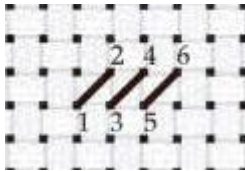
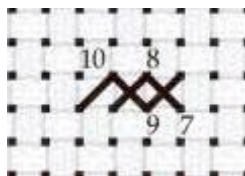


Learning to Cross Stitch

The cross stitch is one of the easiest and most popular embroidery stitches. Each individual cross-stitch is made up of two diagonal stitches; a bottom stitch and a top stitch that together form an X.

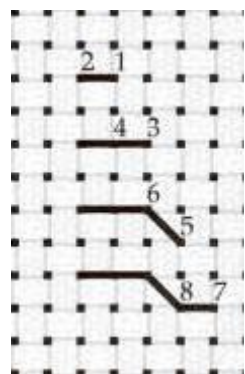
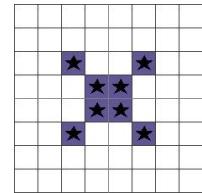


Working horizontally, from left to right, stitch a row of bottom stitches. Form each stitch by bringing the needle up at 1, then down at 2, up at 3, then down at 4, etc.



At the end of the row, complete the cross stitch by crossing the bottom stitches with a row of top stitches in the opposite direction, up at 7, down at 8 (same hole as 4), up at 9, down at 10 (same hole as 2), etc. A single stitch would simply involve bringing the needle up at 1, down at 2, up again at 3 and then across to complete the X.

Basic whole cross stitches are indicated on the chart with a symbol placed centrally in the square to be stitched.



Back Stitch

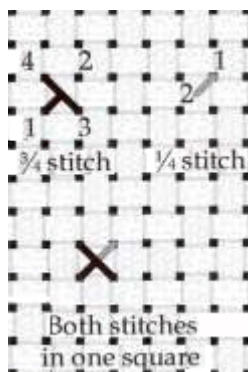
To make a row of back stitches: bring the needle up at 1, down at 2, up at 3, and down at 4, and so on, as shown on the diagram on the left. Notice that 1 and 4 use the same hole.

Back stitch can be used to great effect to bring out areas of stitching, adding depth and sharpness to a design. It is basically a row of stitches, marked on the chart by a row of lines. The back stitch is not normally worked until the cross stitch has been completed and is usually worked with just a single strand of thread.

Fractional Stitches

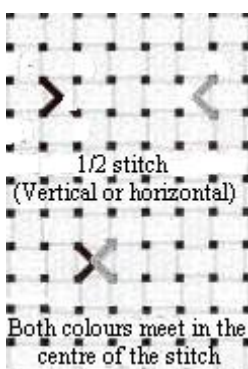
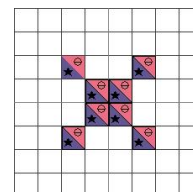
It is sometimes necessary to have more than one colour within a single block. For example, a cross stitch design with a dark grey sloping roof and a blue sky above it will require the stitcher to make a part stitch of blue along with a grey part stitch in the same block. The overlaying diagonal will be made in the dominant colour (which in this case would be the grey of the roof).





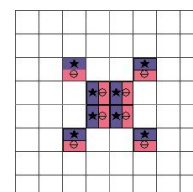
To do this, work a 3/4 stitch in the more prominent shade, and complete the block with a 1/4 stitch of the other shade, as shown in the diagram on the right. Make your own hole with the needle in the centre of the block.

The combination of 1/4 stitch and 3/4 stitch looks better than attempting to make two 3/4 stitches, as four strands across the middle of a block of fabric will be ungainly and too prominent. The 1/4 and 3/4 stitches are indicated on the chart as mini symbols in the corners of the stitch square.



Occasionally, we use horizontal or vertical half stitches, which are similar to the 1/4 and 3/4 stitches described but involve working the part stitches as 2 V's rather than an X. This enables only half of the total width of the stitch to be used, essential in very detailed designs where a full stitch of one colour would be too thick and out of proper proportion.

On the chart a half stitch is indicated by the symbol being placed not in the corner as with the 1/4 and 3/4 stitches, but halfway down or along the side of the stitch square.



(The diagram shown above is our interpretation of the best way to complete this stitch, although some may prefer to stitch a whole cross over half the square area).

Simple half stitches (just a single diagonal stitch) are sometime used for light filling such as skies and water etc.

Fabrics for Cross Stitch

There are many different fabrics that can be used for cross stitch, however we design mainly with 2 types; Aida, which already consists of blocks with holes in each corner, ideal to stitch diagonally across and Evenweave, a more versatile fabric made up of "threads" instead of blocks, which normally are worked two at a time "over two threads".

So for instance, if you wanted to work a 14 count (14 holes per inch) project on finer fabric, you could work it on 28 count (28 holes per inch) fabric, over two threads. The cross stitches would be exactly the same size, and therefore the complete design would be the same size. This also has the advantage that part stitches are easier to do, as a hole already exists in the middle of each square.

The same applies in reverse. For example, you have a design to be worked on 32 count Evenweave fabric, but have difficulty seeing the holes on this finer fabric. Many stitchers use 16 count fabric instead, going into every hole instead of across two holes, and in this way the design will be the same size.

As you learn cross stitch and your confidence grows, you will feel more comfortable working with different materials.



Cross Stitch Needles and Threads

Good quality colour-fast stranded cottons such as Anchor or DMC are in our experience the best threads for most of our designs although there are many speciality threads now on the market that are fantastic to experiment with.

Most stitchers cut their threads into approximately 18" (1/2 metre) lengths, unless they are already supplied in pre-cut lengths. This is a convenient amount of thread to stitch with at a time and avoids tangling and other such problems.

Different cross stitch effects can be obtained by using different numbers of strands. However, on many projects you will find 3 or 4 strands used on 11 count fabric, 2 or 3 strands on 14 count, and 2 strands on 16 and 18 count fabrics to give a good coverage.

Tapestry needles are ideal for cross stitch. This is because they have a rounded point which goes easily through the holes without splitting the fabric. The general guide for use is size 24 for 14 or 16 count fabric, size 26 for 18 count fabric, and size 28 for finer fabrics.

When you have finished, be sure to secure and trim any long loose ends carefully, we prefer to run the ends under the back of the neighbouring few stitches so that they are anchored well before trimming.

Hoops and Frames

Most people use an embroidery hoop or small tapestry frame to hold their cross stitch fabric. This keeps the fabric taut and makes the project easier to handle while being worked. Also the hoop or frame can be held in a stand, which leaves both your hands free. This will allow you to work with one hand under the fabric and one over, which is generally more efficient, and saves the strain of having to hold the work while stitching it.

We have found that there are several advantages of a frame for cross stitch, rather than an embroidery hoop. The top of the needle work is attached to the top bar, and the bottom to the bottom bar. This makes it easy with larger projects, to "roll up" the next section for stitching, rather than having to remove the fabric from the hoop to reposition it. It also avoids soiled, circular marks on the finished cross stitch project.

