

## Thread — Kelugkaq, K'lugkaq

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**KELUGKANEK ATURTAARTUKUT MINGQU'AKAMTA. – WE ALWAYS USE THREAD WHEN WE SEW.**

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Photo: Youth and adults learn to make thread from Sinew with the help of Coral Chernoff.

Alutiiq seamstresses manufactured thread from the tendons of whales, porpoises, and seals. Thin strands of sinew were separated with the fingernails from sea mammal tendons and the resulting thread wrapped around a wooden spool. This sturdy sewing material was used to stitch clothing and lash together hunting and household implements. The wooden slats of a warrior's vest of armor were tied together with sinew thread and dyed strands of sinew were woven into men's belts. Porpoise sinew, used for the fine embroidery, was especially valued.

With sinew thread, a thimble made from a thick piece of hide, and sharply pointed awls and needles, Alutiiq women stitched and decorated clothing. With a bone awl, a seamstress would pierce a hole in the hide she was working and then use a slender bird bone or ivory needle to pull the thread through the hole. Some needles had tiny eyes. Others had a small knob for attaching the thread. Still other needles were unmodified. Women wrapped sinew strands around these implements to pass them through the holes made by their awls. Needles, thimbles, and spools of thread were stored in finely decorated sewing bags.