

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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#### Before You Begin

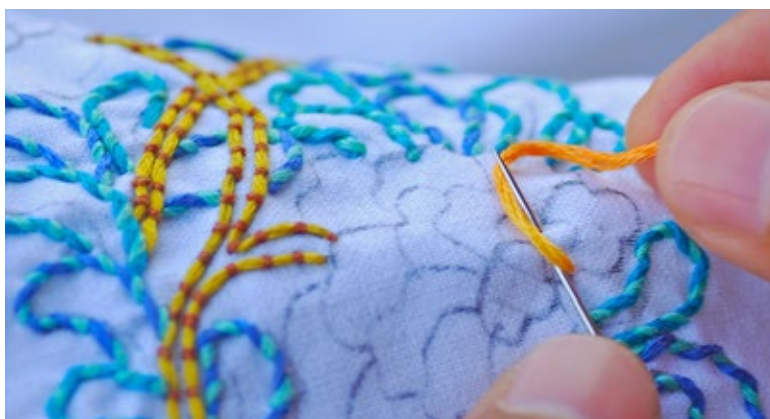
Find all you need to know before beginning hand embroidery. Know what tools and supplies you would need and how to use them.



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#### Picture Index

Don't know the name of a stitch? The Picture Index will help you to identify a stitch with the pictures.



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#### Stitch Tutorials

Find a treasure trove of 200 different stitches and a step-by-step guide to each stitch placed under different families.



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#### Patterns

Find printable patterns with stitch guidance for practice.

Sprinkled here and there—**tips, interesting facts, ideas to get creative, history, basic information on various embroideries**, and **samples** contributed by some of our generous readers. Also, find an **Index of Stitches** in different categories in **page 444**.

## Before You Begin



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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



144 Chain Stitch



148 Whipped Chain Stitch



149 Double Chain Stitch



150 Interlaced Chain Stitch



151 Back Stitched Chain



152 Lazy Daisy



156 Magic Chain Stitch



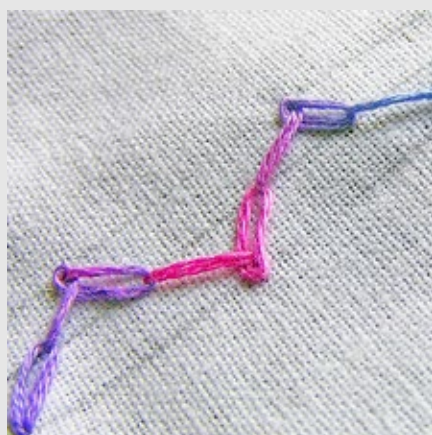
157 Russian Chain Stitch



*Crystal, China*



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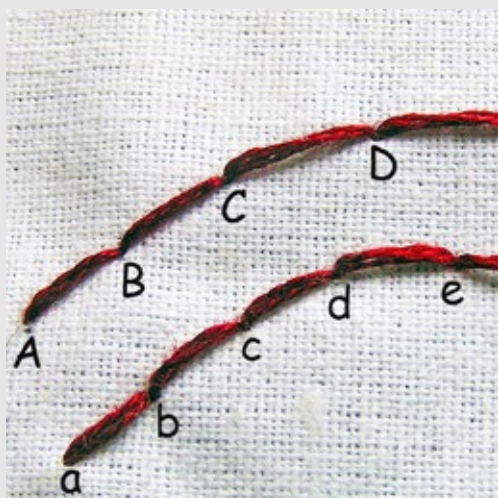


# Herringbone Ladder Filling Stitch

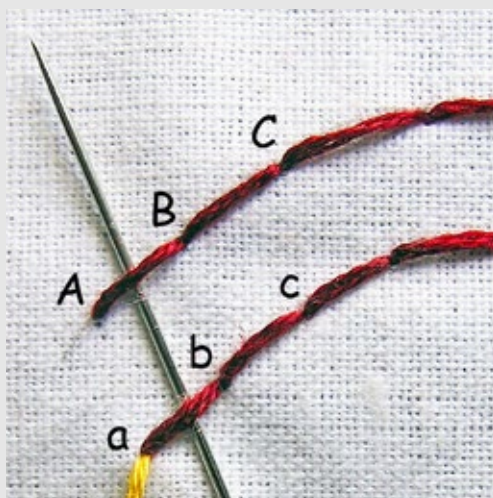
Back Stitch Family

- Also known as** : Interlaced Band Stitch  
**Difficulty level** : Intermediate  
**Stitch category** : Line stitch, Straight stitch, Woven stitch  
**Used for** : Decorating, border designing, filling, even weave fabric  
**You need to know** : Back Stitch

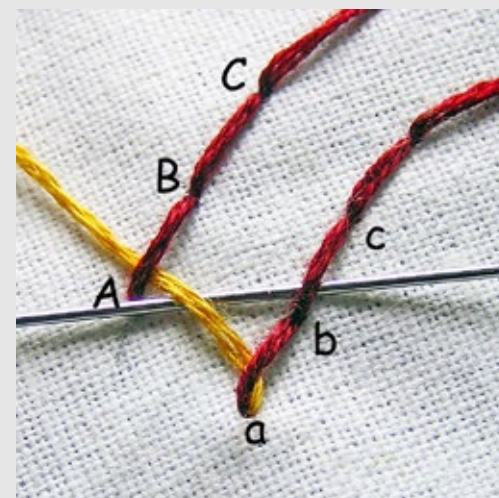
This variation is done over two parallel rows of Back Stitches, but 'stepped' to each other. Essentially, you are kind of making a Herringbone Stitch by weaving on the Back Stitch foundation, instead of the fabric directly. This explains the name, and it proves very decorative giving a rich look.



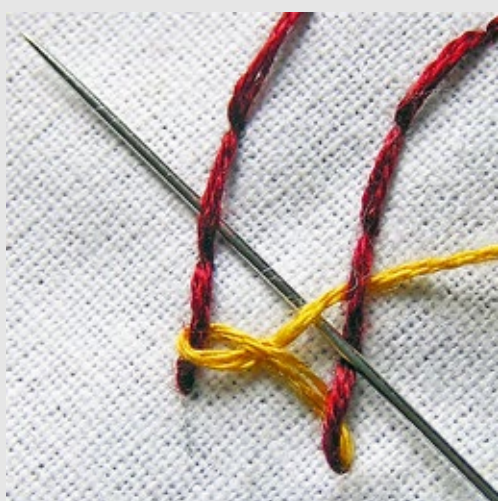
**1** Make a foundation with two parallel rows of Back Stitches, 'stepping' them. That is *A* lies between *a-b*, *B* lies between *b-c*, and so forth.



**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.

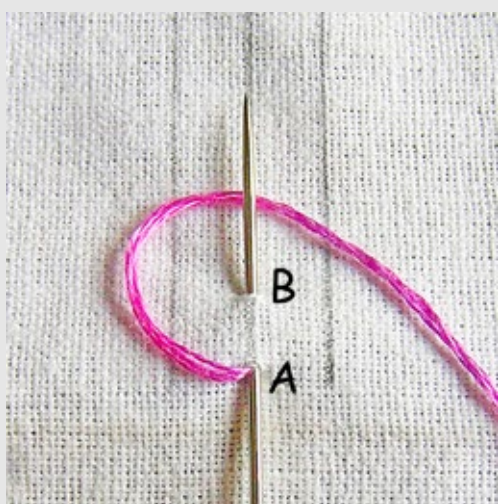


**6** A finished section looks like this and gives a netted effect.

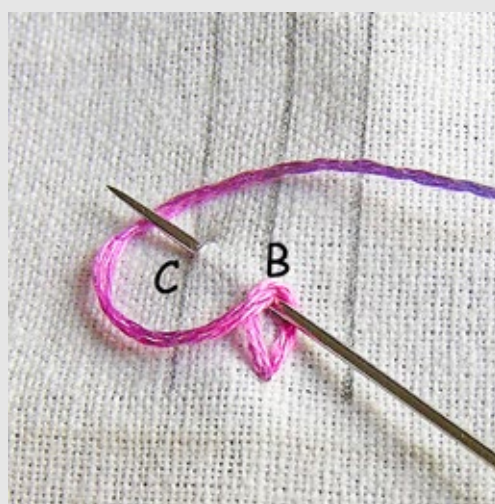


- Difficulty level** : Easy  
**Stitch category** : Line stitch, Stand alone stitch, Looped stitch  
**Used for** : Decorating, border designing  
**You need to know** : Lazy Daisy, Chain Stitch

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.



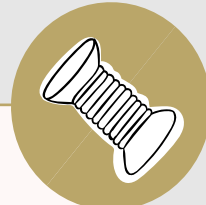
**3** Anchor down the second loop as you would in Lazy Daisy. Next, make the third Lazy Daisy loop, but this time towards the right side, with *D* lying at an angle on the third stitch line.



**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.



### Good to know...

When you make horizontal borders, The stitches are placed one on the side of the other with the first Lazy Daisy pointing upwards. When doing a vertical border, they all fall below one another, but again with the first Lazy Daisy pointing upward.

Of course, I suggest a lenient approach to using this stitch.



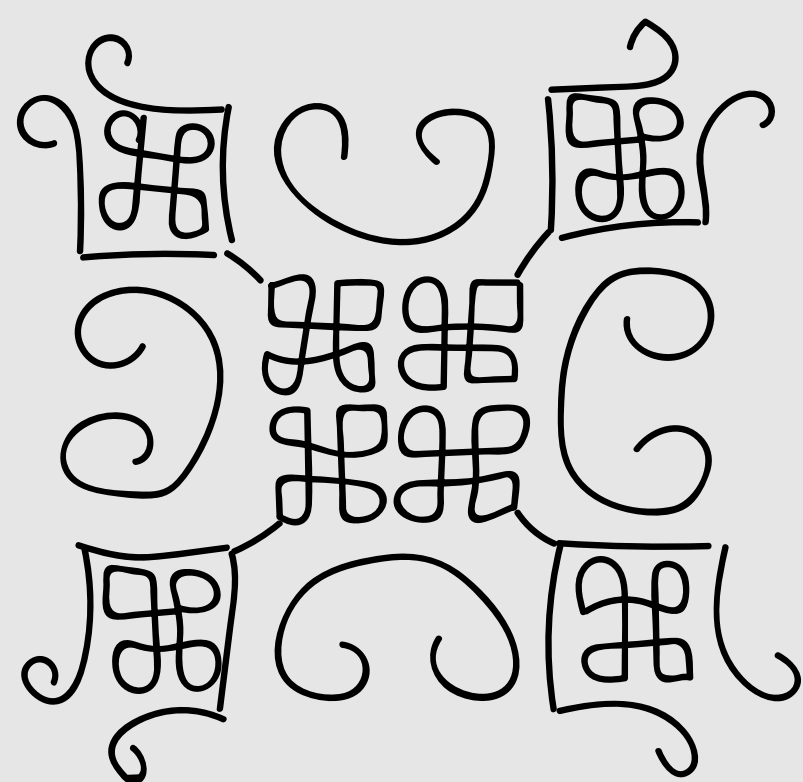


**Contributed by** : Savitri, India

**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**.



*Traditional Kutch Work Pattern*

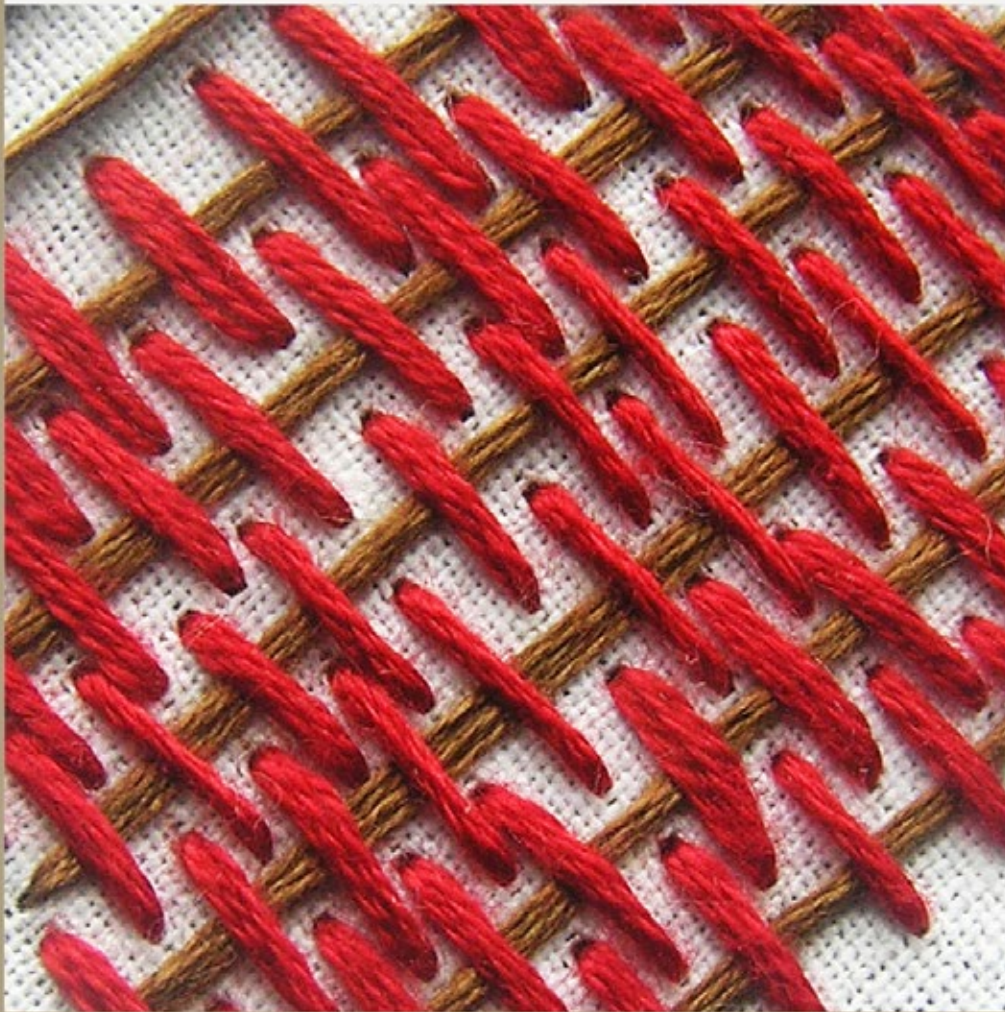
The region of Kutch is inhabited by groups of people that had migrated from as near as the neighboring state of Rajasthan to as far as Afghanistan. We would still be able to find many nomadic and semi nomadic groups in this part of the world. This might explain its similarity to the Armenian Marash Embroidery.

Each group or clan is distinguished by the Kuchchi language they use. But there is another way of distinguishing these clans- by the way they 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.



# Burden Stitch

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**T**his 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.



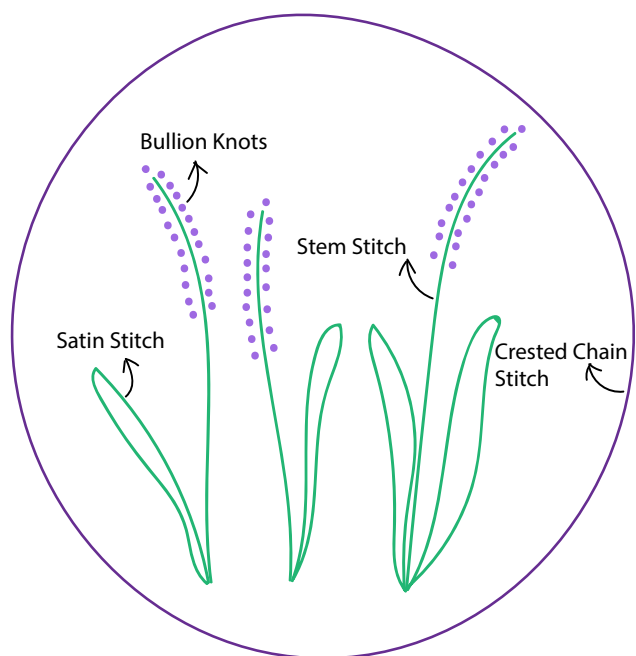
## Patterns



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#### Patterns - Stitched Samples

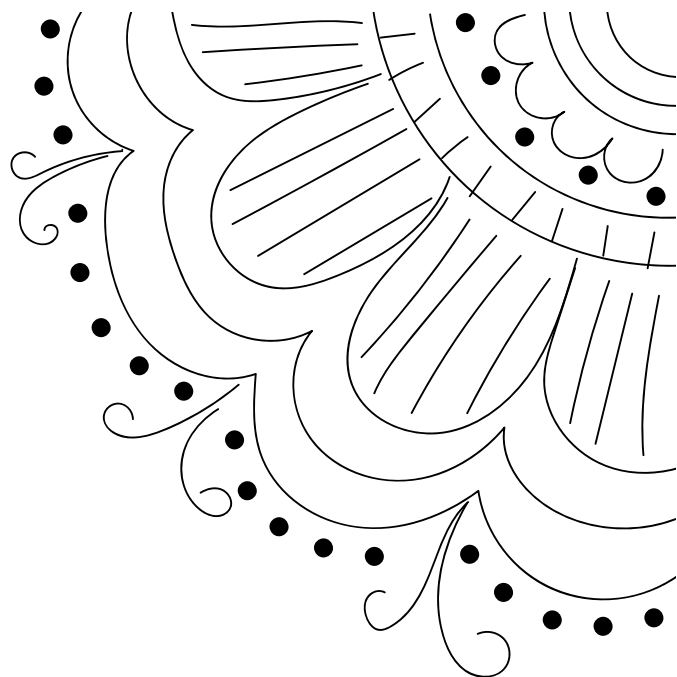
Find 5 stitch samples made to show the how different stitches have been used in a pattern. Think of what other stitches you would have used over these patterns.



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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!

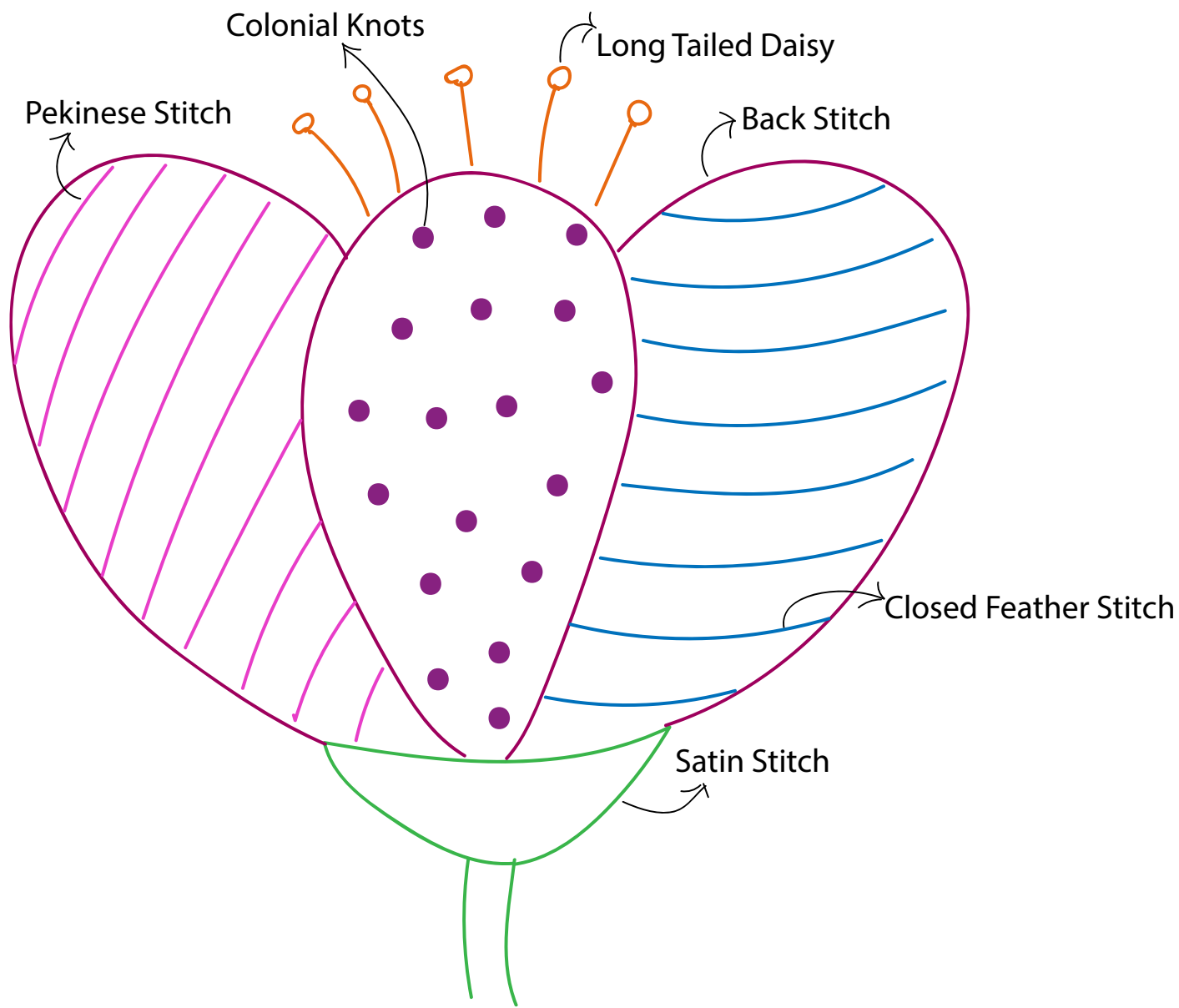


### 433

#### 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!





Long Tailed Daisy



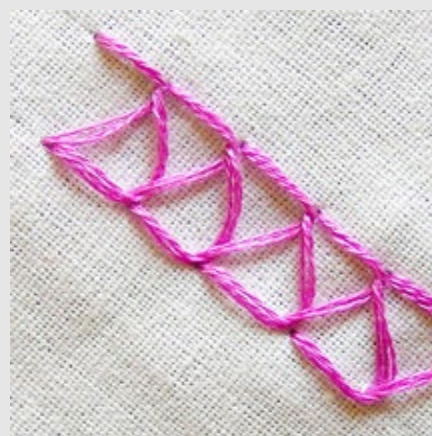
Back Stitch



Pekinese Stitch



French Knot



Closed Feather Stitch



Satin Stitch



277 Closed Cretan Stitch  
 278 Laced Cretan Stitch  
 279 Scottish Cretan Stitch  
 281 Knotted Cretan Stitch  
 283 Blanket Stitch  
 287 Buttonhole Stitch  
 288 Whipped Buttonhole Stitch  
 289 Double Blanket Stitch  
 291 Half-crossed Blanket Stitch  
 292 Crossed Blanket Stitch  
 293 Buttonhole Wheel  
 295 Buttonhole Wheel Cup  
 296 Rosette of Thorns  
 298 Buttonhole Bar Stitch  
 301 Berwick Stitch  
 302 Barb Stitch  
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 305 Mirrored Blanket Stitch  
 306 German Knotted Blanket Stitch  
 307 Knotted Blanket Stitch  
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 312 Blanket Stitch Scallops  
 314 Shaped Blanket Stitch Scallops  
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 198 Pistil Knot  
 200 Colonial Knot  
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 203 Scroll Stitch  
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208 Bullion Knot  
 211 Danish Knot  
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 122 Whipped Stem Stitch  
 137 Threaded Chevron  
 148 Whipped Chain Stitch  
 150 Interlaced Chain Stitch  
 190 Butterfly Chain Stitch  
 191 Raised Chain Band  
 192 Checkered Chain Band





## 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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