

# *Beginner's Hand Embroidery*

## STITCH GUIDE

### **25 Essential Stitches to Get You Started**

Welcome to hand embroidery! This guide covers 25 fundamental stitches organized by category. Each stitch includes step-by-step instructions perfect for beginners.

*In these pages:*

<b>Starter Tips for Beginners</b>	_____	page 2
<b>Outline &amp; Line Stitches</b>	_____	page 3
<b>Filling Stitches</b>	_____	page 6
<b>Decorative &amp; Textured Stitches</b>	_____	page 9
<b>Knotted &amp; Woven Stitches</b>	_____	page 12

## *Getting Started*

### **Basic supplies you'll need:**

- Embroidery needle (size 7-9 for beginners)
- Embroidery floss (6-strand cotton), DMC is a popular brand and widely available
- Embroidery hoop (4-6 inches), beechwood recommended for quality hold
- Fabric (midweight cotton or linen works best)
- Embroidery/Sewing scissors (or other sharp scissors)
- Stick & Stitch pattern -or- Disappearing / Water-soluble transfer pen or pencil

# Starter Tips for Beginners

- ✿ **Start simple:** Begin with running stitch, backstitch, and satin stitch before moving to complex stitches.
- ✿ **Maintain tension:** Keep your thread tension even for neat, consistent stitches.
- ✿ **Use a hoop:** A tight fabric surface makes stitching easier and results cleaner.
- ✿ **Practice on scrap fabric:** Try each new stitch on muslin or scrap cotton first.
- ✿ **Don't stress perfection:** Hand embroidery's charm includes slight irregularities.
- ✿ **Strand count matters:** Use 2-3 strands for most work, 1 strand for fine details, 4-6 for bold coverage.
- ✿ **Thread length:** Use 18-inch lengths to prevent tangling and thread wear.
- ✿ **End properly:** Secure with 2-3 small stitches or knots on the back, or weave under existing stitches.

*Happy Stitching!*

Remember, every embroiderer started as a beginner. Enjoy the meditative process and watch your skills grow with each project.

# Outline & Line Stitches

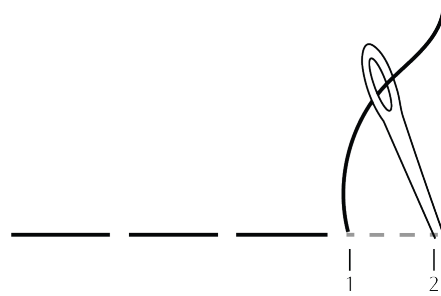
## 1. STRAIGHT STITCH

### Best for:

- ✓ Simple lines
- ✓ Shape Outlines
- ✓ Basting

### How to:

1. Bring needle up at #1
2. Insert needle down at #2 (creating one stitch length)
3. Bring needle up at #3
4. Insert at #4
5. Repeat, keeping stitches even



**Sarah's Tip:** There is a short length between these stitches, thereby making this embroidery slightly less stable when used on open weave, lightweight fabric. Use this stitch on mid-to-heavyweight fabric and consider using a Backstitch on lightweight fabric to provide more stability (though, this option does increase thread use and add additional thread to the back of your work.)

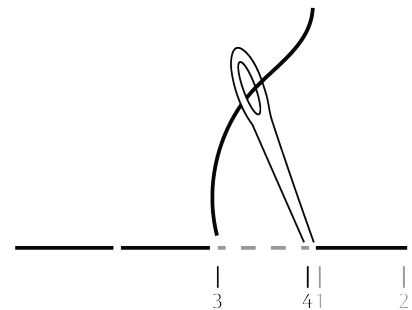
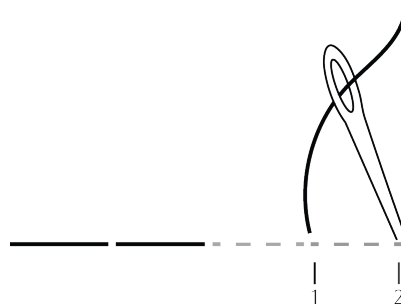
## 2. BACKSTITCH

### Best for:

- ✓ Strong outlines
- ✓ Text
- ✓ Detailed lines

### How to:

1. Bring needle up at #1
2. Insert needle at #2
3. Bring needle up at #3
4. Insert needle back at #4
5. Repeat, always going backward to meet the previous stitch

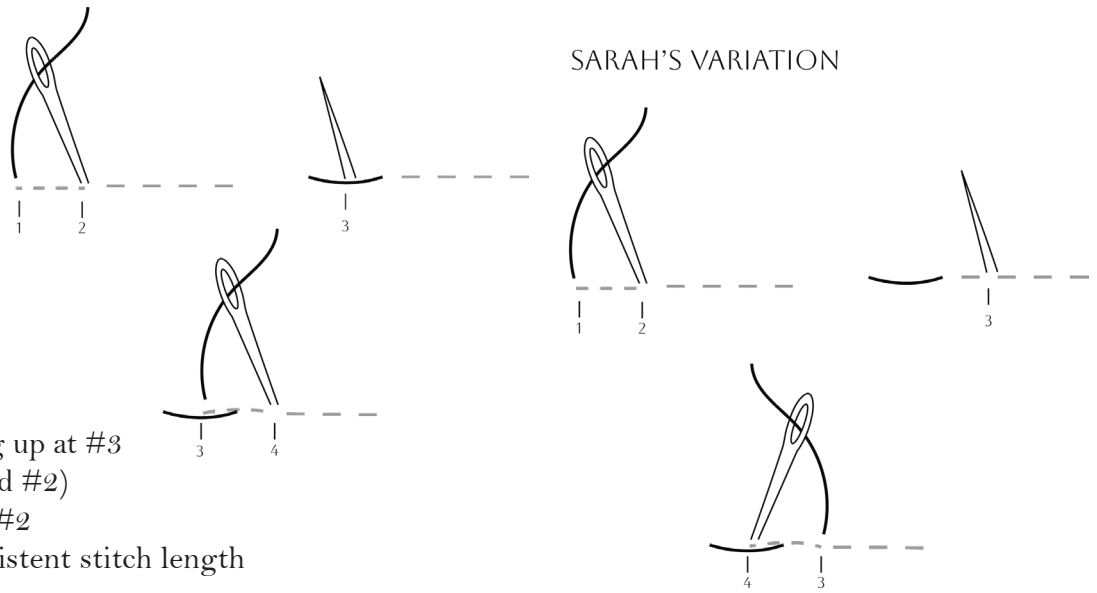


**Sarah's Tip:** Use this stitch on open weave, lightweight fabric to provide higher embroidery stability but consider using a Straight Stitch on mid-to-heavyweight fabric if you'd like to use less thread and decrease the amount of thread on the back of your work.

### 3. STEM STITCH

**Best for:**

- ✓ Curved lines
- ✓ Stems
- ✓ Rope-like lines



**How to:**

1. Bring needle up at #1
2. Insert needle at #2, bring up at #3 (midpoint between #1 and #2)
3. Insert at #4, bring up at #2
4. Repeat, maintaining consistent stitch length

**Sarah's Variation:** This variation allows easier working as you can pull the stith between #1 and #2 to the side while you place the needle down at #4. The trick is to place your #3 stitch at a half stitch length to keep even. This does add additional thread behind your work, but you may find it helps you place your stitches more precisely.

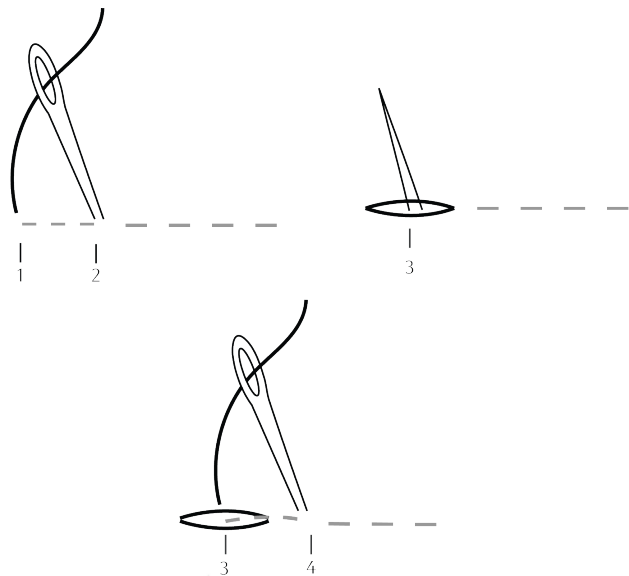
**How to:**

1. Bring needle up at #1
2. Insert needle at #2, bring up at #3 (a half stitch length behind #2)
3. Pull the #1-#2 thread to the side while you insert at #4, (midpoint between #1 and #2)
4. Repeat, maintaining consistent stitch length

### 4. SPLIT STITCH

**Best for:**

- ✓ Smooth outlines
- ✓ Filling
- ✓ Text



**How to:**

1. Make a small straight stitch (#1 - #2)
2. Bring needle up at #3, splitting through the center of the threads of the first stitch
3. Insert one stitch length away
4. Repeat, always splitting the previous stitch

**Sarah's Tip:** If you are experiencing difficulty pulling the thread up between the threads, try reversing the stitch! Make a small straight stitch (#1 - #2), but bring needle up at #4 and down at #3, holding the straight stitch threads apart for easier needle placement. This results in more thread used and additional thread on the back of your work, but allows for easier precision of needle insertion.

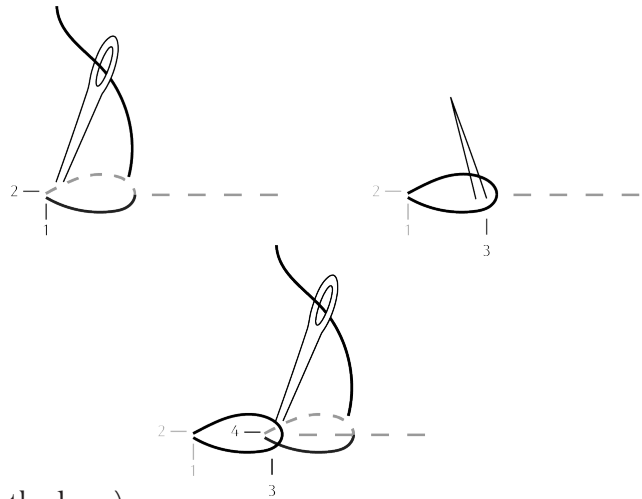
## 5. CHAIN STITCH

### Best for:

- ✓ Bold outlines
- ✓ Filling
- ✓ Decorative lines

### How to:

1. Bring needle up at #1
2. Insert needle back at #2 (right next to #1), leaving thread loose
3. Bring needle up at #3 (one stitch length away, inside the loop)
4. Pull thread through and straight up and pull previously made loop taut
5. Insert thread within the previously made loop at #4 (right next to #3)
6. Repeat, creating chain links



**Sarah's Tip :** For best results, keep constant tension on the loop thread without pulling it through too tightly. If you pull too much of the loop stitch through you'll end up with a thinner loop and point end.

## 6. WHIPPED BACKSTITCH

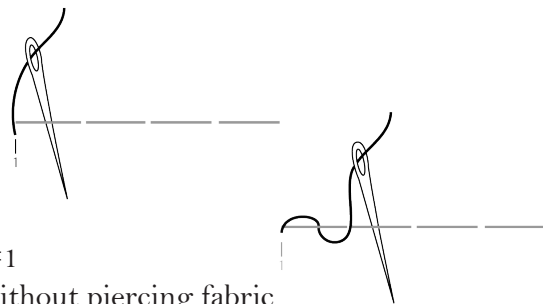
### Best for:

- ✓ Raised decorative lines
- ✓ Lettering
- ✓ Borders

### How to:

1. Work a line of Straight Stitch or Backstitch
2. With same or contrasting thread, bring needle up at #1
3. Slide needle under each backstitch and wrap around without piercing fabric
4. Keep thread tension even for a rope effect

A | CREATE BACKSTITCH [SEE #2]  
B | WHIP IT:



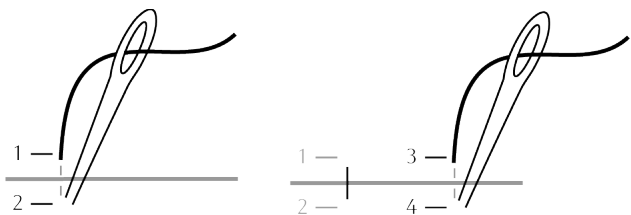
## 7. COUCHING STITCH

### Best for:

- ✓ Attaching thick threads
- ✓ Decorative lines

### How to:

1. Lay a thicker thread (or 6 strand thread) along your stitch line
2. With a thinner thread (approx. 3 strands), bring needle up at #1 (beside thick thread)
3. Make small stitches over the thick thread and insert at #2
4. Repeat over evenly placed intervals



# Filling Stitches

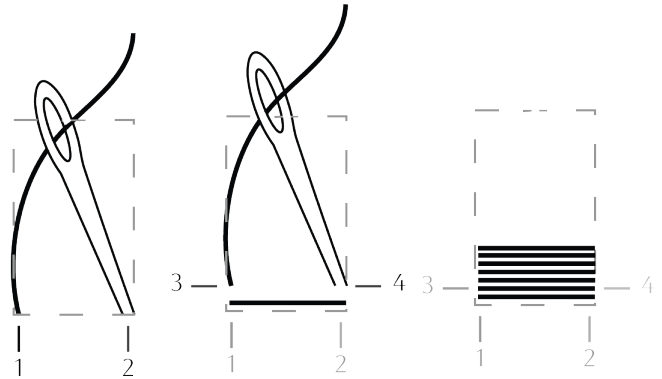
## 8. SATIN STITCH

### Best for:

- ✓ Smooth filling
- ✓ Leaves
- ✓ Petals

### How to:

1. Draw your shape outline, either with disappearing /water-soluable ink pen or with an outline straight stitch
2. Bring needle up at #1 on starting edge
3. Insert at #2 on opposite edge
4. Bring up at #3 (right next to #1)
5. Insert at
6. Cover entire shape



**Sarah's Tip 1:** To use less thread, but decrease stitch stability, you can perform the stitch in an order of #1, #2, #4, #3, then repeat. The back of your work will be cleaner but the stitches will have less fabric to hold on to, so this is best done only on thicker base fabrics, such as muslin cotton.

**Sarah's Tip 2:** Trust the shape outline over your eye when placing stitches next to each other. If you always use the shape outline as your true guide you'll end up with straighter lines on your final work.

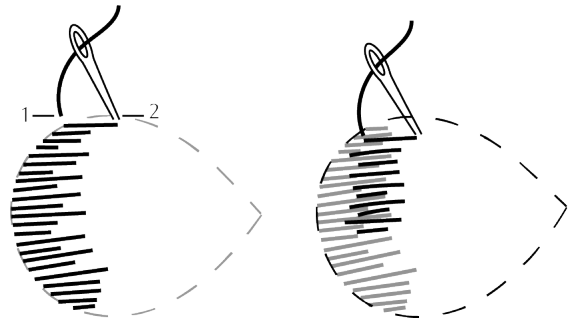
## 9. LONG AND SHORT STITCH

### Best for:

- ✓ Shading
- ✓ Blending colors
- ✓ Realistic fills

### How to:

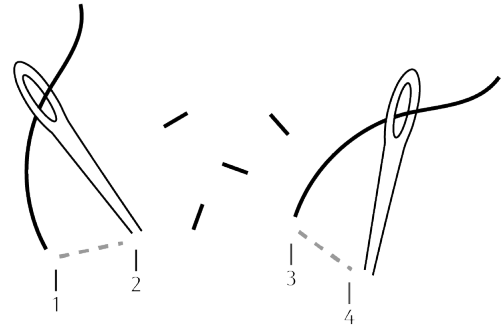
1. Draw your shape outline, either with disappearing /water-soluable ink pen or with an outline straight stitch
2. First row: Alternate long and short stitches along one edge of the shape outline
3. Second row: Alternate long and short stitches, coming up into the first row
4. Continue rows, blending stitches into previous row with stitch length variation
5. Last row: Alternate long and short to finish edge



## 10. SEED STITCH

### Best for:

- ✓ Textured filling
- ✓ Backgrounds
- ✓ Scattered effects
- ✓ Flower Seeds



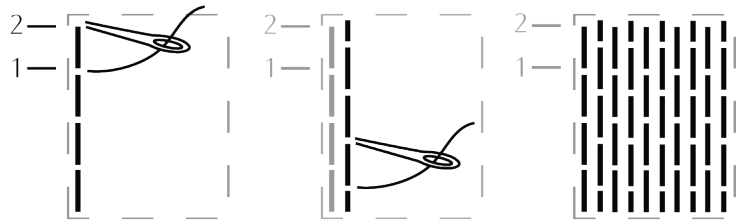
### How to:

1. Make small straight stitches randomly within are by coming up through work at #1 and inserting at #2
2. Vary angles and spacing
3. Can be dense or sparse depending on desired effect

## 11. BRICK STITCH

### Best for:

- ✓ Geometric filling
- ✓ Backgrounds



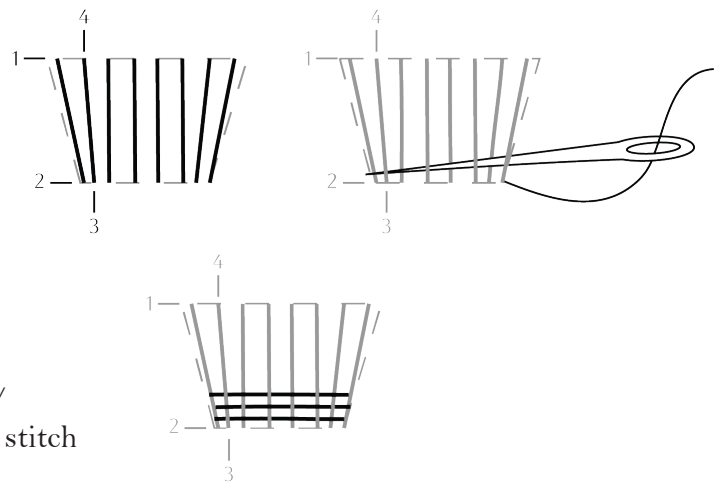
### How to:

1. Draw your shape outline, either with disappearing /water-soluable ink pen or with an outline straight stitch
2. First row: Make a row of straight stitches with small gaps
3. Second row: Offset stitches like bricks, filling gaps
4. Repeat, alternating rows

## 12. BASKET WEAVE STITCH

### Best for:

- ✓ Textured fills
- ✓ Basket effects
- ✓ Tree or plant base



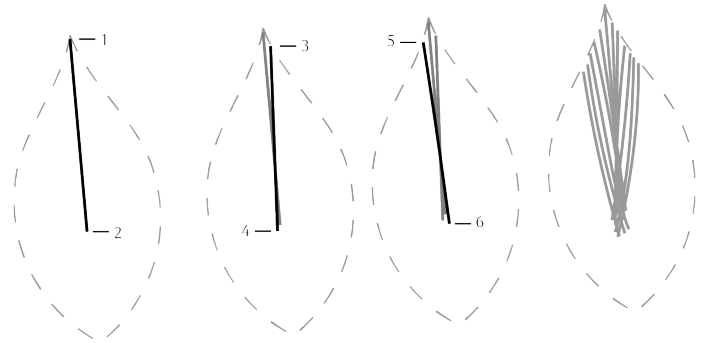
### How to:

1. Draw your shape outline, either with disappearing/ water-soluable ink pen or with an outline straight stitch
2. Place a group of Vertical straight stitches (as shown in #1 -#2 & #3-#4)
3. To build basket texture, bring needle up through fabric on one edge, then weave your needleover and under vertical straight stitches without piercing the fabric.
4. Once you reach the opposite edge, insert your needle along your shape outline
5. On next row, alternate your weaving of the vertical stitches
6. Repeat until shape outline is filled with appropriate thread density for your work

## 13. SATIN LEAF STITCH

### Best for:

- ✓ Leaves
- ✓ Feathers
- ✓ Filling elongated shapes



### How to:

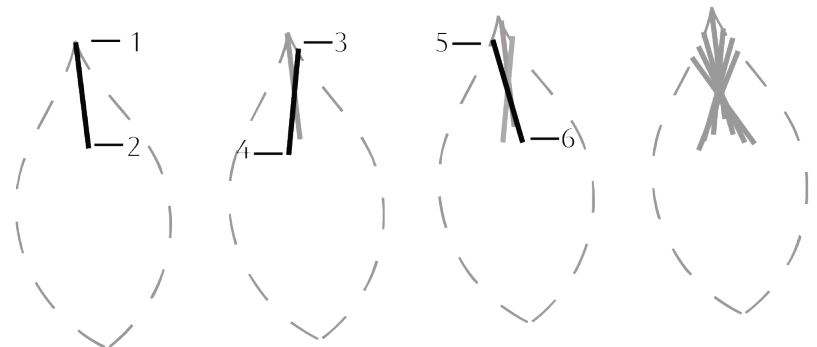
1. Draw your shape outline, either with disappearing/ water-soluble ink pen or with an outline straight stitch
2. Bring up needle at #1
3. Insert needle at #2 (approx.  $\frac{2}{3}$  the length of the shape)
4. Bring up at #3 (slightly right of #1, following shape outline)
5. Insert needle at #4 (just below #2 and slightly left)
6. Bring up at #5 (slightly left of #1, following shape outline)
7. Insert needle at #6 (just below #4 and slightly right)
8. Repeat steps 4-7 until shape is fully filled

**Sarah's Tip:** Just the same as for regular Satin Stitches, trust the shape outline over your eye when placing stitches next to each other. If you always use the shape outline as your true guide you'll end up with straighter lines on your final work. Exactness of needle placement for this stitch is key to a beautiful leaf!

## 14. FISHBONE STITCH

### Best for:

- ✓ Leaves
- ✓ Feathers
- ✓ Filling elongated shapes



### How to:

1. Draw your shape outline, either with disappearing/ water-soluble ink pen or with an outline straight stitch
2. Bring needle up at #1
3. Insert at #2 (approx.  $\frac{1}{4}$  the length of the shape)
4. Bring up at #3 (slightly right of #1, following shape outline)
5. Insert needle at #4 (just below #2 and left)
6. Bring up at #5 (slightly left of #1, following shape outline)
7. Insert needle at #6 (just below #4 and right)
8. Repeat steps 3-6 until shape is fully filled

**Sarah's Tip:** Just the same as for Satin and Satin Leaf stitches, trust the shape outline over your eye when placing stitches next to each other. If you always use the shape outline as your true guide you'll end up with straighter lines on your final work. Exactness of needle placement for this stitch is key to a beautiful leaf!

# Decorative & Textured Stitches

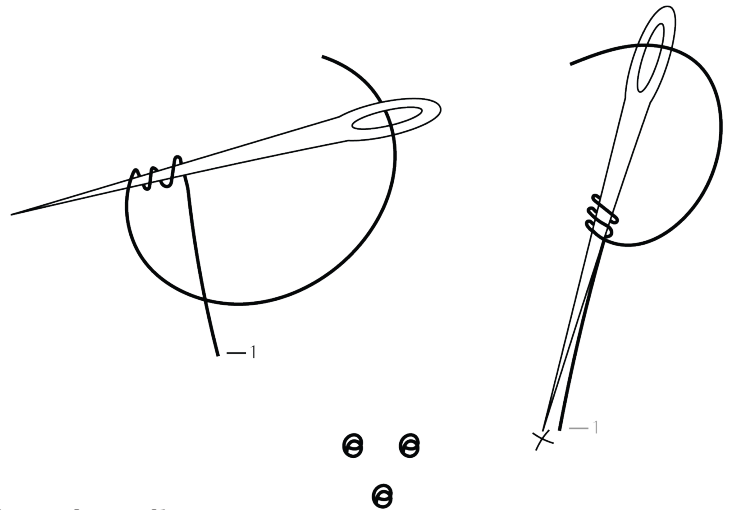
## 15. FRENCH KNOT

### Best for:

- ✓ Flower centers
- ✓ Dots
- ✓ Texture
- ✓ Eyes

### How to:

1. Bring needle up through fabric
2. Hold thread taut with free hand
3. Wrap thread around needle 2-3 times
4. Insert needle close to (but not in) where you brought needle up
5. Keep wraps taut (but not too tight) as you pull needle through



**Sarah's Tip:** The key with French Knots is to keep medium tension as you wrap the thread around the needle, then pull the needle back down through the work. The thread should be taut enough where there is no slack in the strands, but not so tight as to distort how the strands lie on the needle. When inserting the needle back through the work pull through slowly, keeping constant tension on the thread with your free hand (If using embroidery hoop, you will need to hold both the hoop and the excess thread in your non-dominant hand, while your dominant hand hold the needle and places the stitch).

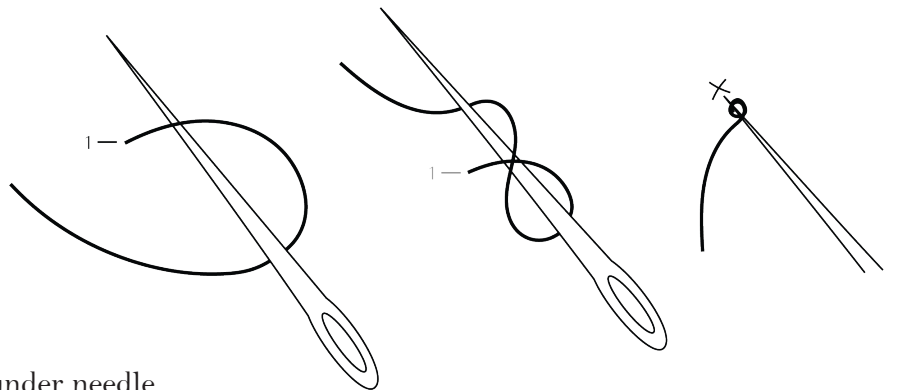
## 16. COLONIAL KNOT

### Best for:

- ✓ Raised dots
- ✓ More stable than French knots

### How to:

1. Bring needle up at #1
2. Hold thread taut
3. Make a loop over needle tip, passing under needle
4. Wrap working thread over and under needle tip once
5. Insert needle near (but not in) #1 and pull through

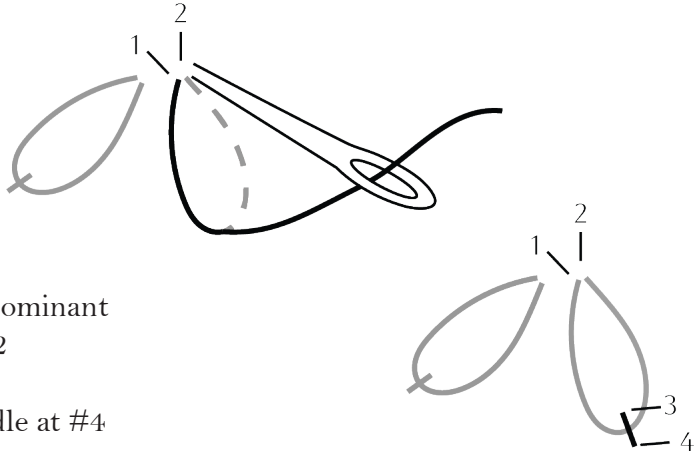


**Sarah's Tip:** Similar to the French Knot, the key with Colonial Knot is to keep medium tension as you wrap the thread around the needle, then pull the needle back down through the work. The thread should be taut enough where there is no slack in the strands, but not so tight as to distort how the strands lie on the needle. When inserting the needle back through the work pull through slowly, keeping constant tension on the thread with your free hand (If using embroidery hoop, you will need to hold both the hoop and the excess thread in your non-dominant hand, while your dominant hand hold the needle and places the stitch).

## 17. LAZY DAISY

### Best for:

- ✓ Flower petals
- ✓ Leaves
- ✓ Decorative loops



### How to:

1. Bring needle up at #1
2. Create a loose loop and hold with your non-dominant hand while you place the needle down at #2
3. Bring needle up at #3
4. Make small straight stitch by inserting needle at #4 (creating the anchor stitch over the loop)
5. Pull through until thread is taut (but not tight) and repeat (if needed)

**Sarah's Tip 1:** For best results, keep constant tension on the loop thread without pulling it through too tightly. If you pull too much of the loop stitch through you'll end up with a thinner loop and point end.

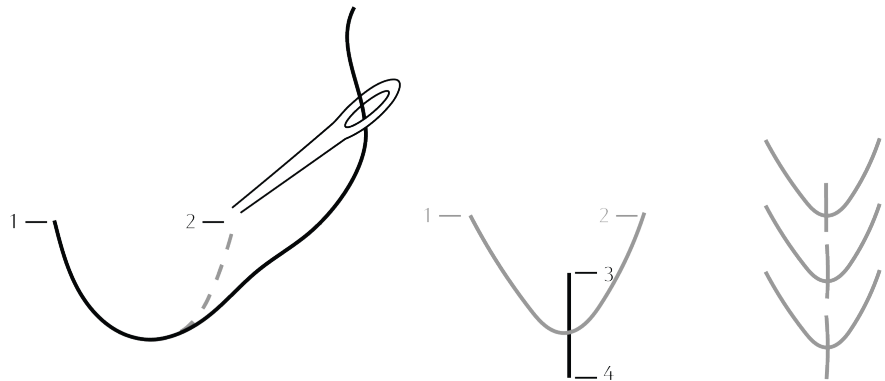
**Sarah's Tip 2:** By adjusting the stitch length between #3 & #4 you can achieve different appearance results in your work. A shorter stitch will create a more invisible loop anchor, while a long stitch may work beautifully in creating unique floral shapes as a type of flower stamen.

**Sarah's Tip 3:** Using this stitch as an outline before or after filling with Satin, Satin Leaf, or Fishbone stitch is a good, beginner way to get a clean outline edge on the shape. It also results in having a raised edge of the shape, adding a unique texture to your work.

## 18. FLY STITCH

### Best for:

- ✓ Scattered leaves
- ✓ Seaweed
- ✓ Textured leaf filling
- ✓ Decorative elements



### How to:

1. Bring needle up at #1
2. Insert at #2 (level to #1), maintaining loose thread loop
3. Bring up at #3 below previous loop stitch and centered, gently pulling the thread taut
4. Thread over loop stitch and insert at #4
5. Pull through, make small anchor stitch
6. Repeat as needed

**Sarah's Tip:** By varying the tautness of the loop and length of the anchor stitches (#3 - #4), you can adjust the appearance of your work. For leaves, it is best to make the loop very taut, but anchor stitches very short to create the best filling result.

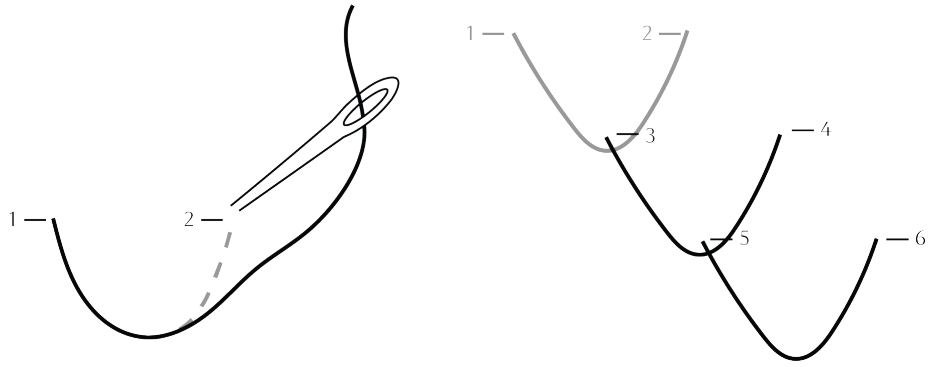
## 19. FEATHER STITCH

### Best for:

- ✓ Branches
- ✓ Seaweed
- ✓ Decorative borders

### How to:

1. Bring needle up at #1
2. Insert at #2 (level to #1), maintaining loose thread loop
3. Bring up at #3
4. Thread over loop stitch and insert at #4, maintaining loose thread loop
5. Bring up at #5 and repeat as needed



**Sarah's Tip:** By altering loop sides as you continue your work will result in a feathery pattern (so rather than loop #5 - #6 being to the right of loop #3 - #4, it would be to the left)

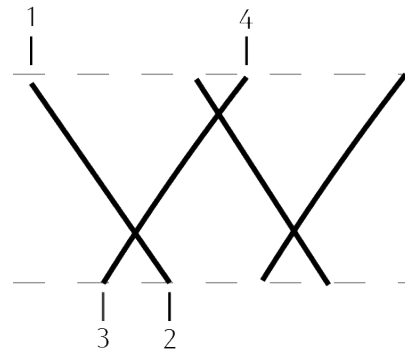
## 20. HERRINGBONE STITCH

### Best for:

- ✓ Borders
- ✓ Filling
- ✓ Decorative bands

### How to:

1. [Optional] Draw your parallel lines with disappearing or water-soluble ink pen
2. Bring needle up at #1
3. Insert at #2 and pull through
4. Bring needle up at #3
5. Insert at #4 and pull through
6. Repeat, creating crossed pattern



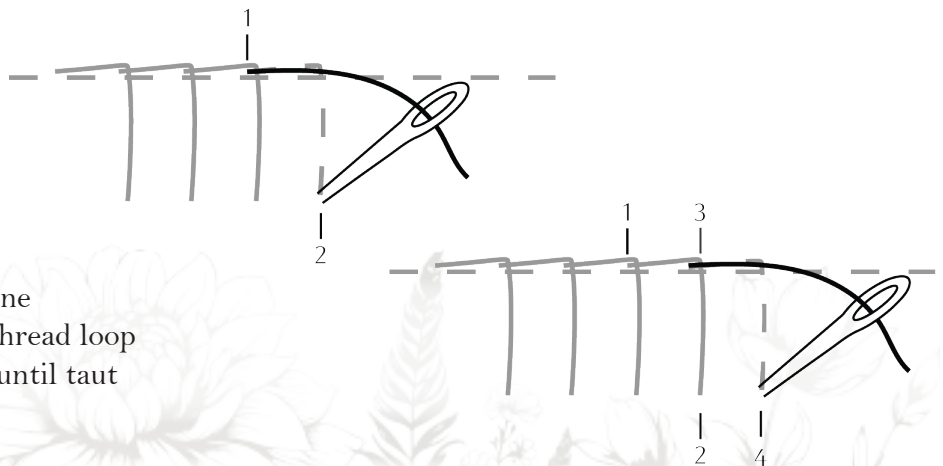
## 21. BLANKET / BUTTONHOLE STITCH

### Best for:

- ✓ Edges
- ✓ Appliqué
- ✓ Decorative borders

### How to:

1. Bring needle up at #1 on edge line
2. Insert at #2, maintaining loose thread loop
3. Bring up at #3 and pull thread until taut
4. Repeat along edge



# Knotted & Woven Stitches

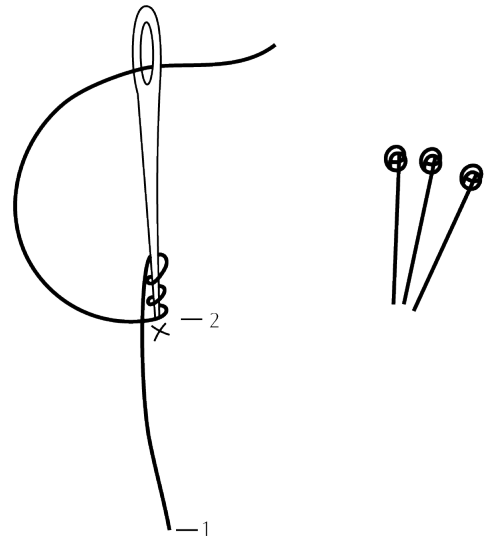
## 22. PISTIL STITCH

### Best for:

- ✓ Stamens
- ✓ Antennae
- ✓ Hair-like details

### How to:

1. Bring needle up at #1
2. Insert at #2 (where you want pistil end)
3. Bring up near #2
4. Wrap thread around needle 1-2 times (like French knot)
5. Pull through, keeping even thread tension



**Sarah's Tip:** The key with French Knots is to keep medium tension as you wrap the thread around the needle, then pull the needle back down through the work. The thread should be taut enough where there is no slack in the strands, but not so tight as to distort how the strands lie on the needle. When inserting the needle back through the work pull through slowly, keeping constant tension on the thread with your free hand (If using embroidery hoop, you will need to hold both the hoop and the excess thread in your non-dominant hand, while your dominant hand hold the needle and places the stitch).

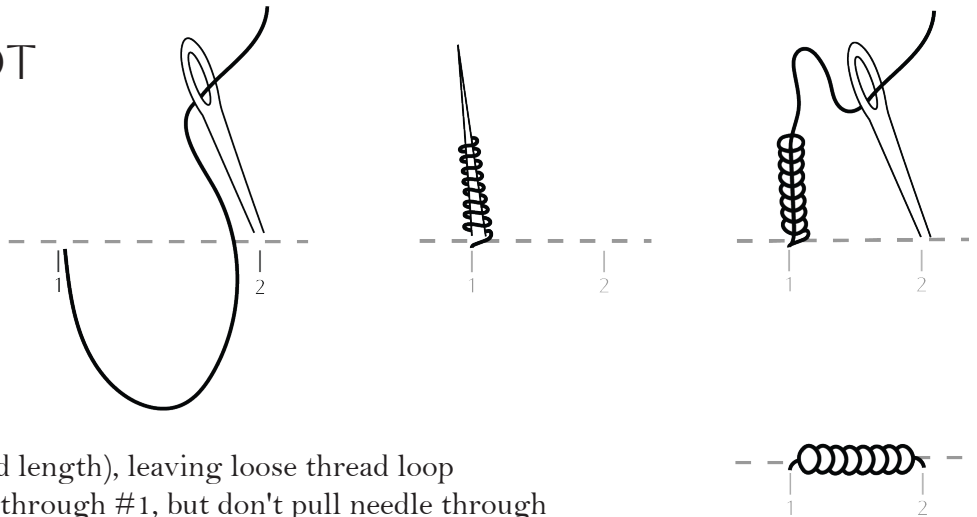
## 23. BULLION KNOT

### Best for:

- ✓ Roses
- ✓ Caterpillars
- ✓ Flower center fillings
- ✓ Dimensional elements

### How to:

1. Bring needle up at #1
2. Insert at #2 (at your desired length), leaving loose thread loop
3. Bring needle point back up through #1, but don't pull needle through (Needle should be half above and half below fabric)
4. Wrap loop thread (#1 - #2) around needle 8-12 times (You are aiming to make the stacked needle wraps the same length as the distance between #1 and #2)
5. With non-dominant hand, hold needle wraps loosely with your dominant hand gently pulls the needle through the loops until taught (but not tight)
6. Insert at #2 to secure



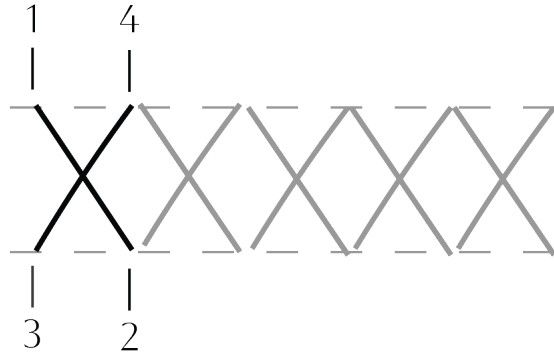
## 24. CROSS STITCH

### Best for:

- ✓ Geometric designs
- ✓ Samplers
- ✓ Counted work
- ✓ Traditional borders

### How to:

1. Bring needle up at #1
2. Insert at #2
3. Bring up at #3
4. Insert at #4 to create an X shape
5. Repeat as needed



## 25. WOVEN WHEEL (SPIDER WEB ROSE)

### Best for:

- ✓ Dimensional flowers
- ✓ Roses
- ✓ Circle filling

### How to:

1. Draw your circle shape outline with disappearing or water-soluble ink pen
1. Bring needle up at #1
2. Insert at #2 in center of circle
3. Bring needle up at #3 and continue straight stitches in order from #4 - #6
4. Bring needle up at #7
5. Weave thread over and under the five spoke stitches, alternating without piercing fabric
6. Continue weaving in circular pattern
7. Keep thread flat and pull gently
8. Weave until spokes are covered and the desired fill density is achieved

