozens of bags for every occasion and for everyone on my list, this \$10 reel is turning out to be the bargain of a lifetime. Even at the rate I'm using it, it may well take a lifetime to use it all up!