

How to Cross Stitch

Sorting your threads: Cut slits in a stiff piece of paper to loop your threads through and make it easier to find the color you need while stitching. Identify each color listed in the chart's color key. Remember that some colors may only be listed in the backstitching instructions. Write the name of each color on the card next to the slit it's threaded through.

How to read your chart: The color key below the chart indicates which color is represented by each symbol. Each square on the chart represents one cross stitch to be stitched on the corresponding square of the fabric. The heavy black lines on the pattern indicate straight stitches (backstitches).

Getting started: Fold your fabric in half in both directions to find the center and place a pin as a marker. Locate the center of the chart by following the centering arrows. Thread your needle with a color located at the center of the chart. Your embroidery cotton is 6 strands twisted together. Pulling out one strand at a time, separate two strands & thread them into your needle. **Notice that some symbols may indicate you need 1 strand each of two different colors in the needle to stitch.** Avoid knots when starting or ending a color. To begin, hold 1/2" of thread on the back with your finger and catch it under your first few stitches. To end, run the thread under several stitches on the back of the work.

Cross Stitch: Use 2 strands of thread. You can stitch in rows, working half of the stitches in one direction and crossing them on the return journey (fig.1) or you can complete each stitch as you progress (fig.2). Just be sure the top stitches on your crosses all lay diagonally in the same direction.

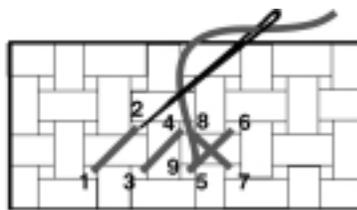


Fig. 1

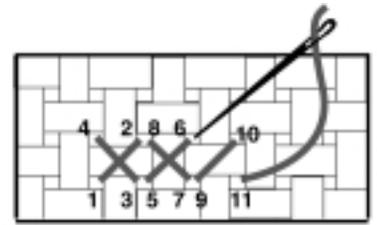
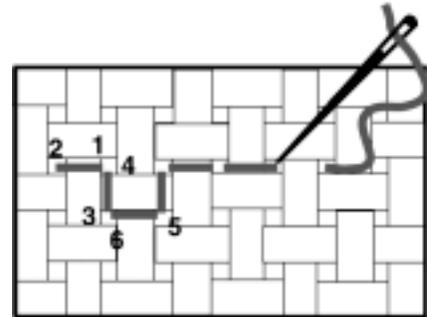
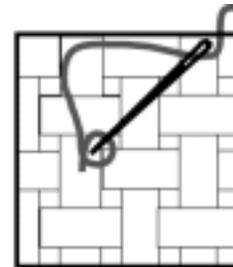


Fig. 2

Backstitching: Unless otherwise indicated on the chart, most of the backstitching will be done with only one ply (strand) of thread. Where the backstitch lines outline the cross stitching, each backstitch is one square long and is laid down between the stitched squares to create an outline. On some designs there are elements that are worked with longer backstitches. **Be sure to do the backstitching last, only after the cross stitch in an area is complete.**



French Knots: A few of the designs have accents created by French knots. These are stitched by bringing your needle up at the point indicated by the black dot on the chart, wrapping the thread once tightly around the needle and pushing the needle down through the fabric at a spot very close to where you came up (but not the same hole).



Stitching hints: An embroidery hoop may be used although a small piece is frequently easier to stitch without one. Don't carry thread for long distances on the back to get from one area to another with the same color. End your thread and begin again at another location. Clip all threads close to the fabric once they have been secured. Hanging threads can show through to the front when the piece is finished.

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