Loops and Tubes
By Linda Lee
Are You in the Loop?

- Button loops, cord-filled tubing and drawstrings have both useful and decorative purposes in garment and home decorating projects.

- Because they are usually narrow bias-cut strips of fabric, they are usually tedious and difficult to turn to the outside.

- This tutorial takes the mystery out of how to turn narrow fabric tubes quickly with the right tools and techniques.

Kathy models a MixIt Top with a loop and button closure.

Knotted Tail pillow from Sew Sensational Pillows by Linda Lee
Short Loops

- Short loops are generally used for button closures.

- So they need to be narrow with an even width and non-bulky.

- There are lots of turning tools available, but I have narrowed it down to my two favorites.

- But first let’s investigate turning tubes without any special tools — the old-fashioned way.

There are 8 button loops to make in the Salsa Blouse. Whew! Make one long tube and cut it into 8 pieces.
Turning Without Tools

- Cut fabric strips on the bias.

- Cut the width generously. For example, if you want a finished tube width of $\frac{1}{4}"$, cut the strip $1\frac{1}{2}"$ wide. (Width of tube times 2 plus two $\frac{1}{2}"$ seam allowances)

- Cut a piece of cordonnet twice the length of the bias strip plus a few inches.

- Fold the thread in half and zigzag stitch the loop end to the wrong side of one end of the bias strip.

Cordonnet A thick, loosely-spun thread, yarn or cord such as Pearl Cotton.
Turning Without Tools

- Fold the bias strip in half lengthwise with right sides together.

- Nestle the cordonnet along the inside fold.

- Stitch an even distance from the folded edge the width of the finished tube, making sure not to catch the cordonnet.

- At each end, veer the stitching towards the raw edges to form a funnel shape.
Turning Without Tools

- Trim the seam allowance to $\frac{1}{8}$".

- Use long cutting shears rather than short trimming scissors to make a smoother cut line.

*Kai 9" Tailoring Shears*

These shears are like no others — razor sharp and balanced in your hands.
Turning Without Tools

- Hold the cordonnet tails in one hand as you begin to ease the fabric over itself at the other end.
- Once you get it started, which takes a bit of fiddling, continue to pull the cordonnet and the tube will emerge completely.
Fasturn Tool

- The Fasturn Tool is a handy apparatus. It consists of a metal tube through which a thin wire with a corkscrew end is inserted.

- It is available in nine diameters and six lengths sold individually or as a set, so you can make many sizes of tubes and cording.

- Because of the lengths of the metal tubes, there is a limit to the length of fabric tubes that can be turned, but for lengths under about 36", it is a very cool tool.
Fasturn Tool

- This is a YouTube video that is worth watching.
- I thought I knew how to use my Fasturn tools, but I learned three new things.
- I think you will be amazed.
- Click on the link on this page to watch this short presentation.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a4Qz06pVcMY

Click on this link to watch the video demonstration.
Ball Point Bodkin

- My other favorite turning tool is the ball point bodkin.

- It’s simple and has the advantage of turning endless lengths of tubes.

- It is 6" long and has a small ball at one end and an open “eye” at the other.

- Uses include turning bias tubing, inserting elastic into casings and ribbon weaving.
Ball Point Bodkin

- Cut bias strips, fold and stitch as instructed in the method on page 4.
- Insert the ball end into the fabric tube, leaving the eye exposed at one end.
- Zigzag stitch by hand or machine through the eye of the bodkin to anchor it to one end of the tube.
Ball Point Bodkin

- Begin pulling the bodkin while easing the end of the tube inside itself.
- Continue to pull the bodkin and feed the fabric completely through the tube.

*Leave the tubes soft or press flat. Your choice!*
Prairie Points

- The button and loop closure on the Urban Pants adds a decorative touch to the vent detail on the legs.

- This tube is wider and pressed flat to make a prairie point, a detail more commonly found in crafts and quilting.
Prairie Points

- Pin the turned tube to a padded pressing surface.

- Make a loop with the tube and butt the tube strips together. Pin in place.

- Press the top loop into a flat point and pin in place. Press the entire prairie point.

- Sew a zigzag bar tack to secure the prairie point.
Prairie Points

- Prairie points are fun to make from tubes of fabric or ribbons.
- Use lots of prairie points to embellish pillows, craft projects or garments.

Ribbon and fabric tubes pressed into prairie points and used as pillow fringe.
Long Tubes

- Cord-filled tubing can be used for ties and decorative cording on garments and as covered piping for pillow edges.

- This unique technique allows you to make endless lengths of piping, sew it to edges, and leave it free at the corners in order to tie knots and bows.
Long Tubes

- Cut pieces of cotton cable cord of any diameter twice the length of the finished piping needed.

- Starting in the middle of a piece of cotton cable cord, wrap a piece of bias fabric around the cord with the right side to the inside.

- Using a cording or zipper foot, stitch the fabric along the cord to encase it.

- Trim the seam to $\frac{1}{8}"$. 
Long Tubes

- Turn the bias strip right side out over the cord. Start by easing the bias gently over itself toward the exposed cord.

- Once the bias strip turns over the anchor stitching, hold the cord extending from the open end of the bias strip firmly in one hand and with your other hand, continue to ease the bias strip over itself.

- Cut the excess cord.
Long Tubes

- Center a piece of piping along one edge of the finished pillow.

- Reverse the blindhem stitch on your machine. Using monofilament invisible thread and a blindhem presser foot, stitch the piping to the edge of the pillow.

- Start and stop stitching about 1" from each end.

- Repeat on all edges.

- Tie square knots at each corner, and tie knots at the ends of each piping tail.
Drawstrings

- Drawstrings are another form of tubes.

- Since drawstrings are generally inside of a casing, there is no need to turn a long tube.

- Folded, pressed and stitched works just fine.
Drawstrings

- Cut a strip of fabric (not necessarily on the bias) four times the finished width of the drawstring.

- Fold the strip in half lengthwise and press.

- Open the pressed strip and press each raw edge to the center foldline, dividing the strip into fourths.

- Refold and edgestitch the folded edges together.
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