

# A Treasure Pouch in Simple Looping

ROBIN TAYLOR DAUGHERTY

Robin Taylor Daugherty's treasure pouches in a variety of colors.  
*Photograph by Joe Coca.*

Treasure pouch necklaces are made by the ancient technique of simple looping. I first learned the technique in the early 1970s and made several small containers. At a basketry convention in Michigan, I noticed several women gleefully clutching tiny waxed-linen baskets hung on a braid and decorated with a few beads. I tracked down the creator, Christa Hobson. Later, I used Christa's instructions as a jumping-off point to make a slightly larger pouch, adding a drawstring and redesigning the base to create a regular geometric pattern. After having worked this simple stitch into so many little bags, I was struck by their resemblance to a looped fiber bag from the U-Bar Cave in New Mexico dated to A.D. 1200–1425 and now in the collection of the Museum of Indian Culture in Santa Fe. So much has changed in 600 years, and yet so little.

Totems, tokens, and talismans—those small treasures take on such a special significance that we want to keep them with us. They belong in a pouch, a pocket, or a purse: some small, portable receptacle for precious things. These treasure pouches are an age-old solution to an age-old problem.

You will need about 16 yards (15 m) of 4-ply Irish waxed linen thread for one bag. Choose a light-colored waxed linen for your first attempts. It is much easier to see what you are doing if you use a lighter color. Waxed thread results in a much more substantial, shapely bag than unwaxed thread would.

#### MATERIALS

Royalwood, Ltd. Irish Waxed Linen Thread, 50 g (100 yds)/spool,  
1 spool in the color of choice  
Colonial Needle, tapestry, size 17  
Scissors  
Clipboard or clamp (optional)

*Materials are available at needlework stores or from mail-order or online resources.*

Finished size: About 2½ inches (6 cm) high and 1½ inches (4 cm) in diameter.

#### INSTRUCTIONS

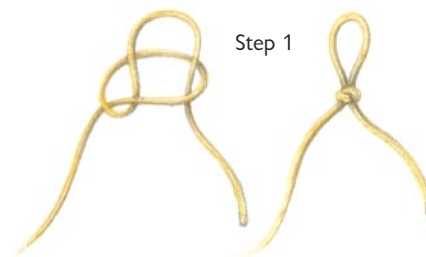
*Note:* As in all fiber crafts, tension is critical. To keep your stitches the same size, try pulling the stitch close with a broad outward swing of your arm, and then use your fingers to snug it up just right by pulling up and slightly *toward* yourself.

For the pouch, cut 3 pieces of waxed linen thread, each

2 yards (1.8 m) long. You will have to splice them as you work; one long piece would be unwieldy. For the braid, cut 4 pieces 60 inches (152.4 cm) long. For the drawstring, cut 1 piece 20 inches (50.8 cm) long.

#### The Base

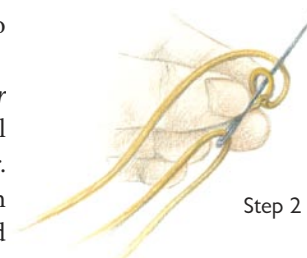
*Step 1:* Thread a 2-yard (1.8-m) piece of waxed linen on the needle. Tie a slipknot in the other end, pull-



Step 1

ing the short end up into the loop.

*Step 2 (first row or round):* Pull the short tail to make the loop smaller. Insert the needle through the loop and pass the cord behind the needle from right to left. Pull the needle through and pull the stitch up fairly snug but not so tight that you can't see the small loop formed by the stitch. You will need to stitch into that small loop on the next round.



Step 2

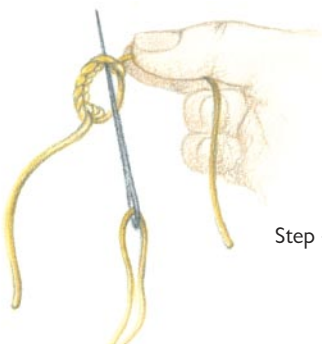
*Step 3:* Repeat the stitch



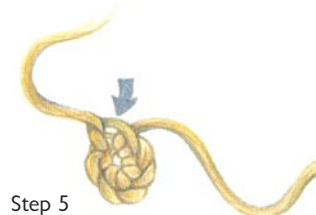
Step 3

in Step 2 five more times for a total of 6 stitches.

*Step 4 (second row):* Insert the needle into the first stitch and then pull the short end of the original loop to close up the circle of stitches.



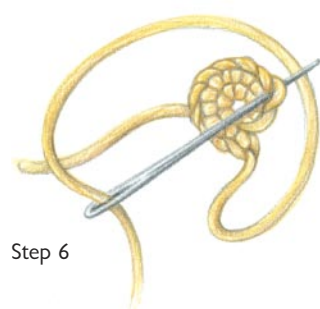
Step 4



Step 5

*Step 5:* Complete the first stitch and notice that it is quite long. (You will skip this stitch when you begin the next row.) Take a second stitch in the same hole as the first. Continue

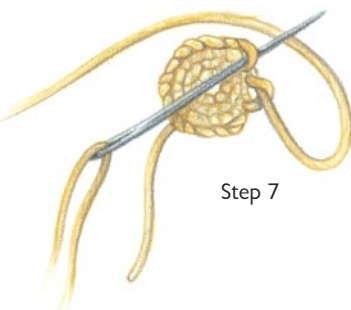
taking 2 stitches in each of the remaining 5 stitches for a total of 12 stitches.



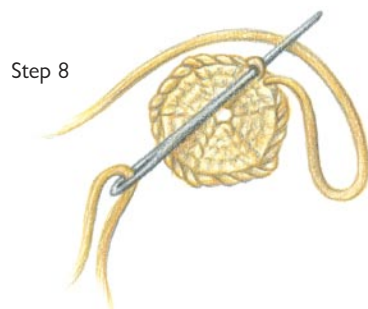
Step 6

*Step 6 (third row):* Skip that first long stitch and insert your needle into the second stitch. \*Take 2 stitches in that stitch and 1 in the next.\* Repeat between \*s for a total of 18 stitches.

*Step 7 (fourth row):* Notice how the base has become 6-sided. You shouldn't get lost if you remember always to take your double stitch in the corners and single stitches across the flat sides. On this row, work a double plus 2 singles, for a total of 24 stitches.



Step 7



Step 8

*Step 8 (fifth row):* This drawing shows a completed fourth row. The next stitch will begin the fifth row—1 double (2 stitches) plus 3 single stitches (=5=fifth row: get it?). As waxed linen varies in diameter, it

is difficult to specify the number of rows necessary for the base, which should be about the size of a quarter. You will need 5 or 6 complete rows.

### The Sides



Step 9

*Step 9:* At this point, stop increasing and simply work one stitch per previous stitch until your thread is too short to make another. Take it out of the needle.

To add on, thread a second 2-yard (1.8-m) piece on your needle and pull it most of the way through the next stitch. Pull until the new tail is the same length as the first tail. Wrap the new tail to the left behind the emerging new thread and tie the two tails in a square knot. Cut the thread tails off, leaving about 1 inch (2 cm), and press them to the inside of the pouch. Continue working 1 stitch per previous stitch until after you have added the third 2-yard (1.8-m) piece;

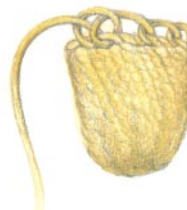
36 inches (91.4 cm) of thread remain.

*Step 10 (drawstring holes):* Skip the first of every 3 stitches for 1 full row. (Skip 1, stitch 2. See Step 11.) Don't pull the cord very tight over the skipped stitches. This creates small loops.

*Step 11:* At the end of the row, count the number of loops. You



Step 10



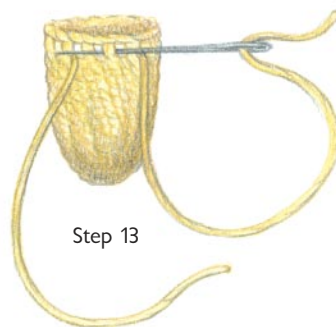
Step 11

need an even number; if you have an odd number try to squeeze one more in or leave one out.

*Step 12:* To return to the previous number of stitches, take 2 stitches in the top of each loop and a single stitch in the other stitches. Complete that row and then work one more regular row. At the end, stitch from back to front into the next stitch and then back into the pouch. Cut off the thread, leaving a tail about 1 inch (2 cm) long, and press it against the inside.



Step 12



Step 13

*Step 13:* Thread the 20-inch (50.8-cm) long piece on the needle. Turn the pouch so that the last stitch on the rim is to the right and slightly back. Thread the drawstring through the

loops (the illustration shows last stitch).

### The Braid

These instructions produce a braid (neck strap) about 34 inches (86 cm) long. If you choose to make a shorter braid, measure to see whether it will still go over your head. Another option is to make the braid long and adjust the length with a slipknot tied at the back.

*Step 14:* Tie an overhand knot 10 inches (25.4 cm) from the end of the group of 4, each 60 inches (152.4 cm)

Steps 14 and 15



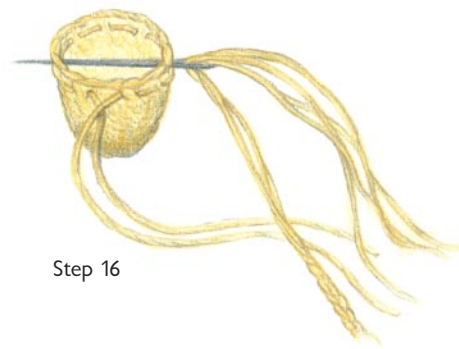
and is adjustable to different lengths, if desired. Do not tie a knot. (If you must stop in the middle of the braid, tie

long. Clamp it to the clipboard or otherwise secure it. Try to maintain a consistent tension. Pass the outer right-hand piece to the left under the next 2 strands and then back to the right over 1. (It returns to your right hand.)

*Step 15:* Pass the outer left-hand strand to the right under the next 2 strands and back over 1. (It returns to your left hand.) Tighten and repeat these two steps until the remaining ends are 9 inches (22.9 cm) long or the braid is long enough to go over your head

the 2 strands on the left in a loose overhand knot so that it is easy to find your place.)

*Step 16:* Thread the unknotted ends on the needle and stitch through a stitch on the pouch, below the gathering cord on one side and out through a similar stitch on the other side. Take the threads off the needle and tie them in a knot 9 inches (22.9 cm) from the end.



Step 16

#### FURTHER READING

Ligon, Linda. "The Ubiquitous Loop." *PieceWork*, September/October 2009.