



the Point of Pins

Using too thick a pin choice will distort fabric layers—not a good thing

Text and photos by Cindy Scraba

In my previous Columns for *The Canadian Quilter*, I've mainly focused on Thread being the key element in constructing and adorning quilted projects and beyond. Actually, PINS perform as the backup act before Thread arrives. I've discovered certain pins are like quality Thread; they have their strong points and some weaknesses. Ultimately pins make a difference, too, if we choose the best tool for the job. You may be surprised by some of these modest *Pinhead* performers...

Anatomy of a Pin

Pin Head: usually we locate our favorite pins by their distinctive heads!

1. Patchwork Glasshead pins are most preferred as they withstand iron heat (see blue/gold heads in photo). They cost more but are worth it if you tend to melt your pinheads.

2. Flowerhead Quilting pins are popular for quilting tasks because they're long and flexible, easy to grasp and can dive through quilting layers. They also behave within seams and lay flat under rulers and during machine stitching. Their weakness is the plastic heads melt and can bend easily.

3. Buttonhead Quilting pins are made by Dritz and claim a "no melt technology" and they're shorter.

4. Appliqué pins are beneficial because they're scaled down to insert in teeny spaces (see tiny trio in photo). The triangular-shaped pinhead is a Bohin brand with a chiseled point designed for appliqué! The tiny white, pearl-shaped appliqué pinhead is made by Clover.

5. T-Pins are easily recognizable, strong and great for blocking or attaching projects to a design wall—T-pins are very versatile tools!

Assorted Pin Specifications

Pin Name	Brand	Length	Diameter
Appliqué Triangle Headpin	Bohin	22 mm (7/8 inch)	0.65 mm
Appliqué White Pearlhead	Clover	2 cm (3/4 inch)	0.6 mm
Multi-purpose T-Pin	Clover	1.5 inch	n/a
Patchwork Extra-Fine	Clover	36 mm	0.4 mm
Quilting Buttonhead Pin	Dritz	n/a	n/a
Quilting Flowerhead Pin	Clover	54 mm	0.7 mm
Quilting Flowerhead Pin	Bohin	60 mm (2 inch)	n/a
Quilting Pin (blue glass)	Clover	48 mm	0.5 mm
Silk Pin (red pin in image)	Clover	36 mm	0.5 mm

Pin Point: sharp, extra-sharp, fine, and chiseled all describe what to expect; however, it's easy to be misled. For example, Silk pins are not the finest type, by far! Patchwork Quilting pins are finer—check their diameter in the size chart. They're best for delicate fabrics and when the pierced hole size matters. Consider the tapered tip and diameter for better accuracy when piecing and positioning seam intersections with a goal of perfect points. Using too

thick a pin choice will distort fabric layers—not a good thing.

Pin Length & Diameter: most manufacturers list the pin length and diameter on the package; however, it's most helpful if you have other pins alongside to help you to compare. Just a few millimeters makes a difference to the task and fabrics being used.

Pin Metal: the metal content affects how flexible a pin can be, or not. Sometimes you want flexibility and other times you need the column strength. Do you have allergies? Most pins are comprised of plated nickel, chrome or brass, or stainless steel, which is more resistant if rust is an issue in moist climates.

Within the vast world of notions, PINS are pretty nifty. I've learned from my on-line and in person customers that they appreciate choices and often comment on how difficult it is to find specialty pins for their specific needs. Who knew pins were VIP tools, too? Happy Pinning and Stitching Always!

