

Solutions for Specialty Threads

- Re-thread the machine and re-seat the bobbin.
- Stitch slowly.
- Adjust top tension. With thin threads it is sometimes necessary to loosen the top tension. Weird, I know! It's backwards of what makes sense, but it works when the thin top thread is breaking. (Recently I learned that polyester threads cling to chrome which is in the thread path so that has something to do with it.) If the top thread is tight on the fabric's surface rather than pulled down into the fabric, the top tension needs to be loosened. A lower number is less tension.
- Replace the needle. Sometimes a brand new needle is faulty, so try another. **Needles for heavy threads** - Use a 100/16 topstitch needle in the machine. I prefer using a 90/14 topstitch needle to poke a smaller hole but if it doesn't yield good stitches, I use the 100/16 topstitch needle. *Topstitch needles are special. They have a large eye to accommodate heavy thread. A wealth of information is available at www.Schmetzneedles.com. I was not previously aware that every sewing machine needle has a butt.* **Needles for thin threads** - I prefer a 60/8 Microtex needle. Yes, that tiny needle will penetrate all the layers of a quilt.



Thin threads (Wonderfil Invisafil) were used to quilt in the ditch on these quilts. You can't see those stitches!

- If decorative stitches don't look nice, try a simple straight stitch with the needle in the center needle position. Use a stitch length of 3.5mm for a heavy thread and 2.0mm for a thin thread. If this stitch is great, but others are not, your machine may need service.
- Try a different bobbin. Sometimes a bobbin isn't wound well or has a burr which causes problems. A very full or nearly empty bobbin can affect tension.
- Change the spool from spinning to not spinning. Some say vertical spindle to a horizontal spindle. Usually horizontal is not spinning and vertical is spinning but a thread stand is vertical but not spinning so keep that in mind.

When the spool doesn't spin, a twist happens in the thread. Some spools are designed for this and others are not. (If you look at the spool and see a zig-zag then it was wound to be used not spinning.)
- Change the spool end for end.
- Leave the machine, pet the dog, have a nap, then drink a latte. Everything will seem better. position and a stitch length of 3.5mm. If this stitch is great, but others are not, your machine may need service.
- For more info on using specialty threads, see my book, *Precision & Panache*, available at PiecesBeWithYou.com.