

MAIDENWOOD

Embroidery Designs

Hand Embroidery Basics  
*Stitching Guide*



Written by: Sophie Routhier

# Introduction

Hello and welcome to Maidenwood!

I'm Sophie, I have been doing hand embroidery since I was very young and I am beyond excited to be sharing this passion of mine with you!

Each design that I create is truly a labor of love, often starting from hand drawn sketches or photography, then carefully transformed into finished patterns.

In this little booklet, I've written out instructions for all the stitches you will need in the Woodland Mushroom Series.

If you are new to this craft, the one piece of advice that I would love to share with you is to try not to get too bogged down in chasing perfection or in the length of the instructions. After all, embroidery is nothing more than creating stitches with some thread and a needle.

I truly hope that stitching Maidenwood patterns brings you comfort, inspiration and happiness.

Stay cozy & happy stitching!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sophie".

# Hand Embroidery Basics

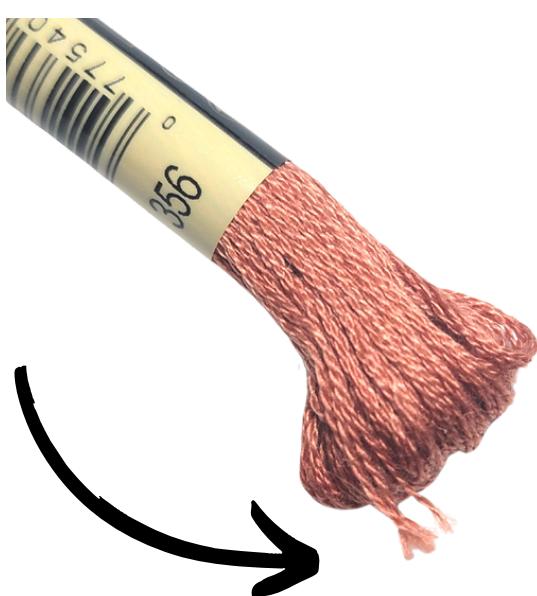
## Stitching Guide

### A skein of 6 strand embroidery floss

Some kits will include full skeins of floss, while other kits may include all pre-cut lengths or a combination of the two. There are also a wide variety of other types of embroidery threads, but 6 strand skeins need a bit of prep to be usable.



Pre cuts are very easy to handle as they can often be used directly, but if you are presented with a full skein, you'll want to know how to unravel it smoothly. (When done improperly, these things become a huge tangled mess)

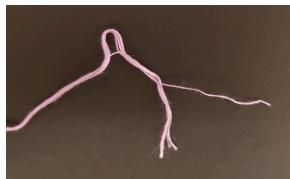


All you need to do is find the end with the colour number and bar code and pull the cut end gently.

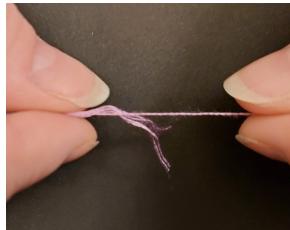
The ideal working length for stitching is to cut a piece that measures from finger tip to elbow. Or finger tip to shoulder, if you are going to double it over.

## Separating strands

One of the most common types of embroidery floss is 6 strand cotton. Each pattern or kit will detail out how many numbers of strands you will need for each type of stitch. Here is how to easily separate each strand from the group.



Start by isolating 1 strand from the thread.



Pinch this single strand between the thumb and index finger then gently run the fingers of your other hand down the main thread, pulling away.



What should result is that the remaining threads will bunch up, down along the shaft of the single thread you are isolating.

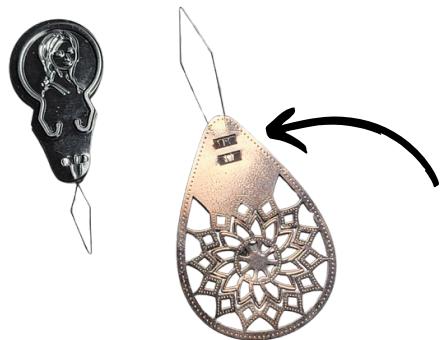


At this stage, simply move your fingers down the length of the thread, gently pulling towards the left. Stop as soon as you feel any resistance.

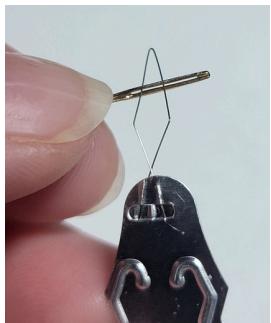
Continue repeating this process a few times, gently pulling and smoothing the threads further and further along down the length, until you reach the end of your thread and have separated your single strand from the thread.

## Threading your needle

Examples of needle threaders.



These things are pretty delicate and they all seem to have the same weak point; the spot where the wire is woven into the frame. Feel free to add a bit of hot glue or Gorilla Glue here to extend the life of this little tool.



Step 1: Pass the wire through the eye of the needle.



Step 2: Pass the thread through the wire, above the needle.



Step 3: Take hold of the needle in one hand, and the needle threader in the other hand, then pull the two apart, bringing the needle up over the wire. Once at this stage, hold onto one end of the thread then finish pulling the needle threader until the loose end of the thread has been pulled through the eye of the needle.



**BEFORE YOU BEGIN** Always double-check how many strands are recommended in your kit for each stitch! Also note, the same type of stitch may require a different number of strands for different sections of the design.

## Anchoring your thread

Often, one of the first questions that comes up for embroidery novices is, "How do I anchor my thread at the beginning and end of working each thread?"

While there are many techniques for doing just that, I prefer this one very simple technique that I'm about that share it with you.

This technique works best when working on handheld embroidery projects that you can easily flip over to see the underneath. Luckily, this kit is exactly that type of project, so you should be all set!

**To secure the beginning of your thread**, hold the tail against the back of your fabric with your index finger, then carefully capture the tail along the back of your fabric with your first 3-4 stitches.

**To secure the end of your thread**, you can choose to capture it along with the starting tail of your next thread, or you can slip it under existing near stitches.

# Hand Embroidery Basics

## Stitching Guide

**Embroidery hoops** are made of wood or plastic and come in a wide variety of sizes. Its primary intent is to maintain even tension on the fabric, in order to allow for easier stitching.



It's best to select a hoop that is smaller than your total fabric piece, though not so small as to require constant reposition to center your working area.

Some stitchers opt to work without a hoop, and will prefer to simply hold the fabric in their hand. So long as you are able to maintain even tension on your fabric and thread, this is also perfectly acceptable.

In order to secure your fabric in your hoop, you will need to loosen the screw at the top of the hoop. This will separate the two layers of your hoop. Set the inside hoop flat on a table, drape your fabric over it, then gently slide the top hoop over the fabric, capturing it in between the inside and outside hoop layers. Begin to tighten the screw, then gently pull on all 4 corners of your fabric, in order to create a smooth and taut working surface within the hoop. Finish tightening the outer hoop until secure.

## Bonus Tips

- Using regular sewing thread that you might have on hand, or 1 strand for your skein, pass a running stitch along the outer edge of your stick & stitch patch. This will help ensure that your pattern will not budge at all while embroidering. Once ready to dissolve your patch, simply remove the running stitch as well.
- If your needle gets sticky and uncomfortable to work with, simply dampen a piece of paper towel with rubbing alcohol and wipe down your needle.

# THE STITCHES

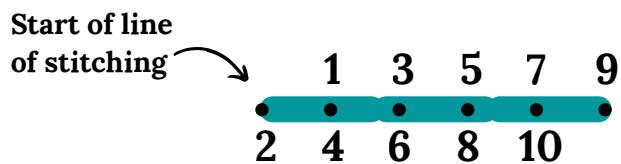
## BACK STITCH

As the name implies, the Back Stitch is worked backward.

Begin by bringing your needle up through the back, (1) one stitch length ahead of where you want to begin your line of stitching, then bring your needle down into the fabric at the starting point of your stitching line (2).

Continue in this fashion, coming up one stitch length ahead of yourself, then going back down the in the same hole that you created with your previous stitch.

A "stitch length" is usually between 3mm-6mm, but can vary depending on the size of your thread and the overall desired finished look.



## CHAIN STITCH

Begin by bringing your needle up through the back, (1) at the very start of your line of stitching, then put your needle back down in the same hole that you came up through (2).

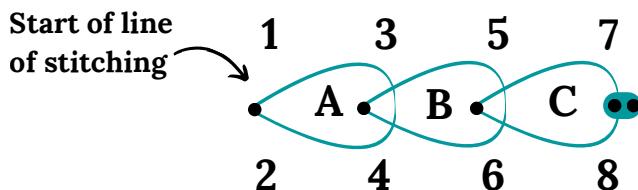
Leave a small loop of thread on top of your fabric. (A) You can secure it momentarily by placing a finger on it.

Next, bring your needle up through your fabric, one stitch length away, (3) making sure that it passes through the loop you left on the front. Pull gently to snug up the loop, but do not pull too tight as that will distort the shape of your loop and fabric.

Once you have created your loop, bring your needle back down in the fabric in the hole you just created (4) and again, leave a loop of thread (B)

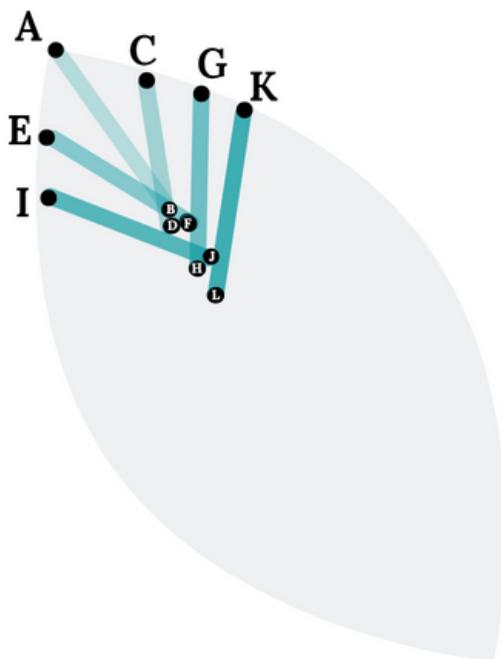
Repeat these steps to create multiple subsequent loops, each anchored through the center of the previous one, creating your chain.

To end your line of Chain Stitch, bring down you last stitch just outside your last loop, rather than through it.



## **FISHBONE STITCH**

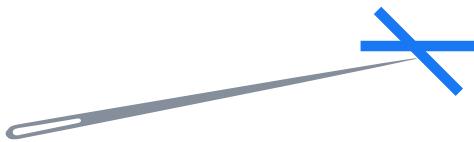
Begin stitching at top of the leaf, adding one straight stitch\* down (Up at **A**, down at **B**). Work your way down, adding straight stitches, on the right and the left, alternatingly. Overlapping the bottom of the stitches gives the leaf's spine a raised effect.



Gray shape indicates approximate area that you want to cover with your stitches. Feel free to experiment with different length stitches to create leaves of varying sizes and shapes.

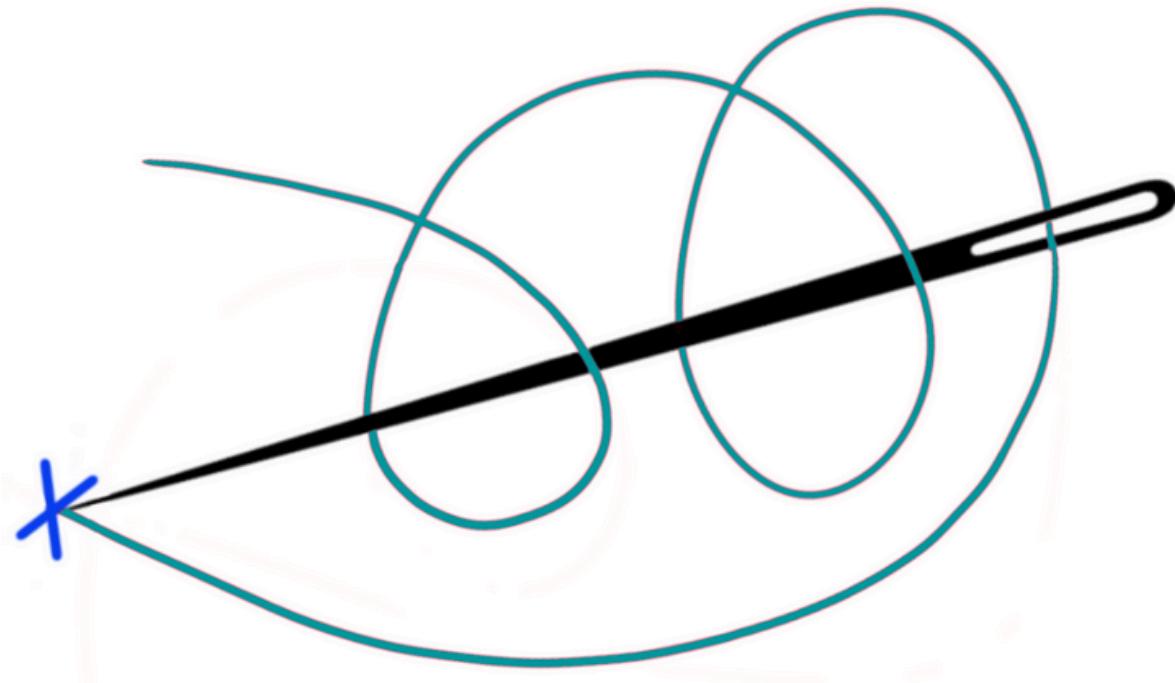
## **FRENCH KNOT**

Begin by bringing your needle up through the fabric in the location where you want to place your French Knot. (Blue X)



- Instructions for Straight Stitch on page 11

Wrap the thread around the needle twice.



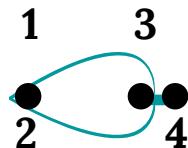
Bring your needle back partway down into your fabric, very near to the location where you brought your needle up. (Blue X)

With one hand, hold your needle steady through the fabric, and gently pull your thread taught with your other hand. This should eliminate the slack in your thread and bring your knot down as close to the fabric as possible, while still being wrapped around your needle.

Once you feel that your thread and knot are snug, gently bring your needle through the fabric the rest of the way and pull your working thread through the loops, creating your French Knot.

## LOOP STITCH

The Loop Stitch is extremely similar to Chain Stitch, however, instead of bringing your needle back down in the center of your loop, you will complete each loop as though it were the final stitch in your line, putting your needle down just on the outside of the loop.



## RUNNING STITCH

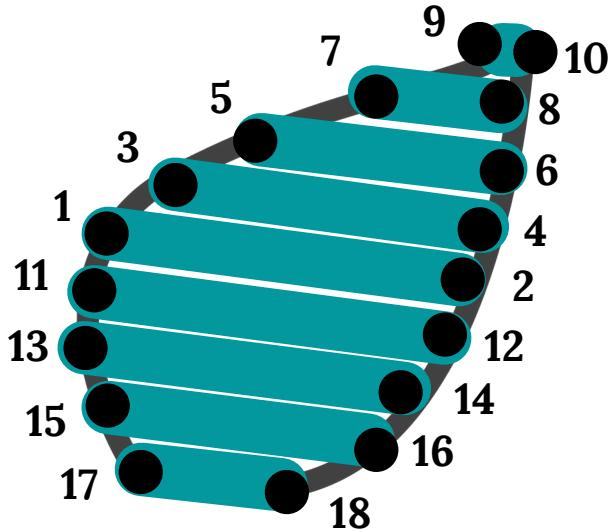
Use 2 strands of thread in a colour that closely matches your fabric. This stitch is often used to gather excess material on the back of your finished hoop.

Come up at A, then down at B. Up at C, down at D. Continue for length of area you wish you stitch.



## SATIN STITCH

Begin by bringing your needle up through the back, along the pattern line, then bring your needle down, directly across. Re- insert your needle directly across from your last exit point. You'll be making parallel stitches that span all the way across the shape, going over and under until you have covered the entire area.



**TIP:** It is often easier to begin in middle of the shape and work outward toward each end.

You can choose the direction and angle for each portion of satin stitch, but keep stitches parallel to each other in every segment.

## **SEED STITCH**

Seed Stitch is created by stitching a series of very small (1mm-3mm) Straight Stitches, each placed in a random direction. Stitches should be kept uniform in length and within approximately the same distance from each other. This creates a sort of polka-dotted effect.



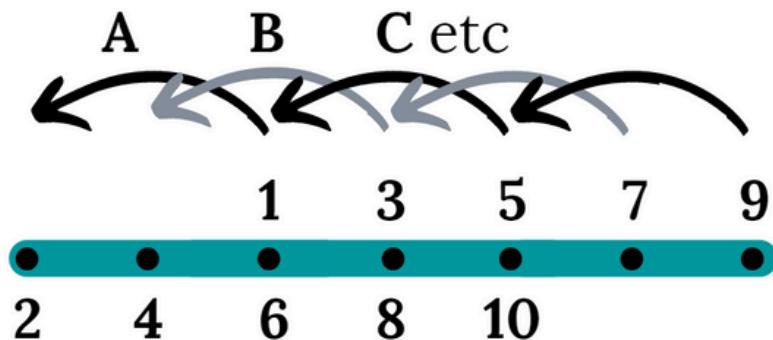
## SPLIT STITCH

Begin as if you were doing a Back Stitch and complete your first stitch. (Stitch **A**, **1** to **2**).

Next, bring your needle up to a second stitch position that is about half as short as you would if you were doing a normal Back Stitch. (**3**).

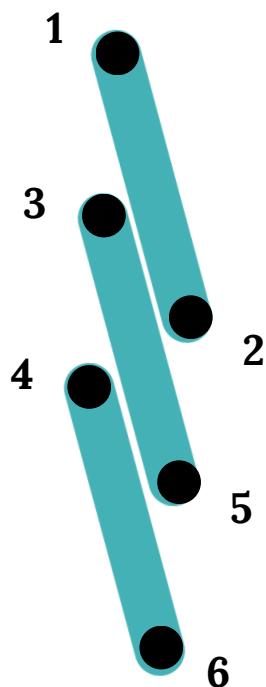
Bring your needle down directly in the middle of your first stitch, (**4**) splitting the ply of the thread. This completes your second stitch (**B**).

Repeat for the length of the line you are covering.



## STEM STITCH

Make a straight stitch, approx. 1/4" long. Come up at 1 and go down at 2. Continue along your pattern line, coming up a space ahead at 3 then bring your needle down at 4, about halfway down the length of your previous stitch. Each subsequent stitch will lay partially next to the previous stitch, at a slight diagonal angle.



**TIP: Whether to slant your stitches to the left or right will often depend on the shape and direction of the line you are stitching. Decide which direction flows more smoothly for each section, then maintain that direction for the length of that line.**

## STRAIGHT STITCH

This stitch is the most simple to do.

Come up at A, then down at B.



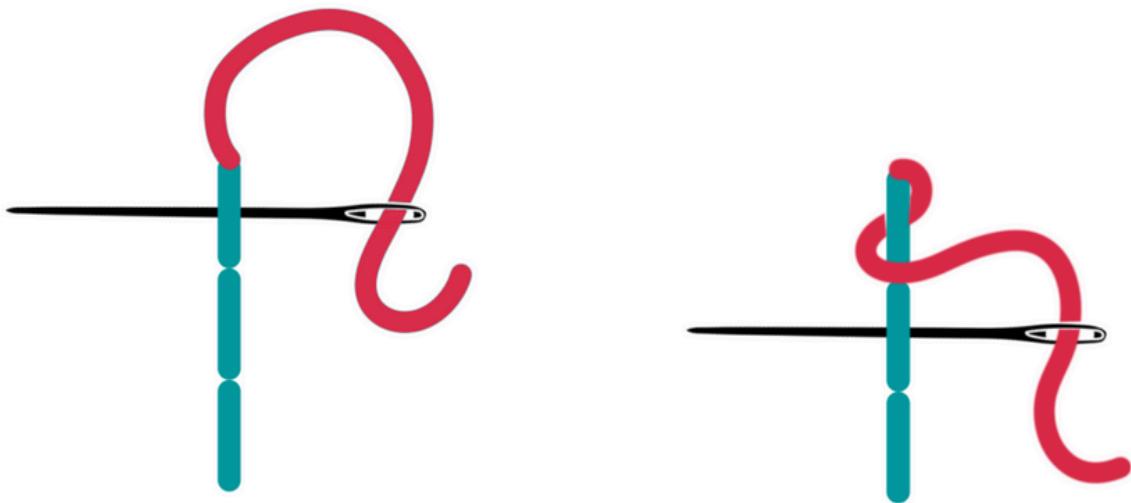
## **WHIPPED BACK STITCH**

Begin by covering the area of the pattern that you are working on with a line of back stitch.

Next, bring your needle up at the start of your line of back stitch and weave your needle under the first stitch, either left to right, or right to left. Similarly to the stem stitch, you will want to pick one direction to work in and continue on in that fashion for the length of your back stitch line.

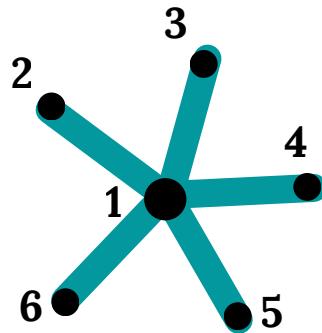
**NOTE: In this illustrated example, a contrasting floss colour is used in order to make the stitching sequence clearly visible.**

**Some patterns will indicate to use the same colour of floss as was used for the back stitches, while other patterns may call for a different colour for the whipped portion, as a means of creating a visually interesting combination ( Think candy cane swirl!).**



## **WOVEN WHEEL STITCH**

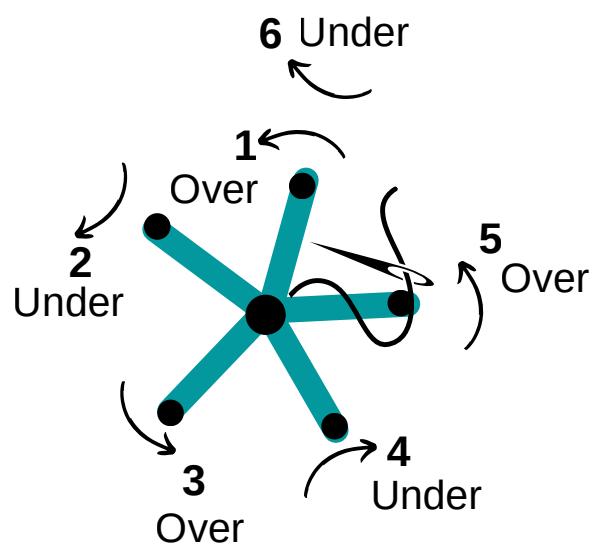
Make a Straight Stitch, coming up at 1 and going down at 2. Complete the 5 foundational straight stitches by coming up at 1 and then down at the outer edge of the wheel.



Next, bring your needle up through the back near the center and begin weaving your needle over and under each Straight Stitch spoke.

You can chose to work clockwise or counter clock wise. Continue weaving in your chosen direction until the spokes are fully covered.

**TIP: Secure your working thread by bringing it down near the outer edge of your woven wheel rose and weave it under existing stitches on the back of your work.**



Thank you so much for supporting  
my small business!

*Happy Stitching!*

**Maidenwood believes that with the right support, everyone has an innate ability to create beautiful things. If you have any questions or simply want to connect, please do not hesitate to reach out! We love to hear from you!**

You can connect with Maidenwood here:

[www.maidenwood.ca](http://www.maidenwood.ca)



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