

# Obsidian Dawn TUTORIALS

This tutorial will help you create realistic embroidered text or designs. Not only does it create the texture, but when you embroider something, the edges of that object are not going to be completely straight or flush. There will be “bumps” from where each stitch of thread on that line ends. This should also help explain how to create those, for a realistic embroidery effect.

It can be used for text, as I’ve shown here, or really for any other shape or design, as well.



## Embroidered Text Effect

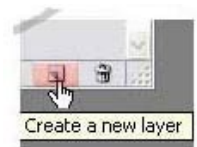
1. Start with your text. Any font will do, but the thicker or bolder fonts tend to look best, I think.

I'm using my initials, and the font is called "Bitstream Vera Serif" - in bold.

You can do it in gray and then color it later if you're not sure what color "thread" you want, or you can start with your color of preference right now.



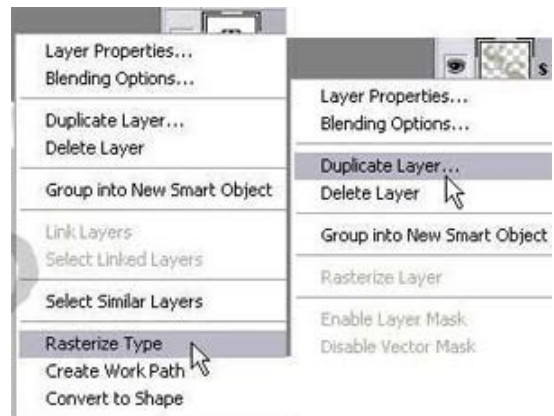
Make sure that your text is on a New Layer by clicking on the "Create a new layer" button on the bottom of the layers palette.



2. Right click on the text layer (which should be named whatever the text says) and choose "Rasterize Type." This will allow us to manipulate the text in ways that we could not do otherwise. Erase parts of it, for example - which is just what we are going to do.

Then, duplicate the layer by right clicking on that layer again and choose "Duplicate Layer."

You should now have the original text layer and a second copy of that layer.



3. As you can see, I have the original “S” layer of text, and the “S copy” layer. I only want to be working with one of them for now, however, so I’m going to hide the second one. You can do this by clicking on the image of the eye next to the layer that you want to hide. Once you do, that eye will disappear, indicating that the visibility on that layer is set to hidden.



I hid the “S” layer. So now I click on the “S copy” layer to make sure that it is the active layer.

4. Now to make those bumpy edges. I’m going to be using a brush from my [Micro Patterns brush set](#). You can make your own (fairly time consuming) or just use mine. What you want is a brush with a bunch of lines (in this case, horizontal) on it, all stacked together. They should be fairly evenly spaced.

If you use the brushes from my set, the one that I am using here is called “lines4” - but you could do vertical lines if that’s the way that you want your “thread” to be running.

Using the eraser tool, select that lines4 brush. The size that you set it to depends on your own personal preference. Don’t make it so small that you can’t see the lines in it, and don’t make it too big, either. These will be the “threads,” so make it a good size to fit how thick you want your threads to be.



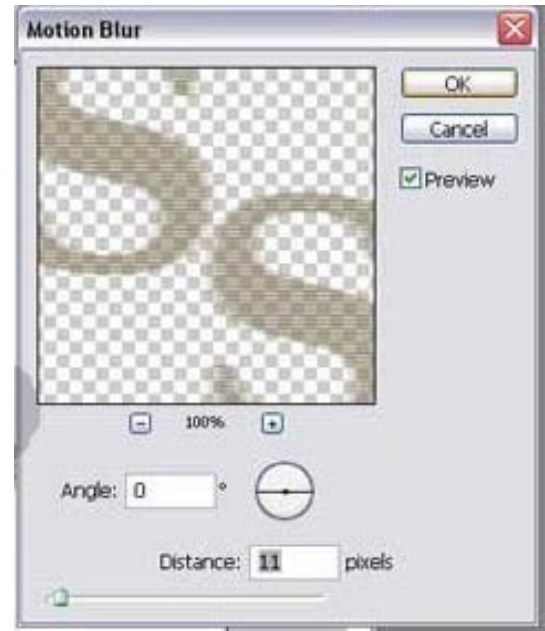
Make sure the brush covers all of your letters, too, if possible. If it doesn’t, you’ll just have to use the brush again on the other part, trying to make the connection as seamless as you can.

When I used the eraser brush, I clicked 2-3 times without moving the brush to be sure that those lines would be extra visible.

5. Those edges are starting to look a bit more like threads, but they're still too even for my tastes. So, what I'm going to do to help make them less even is to use a motion blur. This blur will also help to make the lines look more thread-like, since threads tend to be fairly "soft."

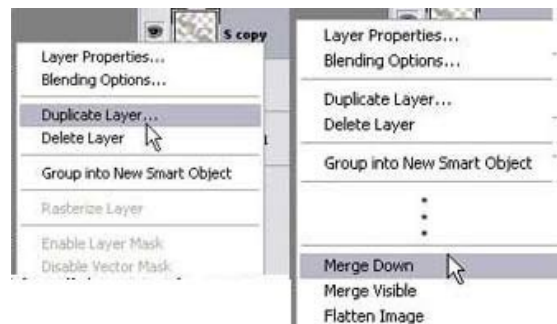
On the menu, select Filter > Blur > Motion Blur.

Make sure the angle is 0 if your threads are horizontal. It should be 90 if your threads are vertical. The distance depends on your font. I am using a very thick font, so the distance that I used was 11 pixels. If your font is smaller, the distance will be less. This "distance" is how many pixels the image is going to blur out to each side. On a smaller font, I used a distance as small as 2-3 pixels. You still want the letters to be very clear, all you want is a bit of a blur at the edges. So, play around with your settings until you get it how you like it.



6. You've now thinned out the image a bit by spreading the same amount of "paint" over a larger amount of space, so I duplicated this layer to give it a more solid feel once more.

Right click on the layer and select "Duplicate Layer" - you'll now have an "S copy" layer. Select that layer by clicking on it, then right click on it and select "Merge Down" (Hotkey: CTRL-E on a PC, CMD-E on a Mac). You now have one layer that's quite a bit more solid looking again.



7. This next step is optional. My S's still looked a bit too blurry on the edges, so I went on to use a Smart Sharpen on that layer.

These were my settings. Again, they will vary a bit depending on your font and font size, and how "soft" looking you want your threads to be.

Keep in mind that unless you have Photoshop CS2 or greater, you will not be able to use Smart Sharpen. A regular "Sharpen" or a "Sharpen Edges" will likely do in this case, as a substitute.

To apply a Smart Sharpen, in the top menu select Filter > Sharpen > Smart Sharpen.



8. This is how mine now looks.

As you can see, it's starting to look a bit more like embroidery. It's still fairly "flat" looking, however, and that's what we'll start to fix next.





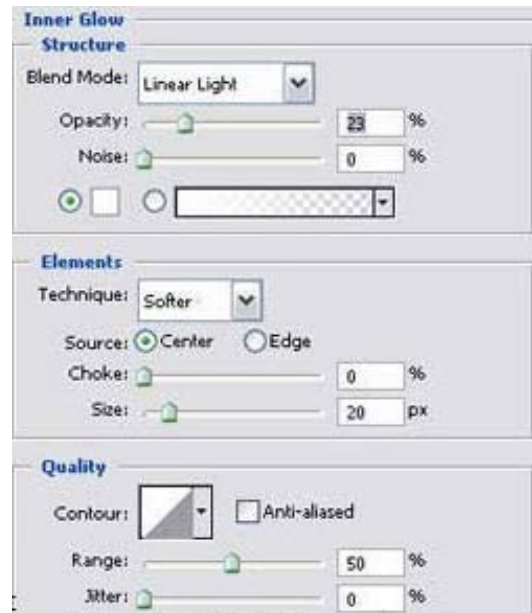
9. We want our embroidery to look like the thread is sinking in toward the edges, as it goes down into the fabric.

This makes the edges of the letters darker and the middle parts lighter. Let's work on making the middles lighter in color first.



At the bottom of the layers palette, click on the round "f" - this is where we will find all of the layer styles that we're getting ready to apply.

Select "Inner Glow" - these are the settings that I used. Change the color to white (or a lighter shade of your chosen color). Change the source to "Center." The size, in pixels, again will vary. My font is big, so my size in pixels is big. But you'll want a fairly decent size, because you want to be thicker than the width that you chose for your thread - so that it spreads out over the whole letter and doesn't just highlight each strand of thread. Something like...



10. ... this.

You can play around with the settings, using different Blend Modes, Opacities, and Sizes.

Another good blend mode would be to simply use "Lighten" or "Screen" - I chose Linear Light just because I liked how it worked with this particular color.

The options are virtually endless! So don't be afraid to try different settings.

Your goal is to simply make the center portions of the letters lighter in color than the edges, so that the letters look somewhat raised up from the "fabric" beneath.



11. Threads generally have tiny strands that have come loose and are sticking out on their own, which creates the thread's texture. To create that, we'll begin by applying some noise to this layer.

On the top menu, select Filter > Noise > Add Noise.

On this layer, I barely want it to show up. Most of the texture is going to come from that other layer that we've been neglecting all this time. So, I used a very small %. Just enough to make it not quite so smooth.



## 12. Speaking of that neglected layer...

It's time to switch over to that other layer. For me, it was just called "S" - we hid its visibility earlier by clicking on that eye next to that layer on the layers palette. Click the eye again to make it visible once more.

You want this layer on top, too. So, to move it so that it is situated above the layer that we were working on previously, click on the "S" layer in the layers palette and drag it up above the "S copy" layer, then let go. It should stay there, and your layers palette should look something like this:



13. Select the “S” layer to make sure that it is active, and apply a Gaussian Blur to that layer. Filter > Blur > Gaussian Blur. I used these settings. You want to blur it enough so that the edges aren’t quite so “sharp” - a radius of 1 to 2.5 pixels should do it.

What you’re doing is making this layer blend into the layer beneath it, the one that creates the bumpy edges to simulate where the threads go down into the fabric.

This layer will be the one that simulates the texture of the threads in the middle parts of the letters. The last layer that we were working on was what makes the edges “bumpy,” but there were too many gaps toward the center of the letters. Most embroidery threads are closely packed at the center of the designs (or, in this case, letters). So, gaps like we had just won’t do.



14. Using the magic wand tool, click somewhere outside of these letters.

If you have letters with “holes” in them like an “o” or “a”, you’ll need to hold SHIFT and click inside the gaps in these letters. Holding shift and clicking means that you’re adding that space to your current selection.

You should now have all of the space outside your letters selected. Click Select > Inverse (Hotkey: SHIFT+CTRL+I on PC, SHIFT+CMD+I on Mac).

This inverts the selection so that your letters themselves are now what is selected.





15. You're almost done! Long tutorial, I know.

On the top menu, select Filter > Noise > Add Noise.

This time, we're going to add a lot of noise. We want a lot of texture to this layer.

My settings are to the right.

Make sure your letters are still selected for the next step!

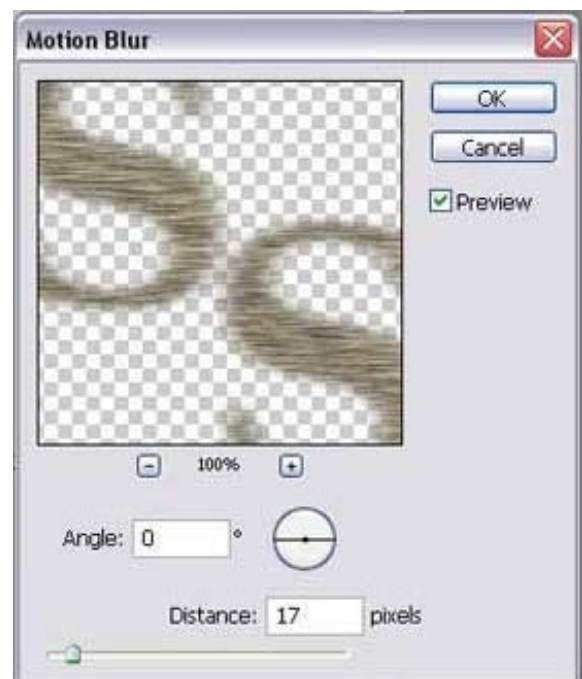


16. Click Filter > Blur > Motion Blur.

The angle should be the same as it was in step 5. If your threads are going horizontally, it will be 0 degrees. The distance will be greater this time, though.

You really want to blur that "noise" that you created, to give the appearance of all those threads coming together.

(The reason that the letters needed to be selected for this step is so that the blur that we're applying doesn't go all over the place - the selection keeps the blur within the boundaries of the letters.)

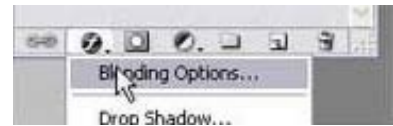


Here's what mine looks like. It may not look much like threads yet, but that's a quick fix.



17. The next step is to play around with this top layer's blending options to get it looking just how you want.

I'll show you a few examples and my settings.

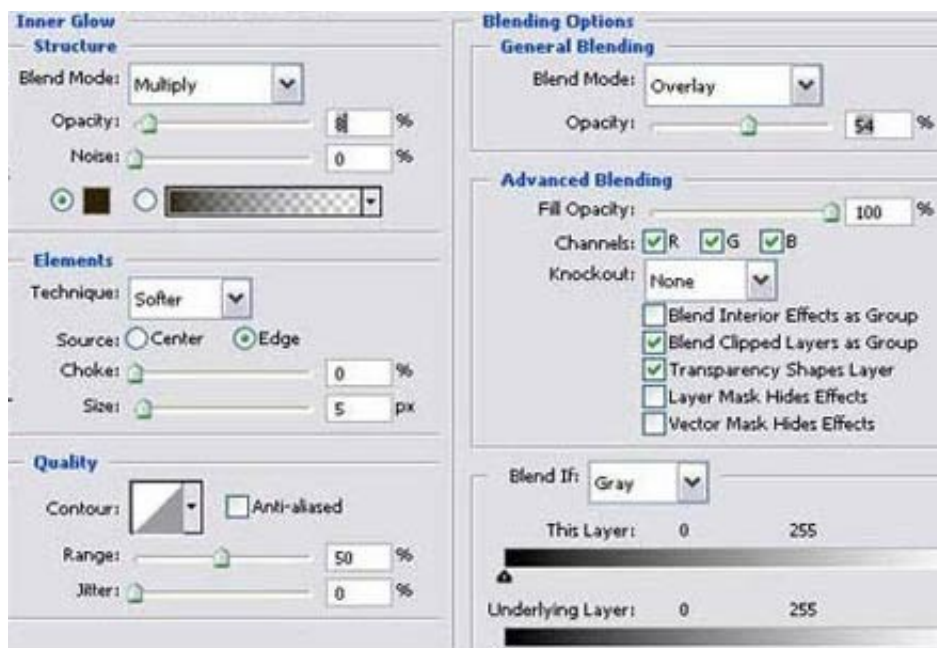


18. The layer properties that you're going to play around with are "Inner Glow" and "Blending Options."

In this example, I applied an "Inner Glow" to the edges of the letters with a blend mode of multiply, meaning I was basically adding a shadow to the edges of the letters. The opacity is set pretty low, so it wasn't very dark.

The Blending Options were set to a blend mode of "Overlay" so that it applied the texture from the top layer to what we'd done with that lower layer, as well as helped to "fill in" some of the gaps between the threads that we had on that lower layer.

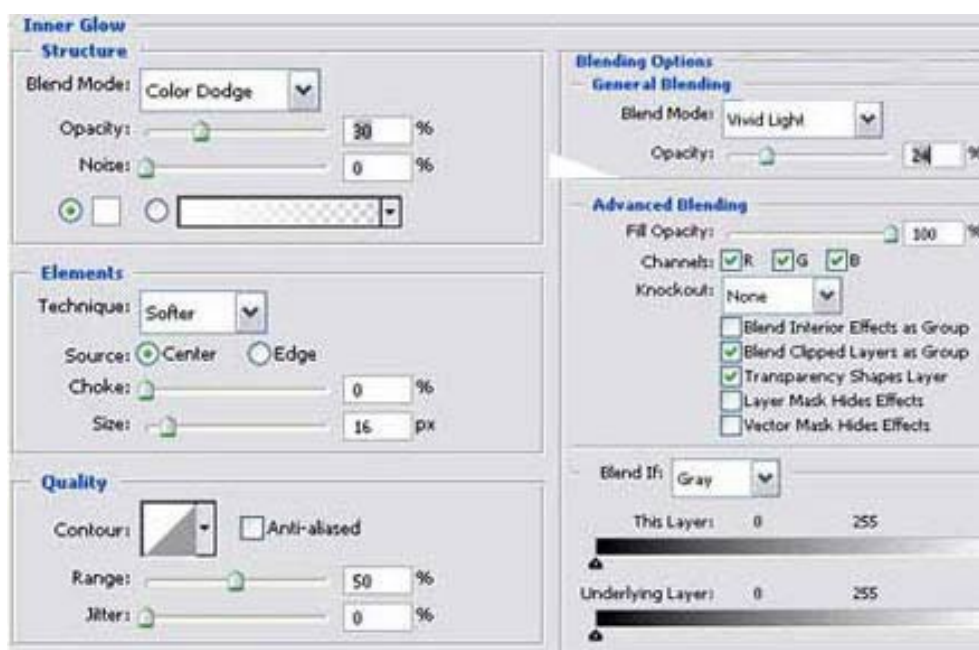
Mess around with the settings as much as you like... there's so many options that will work here - you just need to find the settings that work best for the effect you're trying to achieve.



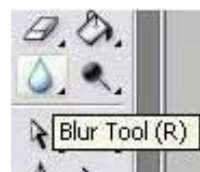
Here's some others that I did...

I thought that these next settings made the thread look a bit more shiny, almost metallic.

The "Inner Glow" on this one, as you can see below, I applied to the center rather than the edge. And I made the blend mode into a dodge with a lighter color, which basically just means that this glow is intensifying that inner glow that we added to the layer beneath. This makes the highlights even sharper and helps to give it that shiny, metallic-thread look.



19. Another optional step is to blur the center parts of the letters a bit, to get rid of even more of those "gaps" between the threads. You'll want to use the blur tool at a low strength percentage (something like 7-20%) on the "S copy" layer, but don't blur those edges! Just the center parts of the letters.



Here's some more samples I made by playing around with the Hue/Saturation a bit, after blurring the center parts of the letters as step 19 indicates.



Here's another that I made of my name, with a slightly thicker "thread" (the size of the lines4 brush was set larger).



That's it! Play around with those settings, and you can make all kinds of embroidery!

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