

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 left of the photo is enormous compared to a regular 3000-yard cone (the red one). But the giant one on the right 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 two giant cones are not conical, and the synthetic thread is pretty slippery, it tends to slide 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.

In the photo at right, you can see the thread pooled around the bottom of the cone.

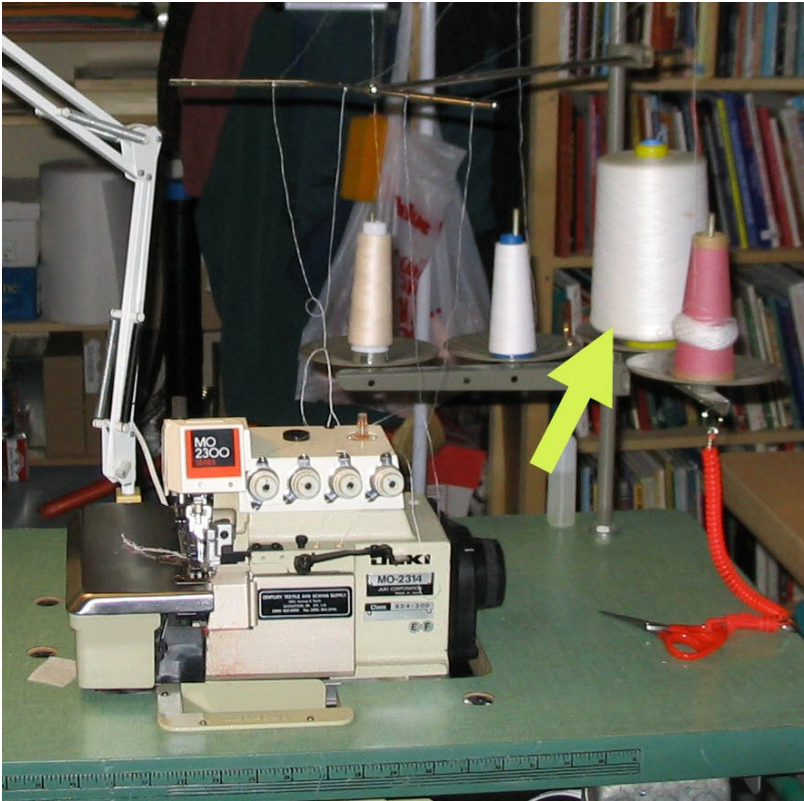


Needless to say, after several attempts I almost gave up on using the big reels, until it struck me that something like a thread net might work on those great big reels of synthetic thread.

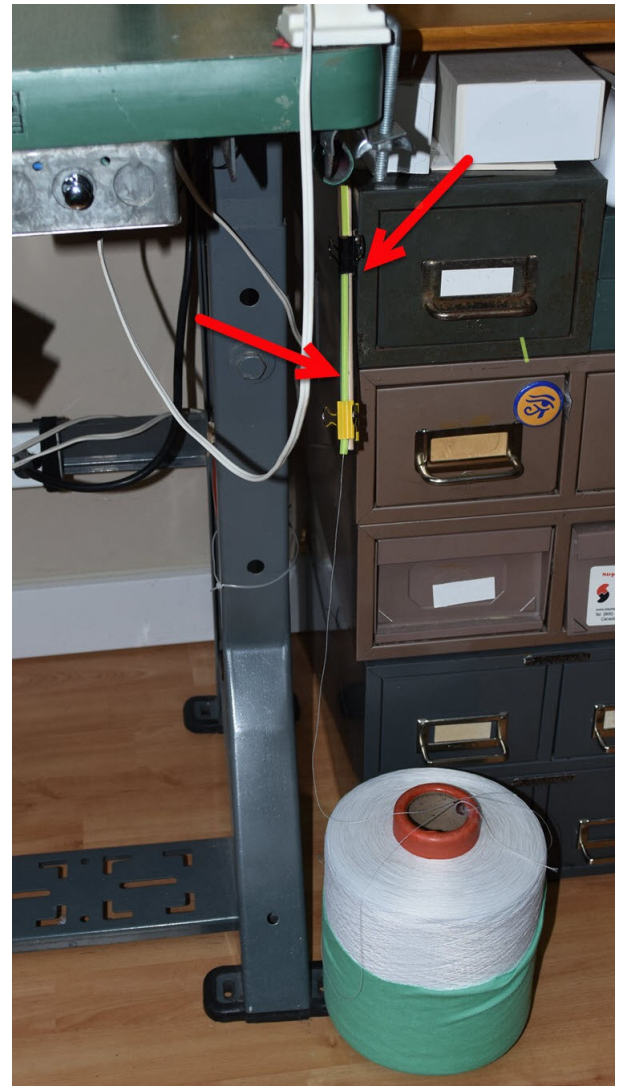
Obviously you can't get a thread net anywhere near large enough for such gargantuan spools, so I made my own large sleeve from a remnant of t-shirt fabric. I used it to enclose the bottom of the gigantic thread reel. (It folds over the very bottom to contain the thread from sliding down around the cardboard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



The giant reel, however, is much too large to sit on the stand, so I have chosen to place it on the floor beside the serger and run the thread up through a length of plastic tubing, which you can see highlighted in the photo at right.





I rigged up the 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 and highlighted in lime green).

The tubing runs all the way up to the guide bar on the thread stand (see photo below), then runs from there through the serger in the normal way.



Given the amount of clean-finishing I've been doing as I make dozens of bags for every occasion, these thread reels have turned out to be a super bargain. Of course, using this thread in the loopers means that the overcasting stitches will be white, but I don't mind for these small projects, where the seams aren't visible from the outside.

On clothing and other projects where the overcast seams will be seen, I can still switch out the looper threads to match my fabrics, as I would normally do anyway.

In the meantime, though, I've saved a bundle on the miles of thread I've been using in the serger! And even at the rate I've been using it – over 100 bags per year in the past couple of years – I've still got lots left to keep me going for a while.