



THE LITTLE BOOKLET
OF

HOW TO

CROSS STITCH

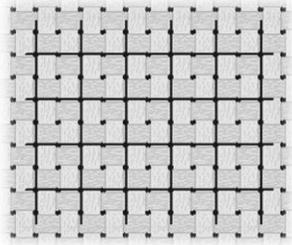
What Delilah Did

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www.whatdelilahdid.com

1. FABRIC

Embroidery fabric is woven so that its threads form a grid of squares to work over which correspond to the grid on the pattern sheet. Using evenweave or linen fabric, each stitch is worked over two threads as opposed to one, so you need to imagine that the grid of squares is formed over two threads at a time (see below).



If you are using aida cloth, the grid is already formed by blocks of thread so you simply stitch over one block at a time.

You will need to prepare your fabric by finding its centre so that you know where to align the pattern. To do this fold the fabric in half one way, open it out again, and then fold it in half the other way, gently pressing along the middle of each fold to find the point where they cross.

2. HOOP

Loosen the screw at the top of the embroidery hoop and take apart the two rings. Place the inner ring on a flat surface and lay the evenweave fabric, centred, on top of it. Place the outer hoop directly over the fabric and inner hoop, then push it down to sandwich the fabric between the two rings. Tighten the screw making sure the fabric is held taut in the hoop.

3. THREAD

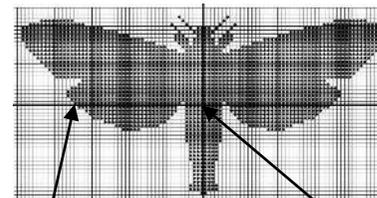
Cut a length of thread about as long as your arm. The thread is made up of six strands which need to be separated before use. To do this, find the end of one strand and hold it firmly between your thumb and forefinger. With your other hand, loosely hold the other strands together and push them down while you pull the single strand up and out of the thread. Straighten out the remaining strands and repeat until you are left with six separate strands.

Now take the number of strands you wish to stitch with and line them up together to form one thread. Thread one end of this length through the eye of the needle (it may help to wet the strands so they stick together) and you are ready to begin.

4. FIND YOUR STARTING POINT

Cross stitch is worked in rows of stitches and each dot in the pattern represents a complete cross stitch.

From the centre point of the pattern count the number of dots (stitches) back to the start of the middle row. Then double this number (assuming you are working with linen or evenweave – do not double for aida) and count that many holes to the left from the centre of the fabric to find the point to start stitching (see example below).



Start here

Centre point



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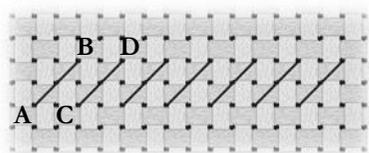
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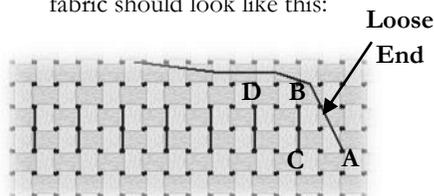


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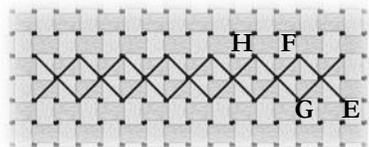
5. BEGIN STITCHING



Rather than knot the thread at the back of the fabric, leave 5-10cm of loose end to tidy up later as this is far neater. Come up through the fabric at your starting point (A) and make the first diagonal 'half-stitch' by inserting the needle back through the fabric at point B. Pull the needle back up through the fabric at point C and down again through point D. Continue in this way to the end of the row, counting the number of stitches from the pattern. The back of the fabric should look like this:



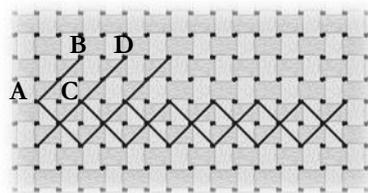
When you get to the end of the row (or a gap in continuous stitches), go back and 'cross' the stitches you have just made. This time working from right to left: come up through the fabric at E, insert the needle back through the surface at F, come up again through G, back down through H and so on (see example below).



Once all of the cross stitches in this row or section are complete, move onto the row above, or to another section, marking off each row of the pattern as you go so that you do not lose your place.

{STITCHING CONTINUED}

If the next row up would normally begin with a stitch at the same point as the previous cross stitch ended (point A), reverse the next half-stitch by working it from B to A (see below). Continue the row by stitching from C to D etc. as normal.

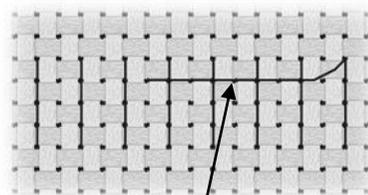


*** TIP ***

After every ten or so stitches, let the needle 'drop' and spin to allow the thread to unwind itself. The shorter the thread, the more often you will need to do this to make sure the thread does not twist around itself too much and begin to knot.

6. COMING TO THE END OF THE THREAD

When you only have 10cm or so of thread left, run the needle underneath four or five completed stitches on the back of the fabric to secure it without a knot, then neatly snip off the loose end (see below).



Loose end threaded underneath completed stitches

*** TIP ***

The back of your fabric should look almost as neat as the front. If you come to a gap or jump in a section of stitches it is generally better to finish the thread you are working on and start afresh in the next section than to carry the thread behind large expanses of fabric as it could show through (especially when using black thread on light fabric).

Alternatively, you can fasten the thread behind existing stitches over short distances, as if you were finishing a thread off. Be careful not to pull stitches out of shape when doing this though.

*** TIP ***

Remove your embroidery from the hoop when you are not working on it to keep the hoop from marking the fabric.

7. FLIP IT

Once you have completed all of the rows and sections in the top half of the pattern, turn the hoop and the pattern upside down. Now stitch the bottom half of the design from the centre to the bottom, marking off each row as you go just like before.

*** TIP ***

Make sure you work all of your stitches in the same direction to keep the finished embroidery looking uniform. Turning the hoop upside down (180°) will not change the direction of your stitches if you work them all in the same order (i.e. A-B-C-D as in the diagrams). However, turning the hoop to the side (90° or 270°) will make the stitches face a different way.

*** TIP ***

Keep the tension of your thread and stitches quite loose at all times – when pulling the thread through the fabric for each stitch, stop as soon as there is resistance. If you pull the stitches too tight this will show up gaps of fabric between stitches and make it difficult to run threads underneath completed stitches at the back of your work.

8. FINISHING OFF

When you have finished your pattern you will need to remove any creases before you can display it. To do this, you can either steam or iron it. If ironing, place the fabric face down on a folded towel to protect the stitches, and dampen the back with a light mist of water. Carefully iron the back of the fabric with a medium iron until the creases are gone and then it is ready to use.

If you want to display it in a hoop, first run a thin line of glue around the outside edge of the inner ring and stretch the calico backing fabric over this. Once it is dry enough to hold in place you can run another thin line of glue over the top of the backing fabric in the same place, stretch your embroidery over the inner ring, and cover this with the outer ring. **If the glue is too thick it will spread and show on the fabric at the front so take extra care with this part!** When the glue has dried you can then trim the excess fabric at the back of the hoop, et voila!

Alternatively you can stretch it over mount board for framing, or of course sew it up in to any number of lovely things.

Ta da!