

Hand Embroidery Stitches

by Sharon Boggon

Learn basic hand embroidery stitches to create beautiful hand embroidered items.

Blanket Stitch: The blanket stitch is worked from left to right over two imaginary lines. Bring the thread up at 1 and down at 2. Bring the thread up at 3, catching the thread from the first stitch (A). Repeat (B).

Chain Stitch: Knot the thread. Bring the thread up from the wrong side at 1. Make a loop to the left, holding the loop with a thumb. Insert the needle at 2 and bring it up at 3. Pull the needle and thread through the loop, but not too tightly. Repeat by inserting the needle inside the first loop at 4 and back up at 5. Repeat to create a chain of stitches (C).

Couching Stitch: Position the surface thread, trim or floss on the fabric right side. Bring the couching thread up from the fabric wrong side using a large-eyed needle. Take a small straight stitch over the surface thread at 1 and back through the fabric at 2 (D).

Cross-Stitch: The cross-stitch is made by two bisecting diagonal stitches. Bring the needle up to the fabric right side at 1 and back through at 2, and then up again at 3 and down again at 4. Repeat (E). Following the opposite direction, bring the needle up through the fabric at 5, and then back down at 6. Repeat (F).

Fly Stitch: Also known as the "Y" stitch, or open loop stitch, the fly stitch is a V-shaped loop that's tied down with a vertical straight stitch. Bring the needle up at 1. Hold a bit of floss down with a thumb and insert the needle at 2. Take a small stitch along the center of the V at 3. Pull it through the fabric and secure it in position with a small loop. (G).

French Knot: Bring the needle up from the fabric wrong side and hold the thread taut with your thumb. Twist the needle around the thread twice. Holding the thread firmly, insert the needle into the fabric a small distance from where the thread emerged (H). Push the knot down the needle shaft, and hold the knot firm against the fabric (I). Pull the floss through to the fabric wrong side.

Lazy Daisy Stitch: Bring the needle up from the fabric wrong side at 1 and hold the thread with your thumb (J). Insert the needle back into where it first came out at 2, and then guide the needle back through the fabric a small distance from the center at 3 (K). With the thread wrapped under the needle point, pull the needle through the fabric; fasten the loop with a small stitch. To make a flower, stitch in a circle with each stitch radiating outward to form petals.

Leaf (Feather) Stitch: Bring the needle up from the fabric wrong side and hold the thread down with your thumb. Insert the needle a little to the right of the invisible line and take a small stitch in a downward diagonal motion so that the needle point appears on the center line. Keeping the thread under the needle point, pull the thread through the fabric. Make a second stitch in the same manner (L). Insert the needle a little to the left and make a small diagonal stitch so that the needle point comes out on the center line. Keep the thread under the needle point; pull the thread through the fabric to make the stitch (M). Repeat the stitch, alternating from side to side.

Running Stitch: Bring the thread up from the wrong side at 1. Insert the needle at 2, up at 3, in at 4 and up at 5. Pull the thread through (N). Keep the stitches about twice as long as the spaces between them. Knot the thread on the wrong side at the end of the last stitch.

Split Stitch: Bring the thread up from the fabric wrong side and take a stitch through the fabric. Point the needle backward along the line and stitch through the thread loop of the previous stitch (O).

Stem Stitch: Working from the left to right, bring the floss up from the fabric wrong side. Take a straight stitch, leaving the needle on the fabric wrong side. Bring the needle to the fabric right side, slightly to the right of where it first emerged (P).

