

Handmade Buttons and Knotted Cording – How To

Our IO4 Egyptian Shirt pattern comes with detailed information on applying applique to the shirt front, back, and sleeves. It also has instructions for applying soutache (narrow braid used for trim), creating your own cording to apply as trim, and how to make knotted buttons from soutache or your own cording. Here, I am going to briefly cover how to make your own flat cording and then use it to make a knotted button.



To make self-cording, cut bias pieces at least 1" (2.5cm) wider than the cord you are using, and at least 12"-15" (30.5 to 38cm) long. Cut cords about 5" (12.5cm) longer than your bias strips.



Fold the bias strip in half lengthwise, rights sides together, over the cord. Pin cord in place, butted up against fold, and using a zipper foot, stitch down the length of the strip, making a 1/4" (6mm) seam.



Backstitch at beginning and end to secure. Secure one end of the cord by stitching several times through cord and fabric about 1/2" (13mm) from end of fabric at one end.



Now grasp the fabric near the secured end with thumb and index finger while pulling the loose end of the cord with the other. Ease the fabric over the secured end and continue pulling, turning the tubing so the raw edges are on the inside. When it is all turned, you will have a piece of flat tubing. Trim the cord off of the handmade cording.



The small knotted round button is a three-dimensional Josephine knot, tied with one piece of cord. Soutache or a small flexible braid or fabric tubing are recommended. In Middle Eastern clothes, soutache made of metallic thread is commonly used.



Make a loop with the cord.



Bring cord around and make another loop on top of the first.



Bring the same cord end around, underneath the first loop cord.



Bring that end over the first cord in the loops, under the second,



over the third cord in the loops, and under the forth cord in the loops. Creating the shape you see below.



Now pull the center loops slightly tighter, then pull gently on the cord ends to tighten. Continue to do this until you have a fairly tight knot.



The finished button size will depend on the size of the cording and how tight you pull the knot. You can use the "tails" of the knots to create the button hole loops.