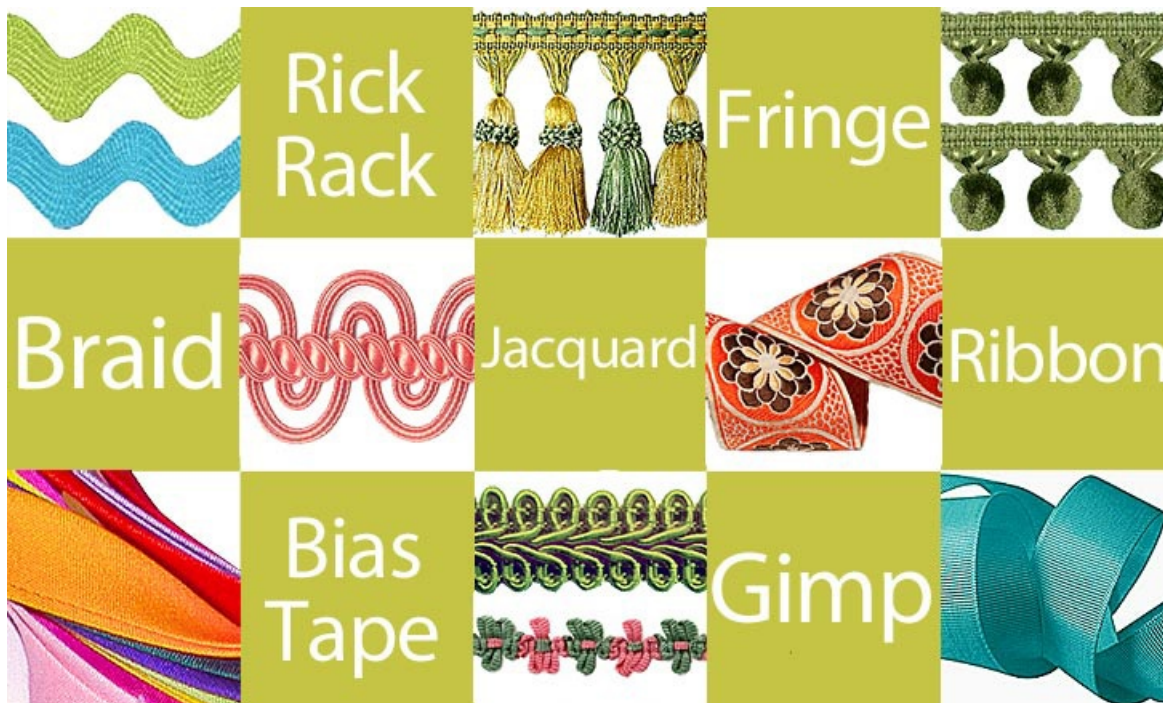


A Terrific Trims Tutorial

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Thursday, 15 September 2011 9:00



If you think Jacquard, Soutache and Gimp sound like the crew of a pirate ship, you're not alone. Just about everybody who's new to home décor finds the names of sewing trims a little odd at first. But once you become familiar with them you'll want to use them to make your finished projects look terrific.

When you go to the fabric store, you'll find traditional trims (which you purchase by the yard on a roll or mini-bolt) in one section, ribbon in another section, and bias tape and rick rack (which you usually purchase in a pre-cut package) in another. Unique sizes of rick rack, jumbo and teeny tiny, are often also found in the by-the-yard section. Online retailers will also have them grouped a number of different ways. So it helps to know what you're looking for.

First: Two Quick Trim Tips

Pre-shrinking

Before you do anything with any kind of trim, you need to know if it might shrink if you wash it. And, some vintage trims may not be color-fast. If the item you're making will be washed at some point, you should pre-shrink (wash and dry) both your fabric *and* your trims. Put your trims in a lingerie laundry bag (or use a sock) before putting them in your washing machine.

I once sewed some dark vintage ribbon along the edge of a white hand towel. It came straight off the roll and I didn't pre-wash it. The towel looked great until I ran it through the laundry--after which it looked like a failed tie-dyeing experiment.

Raveling Ends

When you cut any kind of sewing trim, the ends will want to unravel. To prevent this put a piece of tape over both ends just after you cut it. (Some people like to put the tape on *before* they cut.) Right before you sew it onto your project, carefully remove the tape from the ends. If you are sewing the trim into a seam, you can extend the taped end beyond your seam allowance, then once the trim is secure, trim the trim (hey... I like that, it's a verb *and* a noun) flush with the seam allowance.

Bias Tape



Bias tape is a long strip of fabric that has been cut "on the bias" (at a 45° angle). This cut gives the fabric more flex so it will curve around corners without as much bunching or kinking. Bias tape is used to cover or encase a raw edge and comes in single fold and double fold of varying widths. Double fold bias tape basically wraps a raw edge on both sides and can be used on just about any kind of raw edge you want to have a pretty finished look. It's a favorite choice for quilts and blankets, but I also like to use it as a decorative accent on pillows, curtains and table linens. Single fold is used for folded up hems and is more common in garment construction for skirts and pants, but in home décor, it's quite handy for deep curtain hemming.

Store-bought bias tape comes in a pretty good selection of colors, but sometimes you need something different. So... you can make your own. Read more about making and attaching bias tape in these articles:

[S4H's Top Tips & Techniques: #1 Making & Attaching Bias Binding](#)

[Quick Top: Bias Tape Cheat Sheet](#)

[Products We Love: Simplicity Bias Tape Maker](#)

Braid



A braid is a trim where the fibers have been woven like macrame or your sister's pigtails. Braid can give a formal look and comes in about as many varieties as you can imagine.

Soutache is a narrow, rounded braid with a center "ditch" for you to hide your attaching stitch in. You can use it for accents, ties, scroll motifs, drawstrings and button loops.

Loopbraid is a novelty decorative edging you can use as an accent. You can also use it as a loop for closures.

Middy braid is flat and narrow and used for accents, ties and drawstrings.

Fringe



Fringe comes in a great variety of materials and widths, from brush cut fringe to big pom poms. Fringe can be used to accent pillows, cushions, window treatments and lampshades (or your car's dashboard, but we won't go there). It comes as tassel fringe, bullion fringe, loop fringe, knot fringe, and more. There's always a secured edge to the fringe so it's actually quite easy to stitch onto your project. Just remember to check often as you're sewing on your fringe to make sure it's not getting caught up the seam. It's kind of like your bangs; they look dorky if you get a chunk caught up in your headband.

We especially love pom-poms... these are a few faves:

[Perky Pom Pom Pillows](#) – a user favorite, and they make a great gift.

[Boho Shoulder Bag](#) – great for using up scraps!

[Room Divider Panels / Curtains](#) - adds panache and a unique eye-catching touch.

[Patchwork Pom Pom Throw](#) - velvet and pom-poms create a luxurious throw.

[Country Lane Round Pom-Pom Placemats](#) - tutorial by Bari J.

Gimp



This narrow trim is made with a tightly woven, tiny cord-like material. Gimp trim has traditionally been used for hiding seams on upholstered furniture and around lampshades. But you can also use this versatile trim on pillows, curtains, ornaments and whatever else you can think of.

Ribbon



You can't go wrong with ribbon. It's a wonderful, versatile trim. It's easy to apply. And it adds an understated elegance to nearly any item you make. No wonder simple ribbon turns up again and again on high end designer items. It comes in all kinds of colors, sheens, weaves and widths. In addition to using ribbon as a traditional accent, it makes great fast and easy finished loops along the top of a curtain or drape to slide over the rod. It's also a easy (and pretty) option for tie closures for pillows, duvet covers and slipcovers; as well as drawstrings and tie-backs. Check out the selection at our [Shopping Directory](#) fave online store: [The Ribbon Retreat + Fabric](#)

Then, try some of our favorite ribbon projects:

[Scrap It: Gift Card Case or Biz Card Holder](#)– the ribbon is both decorative and functional.

[Ribbon Accented Tea Towels](#) – using ribbon makes this project extra EASY!

[Charmeuse Satin Pillowcases with Velvet & Lace Trim](#)– did you know that charmeuse satin, with it's super smooth finish, is beneficial for your skin and your hair.

[Sweet Hanging Sachets](#) – using fancy ribbon makes an easy professional finish.

[Market Tote With Ruffly Ribbon Handles & Ties](#)– just look what a little ribbon did to make this tote... amazing!

[Pretty Pleated Travel Pouch](#) - another tutorial that uses ribbon for both finish and function.

[Pillow Pair With Ruffly Ribbon Ties](#) - they look so fancy, but are actually super easy to make.

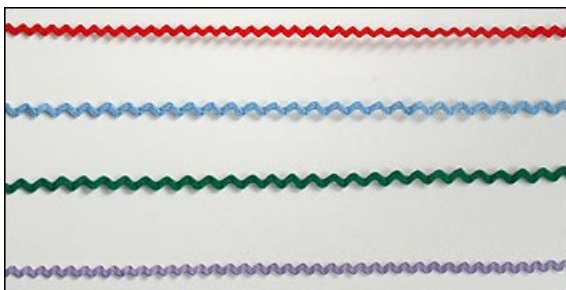
Jacquard



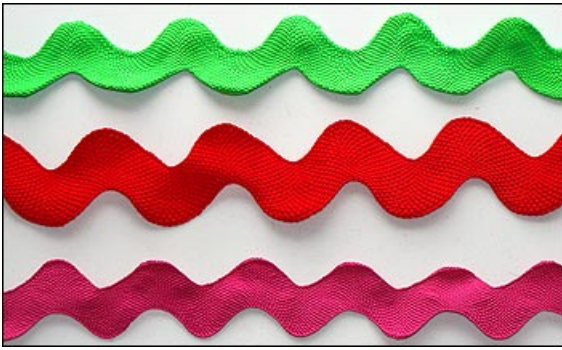
Jacquard ribbon has an intricately woven design that's part of the fabric (as opposed to being embroidered or printed later). You can find it with rich floral designs, classical motifs, and lots of ethnic patterns. Use Jacquard trim when you want a formal look. You apply it as you would ribbon. One of our favorite sources for this type of beautiful trim is [Renaissance Ribbons](#).

Try our [Summer Fun: Dog Collar & Leash](#) using jacquard ribbon trim. Jacquard is sturdy enough to do the job, and colorfast. Also take a look at the [Kaffe Fasset Ribbon Bag](#) - this one is *all* about fabulous jaquard ribbons.

Rick Rack



It's sometimes spelled ric rac or rickrack but shouldn't be confused with "rip rap," which are broken rocks used for embankments. Rick rack is a flat braid with a zig zag shape. It became hugely popular in the late 60s and early 70s and is now making a comeback. You can attach it along the hem of an item, apply as a top trim or insert half way into a seam to create a scalloped edge.



Giant rick rack has recently become popular in fashion and decorating. We spotted actress Blake Lively wearing it on an episode of the CW's *Gossip Girl*. Now that you know about it, *you'll* see it everywhere.

Give it a try with these favorite Sew4Home tutorials:

[Hostess Apron with Dreamy Bow](#) – uses giant rick rack on the bib.

[Table Runner](#) – rick rack adds pizzazz.

[Quick Patchwork Trim Tea Towels](#) – uses inexpensive purchased plain towels, scraps and giant rick rack to create adorable expensive-looking towels.

[Neckroll Pillow with Ric Rac](#) – rick rack upscales a simple neckroll pillow.

All The Other Trims

This introduction has barely scratched the surface of what's out there. For instance, there's a whole world of lace and other vintage trims. You can find those at antique shops, on eBay and in thrift stores. Your local fabric store will have lots of themed and novelty trims. Explore, ask lots of questions, and remember that the right trim can make someone say, "Did you really make that?"

[Buying Guide](#)

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