

Should I Wind My Own Bobbins?

Just about every home embroidery machine comes equipped with a built-in bobbin winder. Normally found conveniently placed atop your machine under the lid, the built-in bobbin winder is a constant source of wonder. Should I wind my own bobbins, or should I purchase pre-wound bobbins? That's a question that everyone has asked themselves at least once.

There is nothing wrong with winding your own bobbins. Many times you need a special thread in your bobbin, or you simply want to use the same thread in the bobbin as you are using on the top. Free Standing Lace comes to mind as one of those times.

What ever your reason(s) for winding your own bobbins, no one could ever fault you for doing so. However, if the reason you wind your own bobbins has anything to do with cost, you may be surprised to learn that pre-wound bobbins can actually save you money. To illustrate my point, let's me make a few cost comparisons between pre-wound bobbins and standard spools of bobbin thread.

For our comparisons we'll use a few of the more well known manufacturers of bobbin thread and pre-wound bobbins. As the chart below shows, there is a major difference in "per bobbin" cost between pre-wound bobbins and bobbins you wind yourself.

Manufacturer	Cost **	Spool Capacity	Bobbin Capacity *	Bobbins Per Spool	Bobbins per box	Cost per bobbin
Superior	\$6.25	1420 yards	120 yards	<12	N/A	\$0.53
Finishing Touch	\$6.00	1200 yards	120 yards	10	N/A	\$0.60
NEBS	\$35.00	N/A	130 yards	N/A	144	\$0.24
Coats Astra	\$22.00	N/A	114 yards	N/A	144	\$0.15
Magna-Glide***	\$28.95	N/A	135 yards	N/A	100	\$0.29

* Bobbin capacities are approximate. Some bobbins may hold slightly more or less.

** Costs shown are average retail prices.

*** Magnetic Core bobbins for machines with metal bobbin case only.

The comparisons above are only a few examples based on the products I am familiar with and use in our own embroidery shop. Bobbin thread and pre-wound bobbins from other manufactures may result in different costs per bobbin. Also note that I used the cost of a one gross box of pre-wound bobbins. Purchasing pre-wounds in smaller quantities is more expensive and would increase the cost per bobbin.

Beside the cost there are other things you must consider when choosing which bobbins to use. If using pre-wounds you should always use high quality thread that works well in your machine. If you wind your own bobbins it's equally important to use a high quality thread to achieve the best results. Some machine manufacturers do not recommend using pre-wound bobbins in their machines, but a bit of experimentation should prove whether or not they will work for you.

As I said earlier, there is nothing wrong with winding your own bobbins. What ever works for you! But, if cost is a major factor in your decision you may want to reconsider. Using pre-wound bobbins is actually less expensive than winding your own.

Ron Bynum
R & M Crafts
rmcrafts@cigarcityarts.com
www.cigarcityarts.com