

Making your Own Cording

One of the fun lessons that Brooke Tucker provided at our “Soft Victorian” workshop was how to make your own cording for finishing upholstered furniture or doll clothing.

First, select two equal length pieces of embroidery silk (from one to six threads, depending on the thickness you want for the final cord), fine wool or crochet thread. The combined length of these two pieces should not be any longer than your arms can stretch (you will see why later...). Choose two contrasting colors, in the colours of your fabric, or use the same colour for a uni-toned cord. For a very delicate look, combine one strand of fine gold thread with two strands of embroidery silk for one of the lengths.

You will need a new piece of equipment to proceed. You need a hand drill, or a hand egg beater, or some other device that translates turning a handle to a spinning motion. See photo for the adapted hand drill that Brooke Tucker uses. You will notice that she has attached a cup hook to the end of the bit on which to knot the threads.



Firmly knot the two pieces together. Tie one end of the combined rope to a clamp securely fastened to a desk top or table. Tie the other end to your adapted “twister” machine. Back up until the combined cord is horizontal and stretched tight.

Now, turn the handle two or three HUNDRED times. The higher the number of turns, the tighter the twist in the finished cord. Experiment to see what effect varying the number of turns, or varying the thickness of the threads have on your finished cord.

Now, still holding the twisted threads taut, take a lead fishing weight (about 6 ounces) with an attached hook, and hang it in the middle of your combined, twisted, cord, close to the knot holding the two lengths of cord together. Detach one end of the cord from the twister machine. Holding that end of the cord in one hand, unhook the other end from the table clamp, holding your arms as far apart as possible. (It helps if there are two of you.....)

Slowly bring your hands together, keeping the lead weight in the middle of the combined cord. As the threads reach the vertical position, the weight will suddenly start spinning like a whirling dervish. This will continue for a few seconds, then the weight will gently come to rest. At this point, you should have a beautifully twisted two coloured (or three, or four, etc. coloured) cord for finishing the edges of your upholstered



furniture, or for trimming that little dress with just the right colours of edging.

Dip each end of the newly-combined cord in a little glue to stop it from untwisting. Every time you cut the cord, you will need to redo the ends with glue to prevent it from fraying back to its original component parts.

Enjoy!