

WORKSHOP: "HAND EMBROIDERY"



Summary: We will go through the basic hand embroidery equipment and ways to work. The instructor will demonstrate 5-6 different types of embroidery stitches and participants will have a chance to try out each stitch making a small sampler. Participants can then either create a small scene on a piece of cloth to use as a clothing appliqué or work from a template provided. This workshop will run over two 2-hour classes and participants have the option to continue working on their own between classes if desired.

Materials and Equipment:

20 skeins of embroidery threads
embroidery hoop
embroidery needle
small sharp sewing scissors
flower embroidery design
sharp sewing needle
booklet of hand embroidery stitches
plain white fabric polyester/cotton
twill tape
instructions/ideas sheet

optional: sketch paper
optional: pencil, eraser, sharpener
needle threader
transfer paper
clothing or fabric to work on
thread for basting/scrap thread
plain coloured woven fabric
denim fabric
optional: thicker thread/yarn for overcasting
optional: sliding clamp (not provided)

Class Plan: Hand Embroidery Setup

1. Embroidery stitches can be worked with or without a hoop. Both methods have their advantages and limitations.
2. Working with an embroidery hoop or frame:
 - a. Allows you to stretch the fabric tightly and reduce puckering in your fabric.
 - b. Embroidery hoops come in different sizes and thicknesses. A narrower thickness of wood is easier to slip under a sewing machine presser foot if you are machine embroidering.



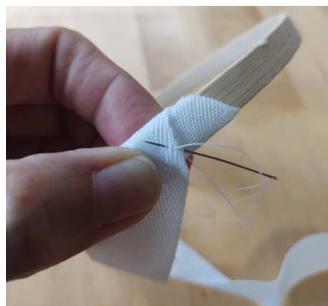
- c. Smaller hoops are useful if you are embroidering motifs on a section of clothing like a pant leg that doesn't leave space for a larger hoop.
- d. Hoops can be clamped to your bench leaving you both hands free to work on your embroidery. With practice, one hand can work from the top pushing the needle down and the other hand from the bottom receiving the needle and sending it back up in the next stitch.



- e. Hoops can also be attached to a floor stand with height adjustments and options to rotate your work to look at the back while still attached to the stand.
3. Working without an embroidery hoop:
 - a. You can minimize puckering in your fabric even if you don't use a hoop, by pulling your thread gently but not tightly so it sits flat on your work.
 - b. Your fabric remains flexible so you can bend it to do in and out stitches all in one motion.
 4. Optional: Wrap the inner wood circle of your embroidery hoop with twill tape or brushed cotton fabric to reduce fabric slipping. This is particularly helpful when working fabrics that will be densely stitched. 46" for a 5" diameter hoop.
 - a. Twill tape is not sticky. It is a flat herringbone woven fabric ribbon that can be easily identified by surface diagonal woven ridges. We used about 46" to wrap a 5" diameter hoop.



- b. Overlap when you are wrapping by about 50% so there are no more than 2 thicknesses of twill tape anywhere on your hoop.
- c. Take a few stitches in place to hold your first wrap of twill tape.



- d. Then wrap around the rest of the hoop, cutting and securing the end with a few more stitches.



- 5. Stretch your fabric in your embroidery hoop if you are using one.
 - a. Check your hoop for this side up markings. Place the inner hoop on your table. Place your fabric over top of it, and the outer hoop over top of that.



- b. Loosen the screw on the outer hoop so it fits snugly when you push it down. We don't want so much tension in the fabric that it is distorting, and enough that it isn't floppy.



- c. Watch for fabric distortion when you are stretching it. Check that the warp (lengthwise) threads are straight and the weft (widthwise) threads are perpendicular to the warp threads.
 - d. Gently pull the fabric to even out the threads and add tension if needed. You want the tension to remain the same throughout your embroidering to avoid distortion.
 - e. Take your fabric out of the hoop if you aren't going to stitch for several days to reduce fabric stress.

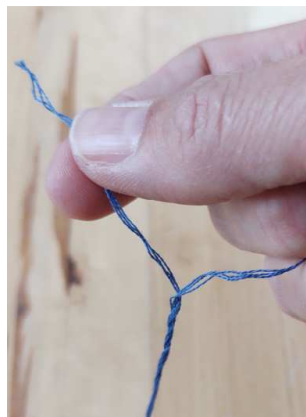
6. Embroidery needles have a larger eye than regular sewing needles to accommodate the floss.



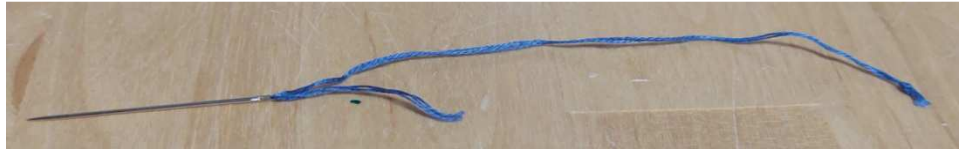
7. Embroidery floss is loosely twisted, slightly shiny 6-strand thread. Cotton floss is the standard thread for cross-stitch and the most common embroidery thread, but it is also available in silk, linen and rayon. It is available in a dizzying range of colours, and brands like DMC number each colour so you can find more to complete your project.



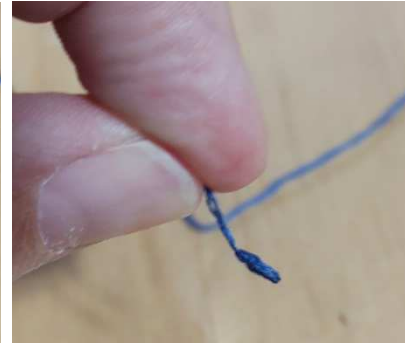
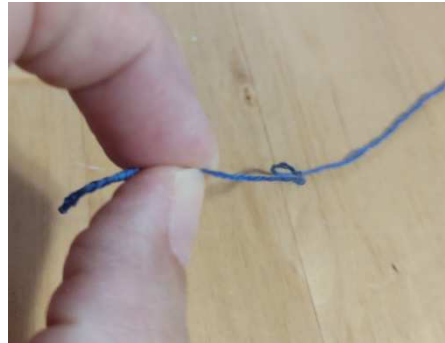
8. Embroidery floss can be separated into individual threads or used anywhere from 2-6 threads at once. It is common to use 1-2 threads at a time.
- To separate one or more threads from your embroidery floss, first cut a length to work with.
 - Separate the set of threads to be divided holding them in one hand and gently sliding the other hand down the separation. Allow the threads to re-twist themselves into the new groups as you go to avoid knots.



9. We recommend working with single layer of the selected threads at a time, so you can slide your needle along your thread as you work. This prevents wearing out one section of your embroidery thread in the needle where it is pulled through your work. It also makes it easier to fix any knots/tangles.



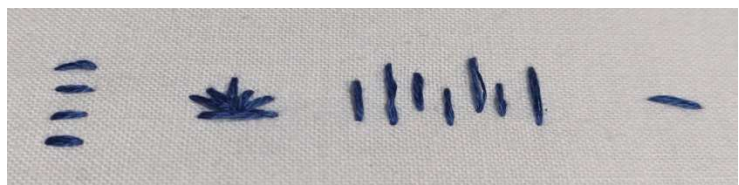
10. To start your stitching secure the end of your embroidery threads.
- This can be done by taking a few tiny stitches in place, and later tucking the tail of embroidery thread behind other stitches.
 - You can also tie a knot in the end of your threads and take your first stitch from back to front to hide the knot. To make a knot, loop the end of the threads around your index finger and roll them together between your finger and thumb. Then pull the resulting tangle down toward the end of your thread to create a knot.



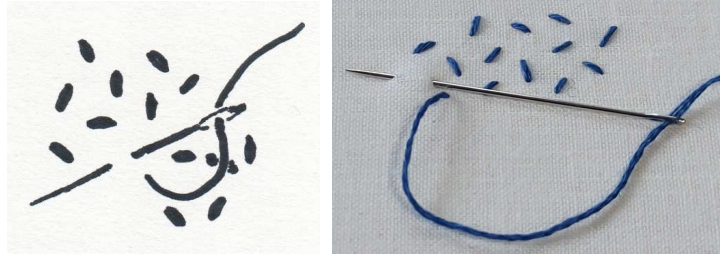
11. We will learn a set of the most common embroidery stitches and then use them to create a project picture in the following exercise. Start all stitches by bringing your needle through the fabric to the right side where you want to begin.



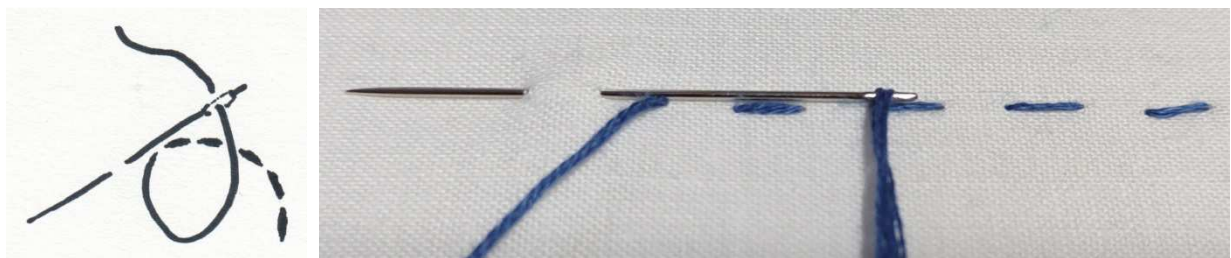
- a. **Straight Stitch** can be used to create flowers, leaves, lines and shapes and is the basic stitch of sewing. It is a single straight line stitch in and out of the fabric and is used as a building block for many other basic embroidery stitches like seed stitch, running stitch and back stitch.



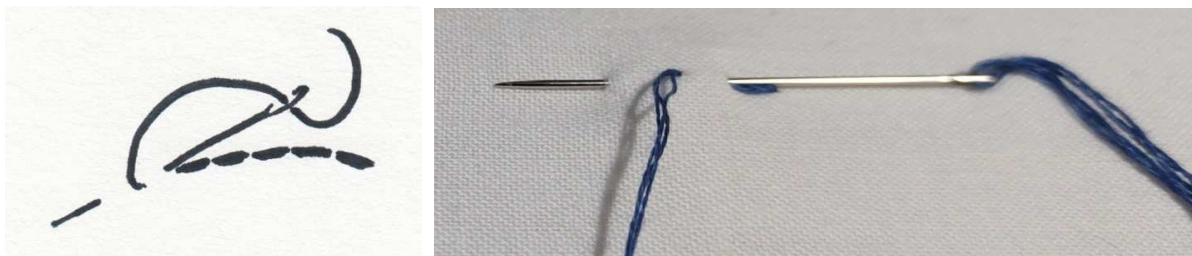
- b. **Seed Stitch** is tiny separate straight stitches scattered around an area to create the haze type effect or fill in lightly. Take small detached straight stitches repositioning the needle from the back each time and stitching on a slightly different angle.



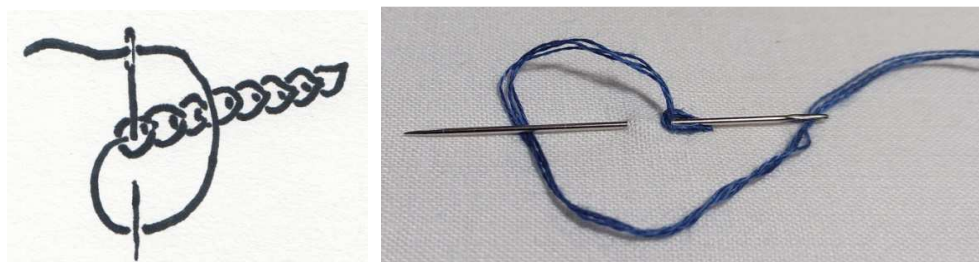
- c. **Running Stitch** is great for creating borders and lines. It is a simple in and out stitch in a line.



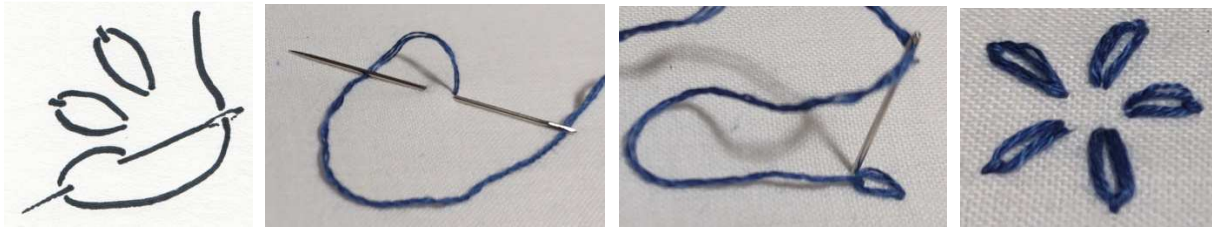
- d. **Back Stitch** is great for lettering and outlining shapes. Take a single stitch like in running stitch. The next stitch starts at the end of the previous stitch and comes out the same distance past the starting point. Repeat starting at the end of the previous stitch each time.



- e. **Chain Stitch** is good for creating borders and lettering. It is a row of interlocked loops and is good for creating borders and lettering. Create a loop with your thread and take a stitch into the space in the loop, catching the loop under your stitch and pull the thread snug. Start the next stitch in the previous loop each time, stitching forward and catching your thread loop. For the last stitch, stitch down just on the other side of the last loop to hold them all in place.



- f. **Lazy Daisy Stitches** are just detached chain stitches and are great for making flower petals. Create a loop with your thread and take a stitch into the space in the loop, catching the loop under your stitch. Pass the needle through the fabric to the back just on the other side of the loop to hold it in place.



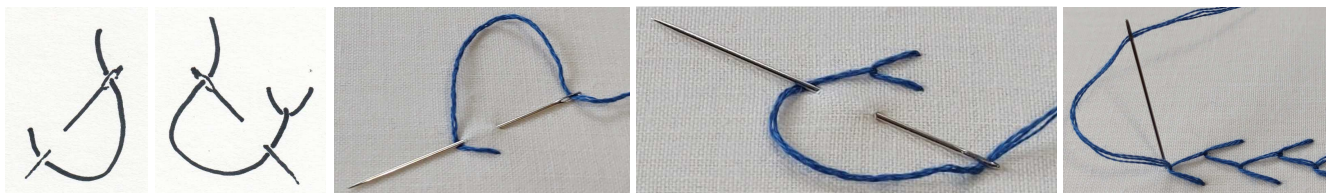
- g. **French Knots** are great for making small flowers or filling in the centres of larger flowers. They add texture and dimension. Twist your thread around your needle twice, poke your needle back into the fabric just beside where it came out, and slide the twisted thread down right up against the fabric. Then pass the needle to the back of the fabric.



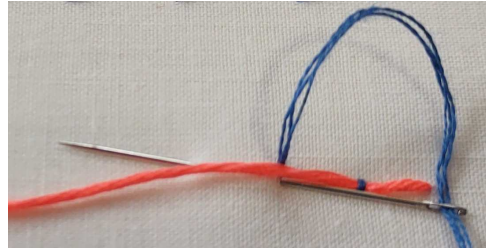
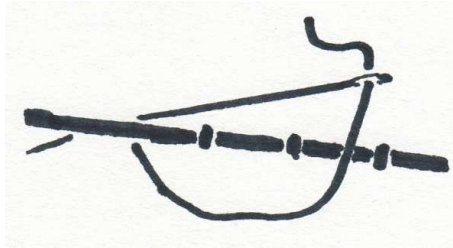
- h. **Satin Stitch** is used for filling in shapes and areas. It is basically straight stitches done side by side of lengths to match the edges of the shape being filled.



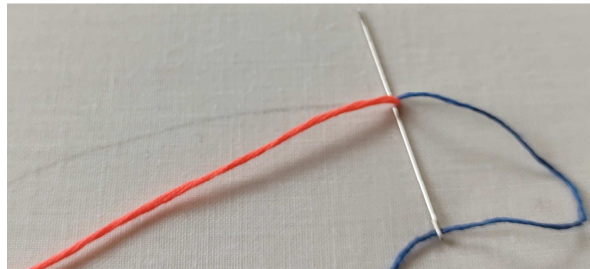
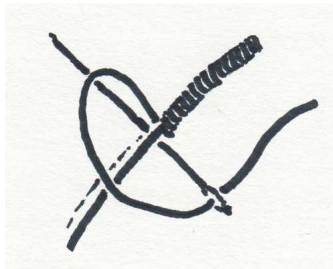
- i. **Feather Stitch** looks like a series of interconnected 'V's. It is a decorative stitch used for borders, filling spaces, making curving designs or plant stems. Where the thread comes out of the fabric is one of the top corners of a triangle pointing downwards, stitch into the other top point and out the bottom point. Move over to the left and repeat, then move to the right and repeat moving along your stitching line.



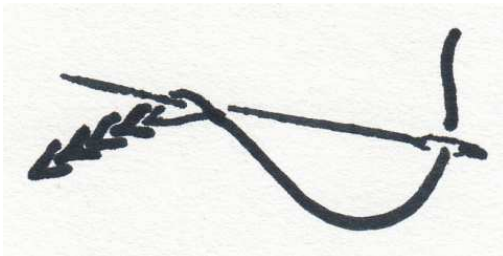
- j. **Couching** is where yarn or other materials are laid on the surface of the fabric and held in place with small perpendicular stitches of another thread. Take a tiny stitch across your couching yarn with your stitching thread. Come up for the next stitch about ¼" further along your couching yarn. Repeat to hold the couching yarn in place.



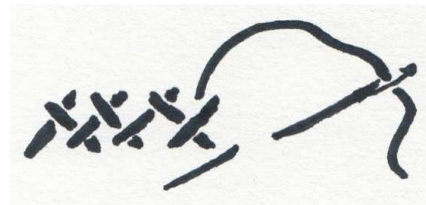
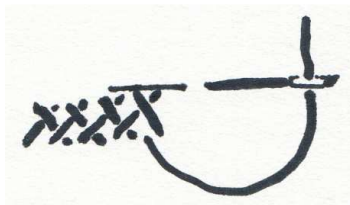
- k. **Overcasting** is done when a raised line is needed. It is basically couching stitching but without the spacing along the yarn being held down. The stitching thread takes stitches perpendicular to the couching yarn all the way along to hide it.

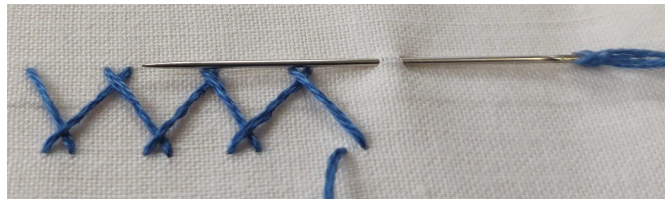
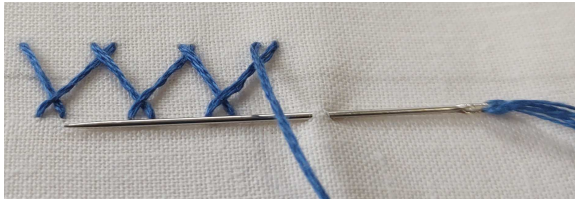


- l. **Split Stitch** gives a very fine line and is used fill spaces and embroider faces. It looks like a narrow chain stitch. Start with a single stitch forward. Come up from the back part way through the previous stitch splitting the threads, then insert the needle further along your stitch line for the next stitch.

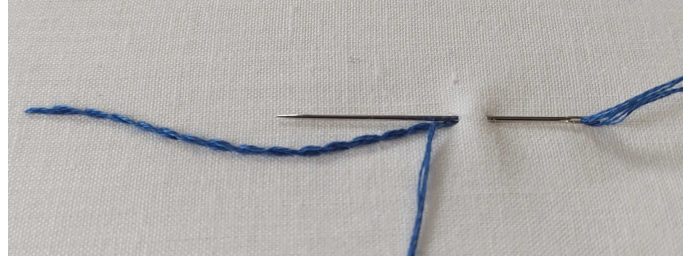


- m. **Herringbone Stitch** looks like the bones extending from the spine of a herring fish and is used to give a trellis type effect. Insert the needle (right to left) facing back towards previous stitches. Pick up a small piece of the material this way alternating above and below a line.





- n. **Stem Stitch** creates a thin line and is used for outlining shapes and plant stems. Insert the needle (right to left) facing back towards previous stitches. Advance the needle a whole stitch length and come up half a stitch back, always keeping the thread below the needle.



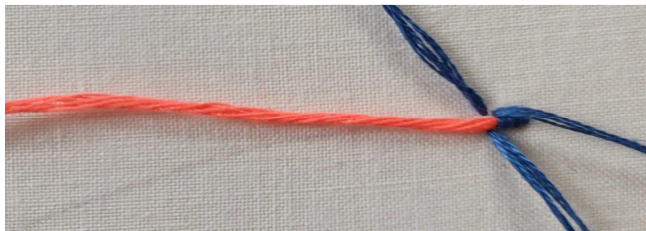
12. Happy creating, and please share pictures of your creations if you feel comfortable.

Useful Information/Adaptations/Variations:

- There are tons of embroidery stitches. Try doing an online search to see hundreds of options. Buying an encyclopedia of stitches is worth it if you are really into embroidery.
- There are different size embroidery hoops available and having several different sizes is useful. Look for ones that can be tightened using a screw driver if available.

Trouble Shooting:

- If your thread tangles a lot, try hanging it from one end and letting the extra twists spin out of it.
- Keep your threads separate when pulling them through your fabric (left) to avoid them pulling other parts of the thread through at the same time (right) causing tangles.



- If your thread breaks, try moving your needle along the thread more often so one area doesn't get all the wear from passing through the fabric while bent over the needle.