

## An Instructional Guide to Beginners Cross-Stitching

This handicraft has been a pastime for centuries. Historically, it was practiced a lot by women & young girls, to learn the alphabet. Now it is a popular pastime for pleasure.

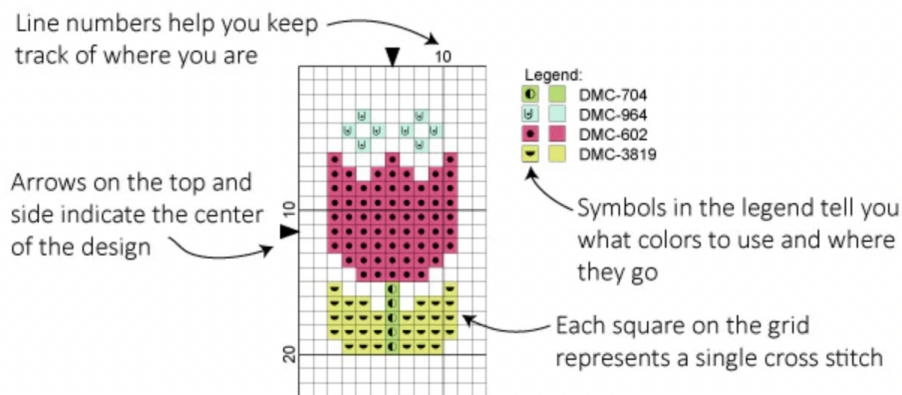
This guide is to help you get started on your cross-stitch journey.

### Some General Tips

- ❖ Buy more thread than what you think you need, it's better to have extra and return it if it's unused than to run out!
  - This also ensures that the colour is consistent, each batch can have a slight colour variation that doesn't make it identical to the last.
- ❖ Mistakes can be undone! This is a handicraft that takes patience, especially when you are first learning.
- ❖ Tension is important! Stitches should lie flat against the fabric without being too tight that it warps the fabric.
- ❖ As you stitch, the thread will tend to get twisted. Every once in a while, let your needle and thread hang freely to let it untwist
- ❖ If your moving a new section of the pattern (that is not an immediate row around where you are) end the thread and start a new one, long jumps can create harsh lines that might be visible from the back
- ❖ Have fun!

### How to Read a Cross-Stitch Pattern

Here's an example of how a typical cross stitch pattern looks:



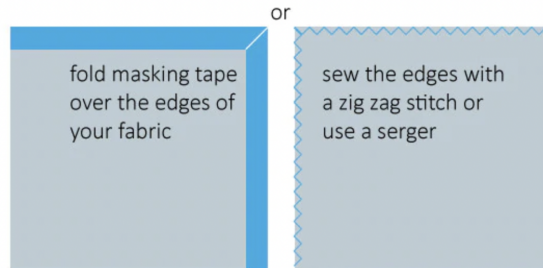
(Figure 1)

Courtesy of StitchedModern.com

- ❖ Each square in the pattern represents the grid created by the weave of the fabric. Each shaded square is a cross-stitch.
- ❖ Starting in the centre of your design is best to make sure that your pattern is centred.
- ❖ Try working with only one colour at a time, doing the pattern in blocks, to avoid confusion & tangles with other colours.

## Choosing a Fabric

Cross stitch can be done on lots of fabrics, but typically is done on linen and Aida cloth. Both of these fabrics tend to fray at the edges, to prevent/minimize this, a zig-zag stitch can be done around the edge. Alternatively, using masking tape on the edges also works.



(Figure 2)

Courtesy of StitchedModern.com

## To Hoop or Not to Hoop

This is an entirely personal choice whether or not to use a hoop/frame. There are many different types and sizes available. Some find it easier for beginners to use hoops.

To set up your hoop:



(Figure 3)

Courtesy of StitchDoodles.com

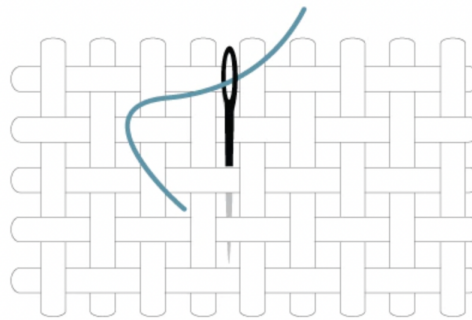
1. Loosen the screw and separate the two rounds. Place the round without the screw flat on a table or work surface.
  2. Lay your fabric over the hoop, make sure that the centre of the fabric is in the centre of the hoops.
  3. Lay the other hoop, over the top of the fabric & press it down so that the edges fabric is stuck between the two hoops.
  4. Gently pull at the fabric to make it taut (flat with no wrinkles and no sagging) as you tighten the hoop.
- ! It's important not to pull too hard at the fabric, it could distort the weave of the fabric & distort the pattern when it's removed from the hoop. !

## Cross-Stitching - How to Get Started

There are a few ways to accomplish a cross-stitch, the first way is to do it in **rows**. This style would be good to use when doing large blocks of the same colour in one area of a pattern. This is typically done going from left to right in rows. Using your pattern is how you will decide where to get started.

- ❖ Begin from the back of your fabric, bring your needle up through the fabric through a hole in the weave, making sure you leave a tail of string about 1 inch long in the back.
- ❖ Pass the needle through another hole in the weave of the fabric that is diagonal from where you started. This is the beginning of your first stitch.

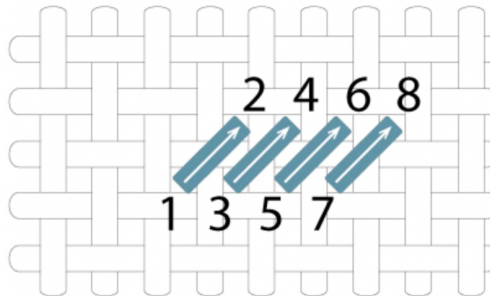
! Be sure to hold onto the 1-inch piece in the back while doing this to be sure your first stitch doesn't become undone! !



(Figure 4)

Courtesy of StitchedModern.com

- ❖ To start the second stitch, bring the needle back up through the hole that is directly below the one you just used.
- ❖ Continue to repeat these steps as the pattern needs until you have a complete row of stitches that slant to the right.



(Figure 5)

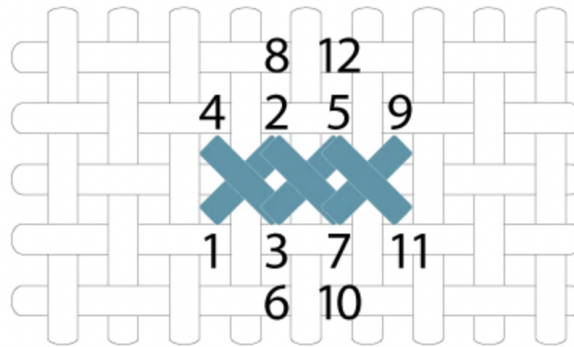
Courtesy of StitchedModern.com

- ❖ To finish this row of stitches, repeat these steps in reverse, taking your needle from behind up through the hole directly below your last stitch and taking it into the hole diagonal to it on the left. Using figure 5 as a guide, you would be taking your needle up through the hole directly below 8 and back into the hole where 6 is.

## How to Make an Individual Cross-Stitch

This style of stitching is best for more detailed or smaller designs where you might be switching out colours or the pattern is more intricate.

- ❖ The pattern of the stitch is still the same but is done all at once rather than in a continuous row and worked backwards.



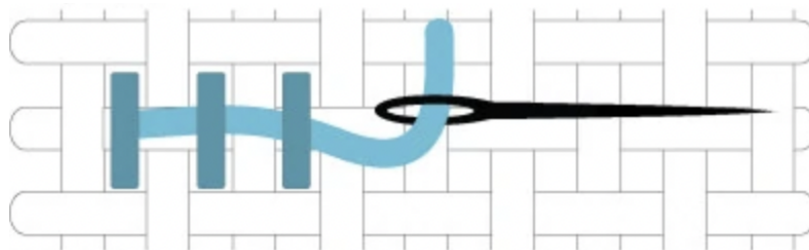
(Figure 6) Courtesy of StitchedModern.com

- ❖ Following figure 6, you would begin coming up through a hole in the weave of the fabric (1) and take the thread across diagonally to (2).
- ❖ On the backside of the fabric, you would bring your needle up through the hole directly below (2) then across again to (4).
- ❖ The main difference in using this technique is to start the next stitch, again from the back of the fabric, two holes to the right, take your needle up through the fabric again to make stitch (5).
  - In figure 6, you are re-using holes from previous stitches, to make sure that they align properly. (6) goes through the same hole as (3) did and so on.

## How to End a Thread

Whether you are finishing a project, running out of thread or starting a new colour, here's how to finish off your thread.

- ❖ On the backside of the fabric, pass the needle under three (or more) completed stitches to secure the thread. Trim the remaining thread, being careful not to cut it too close.



(Figure 7) Courtesy of StitchedModern.com