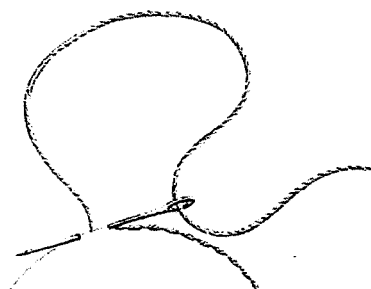


Stitches

The embroidery stitches described and illustrated here are some of the most elementary and frequently used, and they are all you will need to complete the projects in this book. Each one can be applied to any design, whether floral, geometric or pictorial, and can be worked with all types of embroidery silks, cottons, stranded cottons or embroidery wools.

BACK STITCH

While running stitch (see page 136) produces a broken line of stitches, back stitch makes a more solid line. If the stitches are kept very small, back stitch can outline any shape, however awkward, which makes it ideal for embroidering fine details such as tiny stems and leaf tendrils.

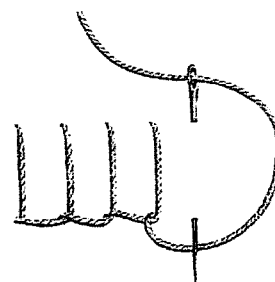


To work

Working from right to left, bring the needle up through to the right side of the fabric and make a short backwards stitch along the working line. With the needle now at the back of the work, take a long stitch forward and bring the needle up to the left of the backward stitch. The long stitch should be twice the length of the backward stitch. Take another short backward stitch on top, joining with the last stitch, and repeat in this way for the required distance. The stitches on top should be equal in length, with no gaps left between them.

BLANKET STITCH

Blanket stitch is frequently used along the edges of household linens and blankets (hence the name) to add a decorative and colourful trim, as well as to secure raw edges. By varying the length and angle of the stitches, numerous different decorative effects can be achieved.

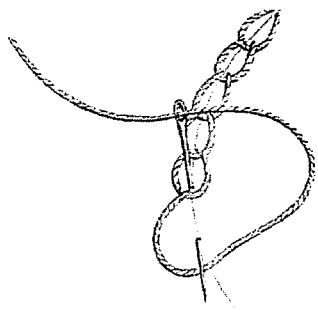


To work

Blanket stitch is worked between parallel lines with the stitches all one length. Working from left to right, bring the thread through on the bottom line and hold it down with the left thumb. Insert the needle to the right on the top line and bring it out on the bottom line immediately below, with the point of the needle over the held thread, i.e. the loop. Pull the needle through until the thread lies flat on the material with the loop pulled tight. Continue working towards the right. When the stitches are worked closely together, this is called buttonhole stitch.

CHAIN STITCH

Chain stitch is made by working a series of single looped stitches together in a line, with each stitch linking into the loop of the previous one. It is a very neat and simple stitch and is particularly effective as an outline stitch (see pages 30–5).



To work

Bring the needle through at the point where the first stitch is to be and hold the thread down towards you with the left thumb. Insert the needle in again just to the right of where the thread first emerged, then take a downwards stitch of the required length. Pass the thread under the point of the needle and pull the needle through until the loop lies flat. Hold the thread down and again insert the needle just to the right of the emerging thread and inside the loop already made. Work a stitch of the same length as the previous one, and continue the chain in this way.

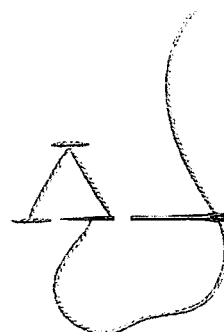
CHEVRON STITCH

Chevron stitch is worked between two parallel lines and from left to right. It is most frequently used as a border stitch, but also works well as a filling stitch when it is embroidered in rows.

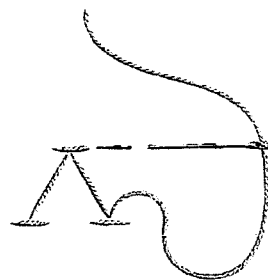
To work

1. Beginning at the left-hand end of the lower line, make a back stitch (see page 132), with the needle emerging for the second stitch half-way along this stitch.
2. Working to the right, take the needle to the top line and, with it pointing to the left, make a small stitch.
3. Make a back stitch to the right along the top line, emerging again half-way back along the stitch.
4. Take the needle back down to the bottom line and form the bottom stitch in the same way as shown for the top stitch in steps 2 and 3. Continue in this way, alternating between the bottom and top lines to create a zig-zag effect.

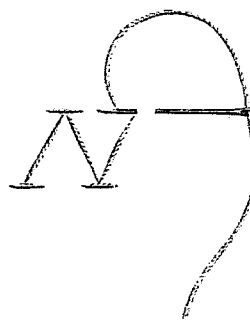
1



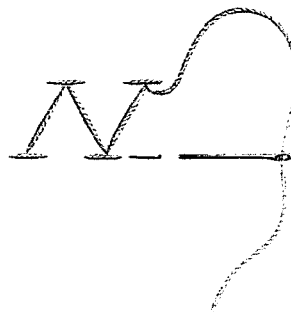
2



3

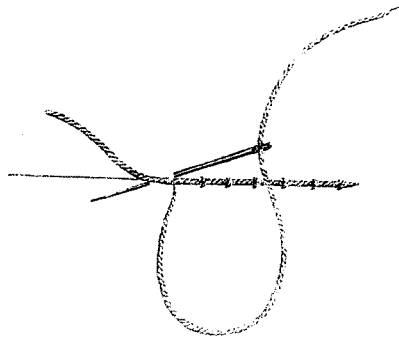


4



COUCHING STITCH

When loose threads are stitched down with another thread, this is known as couching. There are many ways in which the threads can be held in place, but for the purpose of this book I have worked couching stitch only in its simplest form (see pages 76–79).

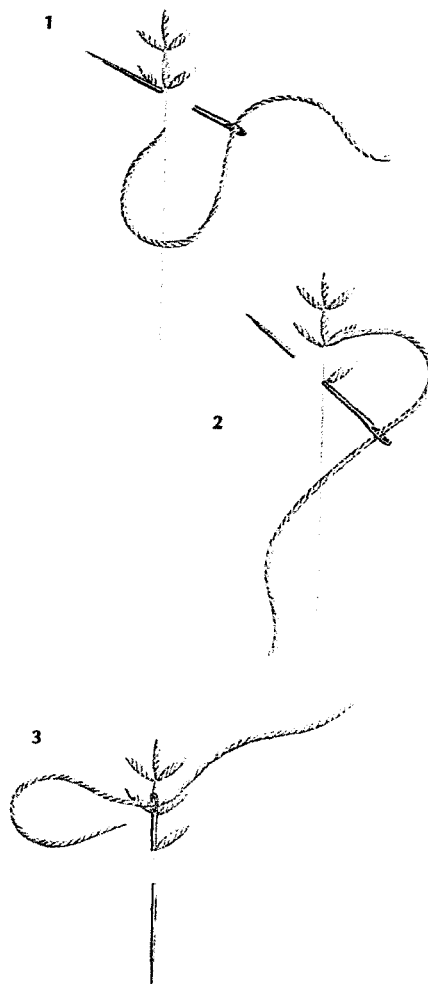


To work

Bring the thread that is to be stitched down through to the right side of the fabric and lay it along the line to be worked. Hold securely in place with the left hand. With another needle and finer thread, work tiny and evenly spaced vertical stitches along the length of the first thread to keep it in place.

FERN STITCH

Fern stitch is made up of three straight stitches radiating from a central line. All three stitches should be equal, but their size depends on the design. It is useful for delicate, fernlike sprays (see pages 18–21) and for the veins of leaves.

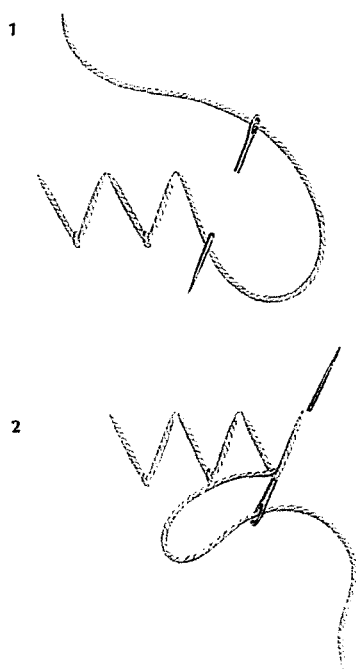


To work

1. Mark the length of one stitch down the central working line and bring the needle through at the bottom point of the stitch. Work one straight stitch to the right, at a 45-degree angle to the central line, and then point the needle back toward the left, and bring it out at the top of the central working line.
2. Make a stitch down the central line, inserting the needle at the bottom of the first stitch. Make one straight stitch to the left, similar in length and angle to the one on the right.
3. Pull the needle through, and take it back to the central line, inserting it where the first and second stitches meet. Take a stitch of the same length as the others down the central line. Continue as before for the required length.

FLY STITCH

This very simple and versatile stitch can be worked in rows, groups, or as a single detached stitch.

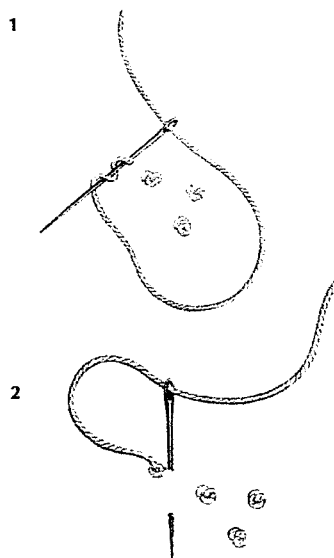


To work

1. Bring the needle through at the point where the top of the stitch is to be and hold the thread down toward you. Insert the needle to the right and take a diagonal stitch downward to the center. Pull the needle through, keeping the thread under the point of the needle, until a V shape is formed.
2. Insert the needle just below the thread, making a tiny vertical holding stitch. Bring the point out at the top of the next stitch.

FRENCH KNOT STITCH

A French knot looks like a small bead lying on a piece of fabric. This detached stitch can be worked to form a line or a group and is often used in embroidery to give focus to the centers of flowers (see pages 36–41) and to form the eyes of tiny animals and birds.

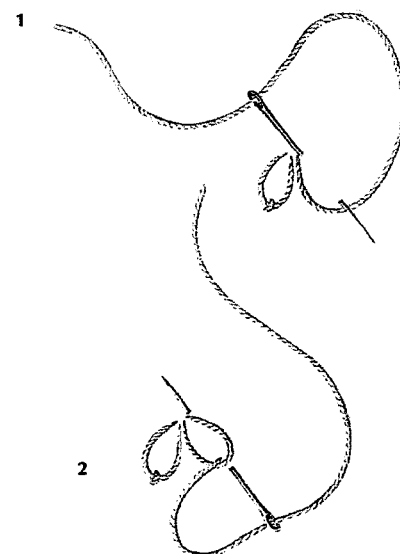


To work

1. Bring the needle through at the point where you want the knot to be. With the left hand, hold the thread taut. Wind the thread around the needle once or twice (depending on the size of knot you want).
2. Turn the needle around and insert it into the fabric close to where the thread first emerged, still keeping the thread taut. Pull the needle through, releasing the thread at the very last minute.

LAZY-DAISY STITCH

Lazy-daisy is also known as detached chain stitch because each stitch stands alone. Each single chain stitch is secured at the top by a small stitch.

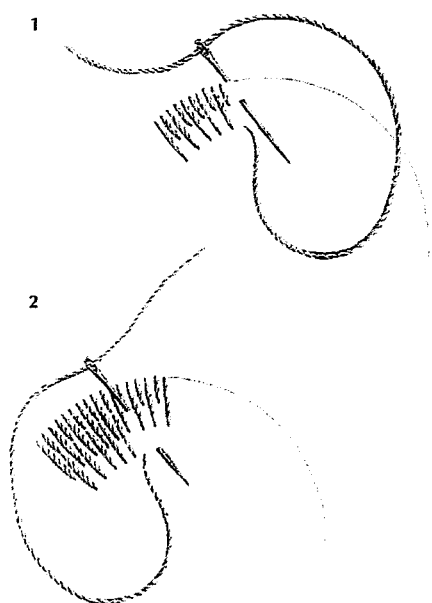


To work

1. Bring the needle through at the point where the top of the first stitch is to be and hold the thread down toward you with the left thumb. Insert the needle again just to the right of where the thread first emerged, then take a downward stitch of the required length.
2. Pass the thread under the needle point and pull the needle through until the thread lies flat. Put the needle in again just beneath the loop to make a small vertical holding stitch. Repeat for each stitch.

LONG-AND-SHORT STITCH

Long-and-short stitch is used to cover large areas with thread. Only the first row consists of long and short straight stitches, the following rows being worked in even-length stitches (except where the outline restricts their size). The blended effect makes the stitch ideal for shading.

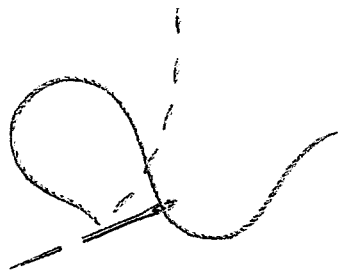


To work

1. First work a row of straight stitches, alternating long and short. Keep the outer edge of the shape even.
2. Work a row of even-length stitches into the short stitches of the first row, passing the needle through the tip of the stitch above. Continue with rows of even-length stitches until the required area is filled.

RUNNING STITCH

This stitch is identical to the running stitch used in sewing. It consists of short stitches used in and out of the fabric in a single line. It is the perfect stitch for outline work, in particular where a broken line, rather than a heavier, solid one, is required.

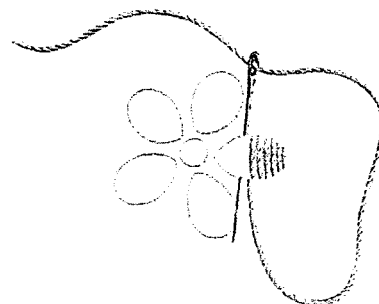


To work

Working from right to left, pass the needle in and out of the fabric to create a broken line of stitches along the line to be worked. It is important to keep the stitches and the spaces between the stitches even. The resulting effect depends not only on the size of the stitches but also on the thickness of thread used: the thicker the embroidery thread, the larger the stitch.

SATIN STITCH

Satin stitch is the most commonly used stitch for filling an area with solid color. The stitches are worked evenly from one side of the shape to the other and are so close together that no fabric shows through. Satin stitch is ideal for smaller shapes, such as petals and leaves, but less suitable for large areas, where the result can be loose and untidy. One solution for large areas is to work several rows of satin stitch, but I would usually recommend using some other filling stitch, such as long-and-short stitch.

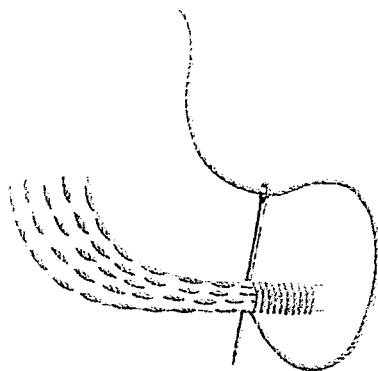


To work

Bring the needle through from the wrong side at the lower edge of the space to be filled. Insert it at the top edge and bring the needle out again at the bottom, close to the thread. The first stitch, which can be either upright or sloping, sets the angle for all following stitches. All stitches must be parallel, without overlapping, and should be smooth and neat.

PADDED SATIN STITCH

For a raised effect, the area to be covered in satin stitch is first padded. When the stitches are made, the light catches on the curves of the padding to create an extra richness and depth of color.

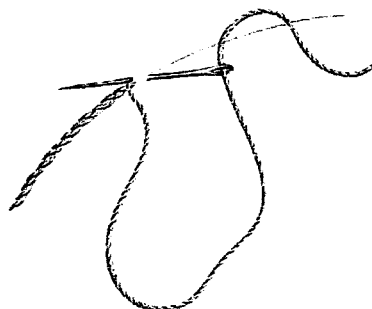


To work

First work a row of small running stitches inside the outline of the shape to be filled, then fill the area inside with further rows of running stitches. Now work satin stitch over this padding.

STEM STITCH

Stem stitch is one of the most widely used stitches in embroidery, and is sometimes known as crewel or outline stitch. The stitches slightly overlap one another to produce an unbroken and very smooth running line. This makes it particularly good for creating curves.



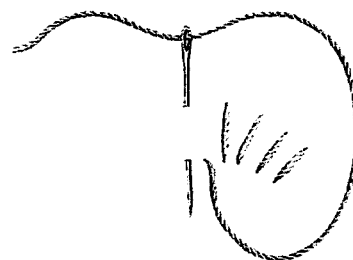
To work

Bring the needle through to the right side of the fabric, just to the left of the working line. Take the needle a little way along the working line and, with it pointing back toward the left, insert it just to the right of the line, making a stitch at a slight angle across the line. Pull the needle through and repeat, keeping the length and angle of the stitches even. The stitch can be worked with the thread to either the right or the left of the needle, but it must be consistent.

Altering the angle of the stitches can vary the thickness of the line. For fine lines, pass the needle directly along the working line. For a thicker effect, pass it on either side.

STRAIGHT STITCH

Straight stitch, also known as stroke or single stitch, is simply one single, flat stitch and is the basis of many other stitches. The stitches can be grouped in many different ways to create simple shapes (see pages 70–75) or worked detached from any neighboring stitch to add detail to a design.



To work

Bring the needle through to the right side of the fabric and make one stitch of any length and in any direction. If several straight stitches are to be worked near one another, bring the needle out each time in the right place to make the next stitch.