



COUNTED CROSS STITCH

SUPPLIES

You will need:

Embroidery fabric {linen/evenweave/aida};
Stranded cotton embroidery thread;
Tapestry needle(s);
Small, sharp scissors;
Pattern sheet;
A pen or pencil;
A comfy place to sit;
Good lighting; and
Patience!
{Optional embroidery hoop or frame}

HOOPS & FRAMES

Using a hoop or a frame when you are stitching is entirely optional, though I find it makes cross stitch a lot easier and helps to keep the stitches looking neat.

I prefer to use hoops and frames that accommodate the entire design in one go rather than moving a smaller hoop from place to place, but again this is entirely down to personal preference.

Just remember that hoops are measured by their *maximum* diameter, so if you are looking for a hoop to house a pattern that measures 7 x 7 inches, the chances are it will not fit into a 7 inch hoop!

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WORK FOR IDLE
HANDS**

FABRIC

Counted cross stitch is most commonly worked on 'evenweave' linen or aida cloth. These fabrics are woven with the same number of threads per inch in the warp and weft, meaning that the holes between the woven threads form a grid of squares (like graph paper) that correspond to the pattern you are following.

Aida fabric is woven in blocks which create very obvious squares to work from, making it perfect for beginners. Squares are formed on evenweave or linen by stitching over two threads at a time. Stitching on linen or evenweave takes a little more thought, but the finish is far nicer.

Evenweave fabrics come in different thread 'counts'. The higher the count, the finer the fabric and the smaller your stitches (and the finished design) will be.

Linen is counted by the number of individual threads per inch and aida is counted by the number of blocks per inch, so stitches worked on a 14-count aida will be the same size as those worked on a 28-count linen because the linen is worked over two threads at a time.

If you are new to counted cross stitch a good fabric to start with is 14-count aida or 28-count linen as the stitches are large enough to count easily while you get the hang of things. Patterns state the size of the design when stitched on this size fabric, so be sure to allow extra fabric for a lower thread count/looser weave.

Correspondingly, less fabric will be needed for a higher thread count/tighter weave.

NEEDLES

The best needles to use for cross stitch are blunt tapestry needles. The blunted end means that the needle passes only through the ready-made gaps between the threads rather than piercing threads or blocks in the fabric, and this keeps your stitches nice and neat.

I find size 24 or 26 needles work well for the most commonly used fabrics.

THREAD

The most commonly used thread for counted cross stitch is stranded cotton. Threads are loosely twisted together so that their six strands can be easily split for stitching with different thicknesses depending on the weight of your fabric and size of the stitches. It is mainly down to personal preference how thick you wish your thread to be.

I like my stitches to completely cover the backing fabric with no gaps and so I prefer to use quite thick threads for my embroidery – the table below is a guide to the number of strands I use for different fabrics, but feel free to increase or reduce the strands as you wish for your own stitching.

Number of Strands	Aida	Linen
4	14-count	28-count
3	16-count	32-count
2 to 3	18-count	36-count
2	20-count	40-count



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