Chapter Three



Needle Arts

Introduction to Needle Arts

Through needle arts you will learn to express your creativity in a constructive way while developing a skill that is relaxing and fun. You will also have the opportunity to learn more about the history of needle arts, when and where it originated, how it was passed down through the ages, new techniques and supplies, and much more.

You may want to experiment with different stitches as you learn the basics of needle arts. Visit with artisans in your community to discover how they learned to do needle work, what projects they have completed, and any suggestions they would have for you as a beginner. Check for additional resources in your local Extension office, the Internet, library, or yarn shops to get new ideas. Most importantly, have fun!









Project Evaluation

Your needle arts projects will be evaluated on:

Overall Appearance

- Clean and neat
- Suitability of materials for technique

Workmanship

- Construction-appropriate. well made, finishes, matching thread
- Decoration-even stitches, smooth, inconspicuous joining, no unnecessary knots
- Color, design and texture
  - even, harmonizing with background color, type and quality of materials
  - decoration follows general shape of article it decorates
  - one color predominates, all colors in harmony

Finishing and Presentation

- Pressed
- Blocked (if needed)
- Smooth and secure binding

Note: Your exhibit piece(s) may be mounted and/or framed at time of show. It is recommended that a judge be able to see the back of your piece to see how you worked your stitching.

History of Needle Arts (Decorative Stitching)

"The products of American needles have always been prized for their qualities of design, color and workmanship. "
-JaneC. Nylander, "Flowers from the Needle,"
An American Folk Art from the Shelbourne Museum, p. 42



Needle work is as old as history. For as long as people have attempted to cover themselves with hides and skins, they have somehow laced or bound them together, inventing needles along the way. Needle work as a form of decoration or embellishment is part of our desire to adorn ourselves.

Needle work of all sorts has generally taken two forms-plain and fancy. Plain needle work includes knitting and marking household linens for identification. It requires simple stitches, such as straight running stitches, used to hand sew the essentials-underwear, ordinary clothing, sheets, towels and bed coverings-before the days of the sewing machine. Learning plain needle work is the first step in learning fancy needle work.

Fancy needle work can be both functional and non-utilitarian. Stitches may hold two pieces of cloth together in a very functional manner and be considered plain. At the same time, these stitches may add a decorative touch to those pieces of fabric. Fancy needle work is done to please the eye. In the days of Martha Washington in the 18th century, fancy needle work was viewed as an indication of a young lady's prospects of being a good wife. A good wife would need to be able to sew everything from underwear to suits for her family. At a time when it was not thought necessary for young women to know how to read and write, private schools were established to teach needle work to girls between the ages of 6 and 16.

By the 19th century, fancy needle work had become a stylish lady's most important accomplishment. It was evidence of her good upbringing and of her position or station in life. A lady of leisure could spend her day at her needlework.

Today, needle work is somewhat a lost art. Few people have time for stitching, and we run the risk of losing this knowledge. This is your opportunity to begin creating heirlooms of your own.

Types of Fancy Needlework

Embroidery and Cross-stitch:
The word embroidery comes from an Anglo-Saxon word meaning a border. It originally described the embellishment of garments. There are a number of traditional stitches used in embroidery. Cross-stitched work is made up of X-shaped stitches and generally uses special fabrics known as even weave.



Needlepoint:
Sometimes called canvas work, this hand stitching technique dates back to the Elizabethan era in the 16th century. The decorative fabrics created using needlepoint were used as table carpets, cupboard cloths, chair cushions and bed hangings. In the 19th century, needlepoint was a pastime for Victorian ladies and was known as Berlin work.



Candlewicking:
Candlewicking became popular early in the 19th century. The finished projects are generally an outline of an object or nature motifs (like pine trees or flowers) with Colonial knots, which are similar to French knots though sturdier. Colonial knots use less thread than French knots. This craft uses a special soft-spun candlewicking or roving yarn that has very little twist and may include other embroidery stitches.





Crewel:
The word crewel is thought to have originated from an Anglo-Saxon word meaning ball of thread. Crewel work has a rich history in Britain, dating back thousands of years. Crewel work is similar to embroidery, utilizing many of the same stitches, but worked in two-ply wool yam. The subtleties of color shading are very important to successful crewel work.



Lacework:
Lacework projects include needle lace, tatting, filet netting, bobbinlace, lace weaves and hairpin lace. Often used as embellishment to clothing and home furnishing items, lace provides richness to the overall look of the selected project.Individual lacework projects may be used to decorate selected areas of a home as well.



Applique:
Applique is one of the oldest forms of decoration. It is a method of applying small pieces of material onto a background fabric. Initially, it was used to cover a worn piece of cloth. Quilts often have appliqued designs. Reverse applique involves the removal of fabric to form a design.



Embroidery and Cross-Stitch

For your first project, select a book of cross-stitch patterns or a transfer embroidery design or a kit that includes all of the materials needed to complete the design.

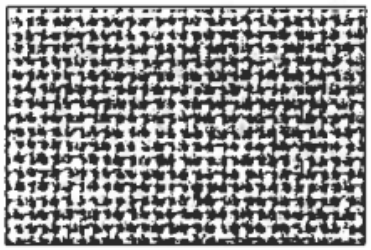
Cross-Stitch

Materials:

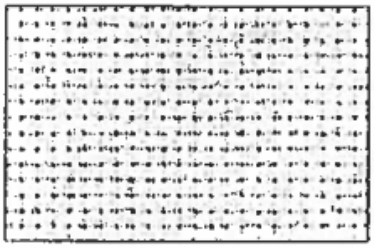
1. Fabric (Aida or evenweave)
    1. Aida cloth is the most popular blocked grid fabric for cross-stitch, typically woven in counts of 6, 8, 11, 14, 16, 18, 22, and 28. The counts represent the number of squares that can be stitched per inch. Sizes 11 and 14 are good for beginners.

    2. Alternatively, Hardanger refers to both a traditional Norwegian embroidery technique and the specific type of fabric designed for it, which is a 100% cotton evenweave woven with pairs of threads (two warp threads woven over and under two weft threads). This double-thread weave gives it a distinct grid look and allows cut threads to pull out cleanly without unraveling the rest of the piece.

    3. These fabrics are available at most craft and needlework stores.



Even weave fabric



Aida cloth

2. Six-strand embroidery floss. Depending on the fabric and pattern, use one, two or three strands of floss.

3. For cross-stitch, use a blunt-pointed tapestry needle in proper size for the holes in the fabric and for the number of strands of floss to be used. The needle is inserted between the threads and does not pierce the threads of the fabric. The most common tapestry needles used for cross stitch are sizes 24 and 26, although needles are available in sizes 20, 22, 24, 26 and 28.

4. Oval or round embroidery hoop of wood or metal to hold the fabric taut. Fabric is placed over the smaller hoop; the larger hoop is fit over the smaller hoop and the fabric.

The size of the finished project will vary according to the thread count of the fabric. To calculate the size of a project, divide the number of squares in the width of your design chart by the count of your fabric (the number of threads per inch). This equals the height of your design in inches. Many cross-stitch patterns will list dimensions for various cross-stitch fabrics.

Always locate the center of the chart and fabric. Begin stitching at this point. Many crossstitch patterns indicate the center point of the design. If it is not shown, locate the center point of the design by counting from the top of your design down to the bottom and divide in half; this gives you the horizontal center.

Repeat this process counting from one side of the design to the other side; this gives you the vertical center. Then count out the horizontal and vertical center number to begin your design. You can find the center of your fabric by folding it in half and folding it again into quarters. Mark the center point with a thread of contrasting color.

Recommended Floss and needle Determined by Fabric Count				
Fabric	Tread per Inch	Strands of Floss for Cross-Stitch	Strands of Floss for backstitch	Tapestry Needle Size
Aida	8	3 to 6	3	20 or 22
Aida	12	3	2	22 or 24
Aida	14	2 or 3	1 or 2	22/24/26
Aida	16	2	1	24/26
Aida	18	1 or 2	1	24 or 26
Hardanger	22	1	1	24 or 26

Embroidery

Materials:

1. A light-weight to medium, tightly-woven, 100 percent cotton fabric. Polyester/cotton blend fabrics are acceptable but are more difficult to stitch through.
2. Six strands of embroidery floss. Depending on the fabric and pattern, use one, two or three strands of floss.
3. A crewel or embroidery needle. It is important that the needle has a long eye to accommodate several strands of floss.
4. Oval or round embroidery hoop of wood or metal to hold the fabric taut. Fabric is placed over the smaller hoop; the larger hoop is fit over the smaller hoop and the fabric.

You can either purchase a kit with a pre-printed design, supplies and stitch instructions needed to complete a design. You can also create your own design, selecting the thread and fabric from craft or yarn stores. Use hot-iron transfers or use dressmaker's carbon with a tracing wheel, pencil or knitting needle to transfer the embroidery design onto your fabric.

Embroidery is composed of one or several stitches that all belong to a basic family stitch groups. The groups are:

- backstitch
- blanket stitch
- chain stitch
- couching stitch
- cross stitch
- Featherstitch
- detached filling stitch
- laid filling stitch
- running stitch
- satin stitch
- weaving stitch

The Royal School of Needlework at https://rsnstitchbank.org/ lists over 500 embroidery stitches. You can search stitches by technique, stitch uses, and stitch structures. It is a great resource to learn new stitches! You can also find videos online or embroidery books at your local yam/craft store or library to see illustrations of embroidery techniques. One great online resource can be found at Embroidery Stitches, Patterns & How-Tos from The Spruce Crafts, a craft and hobby website covering helpful tips and step-by-step tutorials.

Hints for Cross-Stitch or Embroidery

- Wrap the raw edges of fabric with masking tape or zig zag the edges with a sewing machine to prevent it from unraveling.

- Separate strands of floss carefully, allowing them to untwist. Stitching with two strands is generally appropriate for medium sized fabric. Separate these two strands and allow them to untwist before placing them back together and threading the needle.

- Floss becomes twisted while you are stitching; allow it to hang freely and it will untwist.

- Remove the hoop when not stitching to prevent hoop marks on the fabric.

- Traditionally, knots are not used in embroidery. The stitcher buries the end of the thread in the work. Consider the use of your embroidered or cross-stitched item. If it is a garment that will be washed, it may be a good idea to knot the floss. If the piece is to be framed, knots should be unnecessary.

- Always sign and date your work. You have worked hard to create a unique piece of stitchery. Put your initials and the date in the comer or on the back.

- Use a thimble. While it may seem awkward at first, a thimble will help you stitch by pushing the needle through the fabric. A thimble is worn on the middle finger of your dominant hand.

- Be prepared to block your finished work. The threads in the fabric or canvas will often get off-grain as you stitch.

- **One of three methods is suggested:**
  - Method One - Block textile, after it has been fully immersed in cold water, by pinning it to the desired shape on a blocking board or any flat surface that is covered with absorbent bath towels. Let the textile dry thoroughly.
  - Method Two - Pin dry textile on blocking surface to desired shape. Then spray the textile with clear, cold water until damp. Allow to dry thoroughly.
  - Method Three - Pin dry textile to desired shape on the ironing board. Using a press cloth and a steam iron, steam press the textile, **never touching the iron to the textile.** Leave the textile pinned to the ironing board to cool and dry for several hours.

Needlepoint



Needlepoint is a type of embroidery in which stitches are formed on an open-weave canvas using yarn or embroidery floss and a blunt needle. The different types of needlepoint are usually classified by the size of the canvas or the number of stitches per inch.

Three common types of needlepoint are:

- Quick point - 3 ½ to 7 inches per inch
- Gros point - 8 to 15 stitches per inch
- Petit point - 16 or more stitches per inch



Bargello is another type of needlepoint. It is frequently characterized by long upright stitches and flame-like designs that require exact counting of squares. It is also sometimes called Florentine work or flame stitch embroidery, because this style of stitching is based on a flame-like design on some chairs in the Bargello Palace in Florence, Italy.

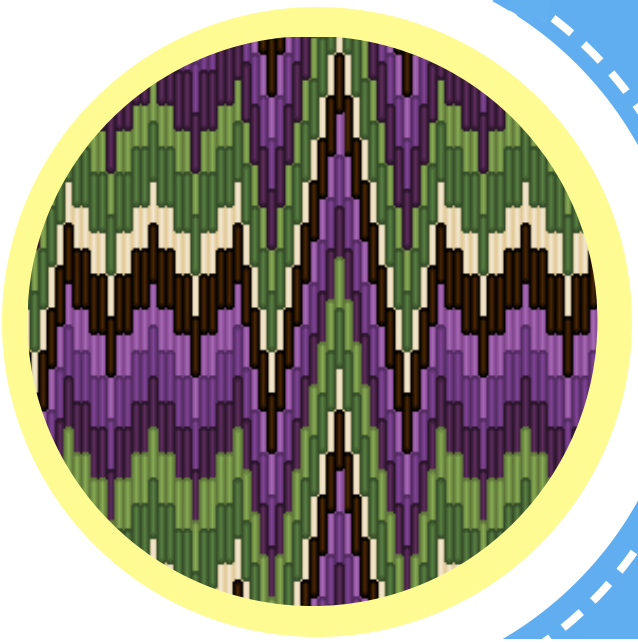


Image Credit: Two examples of Florentine Bargello (needlework) curved and flame stitch motifs (2021, December 27). Wikipedia.
Image Credit: Bargello, Sarah Sellers

Stitches

There are literally hundreds of stitches in needlepoint. Each stitch has a different texture and gives a different effect. After you decide on a design or picture, experiment with different stitches to determine which one gives which effects. Doing fancier stitches in the design and planer ones on the background will place emphasis on the design.

You may wish to do a sampler containing five to 10 different stitches to practice a variety of stitching techniques. Your sampler can serve as a reference piece later. A sampler can be made into many projects, such as a wall hanging or a pillow. It is suggested you use a heavy three strand yarn, a size 18 tapestry needle, and a canvas with 10 holes per inch for the sampler. The Spruce Crafts is a craft and hobby website covering helpful tips and step-by-step tutorials. The website lists a wide variety of stitch types that you can use to select stitches for your sampler. The list can be found at 54 Popular Needlepoint Stitches.

Tent stitches are the most commonly used stitches in needlepoint. All tent stitches appear the same from the fabric's right side, but differ in appearance on the wrong side. Two commonly used tent stitches are continental stitch and half-cross stitch.

Here is a diagram of the correct way to stitch a horizontal continental stitch, stitched from right to left:

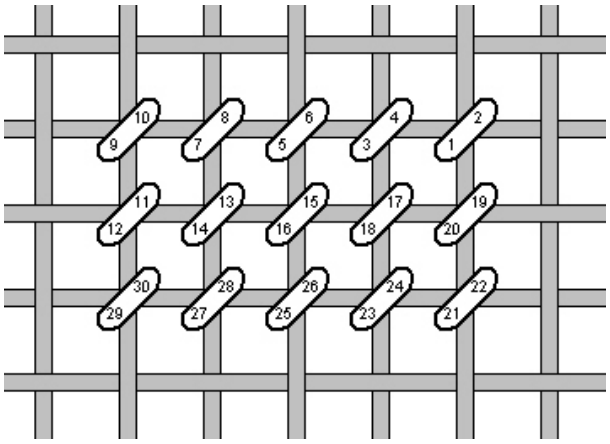


Image courtesy of Threadneedle Street.

Here is a diagram of what several rows of continental stitch will look like on the back of the canvas.

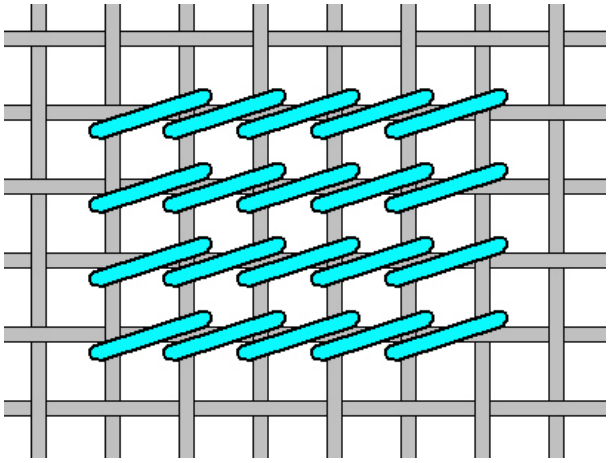


Image courtesy of Threadneedle Street.



Here is a diagram of the correct way to stitch a half cross stitch from left to right:

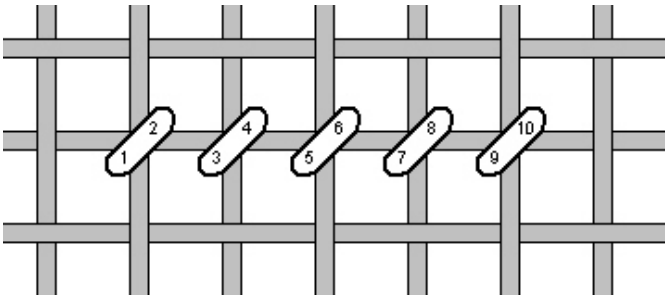


Image courtesy of Threadneedle Street.

Here is a diagram of what several rows of half cross stitch will look like on the back of the canvas. These stitches do not totally cover the back of the canvas and some of the canvas threads will still show.

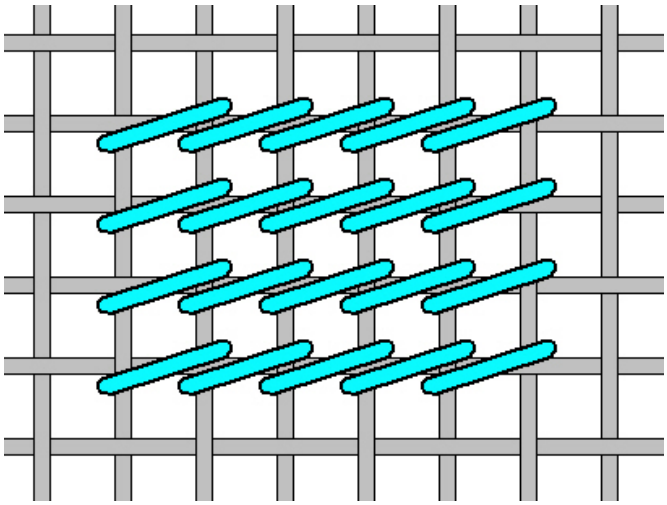


Image courtesy of Threadneedle Street.

The continental stitch uses more yarn than the half cross stitch, but covers the canvas better. Because there is quite a bit of yarn on the wrong side, the continental stitch is suitable for items that receive hard wear, such as upholstery and rugs.

The half cross stitch does not cover the canvas as well. Because there is little yarn on the wrong side of the canvas, the half cross stitch is suitable for items that receive minimal wear.

It is best practice to use one type of stitch on a project rather than mixing the stitches. One of the cardinal rules of good stitching is that work generally needs to be done consistently for good results.

Canvas

There are several different types of canvas used in needlepoint.

- Plain canvas is a single-mesh structure formed by the intersection of a single crosswise thread and a single lengthwise thread.

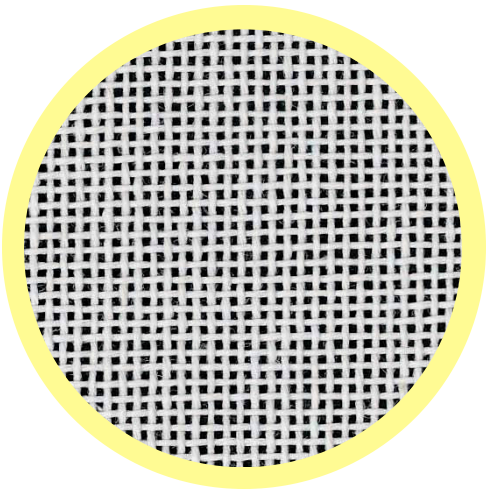


Image Credit: Blank Canvas -Needlepoint Joint

- Like the plain canvas, interlock Mono canvas is a single-mesh canvas with the single lengthwise thread woven between two slender intertwined horizontal threads. The "locked" construction of the interlock mono provides a stabler working canvas than the plain canvas.



Image Credit: https://a.co/d/0ib4GicC

- Penelope canvas is a double-mesh construction formed by the intersection of pairs of crosswise and lengthwise threads.

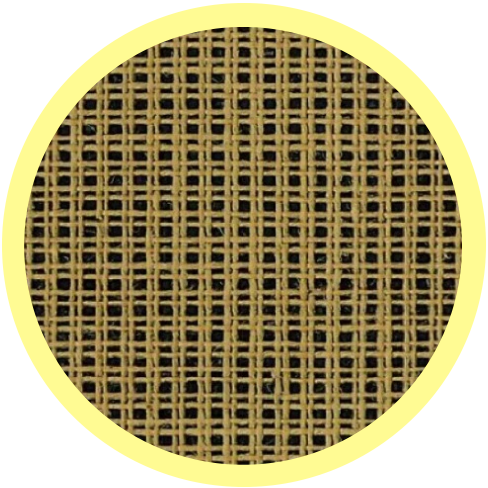


Image Credit: Blank Canvas - Needlepoint Joint

- Rug Canvas has a pair of crosswise threads interlocked by two twisted lengthwise threads.

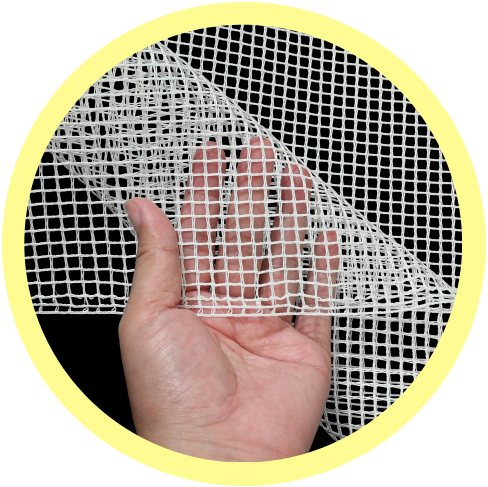


Image Source: https://a.co/d/0h0NNzjX

- Patterned Canvas has the design printed directly on the canvas.

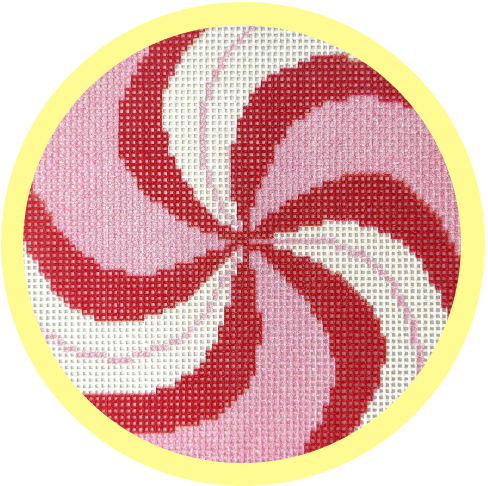


Image Credit: https://a.co/d/05lI3jBr

- Plastic Canvas is a molded plastic single-mesh canvas.

Image Credit: https://a.co/d/0f6lBfQS

Thread

Needlepoint threads come in several different sizes, weights and textures.

- Rug yarn is thick, three-ply, single-strand yarn.
- Persian yarn is a two-ply, three-strand yarn made of wool or acrylic. The yarn can be separated into strands or used as one yarn.
- Tapestry yarn is a fine four-ply, single-strand yarn made of wool or acrylic. The plies are difficult to separate into strands.
- Crewel yarn is a two-ply, single-strand yarn made of wool or acrylic.
- Embroidery floss is a multiple-strand thread made of silk, cotton or rayon. The number of strands vary but can be separated
- Pearl cotton is a two-ply, single-strand cotton thread that comes in three thicknesses: heavy (no. 3), medium (no. 5) and fine (no. 8).

Basic Rules for Stitches

- Never knot the yarn. Hold it behind the canvas and catch it as you work.
- Use yarn pieces only 12 inches to 18 inches long at a time.
- When coming to the end of a piece of yarn, take it to the back of the canvas and run it under four or five stitches to lock it in. To start new yarn, also run it under four or five stitches on the back to lock it in. Then bring the yarn to the front.
- Learn to read the graphs and you will be able to do any stitch given to you.

Needlepoint Project Evaluation

Look at your project or sampler. How does it compare to the following standards for quality needlepoint, gros point or petit point items?

- Canvas is squarely blocked.
- Canvas, yarn and stitches chosen to complement design.
- Stitches all cross in the same direction.
- Stitches completely cover the canvas.
- Ends are woven in.
- Yarns are not twisted, kinked, knotted or pulled thin.
- All stitches lie smooth.
- Uniform tension was used throughout.

Remember

Have fun and be creative with your needlepoint projects. You are limited only by your willingness to experiment and try new stitches. If you want a special effect and cannot find a stitch which does what you want, invent your own. Be sure to graph your new stitch to help you remember it.

Candlewicking

Candlewicking is rather unique embroidery. Women who traveled westward in early America developed the techniques when thread and sewing materials were scarce for settlers. They used unbleached cotton wick thread (used in candlemaking) to embroider raised designs on unbleached muslin. Candlewicking is sometimes called whitework because it frequently uses white or cream thread on white fabric.

In its most basic form, it outlines an object with Colonial knots. These are similar to French knots but stronger to endure frequent washing of items like bedspreads or linens. Candlewicking can be made more elaborate by emphasizing details within the main outline with other embroidery stitches. You can use your finished candlewick creation in many ways such as a pillow, a pincushion, a wall-hanging, a pocket on your Decorate Your Duds project to name just a few.



Your creation can be a statement of elegance by using white thread on a white background. Or you can use colored thread on white or colored backgrounds. You can buy special candlewicking thread or you can use regular embroidery floss divided using two or more strands, depending upon pattern size and look you want to achieve. Acrylic yarn may also be used for another look.

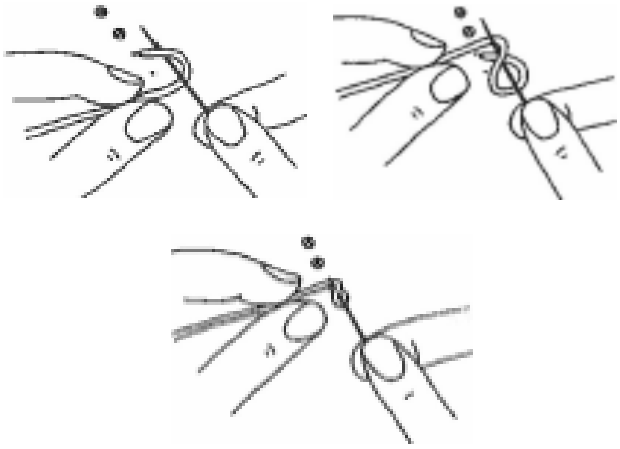


Image Credit: https://www.needlepointers.com/main/showarticles.aspx?navid=3927

Stitches

Candlewicking Knots

Bring the needle up through fabric in the center of the pattern dot. Wrap thread clockwise around the needle once; lay the needle point on top of the thread before inserting the needle into pattern dot. To finish, gently pull on the thread to form a small, uniform knot. Repeat knots in an evenly-spaced arrangement to form the design.



Other embroidery stitches used in candlewicking to dress up outlines include:

- satin stitch–often used to fill in shaded pattern areas.
- daisy stitch–makes a nice leaf or petal (see Dove pattern)
- back stitch or split stitch–to outline a part of the design, including areas filled with satin stitching (see goldfish fins, butterfly antenna, daisy stem, leaf and center)

Find an embroidery book at your local yam/craft store or library to see illustrations of these techniques.

Patterns

Basic embroidery patterns and simple coloring books might also offer ideas and patterns for you to try. Any basic motif (floral, heart, square, diamond, nature, or snowflake shapes to name a few) can be adapted to be used in candlewicking. The 4-H Clover logo could be modified to be used in candlewicking! Candlewicking books and kits also are available commercially. You can also find free patterns on various needleworking websites online.

Fabric

You can use almost any type of fabric. Usually a plain fabric without a print will work best, but you can experiment with printed fabrics, too. Cotton or a cotton blend works well. Traditionally, medium to heavy-weight unbleached or white cotton muslin was used. Very light-weight fabrics are harder to work with, and thread between knots on the back might show through on the front. Heavier knit fabrics are another option after you are familiar with the needed skills.

Other Tools

You will need an embroidery hoop and a needle-size 14 tapestry works well. Smaller or larger needles may be needed depending upon the size of the thread or yarn you are using. Use a transfer or dressmaker's carbon paper to transfer the pattern dots to fabric or you can punch the pattern onto a piece of poster board and trace it on the fabric with a sharp pencil. It is not recommended that you use a pen or marker that wouldn't wash out because stitching doesn't cover all pattern lines exactly. Candlewicking knots should be well-formed, uniform and evenly spaced. Don't hesitate to adjust the spacing on a pattern if it seems uneven, and pay attention to spacing when making your own patterns.

This is a creative type of needlework, and you should have lots of fun trying different things.



Crewel

Crewel is one of the oldest forms of English embroidery that uses a firm, two-ply wool thread known as crewel which gives the needlework its name. Traditionally, crewel was used for home furnishings because it is highly durable, textured, and often very colorful. The best way to get started in crewel is to either purchase a kit with a pre-printed design, supplies and stitch instructions needed to complete a design, or work a sampler that uses a variety of crewel stitches.

Patterns

Embroidery patterns can be used for crewel because they are similar in design. You can also create your own design, selecting the thread and fabric from craft or yarn stores. Use hot-iron transfers or use dressmaker's carbon with a tracing wheel, pencil or knitting needle to transfer the embroidery design onto your fabric.



Stitches

Crewel stitches are many of the same as those used in regular embroidery, such as a chain or stem stitch. Crewel embroidery usually "fills in" the entire design using a variety of stitches. Many of the basic stitches used in crewel to solidly fill a design are:

- Chain
- Stem
- Split
- Satin
- Long and short
- Laid
- Roumanian

Some crewel stitches used for openwork design are:

- French knots
- Bullion knots
- Herringbone
- Wave
- Seed
- Squared
- Burden
- cloud

Find an embroidery or crewel book at your local yarn/craft store or library to see illustrations and techniques. You can also search online with parent/guardian permission for resources and videos that demonstrate the stitches.

Fabric

Like the fabric used in embroidery, the background fabric used in crewel can be almost any closely-woven fabric that is not variegated and has a smooth surface. Linen and wool have been traditionally used, although cottons and other blends could be used.

Other Supplies

Crewel needles should be of medium length with long eyes that are usually labeled crewel or embroidery. The needle should always be slightly thicker than the thread to create an open passage for the thread to pass through easily. This prevents the thread from wearing and breaking. Hoops and frames are used to hold the work taut and ensure neat and even stitches. Fabric is placed over the smaller hoop; the larger hoop is fit over the smaller hoop and the fabric.

Blocking

When your crewel project is completed, be sure to block it. The threads in the fabric or canvas often get off-grain as you stitch and blocking will help to straighten them. Follow blocking instructions given on page 13 in the Cross Stitch and Embroidery section.

Lacework

Below is a description of various types of lacework. You may need to research which form you would like to try to find instructions for that technique. Ask your 4-H leader to help you find resources to guide you in your project.

Needle Lace

Needle lace is what the name suggests: lace made with a needle and thread. The structure of needle lace is built entirely of thread, with fabric used only as an anchoring device. The lace is constructed by hundreds of tiny, looped, and knotted stitches built over a drawn pattern. It is one of the most time-consuming textile arts due to it being made freehand with countless tiny stitches. Several styles of needle lace exist, but the most familiar is Battenberg or Renaissance Lace. This lace is made of a variation of the buttonhole stitch worked between sections of narrow bias tape in the outline of the design attached to a backing. When the work is done, the backing is removed leaving just the lace surface. The Encyclopedia of needlework by Thérèse de Dillmont (1846-1890) is one helpful resource with stitch samples and directions you can find online.

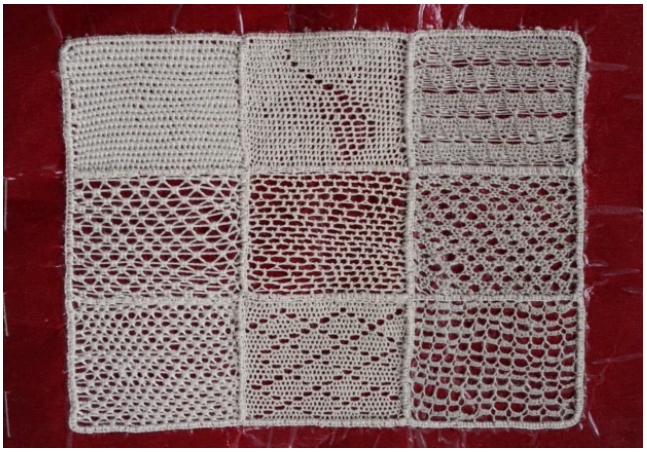


Image Credit: https://www.taixtile.com/needle-lace-first-steps/

Tatting

Tatting may have originated with fishermen using large shuttles to weave string into special knots for making fishing nets. Knotting was also used to decorate clothing by ancient Egyptians. The Chinese also used knotting techniques to embroider decorative items. Tatting is a form of lacework that consists of one knot called a double stitch worked in groups over a single thread. This thread is pulled to draw stitches into curved formations called rings and chains. These rings and chains are then joined to form larger groupings or motifs. Primarily tatting is used to make edgings for items like handkerchiefs, garments, placemats or doilies. It is also frequently used to make items such as earrings, ornaments, bookmarks and even larger items like a tablecloth. Tatting is usually worked using a fine cotton thread, so it is delicate looking but very strong.



Image Credit: https://www.taixtile.com/finding-a-beginner-friendly-tatting-projekt/

Tatting is done by using a continuous thread wound on a small shuttle. A loop of thread is held in the left hand while the shuttle, held in the right hand, is maneuvered around it; double stitches form over the shuttle thread. Basic supplies include a tatting shuttle or a tatting needle (depending on the technique you choose to use), fine cotton thread (like size 10 or 20), small scissors, and a tiny crochet hook (for joining pieces). It is best to select your needle size after you select your yarn size for a particular project. The size of the design is also affected by the thread size.

Filet Netting

Filet netting involves darning, embroidering, or weaving on netting to create designs. You can either make your own net or purchase machine-made netting to do your work on. Usually, only one knot is used but it can assume a variety of forms. The mesh or net, also sometimes called Lacis, is made of diamonds or squares onto which a design is embroidered or woven. This mesh technique is the same one used for making fish nets, basketball nets, and net bags; the only difference is the use of heavier cords.

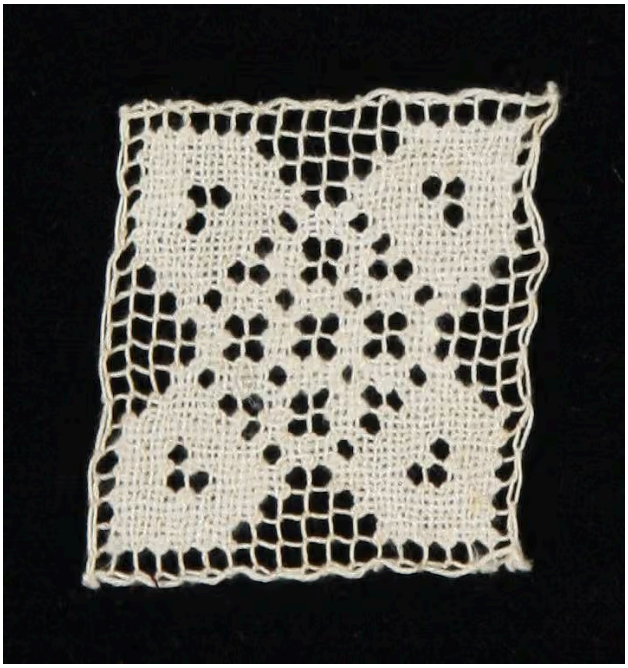


Image Credit: Lace square, 1800s, maker unknown. Gift of Mrs Helen Watson, 2008. Museum of New Zealand Te Papa (GH016278)

Mesh knots should look crisp and be nearly invisible. Filet netting uses a smooth, tightly-twisted cord such as a crochet cotton thread for the best results. A helpful resource for techniques and designs is Priscilla Netting Book (1914) available online.

Bobbin Lace

Bobbin lace is a lace woven of pairs of threads wound on bobbins. The threads are plaited, twisted and interwoven over a paper pattern mounted on a pillow or padded board to form a design or motif. Pins are inserted through the pattern into the pillow to hold threads in place; the pattern is called a pricking. The pillow accounts for another name, pillow lace, by which this lace is also known.



Image Credit: https://withmyhandsdream.com/2023/01/27/the-secrets-of-bobbin-lace/ (from Pinterest)

Lace Weaves

The lace is created by the technique of weaving, which is the interlacing of two sets of threads to form a textile. In lace weaving, warp and weft threads are diverted somewhat from their parallel course to form spaces or raised areas in the weave. The resulting textile is open and airy, characteristic of lace. Some helpful books that include information on lace weaving are:

- Huck Lace Weaving Patterns with Color and Weave Effects: 576 Drafts and Samples plus 5 Practice Projects by Tom Knisley, Stackpole Books, 2019.
- Handwoven Laces by Donna Muller, Interweave Press, 1991
- Mastering Weave Structures by Sharon Alderman, Interweave Press, 2004.
- The Handweaver's Pattern Directory by Anne Dixon, Interweave Press, 2007.



Image Credit: https://www.gistyarn.com/blogs/how-to-weave/lace-weaving-part-three-huck-spot-bronson

Hairpin Lace

Hairpin lace is a type of crochet worked with a two-pronged fork or hairpin and a crochet hook. Yarn is wound around the hairpin loom to form a series of large loops, held together by a row of crochet stitches worked in the center. Hairpin lace can vary due to the width of strips and yarn weight used. The lace-like effect occurs when the strips are stitched together in various ways off the hairpin loom.You can then attach the loops to other loops, leave them alone as a fringe, or edge them. A good tutorial on hairpin lace is available at:

https://stitchdiva.com/pages/hairpin-lace.

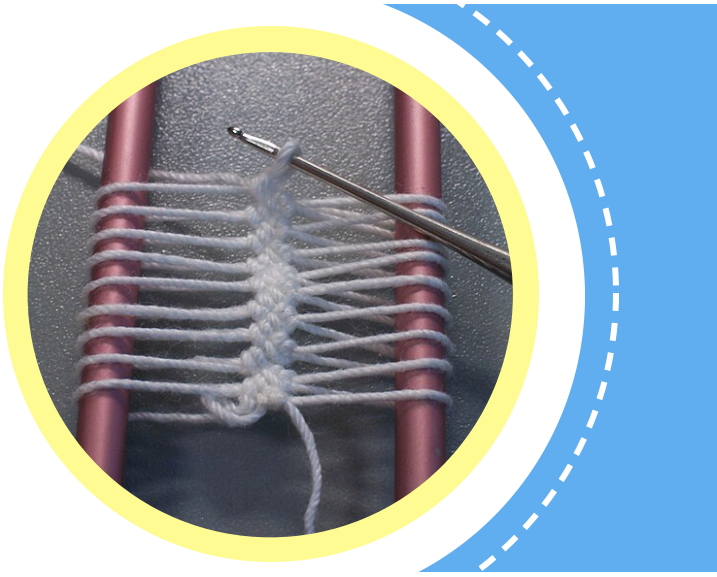


Image Credit: By E.Zajdel - Own work, Public Domain, https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=8644102

Appliqué

Appliqué is stitching or fusing fabric shapes to a background fabric. Shapes can be as simple as a single shape or as complex as a landscape scene. If doing a layered design, work from the background to foreground, and stop stitching before two lines of stitching cross. Colors used in appliqué can be bold or subtle and contribute to the overall effect. Appliqué is often used in quilts, garments, and home décor. Depending on the method you choose, edges can be turned under for a smooth finish, stitched raw for a rustic look, or fused in place for quick and easy projects.

Fabric

- Background Fabric - Select a stable fabric, such as broadcloth or denim. Knit fabrics can also be used; however, more skill will be required to deal with the special fabric properties.
- Appliqué Fabric - Select a fabric compatible in care and weight to the background fabric. Light or medium-weight woven fabrics, such as calicos and gingham, are recommended for beginners.
- Stabilizer Fabric - Use a fabric, such as interfacing, or tissue paper to stabilize the background and to prevent puckering when machine stitching. Iron-on interfacing helps prevent raveling of applique fabric.

Preshrink interfacing, if used, and background and applique fabrics before cutting and stitching.

Pattern

Appliqué designs can be adapted from many sources such as coloring books or greeting cards. Like candlewicking, designs should be composed of simple shapes and geometric designs.

Other Materials

For most designs, use an all-purpose thread which matches the color of the applique fabric. A contrasting or complimentary color can create a special effect.

For hand-appliquéing, use sharps, a medium-length needle. Straight pins for holding appliqués in place are needed, as well as a pair of small, sharp-pointed embroidery scissors for trimming.

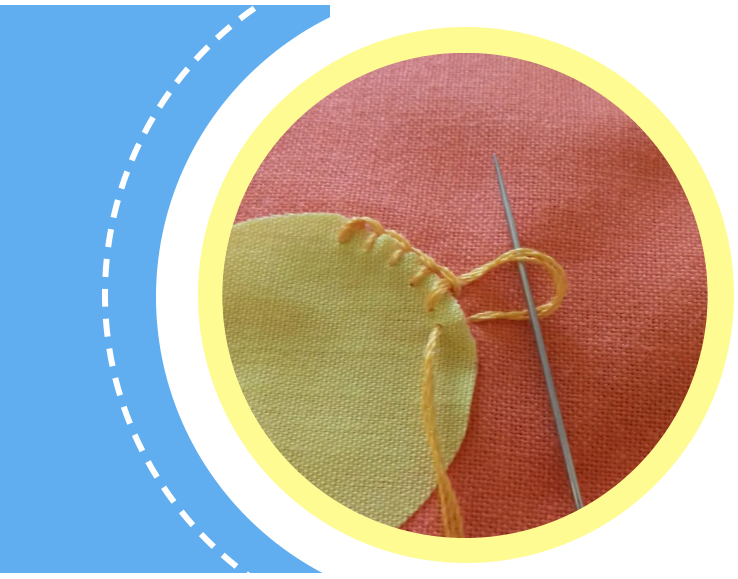
Purchased fusible webs can be used to hold the appliqué in place when stitching. Secure the appliqué by fusing it to your background fabric with an iron. Follow manufacturer's instructions that come with the web carefully.

Stitching

Appliqué may be stitched by hand or machine. Decorative stitches in either can enhance or accent the design. Turn edges under depending on characteristics of appliqué fabrics and the closeness of decorative stitches.

Hand Stitching

A fine slip-stitch is used to secure the appliqué in place. It should hold the appliqué securely in place and remain invisible. An overhand stitch can be used in small areas that tend to fray; these little straight stitches can keep fabric threads from popping out. Other decorative embroidery stitches such as the cross stitch and running stitch can be used to fasten down the appliqué. Remember, since these stitches will be seen, they will become part of the overall design.



Hand stitched applique Image Credit: https://amylovestosew.com/how-to-do-hand-applique/

Machine Stitching

Two methods of machine stitching are used in appliqué. One method uses only straight stitching when applying the appliqué; the other method uses a combination of straight stitching and zigzag stitching.

You may add stuffing or padding under the appliqué prior to finishing the decorative stitching and create a three-dimensional effect. This process is referred to as relief appliqué. Reverse appliqué is cutting out background material to expose one or more fabrics underneath.



Machine stitched applique Image Credit: https://swpea.com/blogs/sewing-tutorials/what-is-applique-and-applique-techniques?srsltid=AfmBOoq5n06KVvC14QUm2Ijr9iwSKe-q92EKhvsXH4Jgw5IgM3dRo87C