

Figure 7

Preventing Twisted Needles

The needles that are visible between the gauge opening and your last stitch should always lie flat, with their smooth surfaces facing out. Turning the gauge back and forth a few times or rotating the loose ends of the needles one-quarter turn to the left and right will help straighten them out.

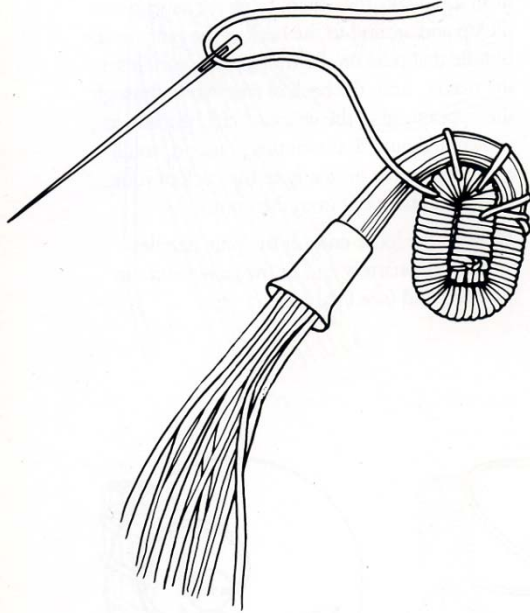


Figure 8

Adding Needles

11. Whenever the needles inside the gauge don't hold the gauge snugly in place, you must add needles. (You'll find that you need to do this after every two or three stitches.) Gently spread apart the needles sticking out of the gauge and insert the de-capped ends of two or three single needles – or one cluster – into their center (see Figure 7). Make sure the new needles are centered within the existing bundle or their whitish heads (once covered by caps) may stick up out of a coil in your finished basket

Filling the Gauge and Hiding the Needle Ends

When a gauge is properly filled, it maintains a light grip on the needles inside it and won't slip off. If the gauge is overfilled, you'll have to yank it in order to move it – definitely not desirable! Don't forget to fill the gauge whenever it feels loose.

Check the front and back of your basket frequently. If you notice any white needle ends sticking out, use your sewing needle or the point of a scissors blade to push them carefully back into the center of the coil.

Stitching the First Coil

12. To make the plain stitch that you'll use for this basket, insert the sewing needle from the back of your work, straight through the top third of the wrapped coil beneath, about 1/8" (3mm) away from your first stitch. Pull the thread tight, bring your sewing needle up and to the back of your work, and take another stitch, in the same fashion, again about 1/8" away from the last stitch (see Figure 8). Rather than making trial-and-error stitches at a surface that you can't see, each time you're about to insert the needle, flip your work over so you can see its back surface.