

# Hand Embroidery Stitches for Everyone



A step-by-step pictorial guide to

**300 Embroidery & Cross Stitches**

with printable patterns, tips, techniques and more



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*From '12 Roses for Hand Embroidery' by Sarah*

It is common for beginners to make mistakes because we are not aware of what could go wrong or what could make the situation better. I have come up with a few points, and going through them can help you avoid those mistakes. Now, some of these mistakes are made by even seasoned embroiderers too.

## **1 Not washing your fabric**

If you are dealing with fabrics that have a tendency to shrink upon wash, always soak and wash before you start the project. Now, if the embroidery is for framing purposes, I will not insist on it.

## **2 Not using an embroidery hoop**

Chances are that you pull the stitches too much or too little, causing the fabric to distort or the thread to hang loose without an embroidery hoop.

## **3 Dirty hands**

Approach hand embroidery with clean hands and keep them in a clean place. Do not bring food or any kind of another coloring near it. You do not want your fabric to be smudged with dirt and colors that might not even come off.

## **4 Wrong Transferring tools**

Use washable or soluble pens over your fabric. If they are not available, just use a pencil. Avoid regular pens and permanent markers.

## **5 Panicking with mistakes**

Chances are that you will make a few mistakes when you start off. Do not panic. Even seasoned stitchers make mistakes. Try to undo the stitches calmly. Or, better still, try to improvise it — set the wheel of creativity on a roll!

# Before You Begin



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## About Surface Embroidery

Hand embroidery is the art of embellishing a surface with a needle and thread. It can be categorized broadly into two — Surface Embroidery and Counted Thread Embroidery.

Surface Embroidery is a big umbrella of embroidery styles and techniques that are done over regular fabric and surfaces. These consist of Crewel Work, Blackwork, Mountmellick Work, Red Work, and any similar kind of embroidery. It also includes the Freehand Embroidery, where different types of stitches are used to stitch over a surface as per the stitcher's imagination. Freehand Embroidery is trendy, and you can use the stitches in this eBook liberally for it. Use your imagination to apply it over different patterns, borders, or as a way to secure the embellishments.

*Freehand Embroidery over cotton fabric*



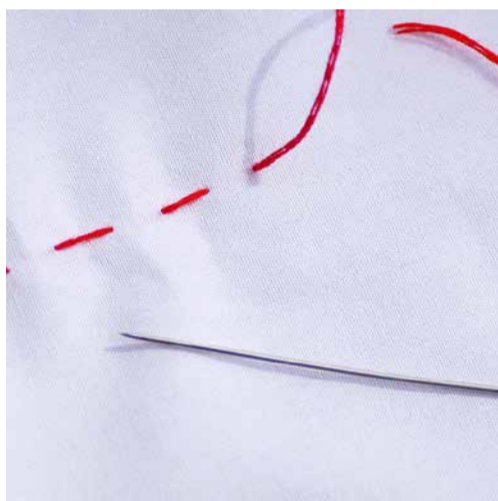
*Jacobean Embroidery on cotton fabric*

Surface Embroidery stitches have either knots, loops, straight stitches, or even a combination of them. The stitcher decides where to take in the needle and bring it out from on the fabric. The same pattern attempted by two artists can differ from each other, giving two kinds of results, making each person's stitching unique. Surface embroidery is done using a sharp-tipped embroidery needle and usually cotton or silk threads.

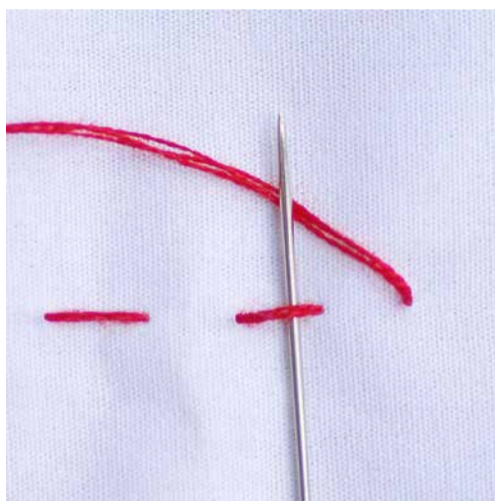
This book has around 280 stitches categorized under the Surface Embroidery umbrella. Many of these stitches, however, are suitable to be used in Counted Thread Embroidery too. You will see that I have indicated it at the top of each new stitch.

This way of finishing off the thread will make a tiny knot behind the fabric. It is an excellent method that can be used for any kind of stitch and embroidery. Of course, this method won't work for reversible embroideries, like the Reversible Pattern Darning, where the thread's end is tucked under the other stitches. I use this method for all my projects.

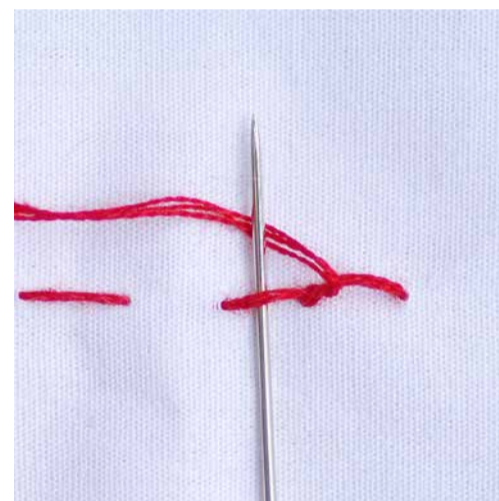
Here, I have made a row of the Running Stitch to illustrate this method. What you see in the pictures is the reverse of the fabric.



**1** Back: This is the reverse of the fabric, where I want to finish off my thread. First, spot the nearest stitch to the last stitch point. It can be any stitch.



**2** Back: Pass the needle under that nearest stitch without plucking the fabric. The working thread should lay below the needle as shown.



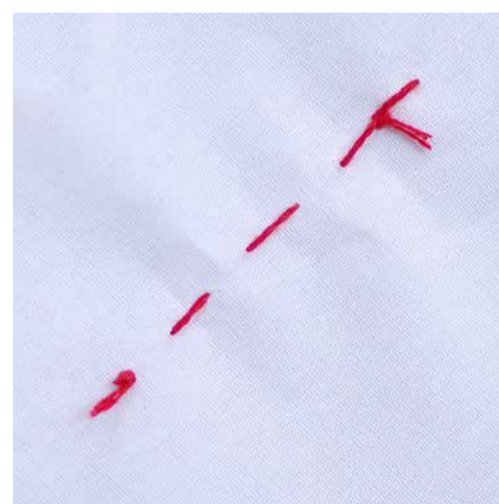
**3** Back: Pull out the needle. Now, repeat the process again—take the needle under the same stitch and loop the thread below the needle as shown.



**4** Back: Pull out the needle. You will see that a firm tiny knot will be formed.

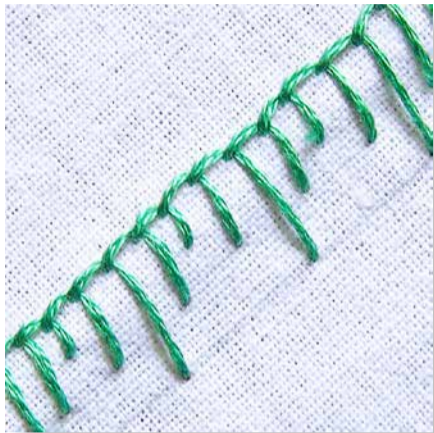


**5** Back: Cut off the thread close to the knot. Do not take it too close, as it will risk the knot to open.

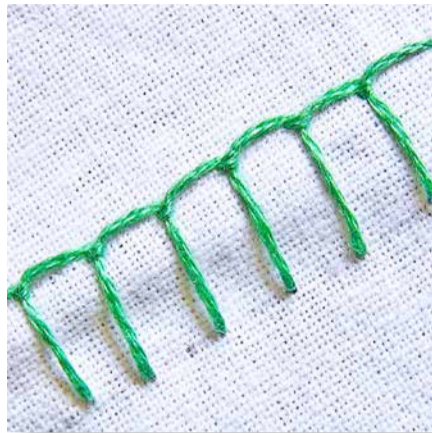


**6** Back: The knot at the end of the stitch will look like this.

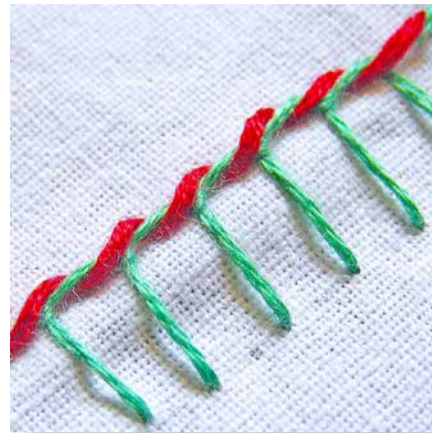
# Blanket Stitch Family



363 Blanket Stitch



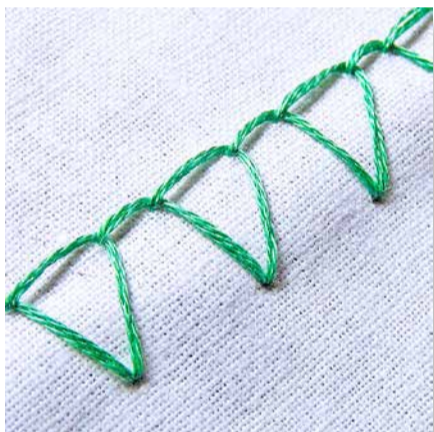
368 Buttonhole Stitch



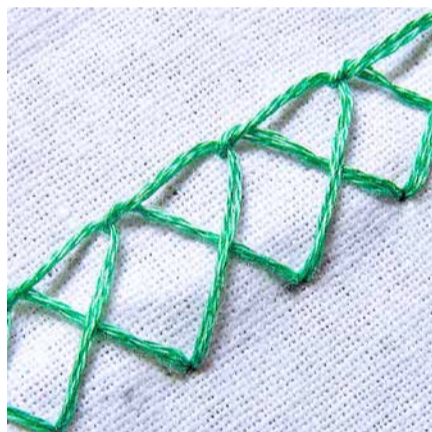
369 Whipped Buttonhole



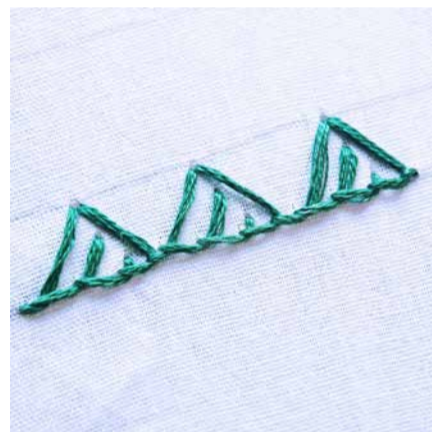
370 Double Blanket Stitch



371 Half-Crossed Blanket



372 Crossed Blanket Stitch



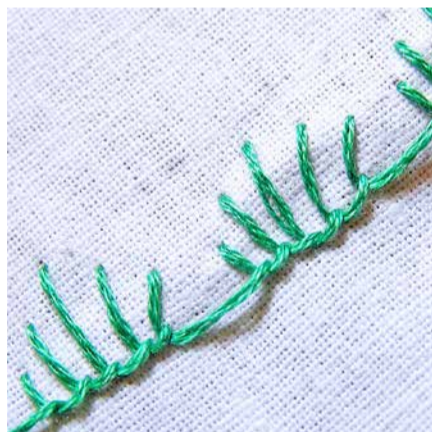
373 Blanket Stitch Triangles



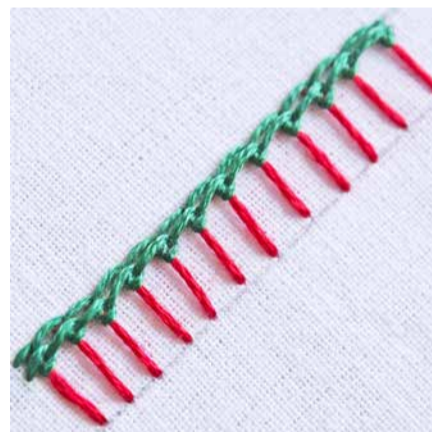
374 Buttonhole Wheel



376 Buttonhole Wheel Cup



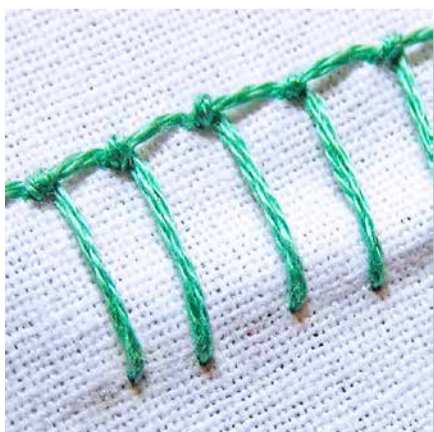
377 Rosette of Thorns



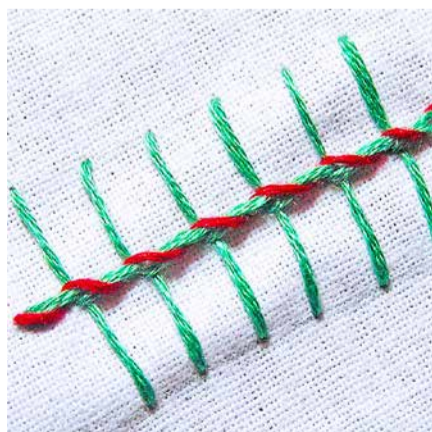
378 Raised Blanket Stitch



379 Buttonhole Bar



384 Berwick Stitch



385 Barb Stitch



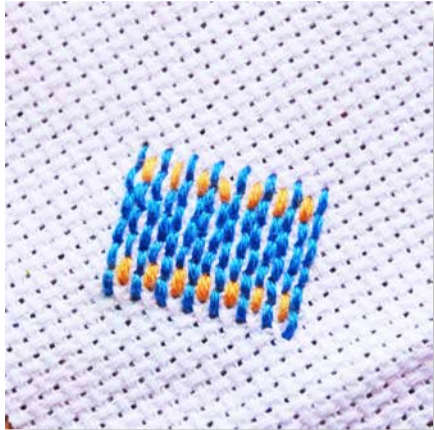
386 Buttonhole Filling



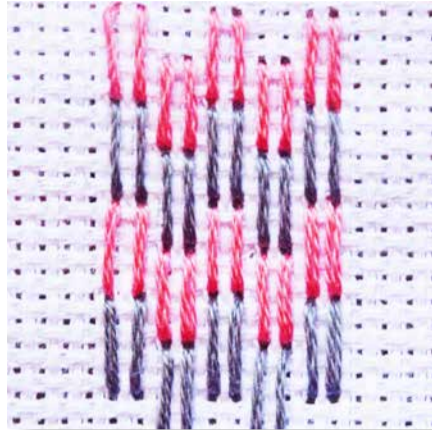
387 Detached Buttonhole



# Needlepoint Stitches



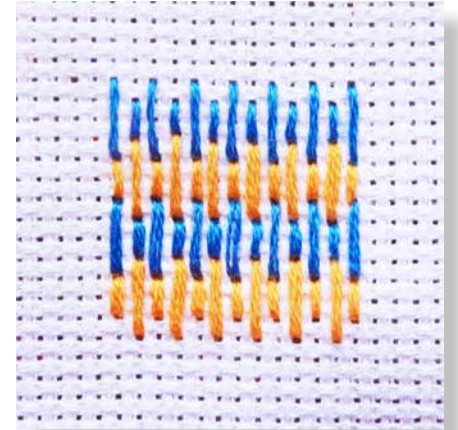
548 Tent Stitch



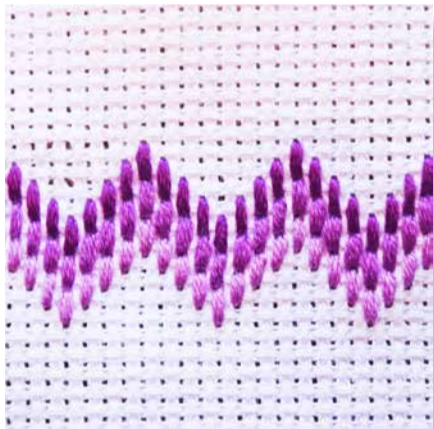
550 Algerian Filling Stitch



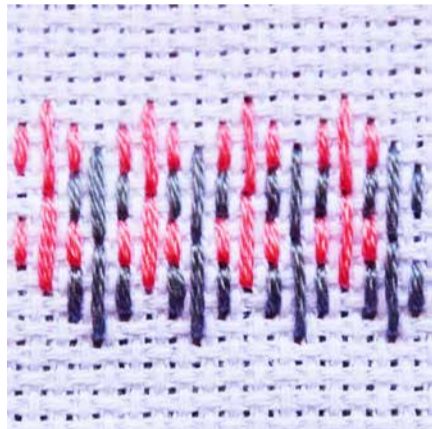
551 Fern Stitch



552 Parisian Stitch



553 Flame Stitch



554 Hungarian Stitch



555 Byzantine Stitch



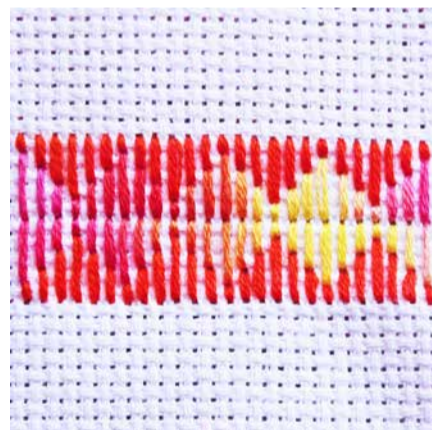
556 Milanese Stitch



557 Sutherland Stitch



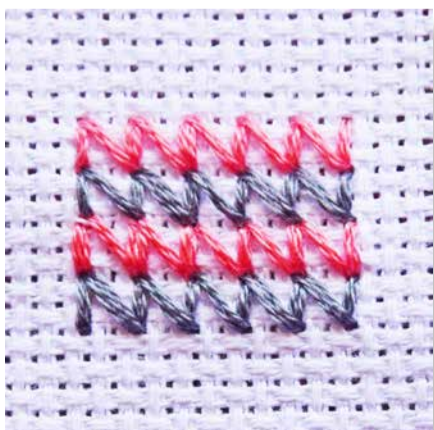
558 Waffle Stitch



559 Triangle Stitch



560 Moorish Stitch



561 Barrier Stitch

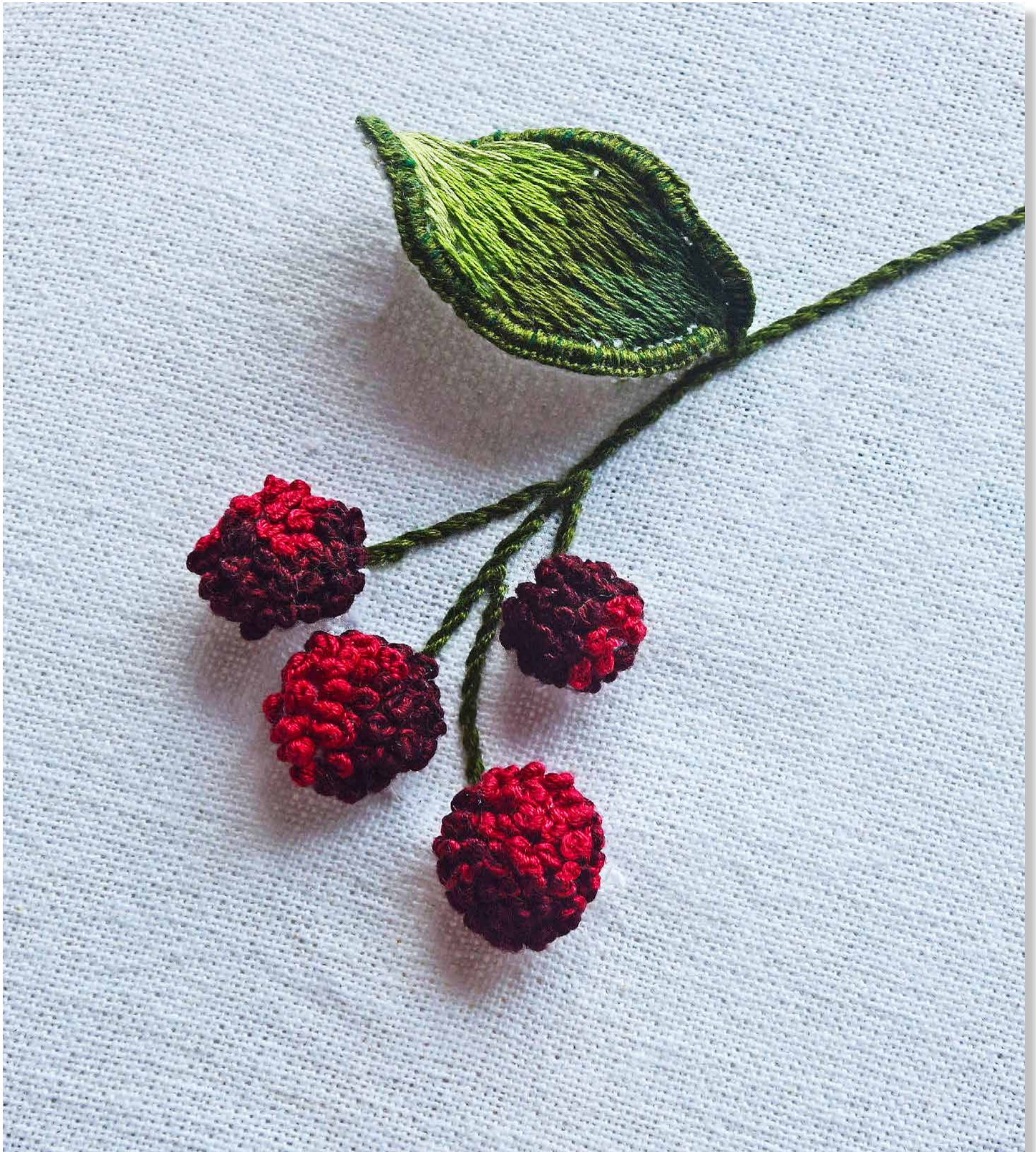




# Stitch Tutorials



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*Stump Work used to make a branch of berries. The leaf is worked using the Brick Stitch and berries using the Colonial Knots.*



● North America

● South America

● Africa

● Europe

● Asia

● Australia

**Stump Work** is a form of raised embroidery where the objects in a pattern were padded to give it a high relief and stand out from the fabric. This is a dimensional embroidery, but different from other dimensional embroideries like the Brazilian Embroidery. While Brazilian Embroidery uses only dimensional stitches to create a dimensional effect in the pattern, Stump Work uses padding to make the objects stand out.

Stump Work was also called **Raised Work** or **Embossed work** and was seen first around the 15<sup>th</sup> Century in England. It became pretty popular in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century, and by the 18<sup>th</sup> Century, it was on a steady decline. It saw a resurgence in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century and was used to embellish women's clothing, and it took on the name- Stump Work.

This embroidery was popular on book covers, mirror frames, and caskets that held jewelry, needlework tools, and other trinkets.

Some modern Stump Work methods would be using different raised and padded stitches, using padding under detached stitches to lift the object, attaching slips (a separate piece of fabric with embroidery), and incorporating wires to construct objects to stand out from the material.

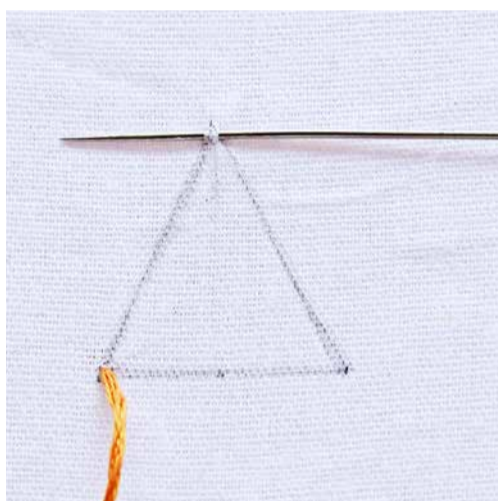
The previous page sample uses separate cloth pieces or slips with French Knots to create the berries with a raised effect. The leaf is constructed using a wire with the Long and Short Stitch to fill the inside.



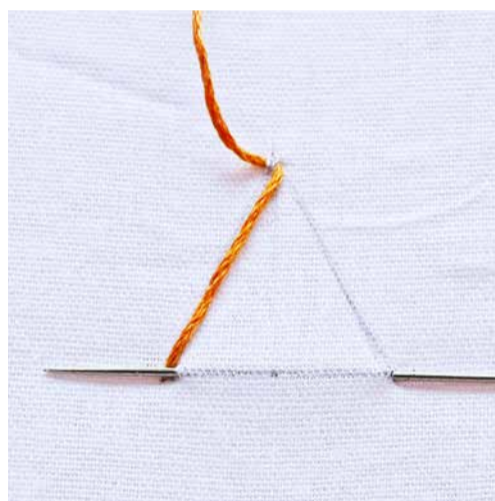


**Stitch category** : Filling stitch, Straight stitch  
**Used in** : Surface embroidery, Needlepoint

The Sprat's Head Stitch, probably, derives its name from its resemblance to the Sprat Fish's head—an interesting name to have in the Fishbone Stitch Family. This stitch is decorative and can be used creatively as isolated stitches to texture or fill an area. It is also used effectively as a visible mending stitch to cover holes in fabric and leather. The technique is similar to the Raised Fishbone Stitch but takes on a different effect due to the triangular shape.



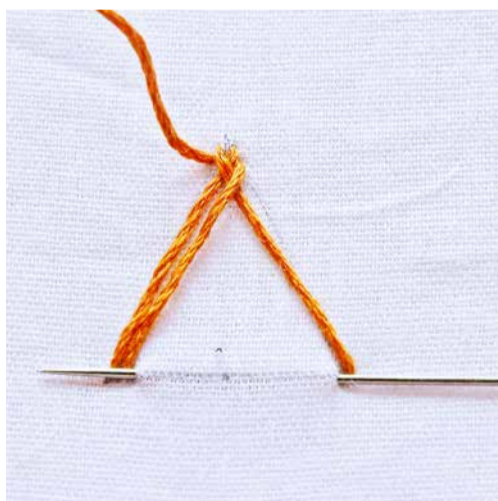
**1** Start from one corner of the triangle. Go in through the next corner and pluck a bit of fabric at the corner, as shown.



**2** Come back down to the third corner. Then, come up very close to the stitch made on first corner. Keep the stitch points on the outlines.



**3** Again, go back in and out under the earlier stitch in the second corner.



**4** Again, into the third corner, at a point close to the earlier stitch, and on the stitch line. Continue with this process. The needle should always pass through the outline of the triangle.

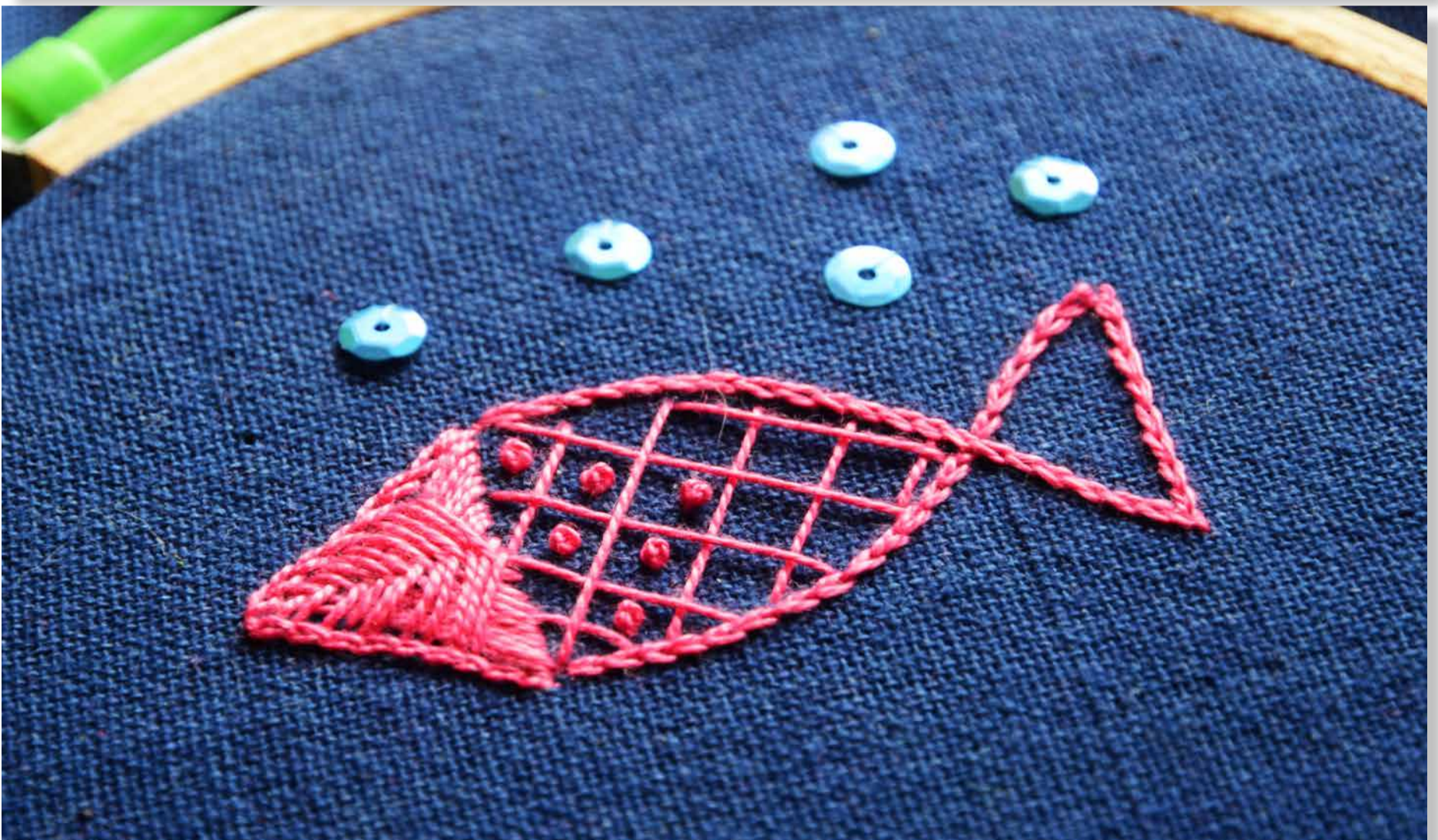


**5** When the entire space is covered, pass your final stitch through the fabric on the base of the triangle.



**6** Your finished triangle will look like this.





*Visible Mending is done over the hole using the Sprat's Head Stitch. Additional stitches are used over the fish pattern along with embellishment with sequins.*



# Buttonhole Wheel Cup

Blanket Stitch Family



- Also known as** : Umschlaufes Wagenrad <sup>[DE]</sup>  
**Stitch category** : Standalone stitch, Looped stitch, Woven stitch  
**Used in** : Surface embroidery  
**You need to know** : Blanket Stitch, Buttonhole Wheel Stitch

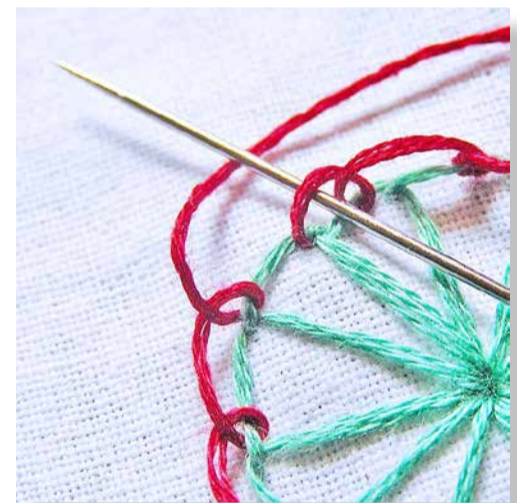
Done over a foundation of the Buttonhole Wheel, the Buttonhole Wheel Cup is decorative and dimensional. This tutorial has spaced out the Blanket Stitches and used a thin thread to make the stitch's features clearer. The use of a thicker thread or a Buttonhole Wheel foundation with Blanket Stitches made with closely placed spokes will help bring out the real beauty of this stitch. The stitch would then stand out like a little cup, as the name suggests.



**1** Start by doing a foundation of Buttonhole Wheel Stitch. Now, bring out the needle from one corner of a spoke of the wheel, as shown. For the sake of tutorial, I have used a contrasting color, but the same colored thread can be used.



**2** Start making Blanket Stitches with the outer rim of the wheel, as shown.



**3** When you complete one trip around the rim, continue the same process, but this time with the previous stitch as the base. It is this process that builds up the cup around the wheel.

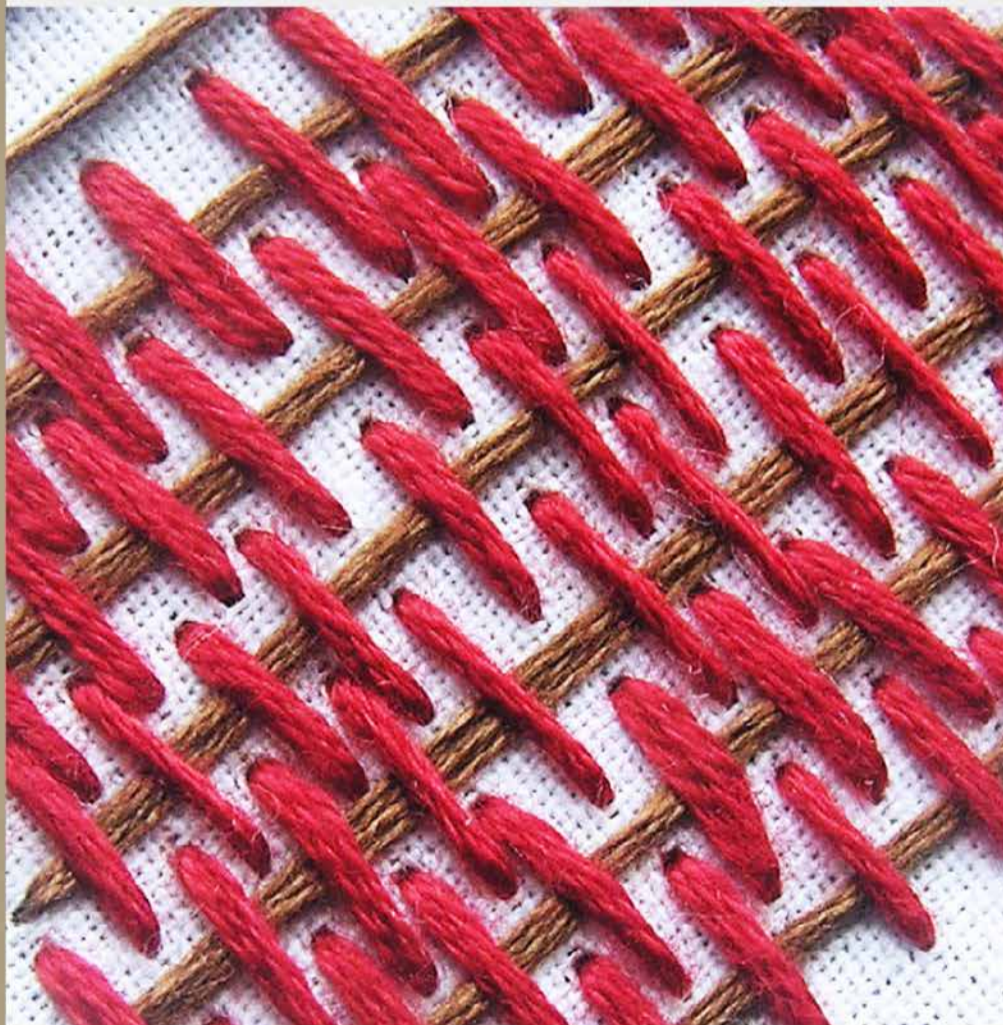


**4** A completed Buttonhole Wheel Cup will look like this after two trips around the rim. A thicker thread and closely made Buttonhole Wheel will accentuate the 'cup' effect.



# Burden Stitch

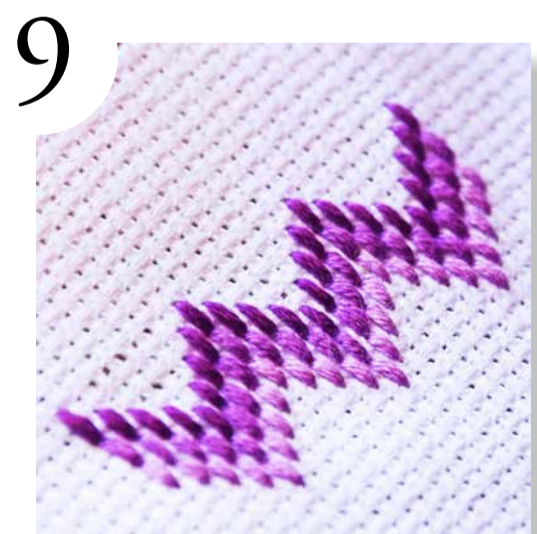
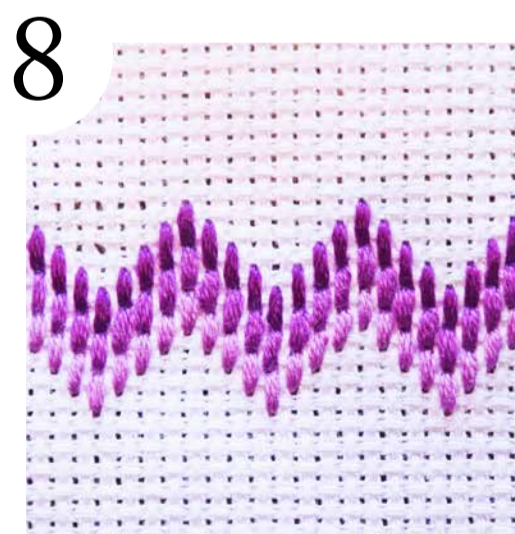
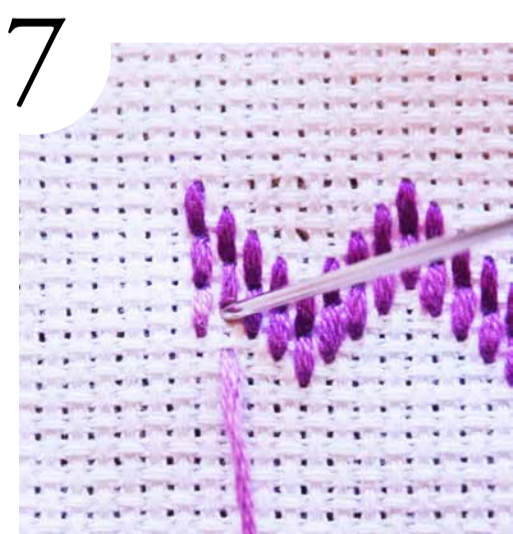
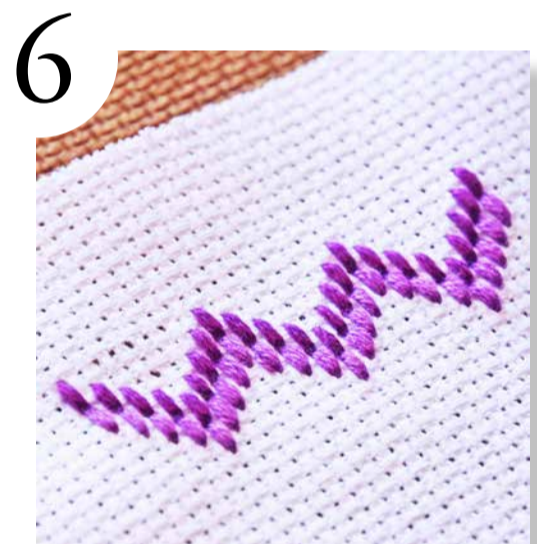
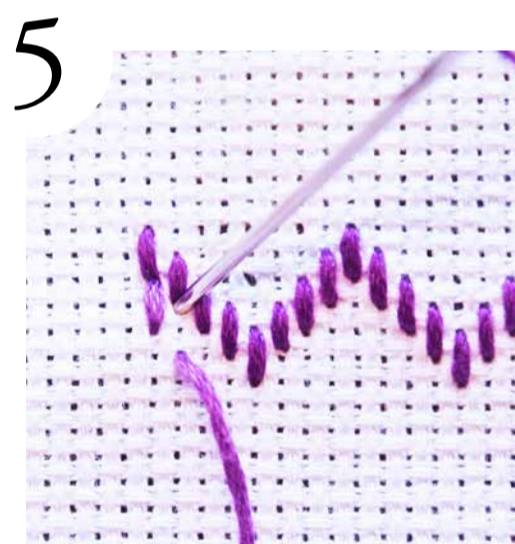
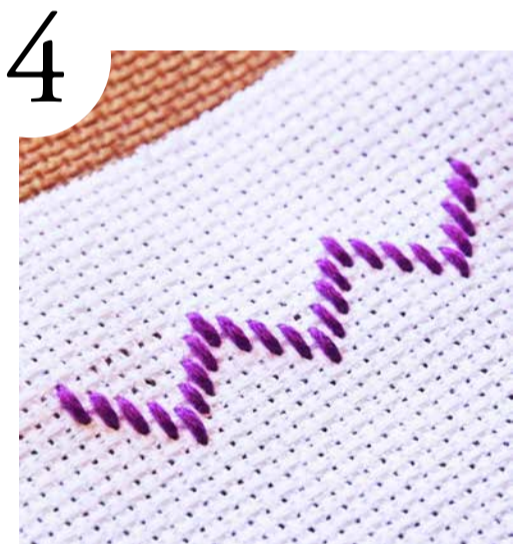
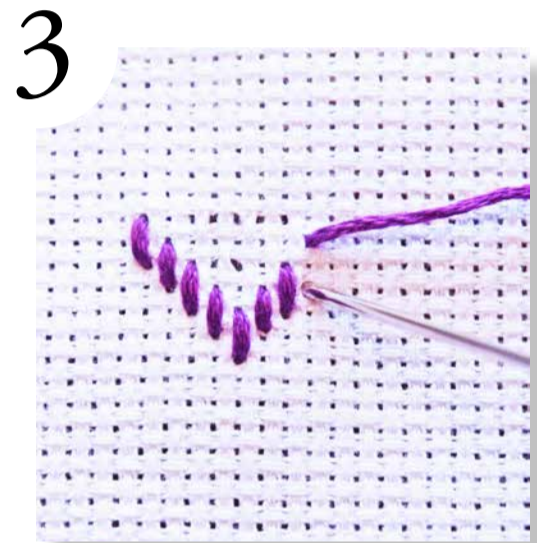
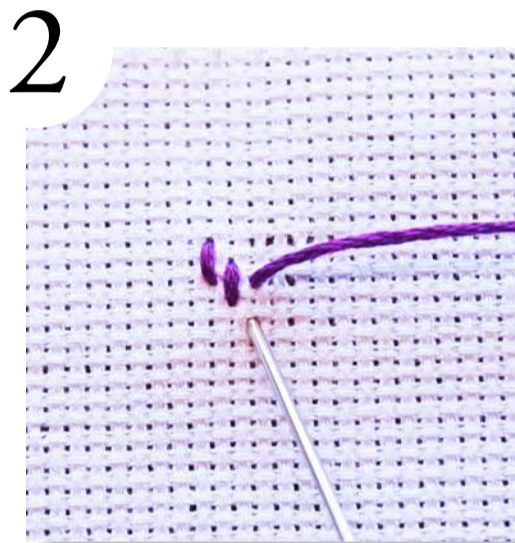
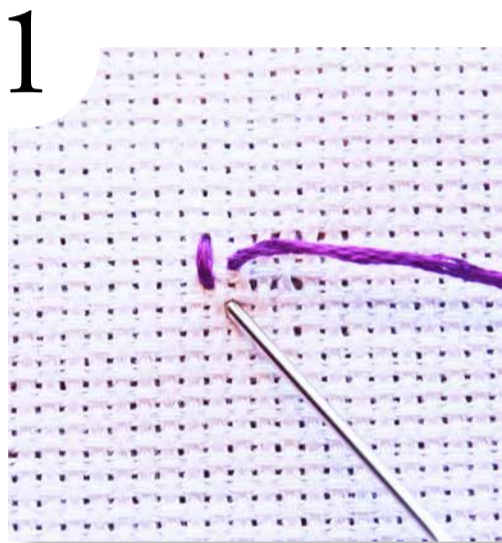
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This stitch is named after Elizabeth (Bessie) Burden, who was fine at needlework during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. She was born in Oxford and taught at the Royal School of Needlework, an institute that was started to revive the art of needlework. She was a model and muse to the British textile designer, William Morris, whom she later married. Bessie taught students to work on pieces designed by him and other designers. She employed a variety of 'cushion' stitches from the medieval period. In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, this stitch was called the 'Tapestry Stitch'. She used it to cover large areas, especially the flesh tones of the figurines in the design. This stitch was renamed 'Burden Stitch' by the school in recognition of Bessie's contribution.

**Also known as** : Bargello Stitch, Irish Stitch, Flame Stitch, Hungarian Point Stitch <sup>[EN]</sup>,  
Punto Fiamma, Punto Unghero <sup>[IT]</sup>

The name of this stitch suggests that it resembles the pattern of the flames. This stitch was used in different variations and flame-like graduation of colors in a lesser documented hand embroidery work called the Bargello. In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, it was called the Hungarian Stitch.





## Helpful Tips



*From the Flower Project by Sarah*

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**565** Dealing with Corners

— **565** Running Stitch

— **565** Back Stitch

— **566** Stem Stitch

— **566** Chain Stitch

— **567** Herringbone Stitch

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**568** Restarting Stitches

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— **570** Herringbone Stitch

— **570** Woven Wheel Stitch

**571** Seamless Circles

— **571** Stem Stitch

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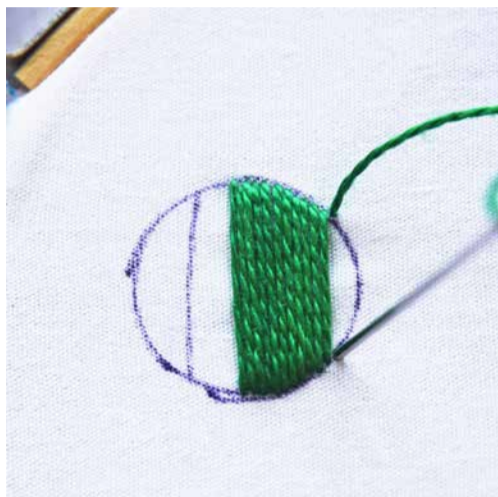
**572** Satin Stitch Circles and Tips

**573** Filling and Size of French Knots

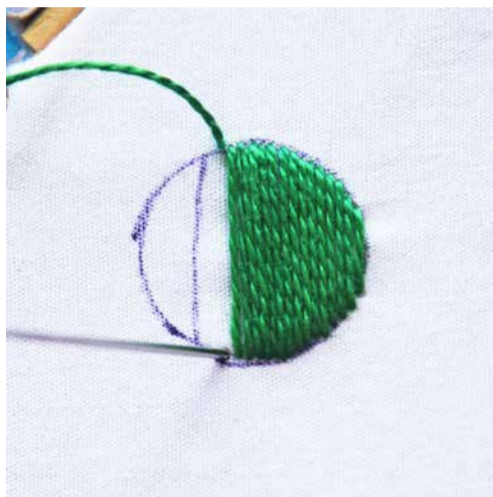


A few tips will help you with dealing with the Satin Stitch when stitching circles and sharp corners and tips.

## Satin Stitching on Circles



**1** To fill in a circle, start by dividing it into different sections. Then, start stitching from the middle working towards one side

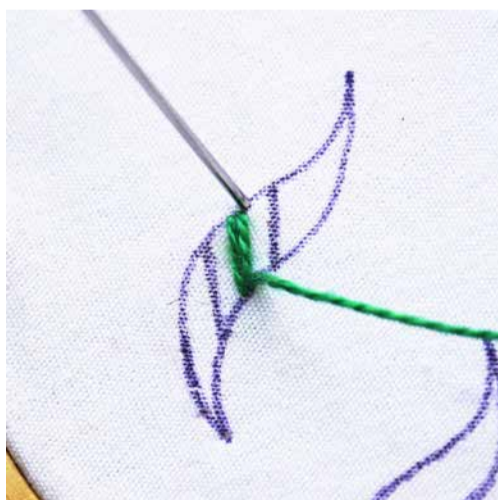


**2** Once one side is done, come back to the middle and work on the other side.



**3** A filled circle looks like this. Partitioning the pattern makes it easier to fill as we take one portion at a time.

## Satin Stitching in an angle



**1** Many times, it is better to use the Satin Stitch at an angle, especially when it has tapering ends. To keep the angle consistent, draw lines as shown to divide the pattern.



**2** Start stitching from the broadest side of the pattern and work one side at the angle. Take one part at a time till you finish one side. Then, move to the other side.



**3** Working from the broader side to the narrower part helps in making the tips as sharp as possible. The angle of the stitch also helps.





## Stitch Key

1. Back Stitch
2. Stem Stitch
3. Chain Stitch
4. Outline Stitch
5. Running Stitch
6. Split Back Stitch
7. Couching Stitch

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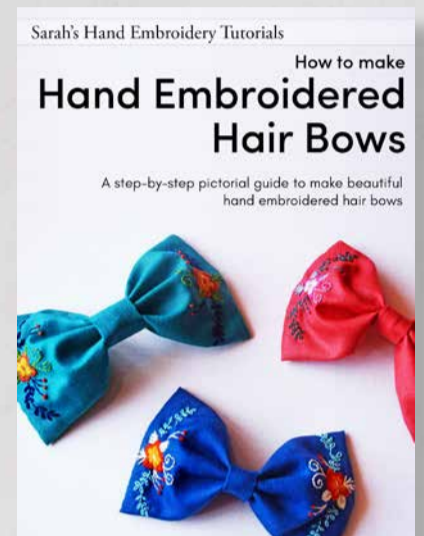
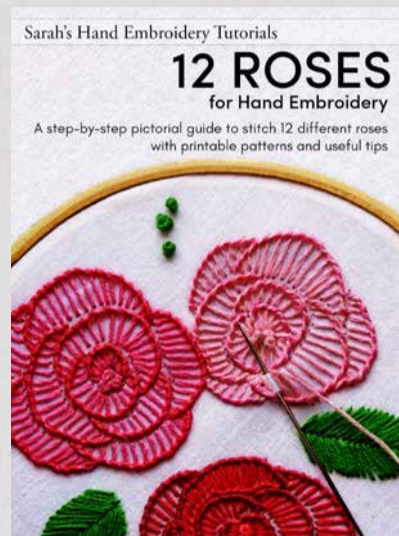
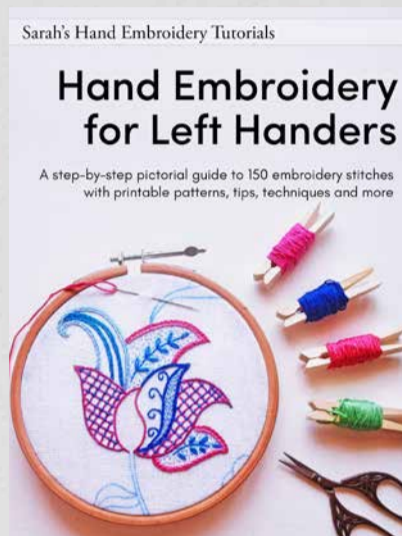
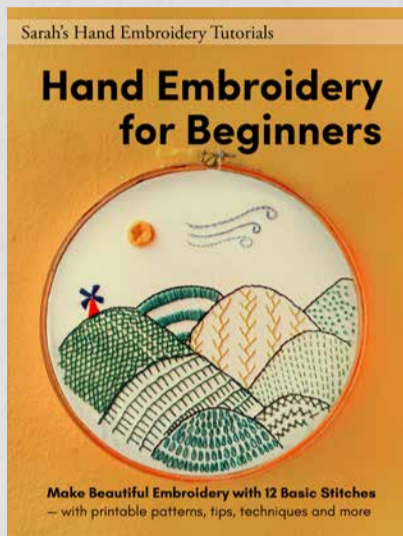


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