



The embRUDery Store

This is NOT your Grandma's embroidery!

PDF Pattern

And

Stitch Guide



- What you will need -

Cross Stitch Fabric

The most common types of fabric for cross stitch are *Aida* and *Evenweave*. Both of these fabrics contain grids of holes that are used to place stitches. They also have different stitch counts. Most of my patterns and sizes are based on 14 count Aida, (14 stitches to one inch), so you are able to use this as a guide if you wish to use a different stitch count in order to make the pattern smaller or larger! My patterns will always state the stitch count they're based on at the top.

If you want to try a cross stitch on any other type of fabric, such as denim or patterned cotton, you can buy *waste canvas* which you can use to complete the design and wash away or pull away once the design is complete. You can cross stitch on anything, the only limit is your imagination!

Cross Stitch Needles and Scissors

The best type of needle to use for cross stitch is a blunt tapestry needle as it won't 'catch' the fabric or the back of your stitches and is easier to push through the holes. If you are using fabric other than Aida or Evenweave and using waste canvas to complete your design, you might want to go for a sharper needle in order to be able to push it through the fabric. There are no rules, use whatever you feel comfortable with. Needles in all shapes and sizes are available in lots of places both online and physical shops, and usually very affordable, which is what makes cross stitch so accessible to all! Tapestry needles start at size 13 and go up to size 26, with a size 24 being perfect for 14 count Aida, but you can experiment and see what works best for you and the fabric you're using!

Scissors are a must! The smaller and sharper the better is my preference, but use what you're comfortable with. A good pair of *pinking shears* is also useful!

Threads

My favourite part! (Other than fabric!). Cross stitch patterns are usually completed with stranded embroidery thread, (unless it states otherwise). Embroidery thread separates into six individual strands. As a general rule, you will use two strands of thread in your needle, based on a 14 count pattern, however some people like their stitches to be more or less 'puffy', and again, it depends what count your fabric is. It's always worth doing a row of stitches along an edge of your chosen fabric to check out they lie and make sure you're happy with how they fill in a space.

My patterns are based on DMC colours, but you can adapt them to use whatever scheme you like! There are lots of converters online to find the closest match to colours of different thread manufacturers. If you use a 7 count plastic canvas you can even use wool!

Embroidery Hoop or Frame

This is entirely optional. Some people will be avid fans of hoops and frames, but some people prefer to just roll up the excess fabric and stitch. I'm a hoop fan most of the time, but sometimes Aida can be a little stiff and it's nice to use in your hands. Other fabric, cottons/denim etc., might require a hoop if you're using waste canvas, but again, there are no set rules so do what you're comfortable with!



- Reading a Cross Stitch Pattern -

Read Through Your Pattern First!

This might take you back to your schooldays where you were always told to “read through the exam paper first”, but I really can’t stress how important it is to get to know your pattern, however simple it may seem, before you start stitching! There’s nothing worse than realising you’ve based the size on a different stitch count, or you’re missing a vital colour!

All embRUDery cross stitch patterns come with a key comprised of symbols which help you to locate which colours go where. The pattern shows a grid with each square representing one stitch. I provide three copies of the pattern – one is a basic pattern which shows the colours only, one is colours with corresponding symbols, and the third is an enlarged version of that pattern, with both colours and symbols. I always recommend using the pattern with colours AND symbols, as it can be difficult to tell different shades apart using the colour blocks alone. If you need to, you can enlarge it further before you print it out.

Alternatively, all of my patterns *should* be compatible with the *PatternKeeper* app, so instead of printing you may want to use this to keep track of your progress. If you have any issues with this, (or anything at all!), feel free to message me. Please note that I am not affiliated with PatternKeeper in any way, (I just enjoy using the app myself!), so any technical issues with regard to the app itself should be addressed to the developers 😊

Most of my patterns use full cross stitches and standard backstitch, (represented by a line on the pattern). There will be occasions when they may include $\frac{1}{2}$ or $\frac{3}{4}$ cross stitches. I’ve included details of how to do these stitches in this guide. The pattern will always tell you which stitches are used so make sure you check this first and you’re comfortable with the stitching used.

Preparing Your Fabric

If you’re working with Aida, or any type of fabric that frays around the edges it can be a good idea to roughly stitch the edges, (a *zig-zag stitch* is perfect for this), to prevent further fraying whilst you stitch! If you’re using a hoop or frame, you might want to just use a pair of *pinking shears*, (those funky zig-zag scissors your Nan used to moan about you cutting cardboard with), to cut around the edge. If you’re working on waste canvas you may want to loosely tack the edges down on to the fabric for extra stability and to prevent it coming loose whilst you’re working. There’s nothing worse than an almost finished pattern falling out of your favourite denim jacket!

Preparing Your Thread

We’re almost ready to stitch, I promise! You might want to pre-cut your thread to lengths that are suitable for stitching. A very general rule is to hold the thread and measure the length from your fingers to your elbow, but you might want it shorter or longer. Bear in mind, the longer the thread, the more likely it will be to tangle, so try to keep it manageable! You will also need to separate the strands, which I do as I need them to prevent them becoming tangled. As I said before you will usually use 2 strands of thread, based on stitching on 14 count Aida, but it’s worth doing a couple of practice lines and blocks to see how the colour fills the grid. Too many strands and it will be hard to push through, too few and you will see the fabric behind.



- How to Start a Cross Stitch -

Find the Centre of Your Fabric

All embRUDery patterns tell you the approximate size of the finished pattern. On this basis, (and not forgetting any extra calculations if you've used a different fabric count!), cut your fabric leaving a border of 3-4 inches, (at least!). This will also depend on whether you are using a hoop or frame. If you are, cut accordingly. Pinking shears will be your friend here! I like to cut mine square, even if I'm using a hoop, and then round it off once it's cut.

Fold your fabric in half and half again, make a crease an voila! You've found the centre. If you're not using fabric which creases easily, pop a tiny stitch in the centre, or use a pen/pencil to draw a tiny dot, (you'll most likely stitch over it). You can find the centre on your embRUDery pattern by following the black arrow at the top of the grid, and the black arrow to the left of the grid. If you've printed your pattern you can use these to draw two pencil lines to mark the centre, or, if you're using a digital version of the pattern, you can annotate it with lines.

Here begins a contentious issue; a lot of cross stitchers will tell you to start in the middle of the pattern and work your way out from there. This ensures that you won't accidentally go off the edge of your fabric. However, I find it easier to work my way down from the top. Providing you have measured your fabric correctly, you should be fine to do this. Sometimes, for a complicated pattern, you will need to start from the middle and work outwards, but it really is entirely up to you. There are no 'set rules' for cross stitching, just guides, so do what you feel most comfortable with!

Start Stitching!

Finally! To begin, thread your two strands, (or however many you decided to use), through your tapestry needle. Identify the four holes that will be used for your first stitch, and insert the needle through the back of the bottom left hole. Pull it through, leaving about an inch long tail from the back. There's no need for knots! We're going to catch this thread at the back in the subsequent stitches to secure it in place.

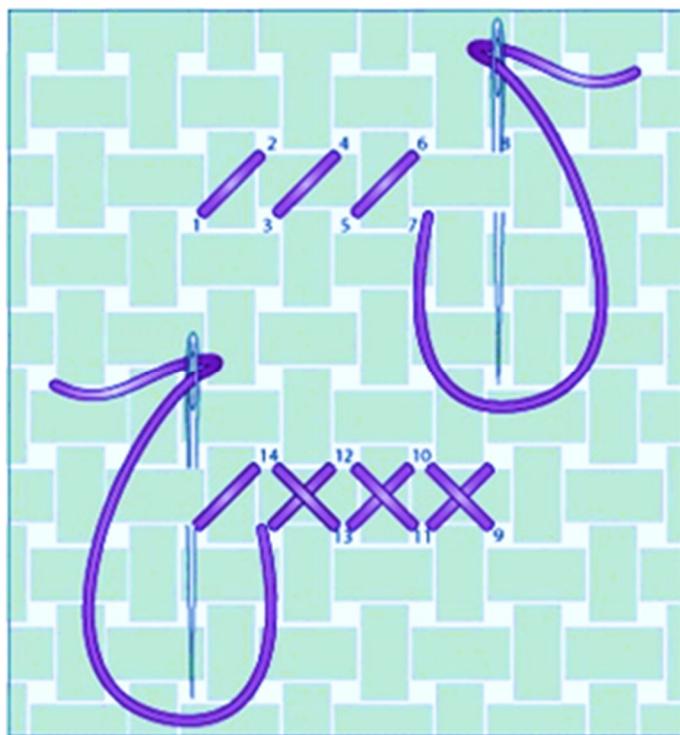


The Stitches

Basic Cross Stitch

When stitching make sure your stitches lie flat, if your thread becomes twisted while stitching, drop the needle at the back and allow the needle to hang freely – it will magically untwist itself! It's good practice to make sure all your stitches are crossed in the same direction. You can do the crosses individually, or, which I prefer, you can do all the diagonal stitches one way, then work your way back long the row to finish off the crosses. This is also a helpful way to ensure they all cross the same way, keeping your work neater and more uniform.

Sometimes you'll stitch only a few stitches in an area, then jump to another area with that same colour thread. Jumping can be easier than stopping and starting a new thread. Only carry thread to another area if the jump is short and the thread is a light colour, otherwise you may see the carried thread through the fabric.



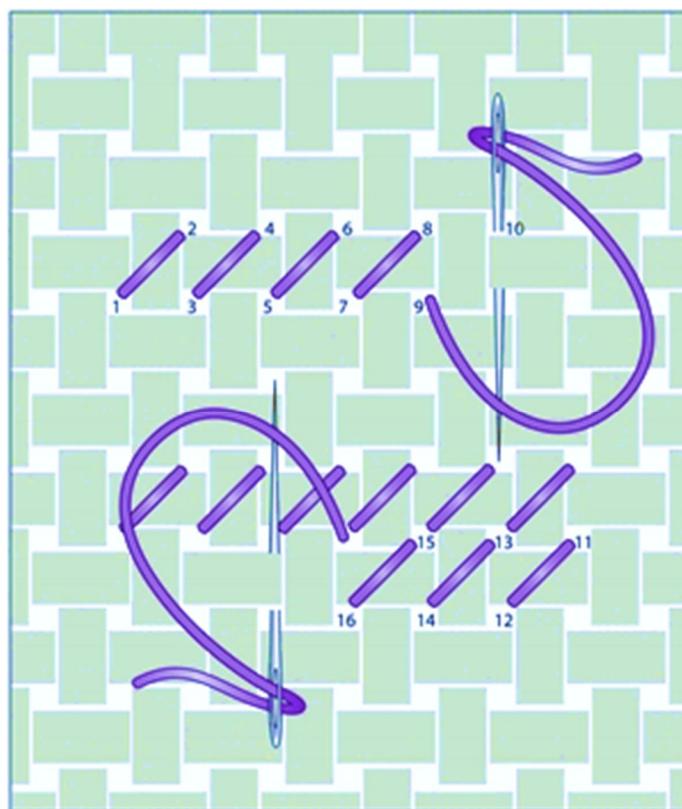


The Stitches

Half Stitch

The half stitch is a simple diagonal stitch, usually worked in horizontal rows. When a design calls for a half stitch it is listed under a separate heading in the colour key and indicated on the chart by a diagonal coloured line. Half stitches are sometimes used in patterns to create a sense of depth with shading in a cross stitch picture.

To stitch a half stitch, bring the needle up from the back of the fabric at 1, and down into 2. Up at 3 down at 4. Complete the row. The return row is stitched in reverse and stitched from the right to the left. Here the needle comes up at 11 and down at 12, then up at 13 and down at 14. It's basically worked as though you are completing a row of full stitches, but without going back and stitching the 'cross' over the top!





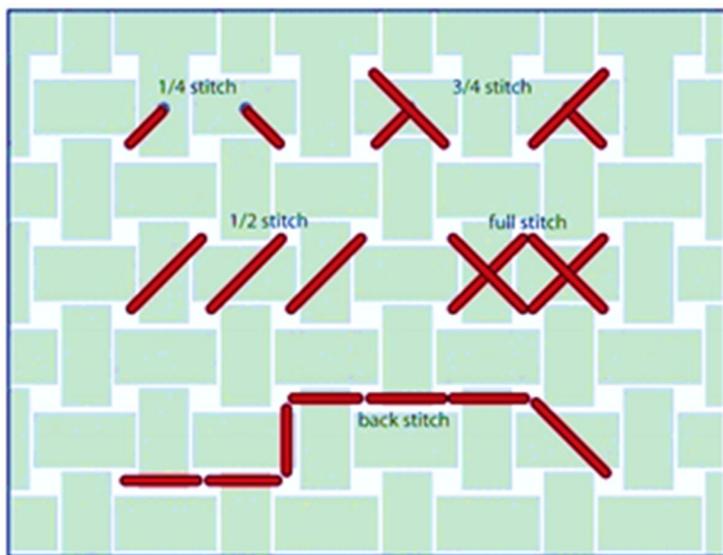
The Stitches

Quarter Stitch

To stitch a quarter stitch, bring the needle up from the lower left hole of the square of the fabric and down into the centre of the square. Quarter stitches may be stitched from any corner of the Aida square. Try not to pierce the fibres in the centre of the square. Wiggle the needle to shift the fibres and slip the needle between them.

Three Quarter Stitch

A three quarter stitch is most often done by stitching the short arm first, like a quarter stitch. It is completed with a half stitch to make the other two arms. To stitch a three-quarter stitch, first bring the needle up at the lower left hole of the square of the fabric and down into the upper right hole of the same square in the fabric. Next, bring the needle up at from the lower right hole of the square of the fabric and down into the middle of the half stitch you created. Three-quarter stitches can be stitched in any direction.



Backstitch

The backstitch is worked from the right to the left. To start bring your needle up at 1 and back down at 2. Move left and bring needle up at 3 and back down at 1. Continue the stitching sequence. A line on your design chart indicates a back stitch is needed. When there is a symbol over a square, and the symbol is the same on both sides of the backstitch symbol, make a cross stitch in that square, then add the backstitch last.

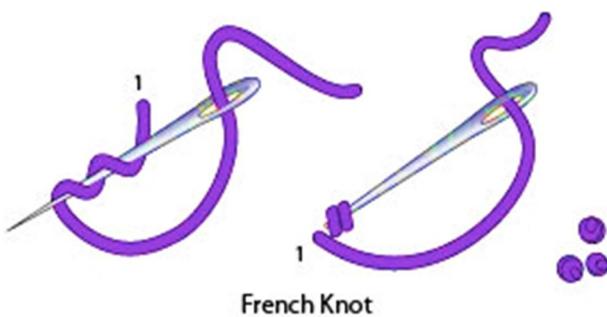




The Stitches

French Knot

The French Knot is used in many counted cross stitch designs to add extra detail or dimension. To make a French Knot bring the needle up at 1. Hold your thread tight with the other hand and wrap the thread twice, (or more or less dependent on what size knot you want to achieve!), around the end of the needle. Gently pull the thread so that the wrapped threads tighten and while holding it taut, insert the needle next to 1. Pull thread through onto the back until the knot is formed and lies securely on the surface. A bold dot on your design chart indicates a French Knot is needed.



Ending the Thread

To end a thread, run your threaded needle under the last few stitches on the back of the fabric, and clip off the excess thread. After rethreading the needle to continue, run the needle under several stitches on the back to secure the thread and resume your pattern!

Have fun completing your pattern!

That should cover most, if not all of the basics you need to know to complete your pattern! There are loads of resources online which detail other stitches you may want to try, tutorial videos and lots of other cool and useful cross stitch things. Cross stitch is a great first step toward embroidery, and like I said, the only limit is your imagination!

If you need help with anything at all, feel free to email me directly and I'll do my best to help!

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www.embRUDERy.co.uk