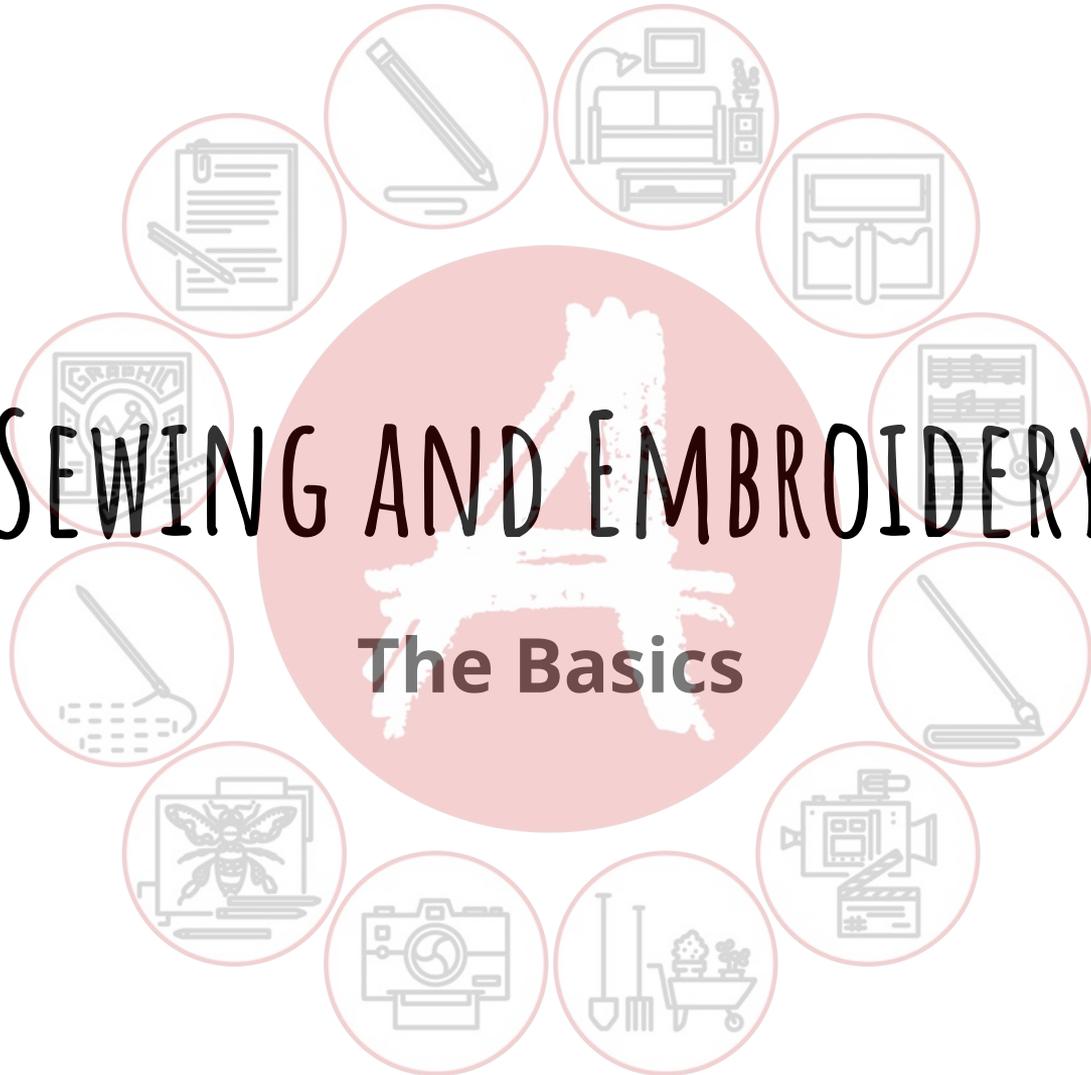


SEWING AND EMBROIDERY

The Basics



LEARNING TO SEW

Learning to sew has a whole host of benefits. It is practical to be able to fix up, mend and create your own handmade items, clothing and gifts, and there are huge benefits of sewing and embroidery to mental health. There has also been a huge recent resurgence in handmade gifts and a 'make-do-and-mend' mentality which has massive benefits to environmental health. But, plainly and simply, sewing and embroidery is a calming, fun and rewarding hobby.

Whatever reason you have for wanting to learn to sew or embroider, this workshop will take you through from basic stitches to embroidery techniques, including writing styles and decorative finesse.

MATERIALS AND THREADS

The great thing about sewing is that, if you have the right needle, you can use any fabric. The same goes for embroidery. You can create embroidered designs on most fabrics, and people often embellish clothing with embroidery. For the sake of simplicity and practice, it isn't necessary to buy expensive or high quality material. You can use the material from a spare tablecloth, an old bed sheet or the lining from a curtain (cotton materials are the best to use if you have them, but use whatever you have to hand).

When sewing fabrics together you can use normal sewing threads, but embroidery thread is much better for use in embroidery (as the name suggests). Embroidery thread is much thicker than sewing thread and so is more visible, which means your designs will show up better. There are, of course, instances in which you may want to use a much finer thread in your embroidered designs, so ultimately it is up to you which to use.

EMBROIDERY HOOPS

You don't need anything other than fabric and thread to get started with embroidery, and for this workshop you certainly don't require any other specific equipment, but if you wanted to take it up as a regular hobby it would be beneficial to purchase an Embroidery Hoop.

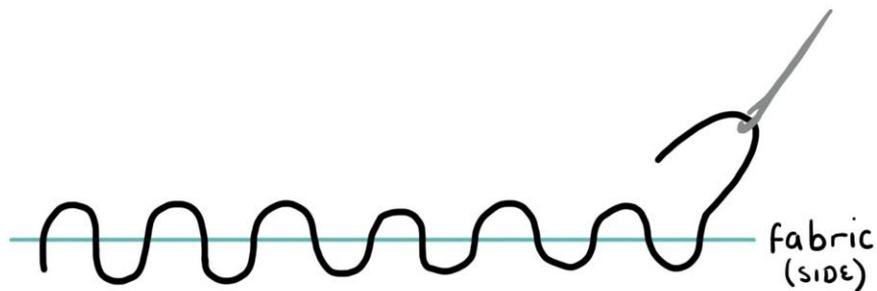
Embroidery Hoops are bamboo hoops that you stretch your fabric across to hold taut and in place whilst you sew your designs. They come in different sizes and aren't particularly expensive, and you may be able to find a full embroidery kit which includes a hoop, threads and even pre-designed patterns to get you started.



BASIC STITCHES

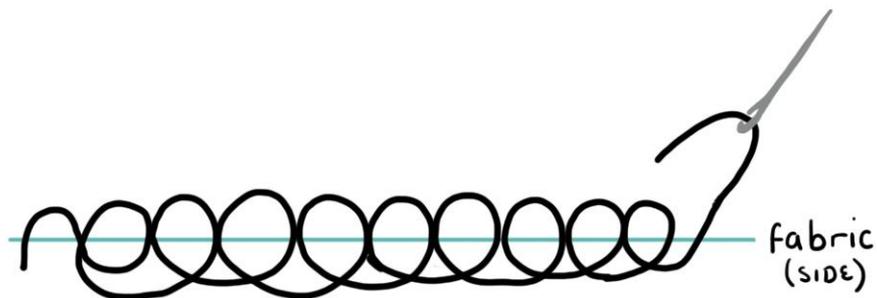
These stitches are simple ones that are most useful in sewing and mending, but they are also the bases for embroidery.

RUNNING STITCH



PATTERN (TOP VIEW)

BACKSTITCH



PATTERN (TOP VIEW)

EXERCISE: BASIC STITCHES

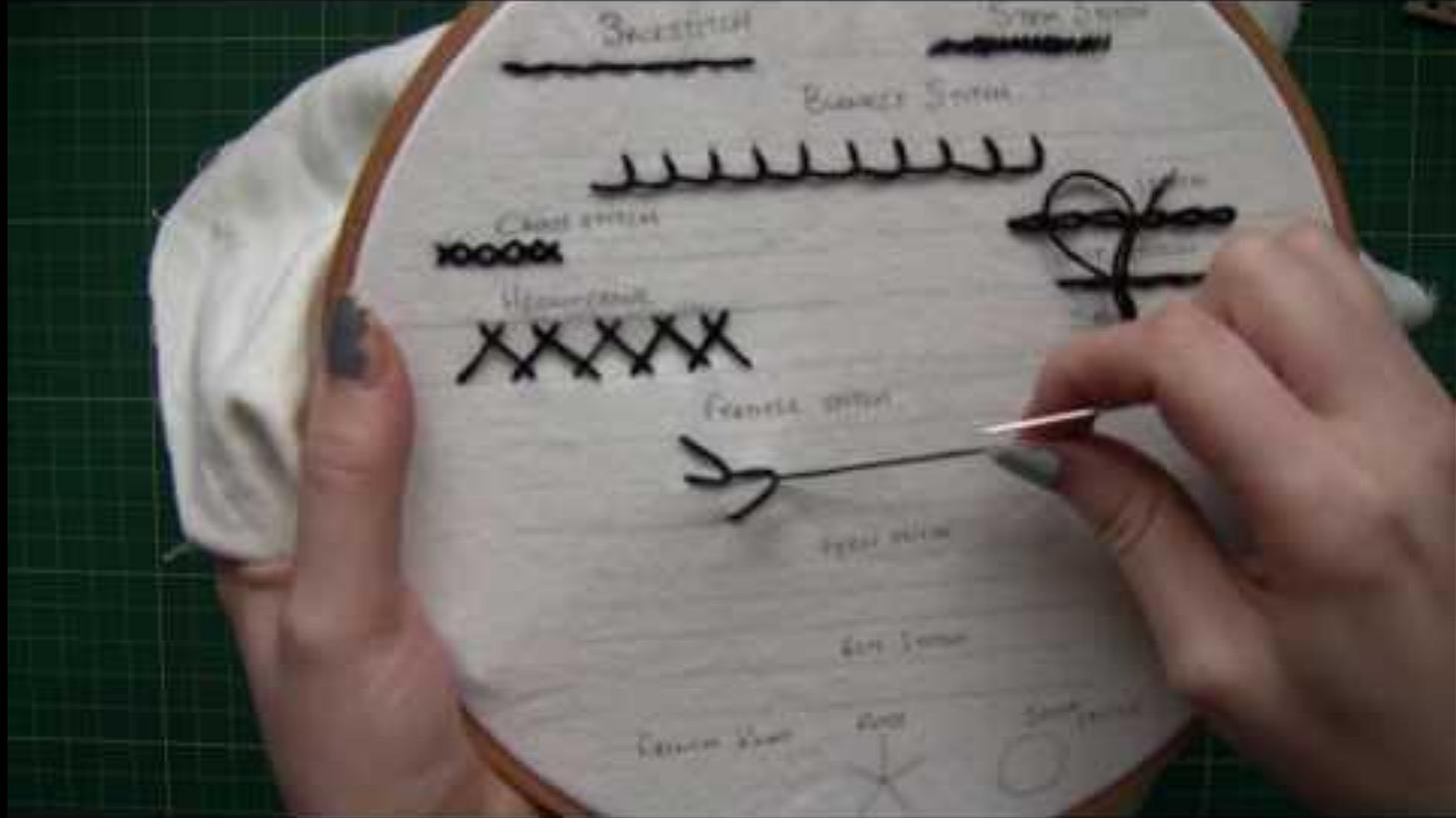
Practice the running stitch and backstitch on a piece of fabric.

It may be helpful to draw pencil guidelines on the fabric first to follow.

Start with a straight line (using both stitches) then try curved lines or patterns. You could even try tracing an entire image outline or simple line drawing.

There are a lot of tutorials online which demonstrate how to perform these stitches and more if you need extra examples, and the OCA has produced a tutorial video (on the next page) to illustrate each of the basic and embroidery stitches mentioned in this workshop.

STITCH TUTORIAL <https://youtu.be/9hlfhWf4X0>



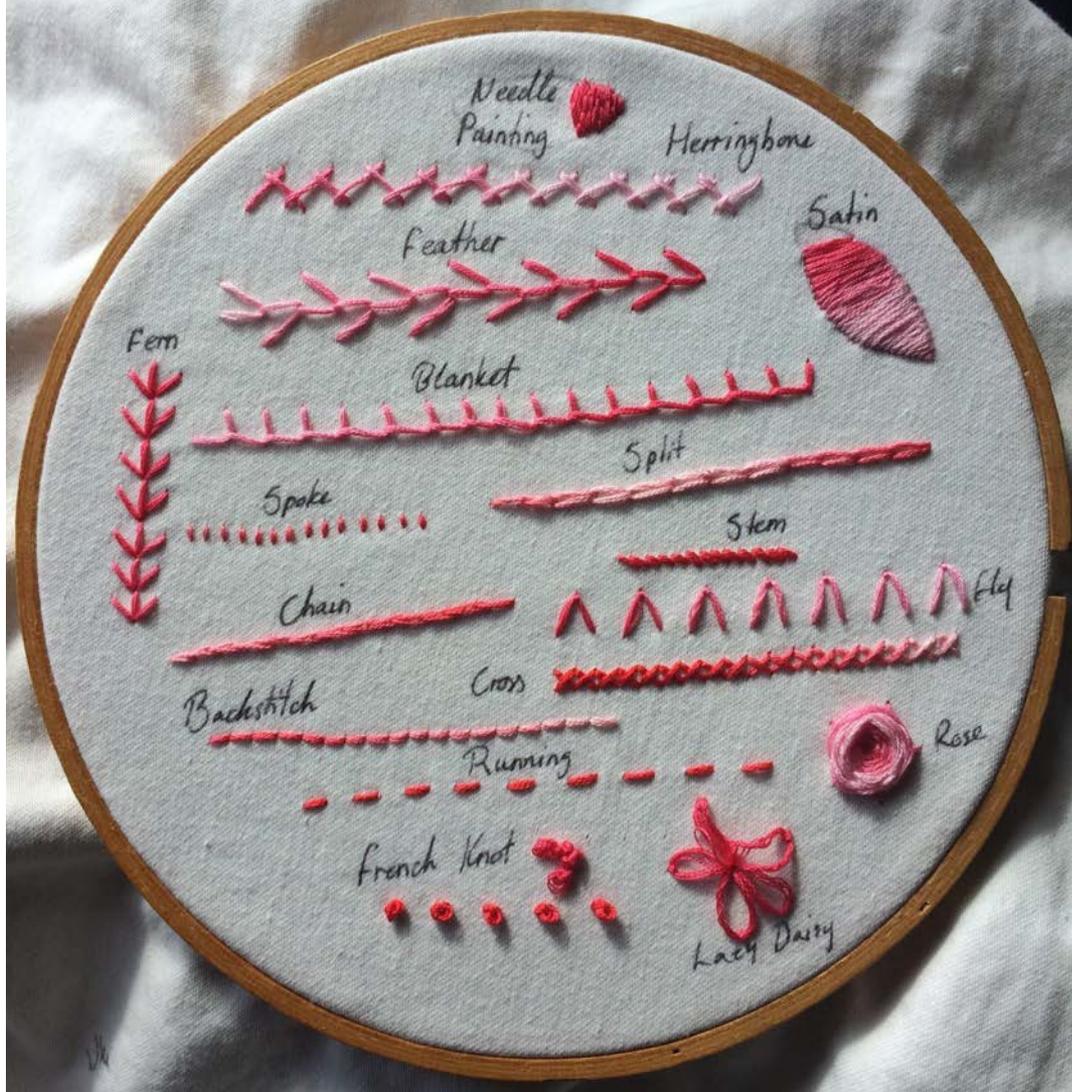
EXERCISE: EMBROIDERY STITCH PRACTICE

Look up and practice the following embroidery stitches. These are all in the OCA video tutorial, but you may need to look online for more resources if you find them difficult.

Stitch them in straight lines before you try doing shapes (and draw a pencil guide on your fabric if it helps).

- Stem stitch
- Blanket stitch
- Cross stitch
- Herringbone
- Chain stitch
- Split stitch
- Spoke stitch
- Feather stitch
- Fern stitch
- Fly stitch
- French knot
- Rose
- Satin stitch

EXAMPLE:
STITCH
PRACTICE



EXERCISE: CREATING A DESIGN

You will now create a design to embroider using a combination of all of the stitches you've learned. This will serve as great practice, and will allow you to explore possible combinations of stitches, and which work best where.

Use a pencil to draw out a design on your fabric. Don't make it too big, or too small (Embroidery is the perfect hand-held hobby after all).

Include in your design:

- Writing (maybe your name).
- A border.
- An image or pattern that will be filled in with colour (a floral design is perfect for this).

EXAMPLE:
EMBROIDERY
DESIGN



EXERCISE: LETTERING

Start by filling in the lettering on your design.

Make it stand out, and consider creating a font by typing the word out on a computer and copying it onto the fabric. A nice combination of thin and thick lines and curves work well in lettering.

Recommended stitches:

- Backstitch.
- Satin stitch.
- Spoke stitch.
- Cross stitch.

EXAMPLE:
LETTERING



EXERCISE: STITCHING BORDERS

Now stitch the border in your design.

If you're unsure what to do there are plenty of beautiful examples online of borders. You could also gain inspiration from looking at journal borders or page borders. Green, leafy borders work well; as do scrawly, decorative styles. Consider dropping bits of colour into them with french knots or flowers.

Recommended stitches:

- Backstitch
- Fern stitch
- Feather stitch
- Chain stitch

EXAMPLE:
STITCHING
BORDERS



EXERCISE: STITCHING IMAGERY

Finally, fill in the image part of your design.

It is very helpful to have the design or image drawn out properly so that you don't have overlapping stitches (as the underneath colours could show through or the thread becomes too thick to get the needle through).

This is the perfect opportunity to try out different combinations of stitches, or look up new stitches online. **Inject some colour and personality into your embroidery, and don't worry about being too perfect;** if needs be you can always undo the stitch.

Tip: The satin stitch is the best to use for filling in block colour, but you may want to look up and try 'needle painting' too for a different effect.

EXAMPLE:
STITCHING
IMAGERY



REFLECTIONS

We hope you have enjoyed learning the basics of sewing and embroidery with us. You can now take what you've learned and develop it further. The only limit is your imagination.

It is important to remember to constantly self-evaluate your work as you go along. Keep practicing and redesigning and learn from any mistakes. It takes a lot of patience, hard work and time to create beautiful embroidery, so whatever you create you should be proud of!



The OCA would love to see what you've created. Share your creations with us by tagging us in them on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.



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