



## A beginner's guide to cross stitch

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Learning how to cross stitch is easy and these are cross stitch instructions for beginners.

#### What is a cross stitch?

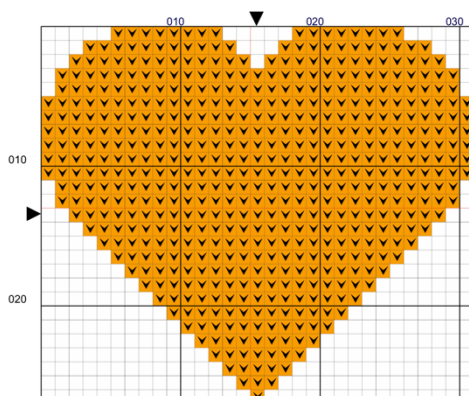
Cross stitch is a form of counted thread embroidery that has been around for many years. It is one of the easiest forms of hand embroidery to learn. Cross stitch is comprised of X shaped stitches done on fabric with an even and open weave like Aida or linen



#### Step 1: Reading a cross stitch chart

A cross stitch chart tells you everything you need to know about where to stitch and what colour to use. The grid on the chart corresponds to the weave of the fabric, and each coloured square on the chart represents one cross stitch.

A combination of colours and symbols in each square tells you which colour to use.



	Number	Name:	Strands	Length	Stitches
▼	DMC 3854	Autumn Gold MD	2	0.4 skeins	562

## Step 2: Finding the centre of your pattern and fabric

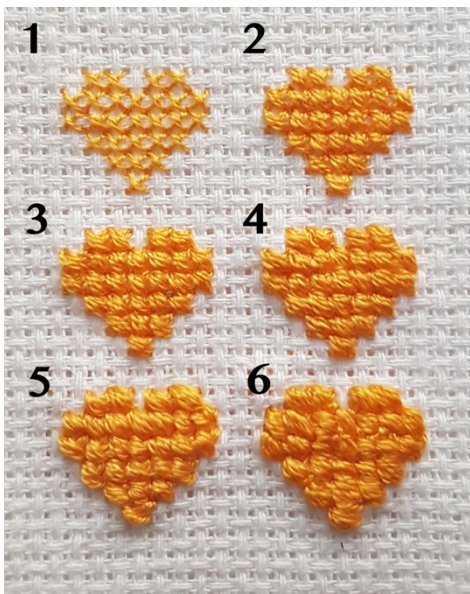
When you begin a new cross stitch project, it is a good idea to start stitching from the centre of your design. That way you make sure your design is in the middle of the fabric. Small arrows on the edge of the chart indicate where the centre points start, follow the red lines to find the centre of the pattern.

Next find the centre of your fabric, fold it in half one way and then fold in half the other way. Pinch the crease at the centre point. To mark it you can place a pin in the centre or make a small stitch.

## Step 3: Using a hoop frame

To use an embroidery hoop, first unscrew and separate the two hoops. Place the smaller hoop (one without the screw) flat onto a work surface. Lay the Aida fabric over the hoop making sure the centre of the fabric is in the centre of the hoop. Place the other hoop over the fabric and press it down so the fabric is sandwiched between the two hoops. Gently pull the fabric taut as you tighten the screw on the hoop.

Don't pull the fabric too tight or it will distort the weave of the fabric.



## Step 4: Prepare the thread

Pick the colour of embroidery thread you are starting with and cut the length to around 18 inches. If you have the thread too long the thread is more likely to get knotted when you stitch.

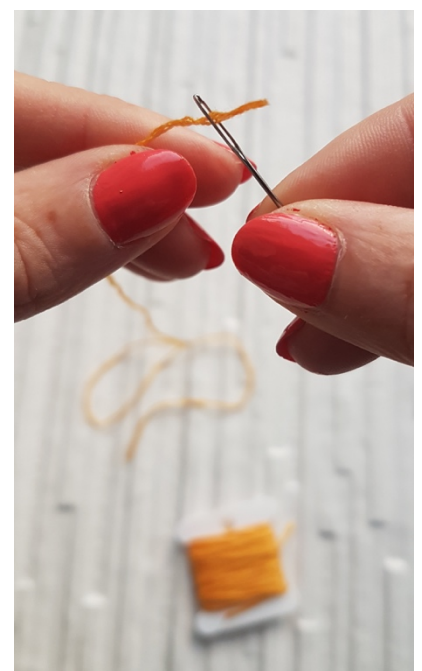
Embroidery thread (floss) is made up of 6 strands, these are twisted together. Your pattern will tell you how many strands are recommended. Have a look at the thread coverage chart to determine how many strands you want to use. The number represents the number of strands used.



To separate out the strands, hold the thread with one hand and pinch the end of one strand with the other hand. Gently and slowly pull the strand up and out until it is separate from the remaining strands. Pulling multiple strands may cause the thread to knot.

## Step 5: Thread your needle

The needle provided is the perfect size for you 14 count Aida fabric. Thread your needle just as you would a needle for hand sewing. In the sample provided you would start with DMC 312 – Navy blue light, this requires 2 strands. Make a knot at the end of the thread and cut any hangover thread after the knot.



### Step 6: Making a row of cross stitches

Cross stitch is generally worked in rows going from left to right. Starting from the back side of the fabric, bring your needle up through a hole towards the front until you knot meets the back of the fabric. Next pass your needle through a hole diagonally across from where you started to make a slanted half cross stitch / Follow your pattern to see how many stitches in that row you need and continue stitching along the row to make a series of half cross stitches.

Next return across the row making a series of half cross stitches in the other direction. Once you have completed that section bring the thread to the back and knot.

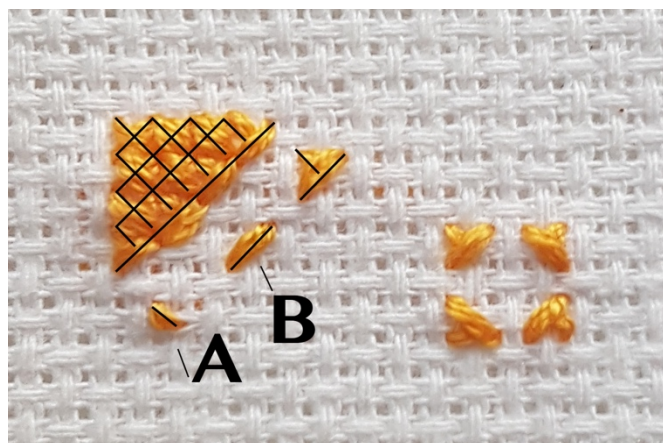
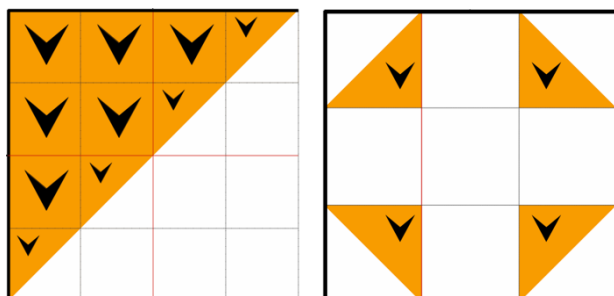


### Step 7: Making individual cross stitches

In some places on the design it may be easier to make one complete cross stitch before moving on to the next stitch instead of working in rows.

### Step 8: Half stitch

The half stitch is half of a cross stitch. It is indicated in the chart with the same symbol but on a smaller scale. Start by bringing the needle through hole 1 and into the centre of that cross stitch (A). Go to hole 2 and diagonal stitch across to hole 4 (B). There are 4 different directions a half stitch can be in.



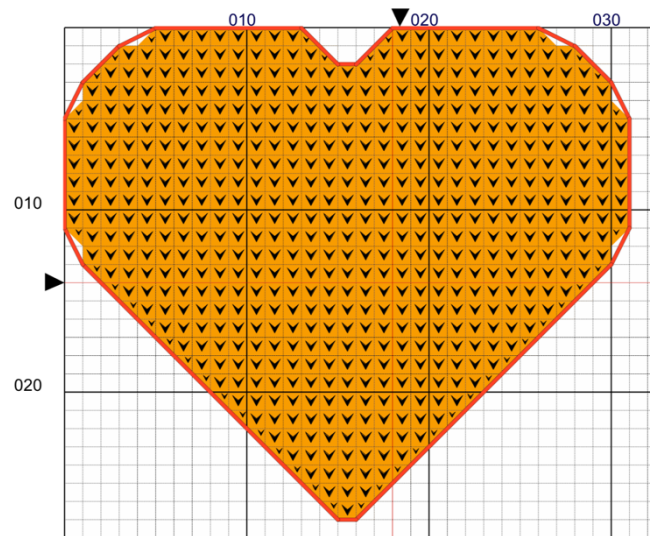
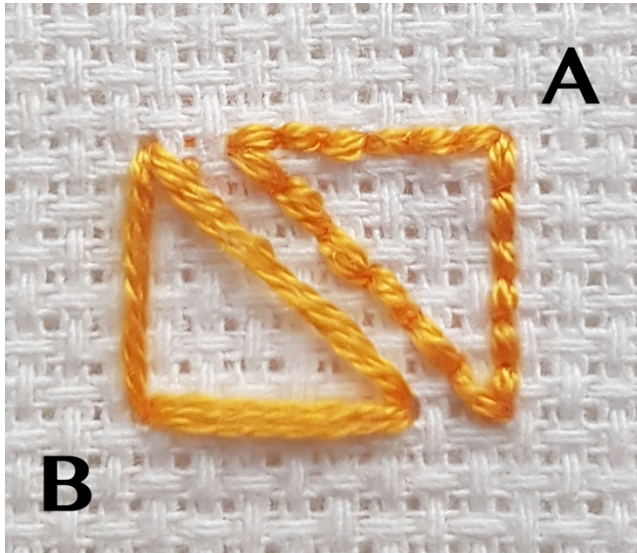


### Step 9: Back stitch (A)

A back stitch is essentially a line made with the thread. It is used to outline or add detail to the design. It is best to back stitch once you have completed all your cross-stitching. Start the stitch at hole 1 in a straight line to hole 2, start a new line through hole 3 and bring the stitch back on itself back to hole 2, carry on to hole 3 and start the process again.

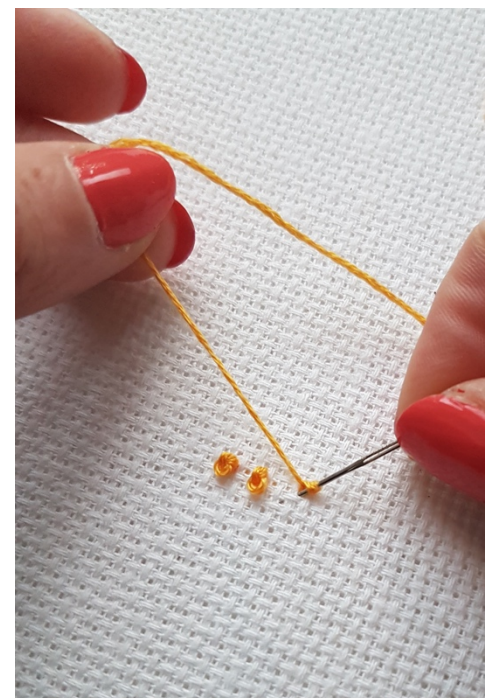
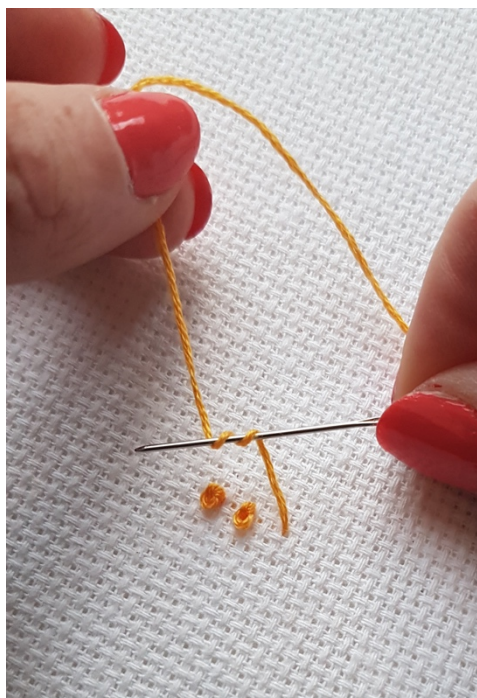
### Step 10: Free hand stitch (B)

Free hand stitch is similar to back stitch but you skip a few more stitches in-between



### Step 11: French knot

The French knot is used in cross stitch designs to add extra detail or dimension. To make a French knot bring the needle up through the hole, hold your thread taut with one hand and wrap the thread twice around the end of needle. Gently pull the thread so that the wrapped threads tighten, insert the needle back into the same hole until the knot is formed and lies securely on the surface. Here is an example of what a French knot looks like on a chart.



### Step 12: Finishing touches

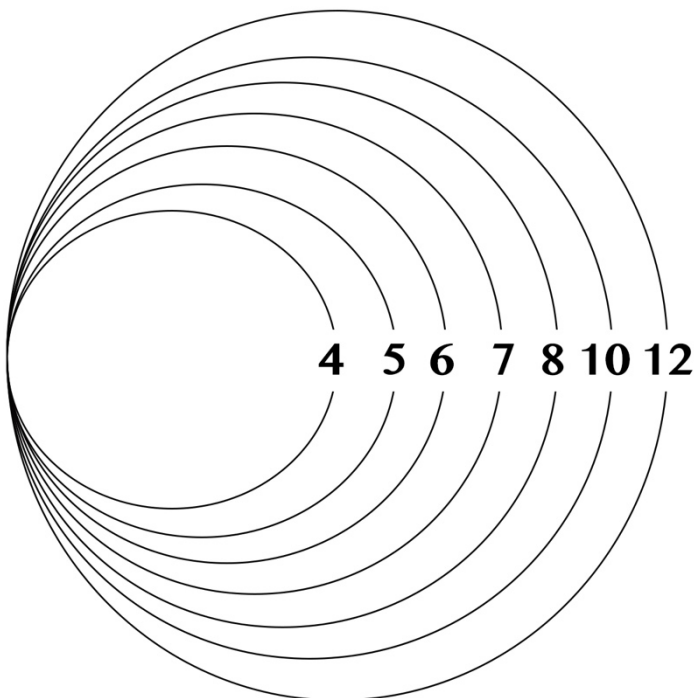
Once you have finished your cross-stitch pattern and you would like to frame it in your hoop. Separate the embroidery hoop and select the smaller hoop as a template. Take your felt and trace around the hoop onto the felt, cut this out.

Place the Aida fabric back into embroidery hoop, tighten and make sure the design is central and aligned with the hoop fastening.

Trim any excess fabric leaving at least one inch of fabric. Thread a needle with enough thread to go all the way around the hoop. Sew around the edge of the excess fabric with large running stitches. Once you have stitched all the way round to where you started, remove the needle and take both thread ends, holding one in place and pulling on the other until the fabric is gathered. Tie a knot and remove any excess thread. Take the felt circle you cut earlier and either glue gun this in to position or stitch this into place making sure you catch both the felt and Aida fabric with each stitch. Continue all the way round the hoop and secure the end with a hidden knot.

### Hoop guide

- Hoops are measured on the outside rim
- Sizes differ from company to company, below is a list of DMC hoops
  - You can also buy tiny hoops from 1 to 3 inch
  - For huge hoops 14 inch and up look for quilting hoops
- For the size of the fabric add at least 5cm / 2inch to the size of the hoop  
(For example, an 8inch hoop requires fabric 25cm x 25cm)



inch	cm
4	10
5	12.5
6	15
7	17.5
8	20
10	25
12	30

### **Tips and problem solving**

- Aim for a nice easy tension on your stitches. Don't pull them so tight that they warp the fabric or leave them so loose that they gape. The stitches should lie flat against the fabric without pulling against it.
- Don't make long jumps across the back of your fabric with the thread because this might show through on the front. When moving to a new area which is more than a few stitches away, you should end your thread and begin again in a new spot.
- Make sure all your stitches are crossed in the same direction

**If you have any cross-stitching queries send me a message. I would love to see your final piece, leave a photo review on my Etsy shop or tag me on Instagram.**

[www.etsy.com/shop/freckledoll](http://www.etsy.com/shop/freckledoll)

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