



CANADA
4-H Manitoba

Stitchery

- The word "stitchery" is quite new but the techniques are centuries old.
- Stitchery includes all types of needle-and-yarn/thread fancy stitches done on a fabric background.
- Embroidery, crewel, teneriffe, Spanish black work, Swedish white work. Hardanger, drawn thread work, huck weaving, and cross stitch are but a few of the many types of stitchery.
- All types of stitchery make use of similar types of stitches but may be done with different kinds of threads or on different kinds of fabrics.
- Needlepoint, petitpoint, machinery embroidery, appliqué and smocking are also forms of stitchery but for the sake of clarity, are not included in this fact sheet.

I. Equipment and Materials

a) Threads and Yarns

- Choose threads and yarns with textures which will emphasize the texture of the stitched design. For example, if stitching a daisy, you might consider choosing a smooth firmly twisted, maybe nylon shiny yarn for petal, a nubby yarn for the centre of the flower, and a very fuzzy loosely twisted yarn for stems and leaves.
- Contrasts in texture and yarn thicknesses are very important.
- Choose colors which will combine attractively with each other and with the background.
- Don't overlook the possibility of using other 'yarns' like thread pulled out of burlap, baler twine, kitchen string, turkey cord, satin ribbon - j anything that conveys the message you are trying to put across with your stitchery.

THREADS AND YARNS



b) Needles

- For use with cotton embroidery thread, and thin yarn, embroidery and crewel needles - about size 6 are easiest to work with.
- When using wool or synthetic yarns, you'll likely find a package of yarn needles most helpful.
- Some types of stitchery may call for you to use a tapestry needle which has a blunt point.

c) Scissors

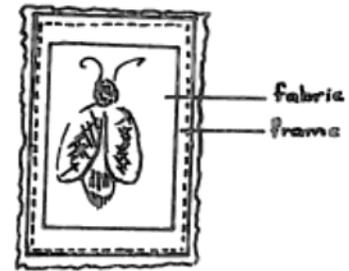
- Short scissors with sharp pointed ends are essential for snipping threads.



d) Frames (optional)

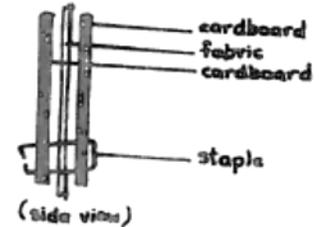
- Something to hold the fabric tight while stitching is being done helps prevent puckers from too tight stitches.
- For small articles of firmly woven fabric, embroidery hoops can be used. They tend to pull loosely woven fabrics out of shape, however.

- For loosely woven or large pieces of fabric, make two heavy cardboard frames, the outside dimensions slightly larger than the fabric; the hole in the centre slightly larger than the working area.
- Place fabric between the two frames and staple through the three thicknesses close together all the way around the frame.
- Wooden stretcher bars may also be used.



e) Fabrics

- All fabrics can be used for stitchery.
- Thin sheers like organdy show a shadow of the back side of the stitches through on the front -very effective for a hazy look.
- Choose a fabric with a texture suitable to the stitches. For delicate tiny lacey motifs, a background of a soft elegant fabric like satin would be more effective than burlap. For big and bold patterns with huge stitches, rougher looking fabric would be more attractive.
- Special fabrics may be required for particular styles of stitchery.
- Consider the end use of the article. Tablecloths, cushions, clothes and placemats have to be washed, so choose washable fabric and yarns that won't shrink. Burlap won't hold its shape after washing.



2. Designs

- Suitable designs are almost unlimited.
- Some stitches cover large areas completely, others make just a fine line.
- By choosing appropriate stitches, any design can be executed in fabric and stitches.
- Create a design that pleases you; that conforms to standards for good design; that is suitable to the end use of the article; and that follows the shape of the object.
- One-way designs are suitable for handbags and wallhangings; a non-directional design is necessary for cushions and other objects that will be seen from every angle. (Non-directional means it looks good from all angles upside down, sideways, and right.

3. General Methods

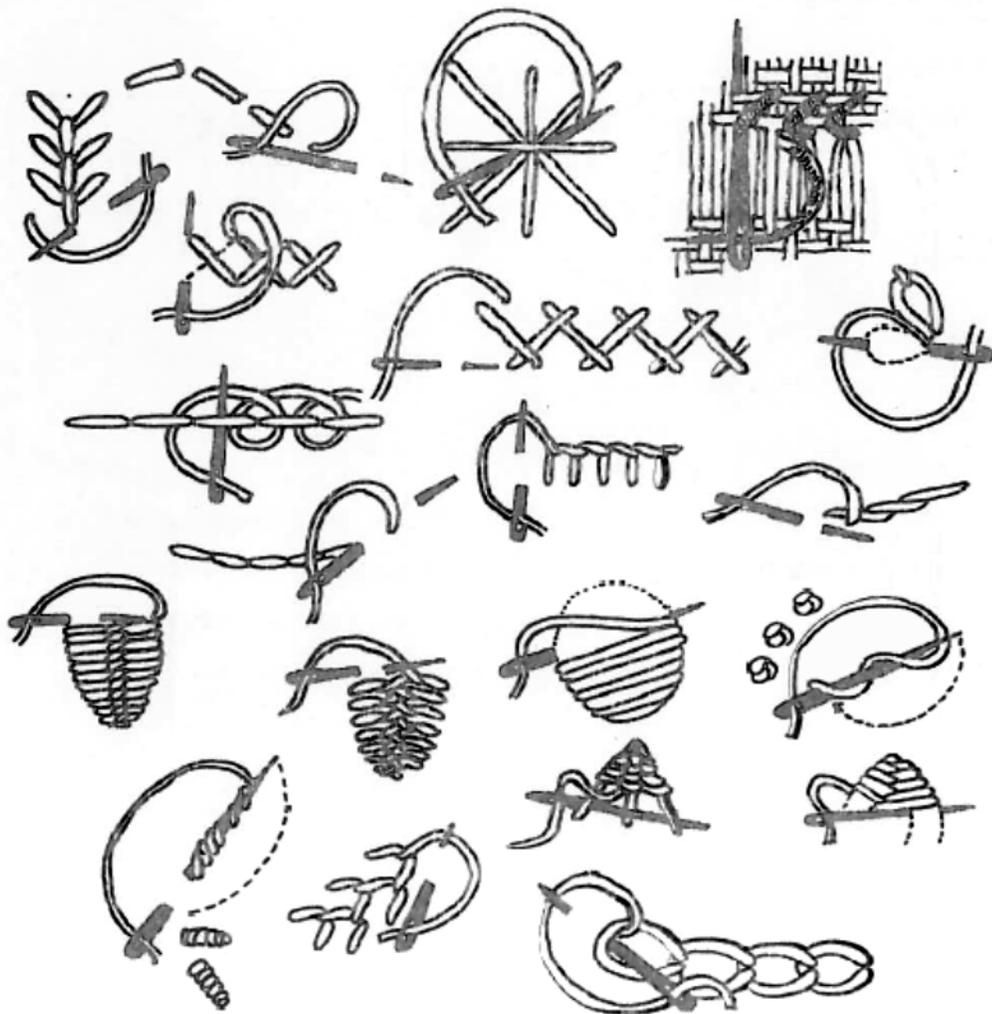
a) Transferring Design From Paper to Fabric

- The safest way of transferring a design is by using chalk. Dressmaker's carbon paper can be used but it is risky on light colored backgrounds or for single lines. Nothing spoils the appearance of embroidery faster than tracing lines!
- For some designs, using an overlay of tissue paper (with the design traced onto it) will work - especially if there are a lot of fine lines. Stitch through both the tissue and the fabric, then tear the tissue paper off.
- Some stitchery styles use something called waste canvas to mark the pattern. The canvas is then frayed and removed from under the stitches.

b) Beginning and Ending Threads

- If the article is to be lined or the back will not show, knots can be used at the beginning of the threads.
- If the back might show (e.g. room divider, place mat) begin by taking a few small running stitches in a place where they will be covered up by embroidery stitches. Finish off by taking a few stitches underneath an area of solid embroidery.

c) Stitches

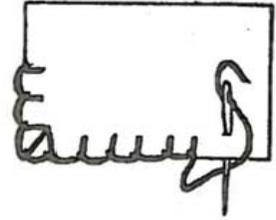


- A variety of stitches are shown above. They are just a sampling of all the possibilities. Once you have mastered a few fancy stitches, you will find it easy to invent your own by combining basic stitches and variations.
- Some stitches stand well away from the surface of the fabric; others lie very flat and smooth. In choosing stitches remember that variety in color, texture and effect are essential.
- **Embroidery:**
 - i. Embroidery is ornamental stitchery consisting of designs worked on fabric with either silk, cotton, or wool threads. It is in embroidery work that you get your first chance to work with designs and with color. Some good rules to remember are:
 - Simple, plain designs are more effective and easier for the beginner.
 - If you work on a firm material, your results will be more satisfactory.
 - When choosing colors, choose them to harmonize with the article you are making. Choose colors which blend well with each other.
 - Use an embroidery needle with a long slender eye for easy threading and for ease in drawing the needle through the fabric without leaving a hole.
 - Never use knots. Start by leaving 2 to 3 cm of thread on wrong side, conceal under stitches as work proceeds. Finish with two back stitches or run thread back under last three stitches to conceal and hold firmly.
 - Use embroidery cotton or woollen yarn for embroidery work. The choice of the thread will depend on the type of material.
 - Work carefully and painstakingly. Your reward will be a piece worth keeping.
 - Long carrying threads, or floats, are unattractive and catch easily.

ii. Basic Stitches:

Blanket Stitch:

- For finishing edges of blankets and other materials which do not fray.
- Six strands of embroidery cotton are general-ly' used.
- Work from left to right.
- Secure thread at desired depth of blanket stitch.
- Holding thread towards edge under thumb insert needle at fastening and draw through loop.
- Insert needle for next stitch at same depth in line with first stitch.
- Stitches should be approximately 1/4 inch deep and 1/4 inch apart.
- Comer stitches: there should be three stitches radiating from a centre point.
- Fasten thread with two back stitches.



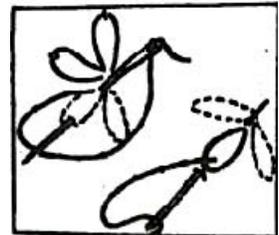
Chain Stitch:

- For outlining, finishing edges or for filling in designs. One or several rows, side by side, may be used.
- Start at the top, work toward you.
- Bring needle through fabric on design line.
- Hold thread in front of needle to make a loop.
- Insert needle beside the point where it first came out, and bring through the loop at the desired length of chain.



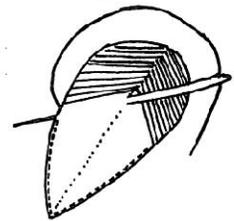
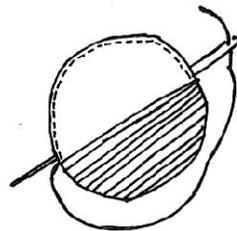
Lazy Daisy Stitch:

- A variation of the chain stitch used for forming simple flower petals and leaves.
- Bring needle to right side of the cloth.
- Hold thread down on the cloth with the thumb and insert the needle in the cloth where it came out.
- Bring needle through the loop at the tip of the petals.
- Insert needle again at end of loop, making a small stitch or bar.
- Carry needle underneath to the next petal and repeat.



Satin Stitch:

- For filling in raised designs.
- Outline design with running stitch.
- Fill in from line to line with straight or slanting over-and-over stitches close together without over-lapping, covering the outline design.



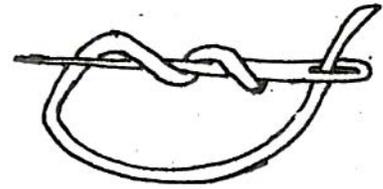
Outline stitch:

- For outlining designs.
- Work from left to right starting at the end nearest you and work away.
- Hold the thread downwards under the thumb and keep the thread to the right of the needle, take up a small stitch.
- Now take a stitch twice the length of the first stitch, bring needle up in the hole in which preceding stitch ended.



French Knots:

- Bring needle out at required position.
- Hold thread taut with the thumb and twist thread twice with the needle.
- Still holding thread firmly, insert needle close to where it first came through the material.
- Pull thread through to back and secure, or pass on to next position.



- Couching is a technique used to make single lines without a break. It is also helpful when trying to use a yarn which is too thick or nubby to pull through the fabric. Yarns are laid on background in place. Matching sewing thread is stitched overtop to hold yarns in position.



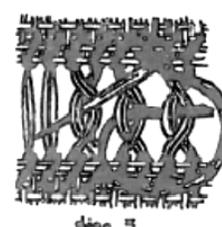
- Drawn thread work can be incorporated into designs. It is the process of removing some of the threads in the background, producing planned holes. To withdraw threads, cut across the required number of threads and withdraw gradually (diagram 1). Leave thread at ends long enough to darn back into the fabric. Threads must be withdrawn carefully with the point of the needle, a small area at a time, to prevent pulling fabric out of shape. To darn cut ends, draw each thread into the fabric over and under the weave, as in diagram 2. Cut off final ends very close to the fabric. Following this, embroidery stitches can be worked around the holes (diagram 3).



diag. 1



diag. 2



diag. 3

- One stitch can take on many forms. For example, a featherstitch done precisely in fine cotton on broadcloth looks very delicate. The same featherstitch done irregularly in nubby twine on burlap looks rough and interesting.
- Match the style of the stitching to the yarn and background and character of the article.

4. Care

- Any hand stitchery should be washed by hand in cool water if fabric and yarns are washable. Do not use bleach.
- To press new work or laundered stitchery articles, pad ironing board with a soft blanket or several towels. This prevents the yarns from becoming squashed flat. Press with a light touch, and use just the point of the iron, not the base, to press away wrinkles from sewn-on areas.

5. Evaluation

Check these points as well as the standards for good design:

- Is the background fabric free from puckers and wrinkles?
- Are all the thread ends securely fastened?
- Are there no tracing lines visible?
- Is the size of the stitches suitable for the end use of the article?
- Do the stitches chosen carry out the texture idea of the design area in which they are applied?
- Is the color combination attractive?
- Does the background fabric suit the character of the stitches and the design?

Project Resources:



Pinterest – The Visual Discovery Tool

Pinterest is a social media bulletin board for you to virtually pin pictures of things that interest you to your own personal boards – Pin-Explore-Discover! 4-H Manitoba has a Pinterest account. Each project series has a board full of fun and interesting ideas. There are also boards for 4-H Awesome, Community Service,

Volunteers, Communications and Building Blocks. Check it out at

www.pinterest.com/4hmanitoba/.

The following links may be useful in completing your project:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o8jViAiDrP0&list=PLclwpYTXHO57fjEilAtq3EHUF0VXMaXeI>

A series of video tutorials demonstrating stitches.

<http://dmc-usa.com/Education/Technique-Overviews/Embroidery.aspx>

A series of video tutorials demonstrating stitches.

<http://dmc-usa.com/Education/How-To.aspx>

A series of tutorials on different stitchery techniques.

Sections of the Stitchery Fact Sheets were adapted from
Creative Craft Techniques and Craft Fun: Unit B Handicraft Project with
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Manitoba Department of Agriculture.

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