A step-by-step pictorial guide to 200 embroidery stitches with patterns and a bit of history

Hand Embroidery Stitches for Everyone

Sarah's Hand Embroidery Tutorials
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The Stitch Families

Embroidery stitches can be divided into ‘families’ of stitches based on the similarities in their techniques. Sometimes, it becomes difficult to decide which family a stitch belongs to as it might have characteristics from not only more than one family, but also the aforementioned categories. So, such stitches are assigned a family based on the strongest characteristic it has. For instance, the ‘Knotted Chain Band Stitch’ could be categorized as a member of the Knot Family. But, since it uses loops to create chains, we placed it under the Chain Stitch Family. This does not mean that it is strictly a member of the Chain Stitch, but only that it shares a strong characteristic.

The Stitch Names

Over time, certain stitches can get to be known by different names. While making this book, we have tried to mention the alternate names wherever possible.

Certain other times, two stitches can be known by the same name! This could be because of the resemblance they have or just the way it got erroneously passed down. Another possibility is that different places used the same names to identify different stitches. One such example is the ‘Rice Stitch’ and the ‘Seed Stitch’, both of which are often used interchangeably. We have tried our best to bring a clarity wherever possible.
Chain Stitch Family

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This variation is done over two parallel rows of Back Stitches, but ‘stepped’ to each other. Essentially, you are kind of making a Herringbone Stitch by weaving on the Back Stitch foundation, instead of the fabric directly. This explains the name, and it proves very decorative giving a rich look.

1. Make a foundation with two parallel rows of Back Stitches, ‘stepping’ them. That is A lies between a-b, B lies between b-c, and so forth.

2. Bring out the needle from one end of the bottom row and slide the needle under the first stitches of both the rows, as shown.

3. Turn around the needle and pass it under the working thread and then b-c, as in the picture.

4. Turn around again, and pass the needle under the working thread and the next stitch.

5. Keep up with this method till the end of the row.

6. A finished section looks like this and gives a netted effect.
As the name suggests, this stitch is found in Russian embroideries, usually along with the basic Chain Stitch. It is made by grouping together three Lazy Daisy Stitches, in a clover shape. Ideally, the first Lazy Daisy loop would point upward, but working this stitch in the reverse order is easier. Let’s work on a vertical border, over three parallel stitch lines.

1. Begin by making the first loop as you would for Lazy Daisy. Come out from the second stitch line at a point A. Put the needle back in A and bring it out from B. Loop the thread around the needle and pull out the needle.

2. Now, make the second loop by putting the needle back in B and bringing it out from C, which lies at an angle on the first stitch line. Loop the thread around and pull the needle out to make the second loop.

3. Anchor down the second loop as you would in Lazy Daisy. Next, make the third Lazy Daisy loop, but this time towards the right side, with D lying at an angle on the third stitch line.

4. Once finished, the clover shaped Russian Chain Stitch would look like this. As mentioned before, this is in an upturned position. Ideally, it should point upwards.

5. A series of vertical Russian Chain Stitches would show up like this (reverse order). You can choose to close them in or space them out.
### Contributed by
Contributed by: Savitri, India

### Stitches used
- Brick Stitch
- French Knot
- Blanket Stitch (outlining the leaves)
These Interlaced Maltese Crosses are used in the **Kutch Embroidery**. Kutch is a region that lies on the northern part of a state called Gujarat in India. The word *Kutch* (or *Kuchchh*) literally means something that becomes sporadically wet and dry. The language spoken in Kutch is Kuchchhi, Gujarati and Sindhi (not necessarily in equal ratios). The Kuchchi language has already lost its script to extinction and mostly uses the Gujarati script to express. Kuchchi language bears more similarity to Sindhi (again, another endangered language) than Gujarati. This is one reason why this embroidery is also known as **Sindhi Embroidery**.

The region of Kutch is inhabited by groups of people that had migrated from as near as the neighboring state of Rajasthan to as far as Afghanistan. We would still be able to find many nomadic and semi nomadic groups in this part of the world. This might explain its similarity to the Armenian Marash Embroidery.

Each group or clan is distinguished by the Kuchchi language they use. But there is another way of distinguishing these clans- by the way their do their hand embroidery work. Some of them use mirrors along with their hand embroidery, some others might have a certain type of embroidery stitch that they favor. But, all their embroideries are done with bright and vivid colored threads over a solid colored background.
This stitch is named after Elizabeth (Bessie) Burden, who was known to be fine at needlework during the late 19th 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’ stitch from the medieval period. In the late 19th 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 as ‘Burden Stitch’ by the school in recognition of Bessie’s contribution.
Patterns

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Patterns - Stitched Samples
Find 5 stitch samples made to show the how different stitches have been used in a pattern. Think of what other stitches you would have used over these patterns.

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Patterns - With Stitch Guide
Find 15 simple patterns which you can draw directly over the fabric. Follow the guide to practice the stitches. Try your own choice of stitches if you like!

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Patterns - Printable
Find 10 patterns you can either draw directly over the fabric or print and transfer. Use your own imagination to fill them with the stitches of your choice!
Patterns—with Stitch Guide

Orchid

- Colonial Knots
- Long Tailed Daisy
- Back Stitch
- Closed Feather Stitch
- Satin Stitch
- Pekinese Stitch

Long Tailed Daisy

Back Stitch

Pekinese Stitch

French Knot

Closed Feather Stitch

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From our readers

“I hadn’t worked on the Bullion Knot in years! And you know, I haven’t worked it better than ever now. I can do it practically with my eyes closed. I was greatly relieved and thankful to find these hand embroidery tutorials you’ve made. It is the best! Simple, well illustrated, viola that’s it!” — Kristin, 2019

“It is so helpful and put together beautifully. It’s really better than all the embroidery books I’ve ever looked at” — Tipton, 2018

“This was fantastic for my homework for sewing. Definitely, highly recommended. I would mostly recommend this for students” — Kitty, 2017

“A proper treasure trove of stitches and tutorials” — Elly, 2016

“It is well presented and the instructions are facile for any level of hand crafter” — Dr. Carla, 2015

“I’ve been embroidering for almost 40 years, but I’m German, and for the names of most of the stitches I don’t know the English equivalent. Your picture dictionary approach is really helpful!” — Maria, 2014

“I started doing embroidery about 50 years ago but had put it aside for the last 20. I just picked it back up and this is exactly what I needed to get me excited about the craft. You have an incredible amount of information and the basic Stitch Family is exactly what I needed” — MaryAnne, 2013

“It’s the most clear tutorial ever, and its easy to understand for any beginner” — Maureen, 2012

“I am fascinated by your knowledge, and your excellent instructions! I’m beginning hand embroidery and am so thrilled that this resource is available” — Catherine, 2011

“I have just started a quilting project that includes hand embroidery. Your tutorials are great...just like having a teacher in the room with me. I am left-handed so I appreciate seeing the stitches so clearly. Thank you, Teacher” — Roseanna, 2010

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