We all know that person who insists that metallic threads will not work on her machine, right? Balderdash! Of course they will! But metallics <u>are</u> specialty threads and not construction threads. They require a few minor adjustments and they become magical! Prepare to be dazzled!

What is the difference between Sulky Original Metallic and Sulky Sliver™ & Holoshimmer™ Metallics?

Sulky Original Metallic is a round, twisted thread that is created by twisting and bonding a fine metallic foil around a strong core to create an exceptionally smooth, strong and pliable thread that is a joy to work with. Add an elegant sparkle to your creativity with the 36 available colors, 21 solids, 9 multi-colors and 6 prisms. Probably the easiest thread for a beginner metallic thread user to use. Only 2 things to remember:

1. Lower your top tension one or two numbers
2. Use a 90/14 needle – and some machines will prefer a 90/14 Topstitch needle

Well then, why not just a "Metallic" Needle, you ask?

There are both 80/12 and 90/14 Metallic Needles available today. Although both have the lovely longer eye of the Topstitch needle, the 80/12 just does not always provide enough room for the thread, and some shredding and breakage could result. Remember, the whole point here is to enjoy sewing with metallics.

What's the difference when using the FLAT metallic threads like Sulky Sliver™ (8000 series) & Sulky Holoshimmer™ (6000 series) Metallics?

They are both thin, flat, ribbon-like polyester films that are metalized with aluminum to make them brilliantly reflective. Add the ultimate sparkle to decorative projects with the 24 available colors in either Sliver or Holoshimmer. Because Sulky Sliver is flat, it reflects more light than the round Sulky Original Metallic. Sulky Holoshimmer is very similar but has a layer of holographic film to create even more sparkle and dimension. Yummy!

The tricks:

1. Lower your top tension <u>more</u> than with Sulky Original Metallics. Perhaps 2 or 3 numbers from normal.

2. Use a vertical spool pin with a felt pad underneath. Because these are flat threads, the twisting action caused by horizontal spool pins will cause breakage. Or position the thread on your machine however you need to, so that it stays flat and rolls off flat into the tension area. The photo below is a gizmo called a Thread Director™,.

It's a great tool if you have issues that these tips don't solve. It's a wonderful thread-delivery-system for many types of threads. You can see in the photo how flat and easy the thread rolls off without any twisting or resistance. More about this optional tool later.

3. Use a 90/14 needle. ANY 90/14 needle will perform better than an 80/12 "metallic type" needle. Some machines prefer a 90/14 Topstitch (which is the same needle as a 90/14 Metallic needle – both have the longer eye, reducing stress on the thread), but any 90/14 will work better for most people than an 80/12 metallic-type needle.

4. When all else fails, a thread lubricant, such as Sewers Aid™ will many times work miracles. I don't know if it just eases the path or if it cleans out some minute obstruction that's irritating the machine. But it almost always works small miracles if everything else is as it should be. (Check with your machine dealer to be sure that you can use this type of product on your machine.) You can run a bead of the lubricant down the spool occasionally, and also put a little on your finger and rub it on the front and back of the needle when needed.

5. SLOW YOUR MACHINE SPEED DOWN.

All Sulky Metallics work well for both hand and machine applications and they are both machine washable and dry cleanable.

- Stabilize properly - since metallics hate abrasion, avoid stiff, coarse stabilizers.
- Avoid short, tiny stitches because all metallics simply don't bend well into small stitches. Elongate your stitches when you can.

What about computerized embroidery designs?

There are a few designs out there actually digitized for metallic threads. Metallic threads are generally considered heavier than 40 wt. rayon or 40 wt. polyester which is what we all use for computerized embroidery. Metallics are considered about a 30 wt. which is 1/3 heavier than 40 wt. embroidery threads. So, you're asking your machine to stuff 1/3 more thickness into the same stitch area designed for a 40 wt. thread. That's a lot.

- You can compensate for this some by enlarging the design slightly (without changing the stitch count).
- You can SLOW DOWN your speed to give your machine a helping hand.
- You can use a thread lubricant if needed.
- Consider what you're asking your machine to stitch through. If it's fusible webs (some are better than others), that is challenging for any thread, and doubly so for a metallic. If you're going through heavy layers, you're adding stress to the thread.
- Choose a soft, lightweight Sulky stabilizer.

I have found that most designs that have been well digitized, and if they are not too dense, will adapt to metallic thread fairly well. But you may need to enlarge the design slightly to accommodate the metallic thread. A poorly digitized design, however, may not ever do well with metallic threads. Very dense designs even if well digitized may not be able to accommodate the thicker metallic threads. Again, SLOW your machine down when using metallics.

Can I use Sulky Metallic Thread in the bobbin?

Many of today's machines handle Sulky Original Metallic Thread in the bobbin beautifully. If yours does not, I suggest using Sulky Polyester Invisible Thread in either smoke or clear to coordinate with the metallic thread. It is very forgiving, and does not show should any pull-up occur.

Wind your bobbin VERY slowly so you do not stretch the monofilament thread and/or stress your bobbin – and only about ½ full – that's still a ton of thread. It is soft to the skin, strong, has a higher heat tolerance and does not easily melt like nylon invisible thread. It is very soft and gentle to the metallic thread, and it's invisible! Metallics like to be handled gently. Using the invisible does tend to negate the need for metallic in the bobbin, but that's still an option for many machines.

Of course, you can also use our quality bobbin thread which is a 60 wt. polyester thread, or our prewound bobbins (also 60 wt.).

If you use other brands of prewound bobbins and experience breakage or bad tension, switch to a regular self-wound bobbin to determine if that is causing the problem. Some machines do very well with prewound bobbins, others do not.

What about using metallics for the myriad of decorative stitches on my machine?

If you're using metallics for decorative stitches, this same "room issue" exists. So, you need to choose stitches that are not overly dense and avoid satin-stitch type stitches when using metallic threads. Or

you can resize and/or elongate the stitch to allow more room.

Here are the key things:

- Proper needle: 14/90 Topstitch or 14/90 Metallic Needle
- Proper spool position: Vertical for the 6000 and 8000 series of flat Sulky Metallics (with a felt pad under the spool) or however you need to position it so that the thread comes off flat and stays as flat as possible going into the tension area.
- Lower your embroidery top tension: if your normal embroidery tension is say, 3.0, then lower it to about 2.0. If you start to get too much metallic thread on the wrong side of your design or some "bird-nesting" then the tension is too low.
- Regular sewing tension: If you are doing regular sewing or free-motion stitching, lower your top tension 1 to 2 numbers for Original Metallic Thread; lower more for the flat metallics, Sliver or Holoshimmer
- Sewer's Aid (if needed)
- Slow your machine down

Some machines, Berninas traditionally for instance, often have a tighter normal top tension then other machines, so you just have to kind of play with it to see what your particular machine needs.

What is the fiber content of Sulky metallic Threads – THE TECHNICAL STUFF:

142/143 – Original Metallics
NYLON 59%
POLYESTER 40%
METALLIC 1%

145 – Sliver™ and Holoshimmer™
POLYESTER 59%
POLYETHYLENE 40%
METALLIC 1%

On the regular metallics, the core is actually the nylon component, the polyester is the metallic foil or wrap so to speak. That wrap is only 1% actual metal of some type. On the Sliver and Holoshimmer, the polyester and metallic components again refer to the metallized film looking component, the polyethylene refers to the core.

So how do you determine the "weight" of a metallic thread?

For our original metallic we do use a regular weight designation and it is 30 wt. For the two flat metallics (Sliver and Holoshimmer) we do not have a weight designation. We have, however, calculated the TEX for those two, and both would be a TEX 16 size. TEX is simply the weight in grams of 1,000 meters of thread. For these products, 6,000 meters weights 100 g. Doing the math you get 16.7 and I believe you are supposed to drop the decimal when calculating TEX. (Just threw that information in to impress you!). No one cares! ☺

Someone told me I really HAD TO GET the THREAD DIRECTOR TOOL.

WHY?

It's a rare machine that won't be euphoric over the tips we've just given you. For that machine, this is a miracle invention. However, it is also just a plain wonderful thread-delivery-system that eliminates twisting and other thread-stressing issues for all types of threads. Should you need it, you'll want it in your gadget collection for immediate easy access. It is a small miracle for those who need it.

There is also a Thread Director II that will accommodate 2 spools.