EMBROIDERY TECHNIQUES FOR BEGINNERS
Beautiful Stitches and Hand Embroidery

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Book 5 of the Creative Art for Beginners Series

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Introduction

Embroidery here, embroidery there. Embroidery is everywhere. Don’t believe me? I bet you can locate three things that have embroidery on them in your home without even hunting. Better yet, I bet you’re wearing something right now that’s been embroidered. Baseball cap? Sneakers? Shirt with a logo? Or perhaps on the shoulder of your T-shirt or back pocket of your jeans? Surprise! You’re embroidered. By hand or machine, on clothing or home furnishings, embroidery is everywhere.

So why do so many people recoil in horror at the thought of sitting with a hoop, needle, and some floss in hand? Does it seem too time-consuming? Or is it that old I-can-just-buy-it mentality?

Personally, I suspect it’s because the word embroidery conjures up an image of some old granny doing needlework in her rocking chair. It’s a common image, just about as common as the notion that needlework is outdated (and undervalued) women’s work. Can we rethink that, just for a moment? It’s high time we try a different perspective.

Maybe you’ve never held a needle. Perhaps you’ve only embroidered the truth and think floss is for your teeth. Fret not. Embroidery is easy-peasy. You are not required to count, follow grids, purchase costly tools, execute difficult stitches, or follow a printout for months. This is free-form embroidery, baby!

You can go wherever you like, in whatever colors you want. You can stick to utterly easy stitches or challenge yourself and learn more complicated ones. Trust me: embroidery is simple, relaxing, and one of the least expensive hobbies you can take up. The supplies and tools are as basic as they come: thread, needle, and fabric.
Chapter 1: Four Styles Of Embroidery

All of the embroidery techniques I will show you in this book are considered “freehand” stitches, because they are stitched by hand onto fabric rather than onto a counted canvas or grid.

I’ve categorized the stitches into four basic types of embroidery: traditional, silk ribbon, raised and textured, and bead.

Each technique uses specific types of thread, ribbon, or bead; specific needles or other tools; and specific materials for the background canvas. Each technique will be discussed in detail in later chapters, but here’s a brief introduction.

Traditional Embroidery

Traditional embroidery may have adorned a favorite blouse or your grandmother’s vintage crazy quilt. You may already know some of the basic stitches; perhaps you learned them from your mom, aunt, or older sister. These stitches can be used in various ways, and you’ll find they cross over nicely with other techniques.

Most commonly, six-ply cotton floss or perle cotton is used.
Vintage Redressed Wallhanging

**Silk Ribbon Embroidery**

Silk ribbon embroidery became popular during the French Rococo period of the eighteenth century, when ribbonwork was combined with ribbon embroidery. Many designs also included ribbonwork flowers and lace yardage. Most people combined traditional ribbon embroidery techniques with newer ones that have been created to capture the unique qualities of silk ribbon. These stitches can be worked with the silk embroidery ribbon and silk threads described in Embroidery Threads and Ribbons.
Lovely Silk Gardens Wallhanging

**Raised and Textured Embroidery**

Historically, needle lace and tatting have been used to create sections of lace with embroidered components. The techniques in this book are adaptations of both forms of lace, creating textured and raised stitches that rest on the fabric’s surface.

The stitches include traditional, needle lace, and cast-on stitches, using a combination of threads.

Framed Lace Wallhanging

**Bead Embroidery**

In recent years, bead embroidery has expanded to include techniques modified from traditional thread embroidery stitches.
To accommodate the bead shape, the techniques are somewhat different from those used with thread.

The stitches include a combination of traditional and raised stitches, using the beads described in Beads and Embellishments.

Beautiful Beaded Blooms Wallhanging
Chapter 2: Basic Tools

Really, nothing gets more basic than a needle, some thread, and fabric. These are the only tools required for embroidery, which makes it one of the least expensive hobbies you can try.

There’s no investing in a machine, expensive yarns, or messy paints. Have a stocked sewing basket or a crafty friend? I bet you can come by many of the supplies free of charge. But in case you need to start from scratch, here are the tools you’ll need to gather to get started.

Needle

When it comes to embroidering, any type of needle you can easily thread and pass through your fabric will do.

Don’t be confused by all the different types of needles out there. Various sizes of needles exist for ribbon embroidery, needlepoint, crewelwork, and tapestry, but a basic medium needle is all you need to get started stitching. Not too long, not too short, and nice and sharp, with a large eye that you can thread in two or three tries without swearing or giving up.

If the eye of the needle is too wide, it may not pass through the weave of your fabric, but if it’s too small, it won’t provide enough lead to pull the floss through. The tighter the weave, the slimmer the needle and finer the thread you’ll need. A more open weave can accommodate a larger needle and a heftier thread.

Thread

The easiest thread to work with is colorfast perl cotton or six-strand embroidery floss. The difference between the two is that perl cotton is a wound double-strand thread that you don’t separate. Six-strand embroidery floss is made up of six smaller strands you can separate away for finer detail or split with your needle while stitching (I’ll explain that later).

Personally, I like the six-strand stuff, which is most commonly used for all kinds of embroidery projects. This floss is sold in bundles called skeins (pronounced SKAYNES). Costing only pennies apiece, they come in a bazillion colors and are found in bins at any craft or fabric store. Almost any
floss you buy at a craft or fabric store will be colorfast (meaning it won’t bleed onto your fabric in the wash), but you may want to test it or ask just to be sure. When shopping for floss on your own, you’ll see that there are different textures, finishes, and weights.

Rayon floss is very shiny and pretty, but difficult to work with. The results are stunning, but the work is slippery and tricky, so hold off on the rayon if you’re just starting out. Metallics look promising but have a nasty habit of snagging on your cloth. Of course, you can embroider with anything that will pass through your fabric, and you should experiment to see the various results you can achieve with different flosses. Embroidery can incorporate ribbon, yarn, metallic thread, and dental floss, anything. So long as you can thread it on a needle and pass it through the fabric, it’s game.

Fabric

One hundred percent cotton fabrics such as flour sack, diaper cloth, muslin, piqué (pronounced pee-KAY), monk’s cloth, or any light linen are ideal for stitching. You don’t want a fabric with too stiff of a weave, because unlike other types of needlework (like needlepoint and cross-stitch, which use even-weave fabric), embroidery is free-form and can go in any direction. You don’t want the weave or texture of the fabric to dictate where you can and can’t stitch. Nothing is more frustrating than a weave that is too tight for passing through with a needle and floss or a weave you are constantly fighting.

A simple cotton tea towel (not a terry-cloth hand towel) has long been a popular place to stick some stitches and is a perfect beginning project. I’m not saying you should stay away from terrycloth, just don’t make it your first project. (When you do stitch up a cute washcloth, pick a low plush.)

Also, do not make a T-shirt or any stretchy, spongy fabric your first project. T-shirt fabric is among the most frustrating to stitch on and requires extra measures (see “Stabilizer or Waste.

Once you get the hang of stitching on cotton, try other fabrics like satin or velvet.

Think of the things you could do! Just as with thread, anything goes when it comes to fabric. And keep the same laundering concerns: make sure the
fabric won’t bleed onto and stain your floss. Some fabric dyes, either vintage or new, may bleed in the wash. Purples and reds tend to be the most likely suspects. So it doesn’t hurt to prewash and preshrink your fabrics before you start stitching on them. Plus, preshrinking the fabric will prevent your stitchery from becoming puckered or distorted when tossed in the washer and dryer.

**Embroidery Hoop**

What’s all the hoopla? Well, an embroidery hoop will make your life as a stitcher much easier. It’s not always needed when working on heavier fabrics, but most of the time you’ll want one. And in fact, it’s actually two hoops. One is adjustable, and the other isn’t. The adjustable hoop fits outside the smaller one, and your fabric goes between them, gently stretched across like a drumhead. Just don’t stretch your fabric so much that you distort the weave. Not only will hooping your fabric make it a million times easier to work on, it will also help prevent your work from puckering with the stitches.

Hoops can be made of plastic, finished wood, or metal, and they come in a range of sizes, from three inches in diameter on up. As a beginner, you want a hoop that’s not too big and not too little. A five- or seven-inch hoop is a nice, versatile size that works well for most projects. Unfinished wood hoops work just fine for starters to see how you like embroidering, but plastic hoops are sturdier and less coarse against your fabric.

Again, the difference in cost is pennies. Just go pick one out! Of course, you don’t want to use a three-inch hoop to stitch up a twelve-by-twelve-inch project. Use small hoops for small designs that cover a small area and larger hoops for larger designs. Play around and see what works best for you. I keep an assortment of hoop sizes around for various projects. Even on the same project, I may switch between smaller and larger hoops.

And always be sure to loosen your hoop when you are not working on your design to avoid permanently distorting the weave of your fabric. Scissors. I’m afraid blunt-end safety scissors just won’t cut it. Tiny, sharp scissors are an essential investment for embroidering. Ask around—a friend or relative might have a pair languishing in a sewing kit. You’ll want a pair of scissors specifically intended for embroidery.
Consider it your one indulgence in supplies since it can be the most expensive tool—a whole $8 (more or less, depending on the quality). Nail clippers work fine in a pinch, but they won’t be any good for pulling up undesired threads—which you’re bound to do. If you’ve stitched something and want to pull it out, I don’t advise that you start snipping away at your stitches.

See if you can first uproot them with the tip of your scissors (that’s why they must be tiny and sharp) or your needle. You’ll first need to unthread your needle from the floss since you’ll be pulling the floss all the way through to remove the undesirable stitches. If you absolutely must start snipping at stitches, carefully cut the loops from the back of the cloth, and then pull them out from the front. And be extra careful not to accidentally snip your fabric. Major disaster.

**Extra Tools**

**Iron**

You can certainly embroider without an iron. That said, an iron is essential for using the patterns in this book. Before using the transfers, make sure your iron is hot, dry (make certain it’s not on the steam setting or you might ruin the pattern), and plugged in. I know that seems obvious, but I once tried to imprint fabric with a cold iron. Hey, I was just excited to get stitching.

Oh, and make sure the surface of the iron is clean (no sticky residues or coloring), and if it’s a steamer, be sure it’s not a leaky one (that’s bad for the patterns). Cramped apartment with no room for an ironing board? Invest in the kind that hangs over a closet door and folds up and away for storage.

If you’re going to use a tabletop as an ironing board (which I don’t advise, especially if it’s made of glass), avoid laminate surfaces and put a layer of towels down first. Also be sure to clear away paper and junk mail that might be hanging around on the table. There are many reasons not to go this route. Just get yourself an ironing board already!

**Thimble**

This is an optional tool. If your finger gets sore from pushing your needle through the fabric, you’ll want to get yourself a thimble. But if you feel
clumsy using one and your finger still gets sore, try a leather or rubber finger
cover (cut off a fingertip from an old glove or get one of those mail-sorter
rubber thimbles). I think these are less cumbersome for the new
needleworker. Me? Thimbles make me all thumbs. I rarely use one myself,
but I do keep one around.

**Stabilizer or Waste Fabric**

Stitching on spongy, stretchy T-shirt fabric requires extra measures. The
spongy fabric has a lot of give that makes it difficult to stitch on without
distorting the design. You’ll need to know some special tricks to make it turn
out right.

So let’s talk stabilizers (sometimes referred to as waste fabrics). The purpose
of a stabilizer is to provide a more substantial ground under the fabric you’ll
be stitching on. Say you want to embroider on some really light, flimsy
material or the aforementioned T-shirt fabric. A stabilizer is necessary to
make this job come out right.

A stabilizer provides an extra layer of support to prevent the fabric from
distorting while you work on it. Place it under the fabric, creating two layers,
and then hoop both layers at the same time. You’ll stitch through the
stabilizer and fabric at the same time, and then tear the stabilizer away when
you’re finished.

There are many different types of stabilizers to choose from: iron-on
stabilizers, stabilizers that don’t adhere to your fabric at all, or stabilizers that
stick without the need for an iron. Some stabilizers even stay on the back of
the work permanently, lending reinforcement to the stitched area. A more
old-fashioned technique is to employ some tissue paper (the kind for gifts,
not your nose).

But what do you need for your T-shirt project? I’ve found that iron-on, tear-
away stabilizer is just dandy for this job. Look for iron-on stabilizer at a craft
or fabric store. You just iron it on the back of your fabric where you want to
stitch. It’s essential that you not stretch out the fabric beyond its original
shape when applying the stabilizer or placing it on your hoop.

If you do, the design will scrunch up and distort when removed from the
hoop, which is a real bummer. Iron on the stabilizer (avoid wrinkles and
stretching), put the fabric on your hoop as before, and work. Your stitches will go through both the fabric and the stabilizer paper. When you are finished, just tear away the stabilizer. Now, isn’t that much better? Had enough of the tools? Me too. Let’s move on to the patterns!

**Patterns on Parade**

What makes free embroidery so unique is that with just a single, simple stitch you can execute a dynamic design using a pattern. The patterns in this book—or transfers as they are more commonly called—used to be available in every dime store and were known to anyone who did decorative needlework. Nowadays, these transfers seem to be an entirely foreign concept, and what choices remain tend to be rather tame and un inventive.

The patterns in this book are nothing like the sort of iron-on you used on T-shirts when you were a kid. Instead of leaving a filmy, gooey transfer, the ink on these patterns stains the cloth and leaves a nice, brownish outline for you to stitch over. Each pattern will yield up to nine imprints, more or less. Basically, how hot your iron is and how long and hard you press the pattern determine how much ink is transferred to the cloth. The ink will fade with each impression. If you keep your impressions faint but just dark enough to follow, your patterns will last the longest.

Isn’t that cool? That means you can make multiple images to border a skirt, shirt, curtain, or anything else you choose. It also means you can put Lovely Lucy Lulu on your jacket and still have L’s left over. The patterns in this kit are designed to use alone or in combination with each other. The only care you must take with these patterns is to keep them far from water. Water + these patterns = ruined.

You can mix and match these designs to make your own unique compositions, which means thousands of projects can be made from the patterns in this book alone. Oh, and do some of the patterns seem oddly plain? That’s because I left it up to you to frost the cupcakes or get your message out on a banner. Take a peek at the project photos to see what I did.

They will give you some ideas. These patterns are a tool for your own creativity, not just a predetermined set of lines to strictly follow. But hey—even if you do only follow the lines, you’ll still have something utterly
unique that was forged with your own effort. That’s the whole idea around here . . .

**How to Use the Patterns**

Now, we all know what a turnoff it is to read, “You must do it this way,” but I’m afraid that there are a few guidelines you’ll need to follow to get the best and longest-lasting results from your transfers.

Be sure to keep the ink sides all facing the same direction (the ink side to the back of the pattern in front of it) to avoid the ink from one pattern bleeding onto another.

**Step 1:** Set your iron to its hottest setting (or for Wool/Cotton). If your iron has a steam setting, make sure it is turned off. Steam, high humidity, and water will ruin the paper pattern and may blur the ink. You have been warned! While the iron is heating up, move on to . . .

**Step 2:** Carefully cut out a pattern (I strongly advise you try a test pattern on scrap cloth), making sure you leave some extra paper for your fingers to hold it down. Pinning is an option, but you won’t be able to pass your iron over a pin. Instead, when cutting around the design, try to leave enough of a paper edge on one side for your finger to anchor it down during ironing. Cutting out a design will also help determine where you’d like to place the pattern on your fabric. Even if it’s just one single design, check it first. Imagine how it will look in that spot and if there’s enough fabric in that area to go on your hoop, if you’ll be using one. Done all that? Next step . . .

**Step 3:** Preheat your fabric by ironing it before you place the pattern on the fabric. You don’t have to iron the whole thing, just where your design is going to appear. Cool fabric may not take the transfer ink very easily, no matter how hot your iron is.

You’ll also smooth out any unwanted wrinkles. Many people skip this step—don’t be one of them!

**Step 4:** Position the pattern, ink-side down, where you want it to appear on the fabric. With the extra paper around the design, you’ll keep your finger holding the pattern securely in place while ironing. But don’t burn your fingers! Once you lay the pattern where you want it and are ready to iron, try
to cover the entire pattern with the iron at once to distribute the ink most evenly.

Just as with any iron-on, the ink does not wash out, so be sure you have your pattern right where you want it before ironing. Also, place a piece of scrap cloth under the fabric you’re imprinting before ironing so that the pattern doesn’t pass through the weave and imprint what’s underneath it—like the cover on your ironing board. Maybe you don’t care, but I would. And don’t say I didn’t warn you!

**Step 5:** Press and pass your iron over the pattern, making sure that the pattern doesn’t move when the iron does. The harder you press and the more you iron, the darker the design will appear. Gotta peek? Be sure to do so by turning back the pattern edge without shifting the pattern. If the lines are too faint for you to follow, just keep on ironing. It shouldn’t take more than ten firm passes of the iron to get a decent imprint.

If the pattern still appears too faint, make sure the iron is sufficiently hot and that your fabric is still warm. Remember, you can use the pattern more than once and place the design again on your fabric in a new location. Or just set it aside and save it for another project.
Chapter 3: Making Your Own Designs

By all means, break out the pencil or chalk and take it to cloth—freehand swirls, words, whatever—and then stitch them up. Make good use of those cool rubber stamps you may have (just be sure to use a fabric-friendly ink). Or you can photocopy a drawing or design from a clip art book and trace it with a layer of carbon transfer paper (also called dressmakers’ carbon) against the fabric. You can find this paper at most fabric or craft stores.

One side of the paper has a chalky coating that will rub off on your fabric. You lay this side against your cloth and then place the pattern on top and trace. Use a ballpoint pen (in a color that stands out, so you know where you’ve already traced), and work on a hard, smooth surface.

Working on a ready-made garment like a shirt? Just slip a hard-cover book or stack of magazines inside the shirt. You want to trace on only the layer you’ll be stitching and not have the extra fabric of the garment underneath. The softness of underlying layers makes it much more difficult to get a distinct line from the carbon paper. You’ll have to press harder and will just end up tearing the paper with your pen. I’ve done this many times, so learn from my mistakes.

There are many additional methods for transferring designs onto fabric, enough to fill a book, but I think you’ll find that using carbon paper to trace directly onto your fabric is one of the simplest (and fastest, after transfer patterns). While you’re out at the craft store, invest in a pad of tracing paper; you’ll find that it comes in handy when you want to work with an original design.

You can work out your final design on the tracing paper and still see the fabric underneath, allowing you to place it where you want it to appear. Then, when you have your design positioned where you want it, just slip the carbon paper in between and trace away.

Specialty shops that cater to needleworkers will offer the widest selection of tools. Often, the employees have tested the inventory and can tell you what works best. Get to know your local needlework retailer. You’ll find that they are keenly inter- ested in assisting you with your project and can offer helpful advice.
**Putting It All Together**

The key players have been introduced, you’ve got all the elements assembled—you just need the know-how for wielding these tools together. Let’s cover the why, the how, and the with what.

**Hoop Hoopla**

Before you can start stitching, you need to get your fabric onto your hoop. If you’re just practicing a few stitches, go ahead and use any old piece of scrap fabric—cotton is usually the best choice to start with. First, separate the two embroidery hoops.

Then lay the cloth across the nonadjustable hoop so that your pattern is within the hoop. Now place the adjustable hoop over the fabric and bottom hoop and press down. Make sure the top hoop is not too tight, or you may permanently distress the fabric. Before tightening the screw, gently pull your fabric taut, like a drumhead.

The floss will pass much more easily through a slightly stretched weave, and it’s easier to hold while you stitch. There should be only a slight give when you pull your floss and needle through. Your fabric shouldn’t move up and down with each stitch like a trampoline. Loose fabric is much more difficult to stitch on, and you won’t be pleased with the results.

When working, you may find that your thread catches on the screw every darn time you try to pull a stitch. Here’s an easy trick: when hooping your fabric, keep the hoop’s screw located at twelve o’clock instead of five, and you’ll more easily avoid this little annoyance.

Also, keep in mind that your entire pattern does not have to fit inside the hoop. The larger the hoop, the larger the surface area, but the more difficult it will be to maintain the tautness that you want. Stitch in an area, and then relocate the hoop to the unstitched portion.

You will go back and forth between stretching and straightening the fabric, then tightening the screw, stretching, tightening . . . until you have your fabric pulled taut across the hoop. You may need to retighten the fabric and hoop as you work. When not embroidering, loosen the adjustable hoop to avoid distorting the fabric.
**Needle Know-How**

Never threaded a needle? Wondering how much floss to start with? Here’s what to do: cut a length of floss or thread about twelve or thirteen inches long, (approximately the length from your thumb and forefinger to your elbow). Fight the urge to cut a longer piece. All you’ll end up doing is pulling your needle up over your head and feeling silly about it (I sure did). If working with perl cotton or single-strand thread, you won’t need to worry about separating any strands.

But if you’re working with six-strand embroidery floss, you can work with the floss as is, using all six strands, or you can separate any number away (remove two strands to work with four, for example) for finer detail. There’s nothing wrong with just using all six strands at once, which is easier for a starting sticher. Some stitchers may work with only two or three strands to create a nice, delicate line. Me? I often work with four or six strands. It’s just a matter of personal preference.

To thread the needle, slip the end of the floss through your mouth first, and press the strands between your fingertips.

This will bind the smaller strands together, making it easier to slip the floss through the eye of the needle. Once you’ve gotten the floss through the eye, pull enough through so it won’t easily slip back through the eye while you are working. You will not make a knot here! Make a simple knot at the other end to anchor your first stitch. I’ll go over the particulars of different knots after we get you started.

With your fabric ready on the hoop, push your needle up through the fabric from the back and pull the floss through until you hit the knot. Now, push the needle back down through the fabric, following your pattern line, and pull the floss through again. You’ve made a stitch! You can make your stitches as long or as short as you like (although most embroidery stitches are smaller than ½ inch).

Play around and see what I mean. Single stitches like this will be used here and there. And, hey, don’t worry about it looking perfect. We all know how boring that can be. The charm is in the fact that the stitching is made by you and not robots. You are officially embroidering.
Organizing Floss

Skeins of floss come in a loop secured by paper bands printed with the number that identifies the floss color. Often you’ll find a tail already dangling out of the skein from which you can continuously pull lengths for cutting. Pull the wrong end, though, and the floss will bunch up and get tangled. For easy embroidering, it’s essential to find a way to keep your floss tidy.

If you’re anything like me, you’ll have oodles of different colors of floss overflowing your tool basket. There are numerous ways to keep them in order. One easy method is to remove the paper bands first thing. Yes, I know it says on the bands themselves not to remove them, but you’ll have to anyway if the floss starts bunching up. Once the bands are emoved, you’ll see that the entire length of floss is coiled in a big loop.

Without unraveling it, open the loop (pass your hand through it like a bracelet), take your scissors, and cut through the entire coil at one end (preferably, where there’s already a kink from it being coiled). Now you have precut lengths of floss! Take one length and tie it around the bunch to secure it.

Pull lengths from the looped end of the bunch, not the cut end. Lots of needleworkers do this as a handy way of prepping floss. However, I find the lengths are a little shorter than I like for working. You’ll just have to try it for yourself to see what you prefer.

Another option is to remove the paper bands and wind the floss onto a floss bobbin—a flat piece of card stock or plastic shaped like a thread spool with notches at either end to secure your floss. Floss bobbins are sold by the bagful and often have a hole at one end so they can be hung on a loose binder ring for easy access, kind of like a charm bracelet of floss.

Bobbins like this can also be organized into plastic cases with dividers designed to fit floss bobbin cards for easy access and color comparison. Keep in mind that winding floss onto bobbins can be a time-consuming activity. But many stitchers I know find organizing floss this way to be meditative and relaxing on its own.

You can also organize your floss into plastic sleeves or small, clear bags specifically designed for holding floss in an album or on a large binder ring.
The plastic sleeve also allows for you to write the number of your floss color on the outside for quick reference. Most craft stores will have these organizing supplies next to the floss bins.

How do I organize my floss, you ask? I keep a rack of spindles, the kind used for thread spools, on which I store my floss. I’ll work from the skein until the aforementioned snag hits, then I remove the paper bands and wind the remaining floss around two fingers and plop it on the spindle. That’s it.

It’s not necessarily neat and tidy, but I can see all my colors at once and I’ve quickly wound them into a small, accessible coil. Whatever storage method you choose, just be sure to keep track of the color numbers in case you’ll need more floss later.

It’s virtually impossible to go back and find the same color due to the multitude of colors and varying hues unless you have the number or sample to compare. Also be aware that the fluorescent lighting in retail shops can dramatically change the appearance of a color. What looked like peachy coral in the shop is really hot pink in daylight. Yipes!

Chapter 4: The Big Finish

So now that you’ve finished your work, what comes next? Knots? Backing? And can I throw this thing in the wash? It all depends.

Knots? Nuts.

Let’s start with knots. Many experienced embroiderers suggest beginning your work without a knot at the end of your floss.

Why? Well, a detailed embroidery isn’t going to suddenly come undone if there are no knots, and knots can make work look lumpy. That’s cool, but we’re not so worried about that yet.

This is the backside of the fabric, so who cares if it’s a bit knotty? True, some needleworkers take great pride in keeping the back of their work just as neat and presentable as the front. Eh,

I’m not that bothered. I want to enjoy doing this and not feel I have to
immediately meet some stuffy standards. A knot at the end of your floss makes things a little easier when you’re learning the basic stitches.

And if your project will actually get handled and used, like a tea towel or pillowcase, let’s have some added security back there. When you nearly come to the end of your floss (give yourself an inch or two to work with) and want to tie it off on the backside of the fabric, you can do one of four things:

✔ Tie the knot at the end of the floss. This is the lazy, lumpy way. It’s what I do all the time, which makes it okay. Can’t get the knot to tighten up against the fabric? Before you tighten the knot, stick your needle inside the open knot and tighten it with the needle held against the fabric, holding the knot in place. As you tighten the knot, it will pull itself down toward the needle (kind of like a French knot), up against the fabric where you want it.

✔ Separate the strands of the remaining length of floss and tie them together. You’ll need at least two inches of floss at the end to comfortably do this. Again, stick the tip of your needle through the knot and slide it down until it’s against the fabric to keep it tight. This makes a tiny, tidy knot that will really stay. If you’re really worried about it staying, make it a double.

✔ Sew a knot. This is the most traditional way of finishing off your floss. If you’re not a seamstress, this means nothing to you. It meant nothing to me every time I came across it in instructions: Just sew a knot!” But I didn’t know what that meant!

✔ Now I do, and this is another reason why you should know the backstitch. Turn over your work to the backside, take a tiny backstitch, and pull your needle and floss through the loop you just made to make a knot. That’s it. A great mystery revealed.

✔ There’s another way to finish your floss that is smooth and stealthy—no knot, no nothing. If the stitches you’ve finished working are neat and close together, you can simply pass your needle through several of them at once along the underside.

✔ Then just unthread the needle. This will only work if you have a long enough tail and small enough stitches to hold it in place. And this is most
useful on embroidery that won’t get handled a lot or if you’re concerned about knotty lumps showing through the front.

**Fusible Interfacing**

Interfacing is just a stiffer fabric used to reinforce another cloth. Interfacing is added to the cuffs or the collar of a shirt, for example, to keep the shape.

Let’s just say that fusible interfacing, the kind found at any craft or fabric store, is something you should use knowingly. Iron-on interfacing is generally a woven (or nonwoven) polyester mesh with one side (or both) coated in a heat-sensitive adhesive that allows you to stick the interfacing onto your cloth by ironing it. Fusible interfacing comes in several different weaves and weights depending on what it will be used for.

On embroidered works, fusible interfacing will smooth out your composition into a fixed shape, prevent knots from unraveling, and generally make it more sturdy. It goes on the back of your design. Sounds great, right? Well, you might want to consider a few things before you choose to attach fusible interfacing to your works of embroidery:

Fusible interfacing is not archival. This means that it has nasty chemical stuff on it (the adhesive) that will react poorly to your fabric over time. It may stain your iron (it did mine), and it may stain your fabric (it did mine). Now, if we’re talking dish towels here, that’s fine. Your embroidered dancing spoon could use a little extra protection with some handy-dandy iron-on interfacing. So go ahead, fuse away.

But if you take your masterpiece of embroidery from its hoop, sigh, and stare off into space imagining your great grandchildren swooning over the minute details of your needleworked heirloom, then skip the fusible interfacing. Over the years (or months even), the interfacing will become brittle.

Don’t use fusible interfacing on anything that you treasure or hope to have around for a long time and two more things:

1: If you use fabric softener in your wash, it might cause the interfacing to separate from the cloth. Interfacing usually becomes fuzzy and pilled with repeated launderings, whether you use fabric softener or not.

2: When using any type of heat-sensitive adhesive, be sure to work in a well-
ventilated area, and wear a mask. I ain’t kidding!

You can inhale dangerous fumes when using this stuff. Craft with care.

So what’s the alternative? My inclination is to tell you not to sweat it. I have clothing I’ve stitched up, and my little knots and stitches stay put just fine. However, you can opt to back your work in another piece of fabric instead of leaving it exposed if you’re really concerned.

If you’re working on baby clothes, this is a special consideration since a baby’s skin is delicate and soft. We don’t want anything irritating against it like lumpy knots, so use a less knotty method or add a silky backing around the area you’ve worked. What a considerate touch!
Chapter 5: Fabrics and Lace

Choosing Your Materials

The fabrics, embroidery threads, beads, and other components that you select for your projects should reflect the type of project you are making. Each of the four basic styles of embroidery—traditional- silk ribbon, raised and textured, and bead has its own unique look or feel.

Traditional embroidery can be worked on both simple and complicated pieced backgrounds. It can be worked with cotton, silk, linen, or rayon embroidery threads, often with different stitches combined to create elaborate designs.

Wisteria and Sunflowers Pillow

Silk ribbon embroidery can be worked on a solid, pieced, or appliquéd background, with silk embroidery ribbon combined with silk or rayon threads to create a feminine-feeling design.
Silk Roses Etui

Raised and textured embroidery can be worked on a solid or simply pieced background in a combination of cotton, silk, rayon, and metallic embroidery threads to create highly detailed designs.
Floral Garden Jewelry Holder

• Bead embroidery can be worked on a solid or pieced background of heavier fabric, with a variety of bead sizes and finishes to create an intricate and opulent design.

Bitty Beaded Beauty Purse

**Color Choices**

Color will be the most important component of your project, because it’s a reflection of your own personal style. We all have favorite colors and color combinations that make us happy and that blend with our decor.

I’ve worked each project in colors that I find pleasing, but you may want to work in a different palette. You can easily substitute your own choices by using the color table provided for each project. Remember this is ultimately your project, and you should be happy with the colors and materials used in it.

If you aren’t sure where to start, I suggest beginning with a print fabric that you like. Choose the colors from within that print for the solid-color fabrics and embroidery components.
Some companies provide a color guide in the selvage edge of their fabric.

**Fabric: The Backdrop**

Solid fabrics in cotton, batiste, denim, linen, moiré, and silk are suitable for all the techniques in this book. Velvet and velveteen are suitable for solid backgrounds when a heavier fabric is called for. Subtle cotton prints and batiks can also be used, but remember that fabric will show through the embroidery stitches to some degree—you don’t want the print to overpower the stitching.

One important thing to consider is that the weight of the fabric should be able to hold up under extensive hand stitching and whatever materials are being used. Don’t work with fragile cotton batiste or silk fabrics if you are going to do a lot of intricate stitching or will be using bead embroidery. Do work with high thread count cottons and quality silk, moiré, and velvet fabrics.
Laces and Handkerchiefs

Lace yardage and appliqués can be used as part of a design to add a feminine look. New laces can be found in various widths, styles, and fiber contents. Vintage laces will give your project an heirloom quality.

Look for cotton handkerchiefs at swap meets and vintage or resale stores. The handkerchiefs will probably be made from fine cotton batiste and may be quite fragile. Iron-on interfacing will give them more stability so that you can embroider without damaging them. Cut away or around any areas that have started to fray or have holes, as these will only get bigger once you start to stitch.
Dyeing

For an antique look, white and ecru lace yardage or handkerchiefs can be dyed with Dritz Dylon Tea Dye.

Ribbons

Satin, grosgrain, and velvet ribbons can be stitched onto a project to add a touch of color. They can be machine or hand stitched to the background and used as part of the design, with stitches worked along the edge or down the center of the ribbon.

Cording

Metallic, silk rouleau, and two examples of rayon cording

Couching with Thread
1. Lay the cord against the edge seam. Stitch through the fabric from the back, close to the cord end. Thread enough seed beads (size 11° or size 15°) onto the needle to go around the cord.

2. Angling the row of beads, stitch through the fabric again, from back to front, next to the first stitch.

Couching with Thread
Lay the cord against the edge seam. Thread a needle with twisted thread. Stitch the needle through the fabric close to the cord end. Follow Steps 2 and 3 of Couching with Beads to attach the cord.

**Stabilizers**

Poly-fil, heavy fast2fuse, light fast2fuse, craft batting, muslin, and lightweight interfacing

The projects in this book all use some form of stabilizer, whether the project is pieced on muslin, fused to a lightweight interfacing, or backed with batting. Stabilizer is used to minimize wrinkling and distortion of the fabric while stitching and to eliminate the need for an embroidery hoop.

- Muslin (100% cotton) is used as a base to which other fabrics are pieced and stitched.
- Lightweight iron-on interfacing is used to create a firm background for a sheer fabric, such as a cotton batiste handkerchief. It can also be used as
an extra stabilizer for pieced fabrics.

✔ Craft batting is used to give a project a softer dimension, while still providing a stabilized surface, as in the Floral Garden Jewelry Holder.

✔ Fast2fuse is a double-sided fusible interfacing that comes in light, original, and heavyweight versions. The lightweight type was used to hold the shape of the Silk Roses Etui, and the heavyweight was used to hold the shape of the Beautiful Beaded Blooms Wallhanging (page 143).

✔ Poly-fil stuffing is used to give dimension to pillows or other forms, as in the Wisteria and Sunflowers Pillow.

![Image of floral buttons](image.png)

Tandletons, 1” × 1”

Hanah Silk habotai ribbon worked into button shapes, then embroidered with traditional and raised and textured stitches worked in Caron Collections Wildflower threads

**Sewing Basics**

**Piecing A Project Base**

Here are a few tips for working on a pieced fabric base for a project:

✔ To keep fabric pieces in place while pinning and stitching, I recommend using Sulky KK2000 spray adhesive. A gluestick can be used for smaller pieces of ribbon or lace.
The pieced fabric base for each project uses a ¼" seam allowance, unless otherwise noted.

Do not backstitch at the beginning or end of a pieced seam, as this adds bulk to the embroidered sections.

In some cases, a woven-edge ribbon is used to hide the raw edges of fabrics that are butted together.

Press the seam allowance toward the darker fabric unless directed otherwise in the project instructions.

When using a paper pattern to cut fabric, pin liberally around the curves and points to ensure an accurate cut edge.

Avoiding Frayed Edges

I recommended that you serge or zigzag the outer raw edges to prevent fraying while you work the stitches. When serging an edge, pin any pieced sections to keep the fabric from traveling off the muslin base.

To help keep the base from further fraying, you can apply Fray Check or Fray Block around the outer edges (follow the product instructions).

Assembly And Finishing

Follow the specific assembly and finishing directions for each project. Press the wrong side of the embroidered piece to eliminate wrinkles, being careful not to press the stitches flat.

Do backstitch at the beginning and end of any assembly seam.

When stitching by hand, you’ll usually use a single thread.

Thread a small, sharp needle with an 18” length of thread and knot the end of the tail.

Tools and Gadgets
These are some basic tools and supplies that I find essential.

- Fabric glue stick (1)
- Fray Check or Fray Stop, to keep edges from fraying (2)
- Iron and ironing board (not pictured)
- OttLite lamp (not pictured)
- Pincushion (3)
- Rotary cutter (4)
- Rotary mat (5)
- 18” quilter’s acrylic ruler (6)
- Seam ripper (7)
- Sewing thread to match the project (8)
- Sewing machine needles (9)
- Scissors for every occasion, both fabric and craft (10)
- Straight pins (11)
- Sulky KK2000 temporary spray adhesive (not pictured)
- Tacky glue pen, for small areas (12)
- Alex Anderson’s 4-in-1 Essential Sewing Tool (13)
Chapter 6: Embroidery Thread And Ribbon

There are so many wonderful fibers and colors to choose from that you can’t go wrong! Traditional embroidery stitches are usually worked in floss or twisted threads, but some stitches can be worked in silk ribbon, and all of them can be worked in metallic threads.

Silk ribbon embroidery stitches are worked with silk ribbon and floss or threads. However, ribbon floss can be substituted for silk ribbon; cotton, rayon, or linen floss can be substituted for silk floss; and perle cotton can be used in place of buttonhole twist.

Raised and textured embroidery stitches can be worked in floss and twisted threads of any fiber, and metallic threads will work for the simpler stitches.

**Floss**

Floss is six-stranded filament that comes wrapped in a skein. Various fiber contents are available in solid and variegated or hand-dyed colors. Cotton
floss and silk floss have a subtle color and texture, linen floss has soft color and some texture, and rayon floss and some silk flosses have a shiny appearance and a supple texture.

Soie Cristale, Waterlilies, Rajmahal, rayon floss, variegated floss, cotton floss, linen floss, and Silk Mori

Floss is worked using one or more strands. You cut a length from the skein, separate the strands, and then reassemble them in the quantity you’ll be working with for a particular technique.

**Cotton floss**—Six-strand floss comes in a 36-yard skein in a wide variety of solid, ombré, and variegated colors. Finca, DMC, and Anchor all make fine threads.

**Linen floss**—This six-strand floss made by DMC comes in an 8.7-yard skein in a select number of colors. It has a slight texture and a muted finish.

**Rayon floss**—This six-strand floss made by DMC comes in an 8.7-yard skein in a select number of colors. This shiny, supple floss can be used alone or combined with cotton floss or perle cotton for special blending effects.

Variegated and ombré flosses—Prism makes a six-strand cotton floss in an 8.7-yard skein, available in a variety of solid and variegated colors. Iris makes a six-strand cotton floss in an 8.7-yard skein that comes in various ombré colors. DMC and Anchor also make ombré flosses.

**Designer And Specialty Flosses**
**Rajmahal**—This six-strand rayon floss comes in an 8-meter skein in a variety of colors. It is finer than the rayon floss by DMC.

**Silk Mori**—Kreinik’s six-strand spun silk floss comes in a 5.5-yard skein in a variety of colors. The soft texture and delicate colors blend nicely with silk embroidery ribbons.

**Soie Cristale**—Made by the Caron Collection, this twelve-strand spun silk floss comes in a 6-yard skein in a variety of hand-dyed colors. The shiny texture and unique colors give a design a contemporary look.

**Waterlilies**—Also by the Caron Collection, this twelve-ply silk floss comes in a 6-yard skein in a wide variety of hand-dyed variegated colors.

**Splitting A Skein Of Floss**

In most cases, you’ll be working with only a portion of the six or twelve strands in a skein of floss. Here’s how to separate the threads.

1. Cut an 18” length from the skein. Split the threads at one end of the length so you’re holding the number you want between the thumb and forefinger of one hand.

2. Hold the remaining threads in the other hand, between fore-finger and middle finger.

3. Hold the length loosely between your thumb and ring finger.

Slowly pull your hands apart to release the strands from the skein, letting the thread flow between your thumb and ring finger.
4. To eliminate tangling, separate each thread individually and then reassemble.

**Twisted Threads**

These threads all have some twist, which gives the stitches dimension. The twist should be running down the thread. Normally, thread wound on a card or spool can be threaded directly onto the needle and then cut to the length needed. If you’re working with the skein, you’ll need to determine which end of a length to start with.

Perle cotton, buttonhole twist, and Wildflowers

**Perle cotton**—This two-ply twisted cotton thread comes in a 27-yard skein or an 8.2-meter ball in a variety of solid, ombré, and variegated colors. The threads come in different sizes: #3, #5, #8, #10, and #12 (the lower the number, the thicker the thread). For the projects in this book, I recommend #8, #10, or #12. Finca, DMC, and Anchor all make fine threads.

**Buttonhole twist**—YLI Corporation makes a highly twisted fine silk thread that comes on a 20-meter card in a variety of solid colors.

**Wildflowers**—This twisted cotton thread by the Caron Collection comes in a
36-yard skein in a variety of hand-dyed, variegated colors.

Working with Variegated Threads

When I’m working with variegated, space-dyed, or ombré floss or thread and I need to add thread, I simply cut a new length from the working end of the skein; then I work with the color as it comes along. I find this serendipitous approach refreshing, rather than searching for and cutting pieces apart to match a previous color.

Blended Threads

A few of the stitches in the Raised and Textured Embroidery call for using groups of threads to create a fuller stitch. You’ll need a chenille needle for these blended groups, with the thread tails knotted to hold them together.

Thread Heaven conditioner can be used to keep the threads from tangling.

Twisted Thread Group

Cut one length each of two or three colors of perlé cotton or buttonhole twist. Place the strands together and thread them through the needle.

Floss Group

Cut one length each of two or three colors of floss. Split the strands from each skein in half, keeping three or six strands of each color and setting the rest aside. (Do not separate the strands and then reassemble them.) Place the three or six strands of each color together and thread them through the needle.

Combination Thread Group

Cut one length each of two or three colors of rayon floss, perlé cotton, or buttonhole twist. Split a single strand of floss from each length. Place all of the single strands together and thread them through the needle.

Metallic Threads

Metallic threads can be used for any of the techniques that call for floss or twisted thread. Simply substitute the metallic floss or thread where those
threads are called for.

Metallic floss, Candlelight, Facets, very-fine braid #4 and #8, and Japan thread

Metallic threads and braids—Kreinik’s very-fine braid #4 and fine braid #8 are tightly twisted threads that come on a 12-yard spool in a variety of solid colors.

Finca Mouline Metalizado—Made by Presencia, this six-strand metallic floss comes on an 8-meter skein in twelve colors.

Candlelight—YLI Corporation sells this slightly twisted thread on a 200-yard spool in solid and variegated colorways.

Japan thread—Kreinik makes this flat length of synthetic gimp with a flat metallic material wrapped around a central cord. It’s available in two sizes and in various metallic colors. This thread is couched down to the surface of a fabric rather than being embroidered.

Facets—Also by Kreinik, this cord has a raised surface that resembles beads on a string. Like Japan thread, it comes in two sizes, in a variety of colors, and can be couched the same way.

Silk Embroidery Ribbons
Ribbons made especially for silk embroidery have a woven edge, a supple finish, and a lovely drape.

Ribbons in 13mm, 7mm, 4mm, and 2mm widths

Silk ribbon by YLI is a soft, pliable woven ribbon with a finished edge that comes on a 5-yard reel in a wide variety of solid and hand-dyed colors and a range of sizes, with 2mm, 4mm, and 7mm being the most popular. A width of 13mm or more is available in fewer colors.

**Designer and Specialty Ribbons**
Woven satin ribbon, ribbon floss, and woven ribbon

Small, woven ribbons from " to ½" wide, though not specifically sold as embroidery ribbons, can be used for several stitches in the Silk Ribbon Embroidery chapter (page 73). If your fabric has a tight weave, however, I don’t recommend using them for stitches that specifically call for silk ribbon because they’ll be too stiff to pull through the fabric.

**Ribbon floss**—A 2mm rayon ribbon by YLI comes on a 15-yard reel in both solid colors and solid colors blended with metallic colors. This ribbon can be used in a wider version for any of the stitches that use thread and for most of the stitches that use silk ribbon.

**Woven ribbons by Mokuba**—These come in 2mm and 4mm widths in a small number of variegated and ombré colors, with a woven or picot edge. Some stitches in the Silk Ribbon Embroidery chapter (page 73) are specifically designed for these lovely ribbons.

**Woven satin ribbons**—Available in 2” to ½” widths, these are sold by the spool or by the yard. Although these ribbons have a tendency to be very stiff when used for embroidery, they can be used successfully for stitches raised above the fabric, such as the woven rose and pointed ribbon tip stitch in the Silk.

**Storage**

Keep threads and ribbons clean and dust-free by storing them in plastic bags with resealable closures. I keep a separate bag for each project, as well as a smaller bag for the leftover odds and ends from each project. You never know when you may need just a few inches of something to finish off a stitch.

**Tangle-Free Threads**

I’ve tried many ways to keep my threads from forming into a bird’s nest, though I think they rebel in the middle of the night! Here are some ideas:

- **For stranded floss**—Take the paper wrapper off the skein, slip the skein over a StitchBow thread holder, and place the wrapper with the color number on the small, rectangular portion of the holder.
**For perle cotton**—Take the paper wrappers off the skein, cut the knot, place the loop of thread over a chair, and wind the thread over a StitchBow thread holder.

Or wind the thread into a ball by hand.

Or cut through one end of the skein and knot the loop of threads together. You’ll have to untie the knot each time you need a thread.

**Taming Threads and Ribbons**

All threads and ribbons naturally twist. If you periodically hold your fabric base upside down and let the stitching thread and needle dangle down, the thread will unwind. Here are a few more tips:

- Run your length of twisted thread or floss over Thread

- Heaven conditioner to prevent the thread tail from knotting or wrapping around the working portion of the thread.

- Buttonhole twist and rayon threads have a tendency to retain the fold from the packaging. Slightly moisten the length you’re working with and then gently pass the thread across the upright plate of a warm iron.

- For most stitches, you want the ribbon to lie flat; however, once it’s pulled through the fabric, it will twist and curve. If the ribbon has a concave curve, simply hold it next to the fabric and stitch. If the ribbon is convex, rub the ribbon until it flattens or becomes concave.
Chapter 7: Bead And Embellishment

Beads, buttons, and charms come in all sorts of shapes, sizes, colors, and finishes—certainly enough to satisfy anyone’s imagination! The Bead Embroidery uses these components exclusively for its techniques. But adding a little touch of embellishment here and there in the form of buttons or charms can add a bit of sparkle to any project, giving your thread-and ribbon-embroidered designs extra appeal.

Glass Beads

When you think of beads, you probably think of little round wonders. But beads come in many shapes and sizes, and the colors and finishes that are available are almost as extensive as what’s offered for threads and ribbons. By mixing sizes, shapes, and finishes, you can add dimension and interest to your bead embroidery projects.

Bead Shapes

![Bead Shapes](image)

Size 15, 11, 8, and 6 seed beads

Round seed beads, or rocailles, come in sizes designated 5° to 18°—though vintage beads can be found as small as 24°. The higher the number, the smaller the bead. Seed beads will yield an even, uniform shape to each
technique.

Bugle beads

**Bugle beads** are long and round, and can be used when you need flower stamens or extra flourishes. These come in sizes 2mm through 20mm; in this case, the smaller the number, the smaller the bead.

Rondels

**Rondels, flat round** or floral-shaped beads (with a single hole in the center) can be used for a flower center or detail decoration.

These can be used in the same stitches where you’d use sequins.
Larger beads are sized in millimeters, starting at 3mm (though some vintage beads can be found as small as 2mm). The higher the number, the larger the bead. These can be used as stamen tips, flower centers, or extra flourishes.

Shapes such as cut beads, cylinders, triangles, and square beads can be used in most stitches that call for a round bead.

Keep in mind that these will yield a different look than round beads. The size numbering for these is the same as for seed beads: the higher the number, the smaller the bead.

Cut beads, cylinder, triangle, and square beads

**Cut beads include Charlottes** - Have a single cut and come in sizes 12° and
13°; three cuts, which come in sizes 9° to 13°; two cuts, which come in various sizes; and hex cuts, available in 5° to 15°.

**Cylinder beads**—Called Delica beads or Antiques by the manufacturer—are tube-shaped beads that come in sizes 8° to 11°.

**Triangle beads** - Have three sides and are different from round three-cut beads; they come in sizes 10° to 15°.

**Square and rectangular-shaped Beads** - Have four sides and are available in sizes from 4° to 15°.

**Bead Finishes**

Glass beads are made from sand, with metals and other materials added to produce different colors. Once the bead is made, additional effects can be applied on the outside to enhance the color. Color can also be added in the hole to change or enhance the color of a transparent bead.

![Beads Image](image)

Transparent: Clear colors with a shiny finish

**Beading Threads**
Beading threads are what you use to stitch beads to the fabric. They are used doubled and slightly waxed, with a knot in the tail. These threads come in a variety of colors; choose a neutral hue to match your project fabric.

**Nymo** is a flat nylon thread that comes in sizes O, B, and D (fine to strong). For the stitches in this book, you’ll use Nymo B, a strong, supple thread that comes on a small bobbin of 144 yards or a large spool of 2,505 yards.

**Silamide** is a strong, two-ply twisted beading thread made of waxed nylon. It comes on a card of 40 yards or a spool of 900 yards.

**Sequins**

Sequins can add a shiny bit of unexpected color and sparkle to your project. For the most part, these are made of plastic, nylon, or Mylar, in a variety of
shapes, colors, finishes, and sizes. Usually there’s a center hole for attaching the sequin.

**Metal sequins** in a dull silver color are called paillettes. They have a large center hole. These can be heavier than plastic sequins, so make sure the project is stabilized properly.

**Vintage sequins** will add a bit of nostalgia, and you’ll find that their colors are usually softer than those of new sequins.

Shapes, colors, finishes, and sizes are also more extensive. Some were made with center holes; others, with side holes.

**Buttons**

Buttons, of course, come in a variety of materials, shapes, and sizes. They may have holes through the middle of the face or a shank on the back for sewing the button in place.

Most sew-through buttons have two or four holes drilled through the center. Button shanks may be molded as part of the button, wire pins molded into the button material, or a different material attached to the button.
Chapter 8: Attaching Buttons

Sew-through buttons can be sewn down with sewing thread, decorative thread, silk embroidery ribbon, or beads. Shank buttons can be fastened with sewing thread or perle cotton. The photos show how to attach a sew-through button using beads.

1. Come up through the fabric and one hole of the button.

2. Thread enough size 11 seed beads onto the needle to cover the space between the button’s holes. Go down through the opposite hole and fabric (go back through the beads a second time). To finish, knot and cut the thread.

These buttons are attached with size 11 seed beads (right), 4mm silk embroidery ribbon (top), and perle cotton #8 (bottom).
Button Materials

Glass buttons in various shapes and sizes come in almost as many colors and finishes as do beads. Keep in mind that these will be heavier than a shell or plastic button, so make sure your project is stabilized properly to hold the weight.

Shell buttons are made from both salt- and freshwater mollusks, each of which yields its own special coloration. You’ll find round, square, or carved buttons with sew-through holes.

Buttons made from a thicker shell may have a carved self-shank, but most shell shank buttons have a metal or plastic shank.

Plastic buttons, made from a variety of synthetic materials, come in an astounding range of shapes, sizes, and colors. These are fairly lightweight, so they won’t add bulk to your project.
**Metal buttons** in various shapes and sizes are made from both pure metals and alloys. Although you may find an occasional sterling, gold, or pewter button, most metal buttons are made from brass, copper, or nickel.

**Vintage buttons** can offer a personal touch of history to your project. As you delve into your mom’s button box, you may find a button that belonged to your grandmother or a favorite aunt. These little bits of the past are made of the same or similar materials as their newer counterparts.
Charms

You’ll find charms in a wide variety of materials, shapes, and sizes, with a hole drilled or molded into the shape or a metal hanger glued or molded into the material. The position of the hole determines how it is sewn to the project. Charms can be sewn on with sewing thread, decorative thread, silk ribbon, or beads.

Charm Materials

Plastic and shell charms are fairly lightweight, so they won’t add extra bulk to your project.

Glass charms come in almost as many colors and finishes as glass beads. These will be heavier than plastic charms, so make sure the project is properly stabilized to hold the weight.

Metal charms, made from pure metals or alloys, will also be heavier than plastic charms, so the project must be properly stabilized.

Shisha Mirrors
Shisha means “bits of glass” in Hindi, and a shisha mirror is a small glass mirror embroidered onto a piece of clothing or other item. There are two kinds of shisha mirrors: Antique and Perfect.

**Antique**

The name Antique doesn’t refer to the age of the mirror, though it is a lost art no longer being used today. Rather, the name refers to the process by which these mirrors were made. The mirrors come in irregular shapes, because each one is formed individually by hand.

Antique shisha mirrors come in plain and colored glass, with a mercury coating on one side to create the mirror. Four colors, in addition to plain, are available: amber, celadon, azul, and red.

**Perfect**

The name Perfect also refers to the process, as these are machine cut into regular shapes. The most common shape is round, but squares, ovals, and triangles can be found, too. The back of the glass is coated with paint to create the mirror.
Chapter 9: Putting it All Together

Getting Started

It’s always a good idea to practice a new stitch before trying it in a project. I suggest making a stitching sampler, using a piece of cotton muslin backed with lightweight interfacing as your base. This will be sturdy enough for drawing in lines on which to practice your stitches.

Transferring A Design

Transfer pencils

If you want to use transfer pens or pencils to mark a design on your project, be sure to read the manufacturer’s directions thoroughly. You need to know whether the marks are permanent, will fade with time, or will need to be washed out after the design is completed.

I suggest transferring only the center point of a flower and then working the rest of the stitches out from there. Leaves and details can be worked around the flower. I use the Ultimate Marking Pencil for centers and for shapes, such as circles, that will be completely covered with stitches.

For larger areas, such as a vine or the outline of a shape, I use a chalk pen
(with loose chalk). The portion of the line that isn’t covered can then be brushed away.

Another option is to baste the line with a single row of straight stitches made with a single sewing thread. Once the embroidery is worked, the basting stitches can be removed if they’re not covered.

**Using A Finger Frame**

It’s important to keep the fabric taut so that your embroidered stitches don’t get pulled too tight, thus puckering and distorting the fabric. To help prevent this, I used a stabilizer of some sort for each project in this book.

As you work the embroidery stitches, the fabric will still need to be held taut. Instead of using a wooden or plastic frame, I create a frame by holding the fabric between the fingers of my nonstitching hand. I pinch the fabric between my forefinger on top and my middle finger underneath. I leave a space of fabric and then pinch the fabric between my thumb on top and ring finger underneath.

![Image of fabric held between fingers]

Hold the fabric taut between your fingers.

**Needles and Thread Lengths**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thread or ribbon</th>
<th>Needle and size</th>
<th>Thread length</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Floss: 1–2 strands</td>
<td>Embroidery 9–10</td>
<td>18”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Floss: 3–5 strands</td>
<td>Embroidery 3–8</td>
<td>18”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Floss: 6–9 strands</td>
<td>Chenille 22</td>
<td>18”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perle cotton #8</td>
<td>Cotton darning 1</td>
<td>18”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wildflowers, buttonhole twist</td>
<td>Milliners 3 or cotton darning 3</td>
<td>18”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fine braids</td>
<td>Milliners 3</td>
<td>16”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Candlelight</td>
<td>Embroidery 3–8</td>
<td>16”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2mm silk ribbon</td>
<td>Chenille 24</td>
<td>15”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4mm silk ribbon</td>
<td>Chenille 22</td>
<td>15”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7mm silk ribbon</td>
<td>Chenille 20</td>
<td>15”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13mm silk ribbon</td>
<td>Chenille 18</td>
<td>15”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beading thread</td>
<td>Beading size 10</td>
<td>1½ yards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sewing thread</td>
<td>Sharp 7–9</td>
<td>18”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Needles**

The purpose of the needle is to make a hole in the fabric big enough to allow the thread or ribbon to pass through, but not so big that it will damage the fabric. As a general rule, the shaft of the needle should be the same thickness as the thread. Needles are numbered from low (largest size) to high (smallest).

These are the needles commonly used for embroidery:

**Beading size 10**—A thin short or long needle with a small eye, used for all
types of beading.

**Cotton darner 1/5**—A long needle with an oval eye, used for perle cotton #5, #8, #10, and #12.

**Chenille 18/24**—A medium-length needle with a long eye, suitable for silk embroidery ribbon.

**Embroidery 3/10**—A fine thin needle with a long eye and used for stranded floss.

**Sharp 7/9**—A shorter fine needle with a small eye; used for sewing thread.

**Straw or milliners 1/4**—A long needle with a small rounded eye and a shaft the same width for the length of the needle; used for fine, single-strand twisted threads.

**Milliners 3/9**—A long needle with a small rounded eye and a shaft the same width for the length of the needle; used for fine, single-strand twisted threads.

**Threading the Needle**

![Threading the Needle](image)

There are, of course, a variety of needle threaders to choose from. I use the Silver Lady for sewing threads and one or two strands of floss. The flat metal hook threader has two ends: one can be used for twisted threads, the other, for silk ribbon.

**Paper Trick**
1. Cut a piece of paper 1” long and the same width as the eye of the needle.

2. Fold the paper in half lengthwise; push the tail of the thread through the fold.

3. Thread the ends of the paper through the eye, dragging the thread along.

4. Remove the paper.

**That Knotty Issue**

I am old-fashioned in that I knot the end of my thread or ribbon. I usually use a stabilizer in my project, so the small lump or bump made by a knot doesn’t show. I prefer this method, because it’s the safest way to keep a stitch from unraveling especially if you’ll be washing or cleaning the item frequently.

**Twisted Threads And Floss**

**Quilter’s Knots**

This knot can be used on any type of floss, twisted thread, sewing thread, or beading thread. It provides a small, firm knot that won’t unravel.

**Beginning Knots**
1. Hold the threaded needle in one hand, with the needle’s point facing the other hand. With your opposite hand, bring the thread tail to the point of the needle.

2. Place the thread tail on top of the needle and under your thumb.

3. Still using the opposite hand, wrap the thread around the needle 3
times; hold the “knots” under your thumb.

4. Again using the opposite hand, pull the point of the needle firmly through the knots.

5. Clip off any excess thread beyond the finished knot.

**Ending Knots**
1. Take a small stitch on the wrong side of the fabric, but don’t pull the needle all the way through the fabric.

2. Wrap the thread around the needle; hold on to the thread wraps and the needle close to the fabric.
3. With the opposite hand, pull the point of the needle firmly through the knots. Clip off the excess thread.

**Silk Embroidery Ribbon**

Silk embroidery ribbon can fray over the eye of the needle. The following knots will allow you to use more of the ribbon and eliminate the fraying.

**Beginning Eye Knot**

1. Thread the ribbon through the eye of the needle with a 2" tail. Pierce the ribbon with the needle ¼" above the end of the tail.

2. Pull the opposite tail to snug the ribbon up next to the eye.

**Tail Knot**

**Option 1**
1. Thread the needle through the tail with a single running stitch. Pull the ribbon through the stitch until only a small loop of ribbon is left.

2. Thread the needle through the loop and pull the ribbon tight to form a knot.

Finish eye and tail knots
Option 2

This knot gives a flatter, more professional look and is the best solution for 7mm or wider silk ribbons.

Thread the needle through the fabric, leaving a tail on the underside of the fabric. Stitch the tail to the underside with sewing thread. Use this technique for both the beginning and end of the stitch.

**Metallic Thread**

**Beginning Eye Knot**

Metallic threads, like silk ribbon, have a tendency to fray over the eye of the needle and the tail of the working thread end.

This knot will keep the metallic thread from fraying while you stitch. It is also a good knot for blended threads.

To end your stitching, knot the tail as you would any thread, using whatever knot you prefer.

1. Thread the needle and make a loop of thread over the tip of the needle.

2. Leaving a short tail, pull the working end of the thread to tighten the loop
around the eye of the needle.

3. Use the quilter’s tail knot (left) at the opposite end of the thread.

**Working the Stitches**

Each stitch includes a section called “Suggested for,” listing the twisted threads, floss, silk embroidery ribbon, or beads recommended for that stitch. The project directions will refer to these simply as thread, ribbon, or bead. In most cases, you’ll need only a portion of the thread, ribbon, or beads suggested in the supply list.

Individual stitches can be worked alone or in groups, following the design or pattern; knot and cut the thread when the design is completed.

Work the base row stitches to the end of the row or pattern; then knot and cut the thread. If at some point you need to add thread, see Adding Thread (right) for suggestions.

**Stitching Direction**

When you embroider the base row or individual and detail stitches, keep the direction of the stitches in mind. For the best results, I suggest you use the diagram provided with each project and work the stitches in the order they are listed.

**Conserving Thread**

To conserve thread on a chain-stitch vine, work from the base of the stitch to the tip; then knot and cut the thread to begin again at the next vine.

For the feather stitch and its variations, begin detail stitches at the last tip stitched and then work up to the beginning and first stitch of the row.

Try to avoid leaving long lengths of thread or ribbon trails on the wrong side of your project.

**Stitch Length**

The length of the stitch should directly correlate with the size of the thread or ribbon that you’re working with. In general, the finer the thread or the fewer strands used, the smaller the stitch. The same theory applies to ribbon size:
take a smaller stitch with 2mm silk ribbon than with 7mm silk ribbon.

**Variations**

Changing the stitch length can be a way to vary the shape of the stitch. By altering the distance between A, B, and C when you’re working the fly stitch (page 59) or the feather stitch, you can change the shape of the finished stitch.

At left, the spacing between A, B, and C is equal. At center, A and B are closer, and C is farther apart. At right, A and B are farther apart, and C is closer.

**Adding Thread**

**Looped Stitches: Feather, Buttonhole, or Chain**

1. Stitch B of a looped stitch down through the fabric, but don’t pull the thread taut. Stitch a new thread through the loop at C. Pull the old thread to form the loop.

2. Stitch a stitch with the new thread; then knot and cut the old thread. Continue to stitch with the new thread.
Straight Stitches: Outline or Split Ribbon

Knot and cut the old thread after B; start the new thread at C.

Tools and Gadgets

These are some of the tools I find indispensable.

✔ Bead scoop for picking up loose beads (1)

✔ Dritz Seam Gauge Creative Hearts Gauge-2, to measure the distance between stitches (2)

✔ 6" clear quilter’s ruler (3)

✔ Needle gripper, to pull the needle through layers of fabric (4)

✔ Pincushion (5)
✓ Porcupine quill (6) or cocktail straw (not pictured), for use in silk ribbon embroidery
✓ Scissors, for both embroidery and ribbon (7)
✓ Segmented bead dish (not pictured)
✓ StitchBow organizers, to keep floss from tangling (8)
✓ Synthetic beeswax, to condition beading thread (9)
✓ Thimble (10)
✓ Thermal bead mat, to keep beads from sliding around (11)
✓ Thread Heaven conditioner, to minimize knotting of sewing and embroidery threads (12)
✓ Thread Zap pen, to fuse the raw edges of woven ribbons used in silk ribbon embroidery (13)

**The Stitches**

The directions that follow list suggested threads or combinations of threads for each technique. See Embroidery Threads and Ribbons for guidelines on which threads are appropriate; for suggested needles, see Embroidering with Confidence.
**Chain Stitch**

The chain stitch can be worked as a single row (straight, curved, or in a zigzag) or as a curved vine that can be further embroidered with branches.

**Suitable for:** Twisted threads, floss, or 2mm silk embroidery ribbon

1. Come up through the fabric at A. Hold the thread toward you and to the left. In one motion, go down at B and come up at C. Loop the working thread under the tip of the needle.

2. Pull the needle up through the fabric.
3. In one motion, go down at B (inside the previous loop), and come up at C. Repeat to continue the row of stitches.

4. To end the stitch, go down at D. Knot and cut the thread end.

**Zigzag Chain Stitch**

Follow the directions for the chain stitch, but angle the first stitch away from the seam and the next stitch toward the seam.

Continue to work the row, angling the stitches from side to side.
Finished zigzag chain stitch

**Chain Stitch Vine**

A chain-stitch vine can be worked using the base for the outline stitch vine

**Straight and Outline Stitches**

**Straight Stitch**

A single stitch that forms a line, the straight stitch can be used alone, to fill in an area, or to add detail to another stitch.
Suitable for: twisted threads, floss, or any size of silk embroidery ribbon

Come up at A. Hold the thread toward you and to the left. To end the stitch, go down at B a short distance from A. Knot and cut the thread end.

Finished straight stitch

Outline Stitch

This stitch can be used to form an outline around a shape or to create a curved line with added branches.

Suitable for: Twisted threads, floss, or 2mm silk embroidery ribbon
1. Come up at A. Hold the thread above the line and to the right. In one motion, backstitch the needle down at B and up at C.

2. Pull the needle through the fabric.

3. In one motion, backstitch the needle down at B and up at C. Repeat to the end of the row.
4. To end the stitch, go down at D. Knot and cut the thread end.

Finished outline stitch

**Outline Stitch Vine**

Draw a curved line meandering on both sides of the seam.

Work the outline stitch directions. Work short branches beginning at the top of each curve.
Finished outline stitch vine

**Blanket and Buttonhole Stitches**

The stitch is called “blanket” when the stitches are spaced far-ther apart and “buttonhole” when they are close together. The tips of the stitch can be embellished with individual or detail stitches.

**Blanket Stitch**

**Suitable for:** Twisted threads or floss

1. Come up at A. Hold the thread toward you and to the right. In one motion, go down at B and up at C. Loop the working thread under the tip of the needle.
2. Pull the needle through the fabric.

3. In one motion, go down at B and up at C. Continue to stitch even, straight spokes, as shown.

4. To end the stitch, go down at D. Knot and cut the thread end.
Finished blanket stitch

**Short-Long-Short Blanket Stitch**

Follow the steps for the blanket stitch. Work a group of stitches with their tips altered from short to long to short. Leave a space between groups.

Finished short-long-short blanket stitch

**Buttonhole Circle**

1. Draw a circle and mark the center point. Come up at A on the circle. Hold the thread down and toward you to the right.
2. In one motion, go down at B and up at C.

3. Pull the needle through the fabric.

4. In one motion, go down at B and up at C. Continue to work the stitches around the circle, as shown.
5. Stitch the last stitch onto the beginning of the first stitch.

6. To end the stitch, go down at D and cut the thread end.

Finished buttonhole circle
1. Trace the heart template onto the fabric; mark the center point. Come up through the fabric at the center.

2. Follow Steps 1 and 2 for the lazy daisy stitch (page 56) at the top of the heart.

3. In one motion, go down at B and up at C, following the outline of the
heart.

4. Pull the needle through the fabric.

5. Continue to work the stitches around to the bottom tip of the heart.

6. To end the stitch, go down through the fabric at D.
7. Come up through the first stitch.

8. Follow Steps 3–5 to work the other side. To end, go down at D next to the last stitch on the first side. Knot and cut the thread end.

Finished heart

**Lazy Daisy Stitch**

The lazy daisy can be worked as an individual stitch or combined with other stitches to create a flower or other design or component.

**Suitable for:** Twisted threads, floss, or any size of silk embroidery ribbon
1. Come up at A. Hold the thread above and to the left. In one motion, go down at B and up at C. Loop the working thread under the tip of the needle.

2. Pull the needle through the fabric.

3. To end the stitch, go down at D. Knot and cut the thread end.

Finished lazy daisy
Lazy Daisy Knot Tip

1. Follow Steps 1 and 2 for the lazy daisy stitch.

2. Follow Steps 2 and 3 for a 3-wrap French knot (page 60).

Finished lazy daisy knot tip

Lazy Daisy Flowers And Lazy Daisy Knot Tip (Top).
Draw a center point. Work a 5-petal lazy daisy (right), 6-petal lazy daisy knot tip (left), and 8-petal combination lazy daisy and lazy daisy knot tip (top).

**Looped Tendril**

1. Follow Steps 1 and 2 for the lazy daisy stitch.

2. In one motion, go down at B (outside, to the right, and longer than the previous stitch) and up at C.
3. Pull the needle through the fabric. Repeat Step 2 to stitch a third loop to the right and longer than the previous loop.

4. To end the stitch, go down at D. Knot and cut the thread end.

Finished looped tendril

**Tulip**

1. Follow Steps 1–4 of the lazy daisy stitch; do not cut the thread.
2. Come up inside the first stitch at A.

3. In one motion, go down at B and up at C to the left of the first stitch.

4. Pull the needle through the fabric. To finish this petal, go down at D.

5. Repeat Steps 2 and 3 for the right side.
6. To finish this petal, go down at D. Knot and cut the thread end.

Finished tulip

**Sunflower**

1. Temporarily stitch a button for the center of the flower. Knot and cut the thread.

2. Come up at the edge of the button. Work a lazy daisy stitch with 3 strands
of cotton floss.

3. Continue to work petals close together around the button.

4. Remove the button.

Draw a center point. Work a 5-petal lazy daisy (right), 6-petal lazy daisy knot tip (left), and 8-petal combination lazy daisy

5. Work a row of chain stitches in a new color around the center of the flower with 2 strands of cotton floss.
6. Work a row of 2-wrap French knots (page 60) inside the chain stitch.

7. Work a second and third row of 2-wrap French knots. Fill in the center with 2 or 3 more French knots, and then work a row of French knots into the chain stitches. Knot and cut the thread end.

Finished sunflower

**Button Flowers**
Use the outline stitch to work 3 stems in perle cotton #8. Work 2 lazy daisy stitches at the bottom of the stems (page 56). Stitch on buttons to form flowers at the tops of the stems.

**Fly Stitch**

This stitch can be worked as an individual stitch or combined with other stitches to create a flower or other design or component.

Suitable for: twisted threads, floss, or any size of silk embroidery ribbon

1. Come up at A. Hold the thread above and to the left. In one motion, go down at B and up at C. Loop the working thread under the tip of the needle.
2. Pull the needle through the fabric.

3. To end the stitch, go down at D, or end with a straight stitch going a short distance away. Knot and cut the thread end.

Finished fly stitch and fly stitch with tail

**Wisteria**

1. Work an outline stitch (page 53) for the stem.
2. Work a single fly stitch (left) at the tip of the stem.

![Image of a single fly stitch](image1)

3. Work another fly stitch nestled around and below the first stitch.

![Image of another fly stitch](image2)

4. Work 4 or more nestled fly stitches each below the previous one. Knot and cut the thread end.

![Image of multiple fly stitches](image3)

5. To finish the wisteria, work 2 or 3 lazy daisy stitches at the stem end on top of the last fly stitch. Knot and cut the thread end.

**Wild Ginger**
1. Work 4 fly stitch petals, following Steps 2–4 for the wisteria (center).

2. To finish the wild ginger, work a lazy daisy stitch in the center of the first fly stitch. Knot and cut the thread end.

**French Knot**

This versatile knot can be used for the center of a flower, or several can be stitched together to form a small flower.

Suitable for: twisted threads, floss, or any size of silk embroidery ribbon

1. Come up through the fabric and hold the thread toward yourself.

2. Holding the needle close to the fabric, wrap the working thread around the
needle once; this is one wrap.

3. Wrap the thread one or more times over the needle and pull tight; hold the end of the thread tail with your thumb.

Go down through the fabric close to the beginning stitch; hold on to the working thread with your thumb. Pull the needle and thread through the thread wraps and fabric. Knot and cut the thread end.

Finished French knot

The number of wraps varies. If you wrap the thread around the needle three times, that’s a three-wrap French knot, for example.

**French Knot Flower**

Work a 3-wrap French knot for the center, surrounded by 5 or 6 more 3-wrap knots.

**Couched Stitch**

This technique is used with a heavier thread, cord, or other fiber to create a solid straight or curved line.

Suitable for: twisted threads, floss, or rayon cord
1. Thread a chenille needle with one end of 6 strands of floss or a heavier fiber. Go down at A; remove the needle and knot that end.

2. Using a second needle threaded with finer thread, come up at B.

3. Lay the second fiber across the first one and go down at C to make a straight stitch over the heavier fiber.

4. Pull the thread down through the fabric A

5. Repeat Steps 3 and 4 up to ½” before the end of the line. Cut the first (heavier) thread 1” longer than needed to end the row; thread and go down at D.
6. Continue couching to the end; then knot and cut both threads to finish the line of couched stitches.
Chapter 10: Wisteria and Sunflowers Pillow

Finished size: 6¾” × 6½”

This sweet little pillow makes a perfect addition to a feminine girl’s room for a girl of any age. Its combination of bright colors, but this piece would also be very pretty worked in white and ecru for use as a ring-bearer’s pillow. For this design, I used a variety of Finca and Anchor perle cotton and floss.

Materials

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fabrics, threads, ribbon</th>
<th>Solid colors</th>
<th>Variegated colors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Color A</td>
<td>Light green</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Color B</td>
<td>Fuchsia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Color C</td>
<td>Pink</td>
<td>Variegated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Color D</td>
<td>Red</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Color E</td>
<td>Purple</td>
<td>Variegated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Color F</td>
<td>Yellow</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Color G</td>
<td>Medium green</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Color H</td>
<td>Grass green</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

✔ ¼ yard solid or batik fabric in color A (1 scrap 3” × 8” is fine)

✔ ¼ yard solid or batik fabric in color B
✓ ¼ yard cotton muslin
✓ 1 yard of " sat in ribbon in color H
✓ ¼ yard lightweight iron-on interfacing
✓ 1 skein each of perle cotton #8 in colors B, D, E, and G
✓ 1 skein each of cotton floss in colors B, D, F, G, and H
✓ 1 skein each of variegated floss in colors CV and EV
✓ Sewing thread to match fabric and ribbon
✓ 5 butterfly charms, ½” size
✓ ¼ yard craft batting (or scrap 8” × 8”)
✓ 1 bag Poly-fil stuffing
✓ 1 yard rattail cording in color H
✓ Sulky KK2000 spray adhesive
✓ 1½ yards of " satin ribbon for ringbearer’s pillow (optional)

Cutting

From fabric A:
✓ 1 piece 3” × 8” From fabric B:
✓ 2 pieces 2½” × 8” and 1 piece using pillow template From the other materials:
✓ 1 square of muslin 8” × 8”
✓ 2 pieces of ribbon 8” long
✓ 1 piece of interfacing 8” × 8”
✓ 1 piece of interfacing using pillow template
✓ 1 piece of batting using pillow template

SEWING
1. Fold the 8” × 8” piece of muslin in half, finger-pressure the fold.

2. Place the muslin square on a flat work surface. Spray with Sulky KK2000.

3. Fold the 3” × 8” strip of fabric A in half to make a 1½” × 8” folded strip; finger-press. Open the piece and align the center line over the center line of the muslin square, right side up. Pin along the center line.


5. Iron the interfacing to the wrong side of the muslin.

6. Fold the stitched square in half, interfacing side facing in and seams aligned. Fold the enlarged pillow template in half, pin it to the fabric, and cut around it.

7. Draw a chalk mark line 1” from the center line on each side.

8. Apply the glue stick to the back of one ribbon length. Lay the ribbon over the zigzag stitches of one seam, aligning the inner edge on the chalk line. Stitch along both ribbon edges. Cut off the excess ribbon.

9. Repeat Step 8 for the remaining piece of ribbon.
Embroidery And Embellishment

Stitches Used

✓ Outline stitch vine
✓ Wisteria
✓ Lazy daisy stitch
✓ French knots
✓ Sunflower
✓ French knot flower

Using the stitching diagram as a reference guide, work the stitches in the following order.

1. Outline stitch vine—base color G, perle cotton; vines
   color G, 3 strands of floss
2. Wisteria—color EV, 3 strands of variegated floss; long
   9 petal, short 7 petal
3. Lazy daisy stitch—color G, 3 strands of floss
4. 3-wrap French knots—color EV, 3 strands of floss
5. 5-petal French knot flower—color B, perle cotton
6. Lazy daisy stitch—color G, perle cotton
7. Lazy daisy stitch—color D, perle cotton
8. Lazy daisy stitch—color G, 3 strands of floss
9. 3-wrap French knot—color F, 3 strands of floss
10. Sunflower—petal color D, 3 strands of floss; center color CV, 2 strands of variegated floss
11. 6-petal French knot flower—color F, 3 strands of floss
12. Lazy daisy stitch—color H, 2 strands of floss
13. Sunflower—petal color CV, 3 strands of variegated floss; center color B, 2 strands of floss
14. 5-petal French knot flower—color E, perle cotton
15. Lazy daisy stitch—color H, 3 strands of floss
16. Charms—stitch in place with color H, 2 strands of floss
Stitching diagram

Assembly

1. Iron the interfacing template shape to the wrong side of the fabric B template shape to make the pillow back.

2. Place the batting piece on your work surface and position the interfaced pillow back over it, right side up (if using the ribbon tie, tuck the length of ribbon inside and away from the seams). Place the embroidered heart on top, right side down.

3. Mark the side opening. Pin around the edges through all the layers.

4. Stitch a \( \frac{1}{4} \)" seam around the edge, leaving the opening free.

5. Trim the batting close to the seam.

6. Clip through all layers at the side opening, clipping to the curve from the seam; clip close to the seam at the center top dip, the side curves, and the bottom point.
Trim batting and clip curves.

7. Turn the heart right side out, using a turning tool to even out the curved edges and the point.

8. Insert stuffing to make the pillow as firm as you want it.

Pin the opening and hand stitch it closed, using the ladder stitch.

Finish the opening, using the ladder stitch.

**Cording**

1. Tie a knot in the center and at each end of the cording. Pin the center knot to the top center dip of the heart.

2. Thread a needle with 1 yard of color E perle cotton. Stitch through the fabric at the dip. Lay the middle knot of the cord over the knot of thread.
3. Following the Couching with Thread directions lay the cord against the heart edge and couch around to the bottom tip.

4. Bury the thread in the stitches through the seam.

5. Repeat for the other side.

Couch cord all around the heart.

**Optional Ribbon Tie**

Hand stitch the middle of the length of ribbon to the center back of the fabric cut from the pillow template 1¼” down from the center dip.
Heart pillow template

Pillow Template
Cut 1 from finished pieced block.
Cut 1 from fabric B.
Cut 1 from interfacing.
Cut 1 from batting.
Enlarge 125%.
Chapter 11: Vintage Redressed Wallhanging

Finished size: 11½" × 11½"

Lovely vintage handkerchiefs are combined with cotton print fabrics and satin ribbons to make this wallhanging. The hankies will be your focal point, with the embroidery and detailed edges enhancing the design. Add some vintage buttons to complete the project. For this design, I used a variety of Finca and Anchor perle cotton and floss.

**Materials**

Use a printed fabric that blends with the colors in the handkerchiefs. From that print, choose the colors for the perle cotton; then use lighter, darker, or variegated colors for the floss.
**Colors** | **Perle cotton solid colors** | **Floss 1** | **Floss 2** | **Variegated Floss**
---|---|---|---|---
Color A | Green | | Darker | Variegated
Color B | Blue | Lighter | Darker |
Color C | Purple | Lighter | Darker |
Color D | Pink | Lighter |
Color E | Red |
Color F | Yellow | Lighter |

- ✔ ½ yard solid or print cotton fabric, 40” wide
- ✔ 2–5 embroidered or printed handkerchiefs
- ✔ ½ yard cotton muslin
- ✔ 1½ yards of satin ribbon
- ✔ Yard lightweight iron-on interfacing
- ✔ 1 skein each of perle cotton #8 in colors A, B, C, D, E, and F
- ✔ 1 skein each of cotton floss in colors lighter than the corresponding perle cotton colors (B1, C1, D1, and F1)
- ✔ 1 skein each of cotton floss in colors darker than the corresponding perle cotton colors (A2, B2, and C2)
- ✔ 1 skein each of cotton floss in variegated colors similar to the perle cotton colors (AV, DV, EV, and FV)
- ✔ Sewing thread to match the fabric and ribbon
- ✔ Yard craft batting
- ✔ Yard fast2fuse
- ✔ 10” dowel
- ✔ Sulky KK2000 spray adhesive
- ✔ Fabric gluestick
- ✔ Buttons and appliqués of various sizes (optional)
- ✔ Second fabric for binding and lining (optional)
Cutting

From the solid or print fabric:

✓ 2 pieces 2½” x 8”
✓ 2 pieces 2½” x 12”
✓ 1 square 12” x 12”
✓ 1 piece 3” x 10”
✓ 2 pieces 3” x 12”
✓ 2 pieces 3” x 14”

From the other materials:

✓ 1 piece of muslin 12” x 12”
✓ 4 pieces of ribbon 12” long
✓ 1 piece of interfacing 12” x 12”
✓ 1 piece of batting 12” x 12”
✓ 1 piece of fast2fuse 12” x 12”

Preparing The Handkerchiefs

1. Cut each handkerchief into 4 equal squares. Decorations or detailed edges can be used as needed.

2. Cut squares of interfacing smaller than each square of handkerchief. Iron to the wrong side of the squares to be used, following the manufacturer’s directions.

Arranging The Handkerchiefs

1. Place the muslin square on a flat work surface and spray with Sulky KK2000.

2. Temporarily place the 2 fabric strips 2½” x 12” along the horizontal edges of the 12” x 12” muslin square. Place the 2 fabric strips 2½” x
8” along the vertical edges, tucking the raw edges under the horizontal strips.

3. Arrange the handkerchief squares in the open square in the center of the muslin, using your own design or the arrangement shown here.

Suggested arrangement of handkerchief squares

4. Tuck the raw edges of the top squares under the horizontal fabric strip. Tuck the squares below them under the top squares. Fold over any overlapped edges that meet in the center; pin in place.

5. Pin the fabric strips in place along the inner and outer edges.

**Sewing**

1. Zigzag over the inner edge of the rectangular strips to hold in place.

2. Hand stitch folded sections or overlapping finished flaps in place.

3. Apply the glue stick to the back of 2 lengths of ribbon. Center the ribbon over the zigzag stitches of the horizontal fabric strips. Stitch both edges of the ribbon. Repeat this step for the vertical strips.
Zigzag the fabric strips, stitch the hankies, and glue and stitch the ribbon.

4. Iron the 12" × 12" square of interfacing to the wrong side of the muslin square.

Handkerchief layout before embroidery

**Embroidery And Embellishment Stitches Used**

✔ Chain stitch
✓ Zigzag chain stitch
✓ Button flowers
✓ Blanket stitch
✓ Wild ginger
✓ Lazy daisy stitch
✓ French knot
✓ Short-long-short blanket stitch
✓ Tulip
✓ Looped tendril
✓ Sunflower
✓ Fly stitch
✓ Couched stitch
✓ Heart
✓ Outline stitch vine
✓ Lazy daisy flower
✓ Outline stitch

Using the stitching diagram as a reference guide, work the stitches in the following order.

1. Chain stitch—color C, perle cotton
2. Zigzag chain stitch—color C, perle cotton
3. Button flowers—color AV, 2 strands floss
4. Blanket stitch—color A, perle cotton
5. Wild ginger—color EV, 3 strands floss, with color D, perle cotton
6. Lazy daisy stitch—color D, perle cotton
7. Lazy daisy stitch—color A2, 3 strands floss
8. 2-wrap French knot—color B2, 3 strands floss
9. Short-long-short blanket stitch—color A, perle cotton
   10. Tulip—color DV, 3 strands floss
   11. Looped tendril—color A2, 3 strands floss
   12. 2-wrap French knot—color C1, 3 strands floss
   13. 3-wrap French knot—color B, perle cotton
14. Sunflower—petals color F1, 3 strands floss; center color FV, 2 strands floss
   15. Chain stitch—color A2, 3 strands floss
   16. Fly stitch—color A2, 3 strands floss
   17. Lazy daisy stitch—color FV, 3 strands variegated floss
18. Couched row—color B2, 6 strands floss, with color F1, 2 strands floss

Handkerchief Edges
Use the following suggestions to fill in and add color to the already embroidered sections.

1. Heart—color DV, 3 strands floss
2. Outline stitch vine—color AV, 3 strands floss
3. Lazy daisy stitch—color AV, 3 strands variegated floss
4. 6-petal lazy daisy flower—color B1, 3 strands floss
5. 3-wrap French knot—colors D1 and C2, 3 strands floss
6. Fly stitch—color A, perle cotton
7. Couched row—color B2, 6 strands floss, with color A, perle cotton
8. Outline stitch—color A, perle cotton
9. Chain stitch—color E, perle cotton
10. 9-petal lazy daisy detail flower—color DV, 3 strands floss
Stitching diagram

Lazy daisy stitch—color DV, 3 strands variegated floss

✓ 3-wrap French knot—color F1, 3 strands floss
✓ Buttonhole circle—color F, perle cotton
✓ 2-wrap French knot—color FV, perle cotton
✓ Buttons—stitch in place using any color perle cotton

Additional Stitching
To fill out the design and create a consistent color palette among the handkerchiefs, you may choose to add outline stitch vines, lazy daisy stitches, and French knots to the existing embroidery. Select floss or perle cotton in colors to match or tie in with the other colors.

**Hanging Sleeve**

1. Press the 3” × 10” fabric strip in half to make a 1½” × 10” folded strip. Unfold and press each end in ¼,” right sides out; stitch along the end folds.

2. Refold the strip and pin in place 2” below the top edge of the 12” × 12” fabric square, raw edges facing up.

3. Stitch the raw sleeve edge to the lining. Fold the sleeve up from the stitched raw edge and pin the folded edge to the lining. Hand stitch in place.

Stitch hanging sleeve in place.

**Assembly**

1. Position the hanging lining, sleeve facing up, on the 12” × 12” square of fast2fuse; press to fuse.
2. Turn so the fast2fuse is facing up; then cover with the 12” × 12” batting square. Place the embroidered base right side up on the batting.

3. Pin around the edges through all layers. With your sewing machine, baste through the layers close to the edges.

4. Fold the 2 fabric strips 3” × 12” in half to make folded strips 1½” × 12:” press.

5. Align the raw edges of the folded strips even with the left and right edges of the embroidered base (fold facing in). Pin and stitch in place using a seam allowance.

6. Wrap the folded edge around and pin to the lining. Thread a small, sharp needle with sewing thread and hand stitch the fold to the lining.
Stitch the side strips to the lining.

7. Fold the 2 fabric strips 3” × 14” in half to make folded strips 1½” × 14”; press. Repeat Step 5 to stitch the strips to the top and bottom edges.

8. Fold the raw edges of the top and bottom strips over the side edges, trimming to ½”. Tuck in the seam allowance on both ends. Pin the edges in place and hand stitch the fold to the lining. Insert the dowel into the sleeve.

Tuck in the ends and stitch the strips in place.
Chapter 12: Silk Ribbon Embroidery

The Stitches

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Technique</th>
<th>Stitch Description</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Colonial Knot</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Pointed Ribbon Tip Stitch</td>
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<td>Wildflower</td>
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<tr>
<td>Split Ribbon Stitch</td>
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<td>Woven Ribbon Rose Variation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gathered Bud</td>
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<td>Pin Rose</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ribbon Loop Stitch</td>
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<td>Vine Flower</td>
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<td>Twisted Ribbon Rose</td>
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<tr>
<td>Padded Straight Stitch</td>
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<td>Couched Ribbon</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pistil Stitch</td>
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<tr>
<td>Peony</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The directions that follow list suggested ribbons or threads, or sometimes a combination of both, for each technique.

All of the stitches here and in the following directions were worked with YLI’s silk ribbon, YLI’s buttonhole twist, Caron Collection’s Wildflower thread, or Kreinik’s Silk Mori floss.

**Feather Stitch**
This stitch can be used as a border or base row, and the tips of the stitch can be further embroidered with individual or detail stitches.

Suitable for: Twisted threads, floss, or 2mm silk ribbon

1. Come up at A. Hold the thread toward you and to the right. In one motion, go down at B and up at C. Loop the working thread under the tip of the needle.

2. Pull the needle through the fabric.

3. In one motion, go down at B (below and to the right of the first stitch) and up at C. Loop the thread under the needle.
4. Pull the needle through the fabric. Repeat Steps 3 and 4 to continue the row, alternating the stitches from side to side.

5. To end the stitch, go down at D. Knot and cut the ribbon or thread end.

Finished feather stitch

**Feather Stitch Vine**

1. Follow Steps 1–3 for the feather stitch; then work a third stitch below and to the right of the second stitch.
2. Work 2 stitches below and to the left of the last grouping. Repeat to continue the row. End as in Step 5 for the feather stitch.

Finished vine base

3. Work feather stitch branches onto the original row to finish the feather stitch vine.

**Split Ribbon Stitch**
The split ribbon stitch can be used as a solid straight or curved border or as a base row.

Suitable for: Silk embroidery ribbon in all sizes

1. Work a single straight stitch; do not cut the ribbon or pull it tight or flat.

2. Come up through the fabric and ribbon at A, about half the length of the first stitch.

3. Go down at B, at about 1½ times the ribbon width. Repeat Steps 2 and 3 to continue the row.
4. To end the row, go down at C. Knot and cut the ribbon end.

Finished split ribbon stitch

**Pistol Stitch**

Work the pistol stitch as an individual stitch, or combine it with other stitches to create a flower or other design or component.

Suitable for: twisted threads, floss, or silk embroidery ribbon

1. Come up at A. Hold the ribbon or thread away from you and to the right.
2. Hold the needle close to the fabric; wrap the ribbon over the needle 1 to 3 times. Hold the tail end with your thumb. Go down at B.

3. Pull the needle and ribbon through the wrapped stitches and the fabric. Knot and cut the ribbon end.

Finished pistil stitch

**Couched Ribbon**

Use this technique to apply ribbon to fabric, forming a solid straight or curved line.

Suitable for: Woven or silk embroidery ribbon of any size
1. Thread a needle with ribbon. Come up at A; set the needle aside.

2. Thread a second needle with thread, floss, or a smaller width of ribbon. Come up at B.

3. Lay the second thread over the ribbon. Go down at C, but don’t pull the thread too tight.
4. Insert a porcupine quill or straw into the loop of ribbon; pull the ribbon down around the quill

5. Remove the quill and pull the second thread all the way through the fabric. Repeat Steps 2–5, stopping ¼” before the end of the row.

6. Go down at D with the ribbon. Knot and cut the ribbon and thread ends.

Finished couched ribbon

**Padded Straight Stitch**
This stitch can be worked by itself, or it can be combined with other stitches to create a flower or other design or component.

Suitable for: Silk embroidery ribbon of all sizes

1. Work a straight stitch (page 53), but do not cut the ribbon.

2. Come up at A, slightly below the first stitch. Hold the ribbon toward you and down.

3. Go down at B, slightly above the first stitch. Knot and cut the ribbon end.
Finished padded straight stitch

**Ribbon Stitch**

The ribbon stitch can be worked as an individual stitch or be combined with other stitches to create a flower or other design or component.

Suitable for: Silk embroidery ribbon in all sizes

1. Come up at A. Hold the ribbon up and away from you, flat against the fabric. Go down through the ribbon and fabric at B for the desired stitch length.

2. Insert a porcupine quill, straw, or your needle through the loop of ribbon; carefully pull the ribbon through to the wrong side. Remove the needle and pull the ribbon to form a small curve. Knot and cut the ribbon end.
Finished ribbon stitch

**Peony**

Draw a center point. From the center, work 11–13 ribbon stitches (left) to form petals, completing the peony.

![Peony stitch](image)

**Colonial Knot**

This detail stitch can also be worked off the tip of a border or base row stitch.

Suitable for: Twisted threads, floss, or silk embroidery ribbon of any size

![Colonial Knot](image)

1. Come up at A. Hold the needle in one hand and the length of ribbon down and toward you, parallel with the needle.
2. Pass the needle over the ribbon, moving from right to left; then loop under the ribbon to the right at A.

3. Wrap the ribbon over the tip of the needle from right to left. The ribbon should form a figure eight, as shown.

4. Go down close to A, pulling the ribbon tight; hold the tail end with your thumb. Pull the needle and ribbon through the wrapped stitches and fabric. Knot and cut the thread end.
Finished colonial knot

**Pointed Ribbon Tip Stitch**

The stitch can be worked as an individual stitch or be combined with other stitches to create a flower or other design or component.

Suitable for: Woven or silk embroidery ribbon of any size

1. Come up at A. Hold the ribbon to the left. Go down at B, looping the ribbon to the right.

2. Pull the ribbon through the fabric to form the stitch. Lay the ribbon flat against the fabric; a point should appear in the center of the ribbon. Set this needle aside.
3. Thread a small, sharp needle with sewing thread or a single strand of floss. Come up at C inside the loop just under the edge of the ribbon resting on the fabric.

4. Stitch down through ribbon and fabric at D, near the tip of the ribbon. Knot and cut the ribbon and thread ends.

Finished pointed ribbon tip stitch

**Wildflower**

Draw a center point. Work 5-pointed ribbon tip stitches (left) outward from the center to complete a 5-petal flower.
Ribbon Loop Stitch

The ribbon loop stitch can be worked as an individual stitch or be combined with other stitches to create a flower or other design or component.

Suitable for: all sizes of silk embroidery ribbon

1. Come up at A. Hold the ribbon up and away from you. Go down at B.

2. Pull the ribbon through the fabric, inserting a porcupine quill or straw into the center of the loop. Pull the ribbon around the quill to the desired stitch length; remove the quill. Knot and cut the ribbon end.
Finished ribbon loop stitch

**Ribbon Loop Posy**

Draw a center point. Work 5 or 6 ribbon loop stitches (above) out from the center to complete the ribbon loop posy.

**Vine Flower**

1. Work 2 ribbon loop stitches (left) side by side. Knot and cut the ribbon ends.

2. Work one straight stitch (page 53) to cover the fixed edges of the looped stitches.
3. Work 3 more consecutive straight stitches. Knot and cut the ribbon end to complete the vine flower.

**Twisted Ribbon Rose**

This stitch can be worked as a single focal point or in groups to fill in a larger area.

Suitable for: Silk embroidery ribbon in all sizes

1. Come up at A. Hold the ribbon to the right; twirl the needle clockwise to twist the ribbon tightly. Hold the loop of ribbon with your thumb to the left, and go down at B.
2. Gently pull the ribbon through the fabric, leaving 1” of twisted ribbon above the fabric. Twist the ribbon on itself, forming a double curled length.

3. Carefully continue to pull the ribbon through. The end you’re pulling will straighten, while the other half curls to form the petals.

4. Coax the ribbon around itself to form the small rose. Set aside this needle.
5. Thread a small, sharp needle with sewing thread or a strand of floss. Come up at the ribbon edge, tackstitch a few times around the edge, and stitch once through.

Finished twisted ribbon rose

**Woven Ribbon Rose**

This stitch can be worked as a single focal point or in groups to fill in a larger area.

Suitable for: Silk embroidery ribbon in all sizes

**ROSE BASE**

Draw a center dot and add 5 more dots equally spaced around it. The base of the rose should be twice the width of the ribbon you’re working with. If you want a smaller or larger rose, work the base accordingly.
1. Thread a needle with a twisted thread that matches your ribbon. Come up at A. In one motion, go down at B and up at C. Loop the working thread under the tip of the needle.

2. Pull the needle through the fabric. Go down at D.

3. Come up at E, then down at C. Repeat for point F to C. Knot and cut the thread end.
Finished rose base

**Rose Petals**

1. Thread a needle with ribbon. Come up at C. Twirl the needle clockwise to slightly twist the ribbon.

2. Working counterclockwise, thread the needle under the first available spoke. Gently pull the ribbon.
3. Skip a spoke and thread the needle under the next spoke. Gently pull the ribbon.

4. Continue to thread the needle over and under the spokes, pulling the center tightly and relaxing the weave as you reach the outer spokes of the base. The last few woven petals should cover the spokes of the base completely.
Finished woven ribbon rose

**Woven Ribbon Rose Variation**

You’ll use two different ribbon widths for this version of the woven ribbon rose.

1. Work a woven ribbon rose base.

2. Thread a needle with the narrower width of ribbon.

Follow Steps 1–5 for the woven ribbon rose petals (left).

Do not cover the spokes completely. Pull the ribbon tightly. Knot and cut the ribbon end.
3. Thread a needle with the wider ribbon. Come up 1 spoke behind the end of the first ribbon.

4. Continue to weave the ribbon, relaxing the weave as you reach the outer spokes. Follow Step 5 for the woven ribbon rose petals (left) to complete the woven ribbon rose variation.

**Ribbonwork Flowers**

These small flowers are made using ribbonwork techniques. Woven, silk bias, or silk embroidery ribbon is cut and stitched directly to the fabric.

Suitable for: 4mm wider woven or silk bias ribbon; larger silk embroidery ribbon

**Ribbon Measurements**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ribbon width</th>
<th>Silk bias ribbon</th>
<th>Silk embroidery ribbon</th>
<th>Ribbon length</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Woven ribbon</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>½”</td>
<td></td>
<td>13mm</td>
<td>3½”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>⅛”</td>
<td>8”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>⅛”</td>
<td>⅛”</td>
<td>3⅛”</td>
<td>7”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>⅛”</td>
<td>6”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>⅛”</td>
<td></td>
<td>7mm</td>
<td>1⅛”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>⅛”</td>
<td>4”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Rosette**

1. Cut 1 length of ribbon according to the Ribbon Measurements chart. Thread a small sharp needle with thread to match.

2. Come up through the fabric and the wrong side of the ribbon at A, “” from the ribbon’s inner raw and bottom edges.

3. Gather stitch along the ribbon’s bottom edge, stopping from the edges; the needle should be on the right side of the ribbon.
4. Pull the needle and thread to gather the ribbon. Go down through the inner ribbon edge and fabric close to the beginning stitch.

5. Pull the thread to create the flower center. Knot the thread end.

6. Come up through the fabric and ribbon at the inner edge; tackstitch.
7. Come up through the fabric and ribbon at the top edge; tack stitch. Knot and cut the thread end.

8. If you wish, tack stitch the flower to the fabric around the outer edges.

Finished rosette

**Gathered Bud**

1. Cut a length of ribbon according to the Ribbon Measurement chart. Thread a small, sharp needle with thread.

2. Come up through the fabric and the wrong side of the ribbon at A, from the raw edge at the center of the ribbon width.
3. Gather stitch through the ribbon center, stopping from the raw edge; the needle should be on the wrong side of the ribbon.

4. Go down through the fabric at B.

5. Pull the needle gently through the ribbon. Tuck under the raw ribbon edges. Knot and cut the thread end.

Finished Gather Bud

**Pin Rose**
This stitch can be worked as a single focal point or in groups to fill in a larger area.

Suitable for: Silk embroidery ribbon of all sizes

1. Come up at A. Hold the ribbon away from you and to the left. In one motion, go down at B and up at C. Do not pull the needle all the way through.

2. Wrap the ribbon around the needle to the base of the stitch; keep the ribbon flat against the fabric. This is a single petal.
3. Repeat Step 2 to make a total of 3 petals.

4. Place a thumb on the ribbon wraps and needle; pull the needle through the fabric with your other hand. Go down at D.

5. Come up at E; go down at F. Knot and cut the ribbon end.
Finished pin rose
Chapter 13: Silk Roses Eetui

Finished size: 5” × 10½”

This lovely little open-sided case is the perfect gift for anyone who works with needles. For the designs embroidered onto the etui, I used silk embroidery ribbon by YLI and Soie Cristale and Wildflower threads by the Caron Collection.

Materials
Select a subtle batik fabric for the etui, and then choose a variegated thread for color A. Pick colors for the additional threads and silk ribbons that are similar to or will complement A.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Silk ribbon and threads</th>
<th>Variegated colors</th>
<th>Solid colors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Color A</td>
<td>Wildflower thread—Tiffany Rose</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Color B</td>
<td>Magenta</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Color C</td>
<td>Orchid</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Color D</td>
<td>Light purple</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Color E</td>
<td>Purple</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Color F</td>
<td>Dark purple</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Color G</td>
<td>Aqua green</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Color H</td>
<td>Loden green</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Color I</td>
<td>Teal green</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Color J</td>
<td>Purple and white variegated</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- ✓ ¼ yard 42"-wide cotton batik fabric
- ✓ ¼ yard lightweight iron-on interfacing
- ✓ 1 skein Wildflower variegated thread (color A)
- ✓ 1 skein each of silk floss in colors B, C, D, and G
- ✓ 1 reel each of 4mm silk embroidery ribbon in colors B, E, F, G, and I
- ✓ 1 reel each of 7mm silk embroidery ribbon in colors D and H
- ✓ 1 reel of 2mm silk embroidery ribbon in color D
- ✓ 1½ yards of ¼" woven ribbon in color J
- ✓ ¼ yard light fast2fuse
- ✓ ¼ yard craft batting
- ✓ 1 rectangle of coordinating felt
- ✓ 1 yard of satin ribbon in color F
- ✓ Sewing thread to match the fabric
Dome snap fastener (optional alternative to the ribbon tie)

Charms

Cutting

From the fabric:

- 2 pieces 10½” × 5”
- 2 pieces 10½” × 3”
- 2 pieces 3” × 7”

From the other materials:

- 1 piece of interfacing 10½” × 5”
- 1 piece of light fast2fuse 10½” × 5”
- 1 piece of batting 10½” × 5”
- 1 piece of felt 9” × 4”
- 2 pieces of satin ribbon in color F, 18” long

Preparation

Iron the interfacing to the wrong side of a fabric piece 10½” × 5”.

Fold the fabric piece in half, interfacing sides together, to make it 5¼” × 5”; press the fold. Fold under the edge opposite the fold ¼” to make a square; press.

Use a chalk pencil to temporarily draw the etui embroidery template into the center of half of the fabric piece; this will be the front.

Temporarily mark the center of the other half (the back) with a chalk pencil.
Fold the front and back sides in half in both directions to find the centers.

**Embroidery And Embellishment Stitches Used**

- ✓ Woven ribbon rose base and petals
- ✓ Split ribbon stitch
- ✓ Feather stitch vines
- ✓ Lazy daisy stitch
- ✓ Colonial knot
- ✓ Gathered bud
- ✓ Twisted ribbon rose
- ✓ Pointed ribbon tip stitch
- ✓ Rosette
✓ Ribbon stitch
✓ Feather stitch
✓ Pistil stitch
✓ French knot

Using the stitching diagram as a reference guide for the front of the etui, work the stitches in the following order.

1. Woven ribbon rose base—color A, Wildflower thread (on back)
2. Split ribbon stitch—color G, 4mm ribbon
3. Feather stitch vines—color A, Wildflower thread
4. Lazy daisy stitch—color C, 2 strands of floss
5. Lazy daisy stitch—color G, 2 strands of floss
6. Colonial knot—color B, 2 strands of floss
Front stitching diagram

1. Woven ribbon rose petals—colors B, E, and F, 4mm silk ribbon
2. Gathered bud—color E, 4mm silk ribbon
3. Twisted ribbon rose—color D, 7mm silk ribbon
4. Pointed ribbon tip stitch—color H, 7mm silk ribbon
5. Lazy daisy stitch—color I, 4mm silk ribbon
6. Rosette—color J, woven ribbon
7. Colonial knot—color C, 2 strands of floss
8. Gathered bud—color E, 4mm silk ribbon
9. Ribbon stitch—color I, 4mm silk ribbon
10. Lazy daisy stitch—color F, 4mm silk ribbon
11. Ribbon stitch—color G, 4mm silk ribbon
12. Lazy daisy stitch—color D, 2mm silk ribbon
13. Colonial knot—color G, 2 strands of floss
14. Stitch charms with 1 strand of floss

**Etui Back**

Back stitching diagram

Flip the fabric piece around and continue to work the stitches in the order listed, following the stitching diagram for the etui back.

 ✓ Woven ribbon rose petals—color D, 7mm silk ribbon
 ✓ Woven ribbon rose petals—color E, 4mm silk ribbon
✓ Gathered bud—color F, 4mm silk ribbon
✓ Feather stitch—color A, Wildflower thread
✓ Lazy daisy stitch—color C, 2 strands of floss
✓ Pistil stitch—color G, 2 strands of floss
✓ Colonial knot—color B, 2 strands of floss
✓ Lazy daisy stitch—colors I and F, 4mm silk ribbon
✓ 5-wrap French knot—color B, 4mm silk ribbon
✓ Pointed ribbon tip stitch—color H, 7mm silk ribbon

ASSEMBLY

1. Iron the remaining 10½” × 5” fabric piece to one side of the fast2fuse; this is the etui lining.

2. Pin the felt to the right side of the lining. Place the batting against the fast2fuse side of the lining.

3. Place the wrong side of the embroidered fabric piece against the batting. Pin all layers together. Machine baste through the layers, close to the raw edges.

4. Using a chalk pencil, mark the center line on which the etui will be folded to create front and back sides; machine stitch along this line.

5. Fold the 2 fabric strips 3” × 10½” in half to create folded binding strips 1½” × 10½”.

6. Pin the raw edges of the binding strips to the right side of the etui front, even with the long etui edges. Stitch in place using a ¼” seam allowance; press open.

7. Turn the folded edges to the inside (lining); pin. Thread a small, sharp needle with sewing thread and hand stitch the fold in place.

8. Machine stitch close to the outer fold of the binding to keep the edge firm.
9. Pin a raw end of each 18" ribbon piece to the center of the unbound edges of the etui, raw end of the ribbon even with the raw edge of the etui.

10. Fold the pair of 3" × 7" fabric strips in half to make folded binding strips 1½" × 7"; press the folds. Attach the binding as in Steps 7 and 8.

11. Fold the raw ends of the top and bottom strips over the side edges, trimming to ½". Tuck in both ends, pin, and hand stitch in place.

12. Fold the etui in half along the line you previously stitched by machine. Press the fold firmly.
Chapter 14: Laundering and Basic Care

The embroidery projects of most beginners are going to be worked on cotton, in cotton. Cotton and cotton-poly fibers are very resilient and forgiving. If your work wrinkles, you can iron it. Scrunched up? You can dampen it and gently stretch it back into shape. When it comes time to iron your finished project (to get rid of that ring around the pattern), do so from the back of your work, center out. Worried about snagging the stitches?

Place a sheet of non-newsprint brown craft paper or scrap fabric between the work and your iron.

What about clothing you’ve stitched on? Aside from the concerns the garment itself carries, I can promise that your stitches won’t come out in the wash. A really hot dryer might cause them to scrunch up, but we just learned how to fix that.

As with anything, gauge its fragility and heartiness for abuse. Just be careful if using hand-dyed floss, as it may not be color fast. The stuff sold in craft stores is colorfast and won’t bleed.

But if you buy thread at a specialty shop, test it first (dab a damp cotton ball on it) to avoid staining a piece of work.
Dear Reader,

Thanks for exploring this book with me. Now that you know some beautiful embroidery projects for your loved ones …

… why not take one step further and learn how to crochet and quilt?

You’ll love the other books, because allowing our creativity to flow is definitely worth it.

Get them now.

Thanks,

Freya

P.S. Reviews are like giving a warm hug to your favorite author.

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