



Beginners Guide to Embroidery

By Julie Schappert - Stones + Glass Designs
email: julieschappert@gmail.com web: stonesandglassdesigns.com
Instagram & facebook: @stonesandglassdesigns
Shop: <https://stonesglassdesigns.etsy.com>

STONES + GLASS
designs

Getting Started

Hello! We are so glad you are here! Embroidery can be a wonderfully relaxing, portable and meditative creative outlet. It takes up little space and is great for at home or on-the-go. With just a hoop, fabric, floss, needle and scissors, you are set! Now, let's get started!

What you need...

Embroidery Hoops

Available in many sizes and materials, hoops are fairly inexpensive and a necessary part of the embroidery process. I prefer to work with wooden hoops, but they can be found in plastic, metal and other materials, as well. More often than not, I like to finish off my work, using the hoop to showcase the piece, though you can certainly finish off your final pieces other ways as well (framed, wrapped around a canvas, etc.).

Fabric

You can use any type of fabric you like! Have an old shirt or pants that you are going to donate? Cut them up and use them for embroidery!! I like to work with 100% cotton - NON-STRETCHY - fabric (a little thicker is better), but have worked on old tops, pillow

cases, jeans and more. Play with different fabrics and see what works for you. You can always add a fabric stabilizer or double up thin or light coloured fabrics.

Embroidery Floss

Available in SO many colors, brands and styles, feel free to try different brands and textures. DMC is one of the most popular brands out there and is readily available at your local craft stores. Many patterns will call for 6 stranded floss, which you can then divide based on stitch and style.

Note: In my patterns, I refer to the number of strands of floss you will use for each stitch. This is the number of threads (of the 6) you will use.

I like to work with lengths of 20-24" max (unless otherwise specified). Longer than this, you will notice that your thread starts to wear and will tangle more often and more easily.

Needles

Again, you can use what you have on hand for needles, but I do recommend embroidery specific needles. They tend to be a little more blunt and come in a variety of lengths (which can be helpful depending on your project). My preference for most projects is a 24 gauge embroidery needle.

Scissors

I use a small pair of manicure scissors. I like them because they don't take up much space and are very sharp.



How to transfer your pattern to your fabric:

Light Transfer using Pencil or Fabric Marker

The most accessible way to transfer a pattern to my fabric is using light transfer. This method uses the light from a bright window or light box. Simply print your pattern and tape your fabric on top of the design.

NOTE: Make sure your fabric is pulled tight OR you can hoop your fabric BEFORE transferring the image to ensure that there will be no warping of your design.

Hold the design up to a bright window and using a pencil or fabric marker, start tracing! I like to keep my lines fairly thin and light so that they will not show through on my final piece. If using a water or heat erasable marker, this is a non-issue.

NOTE: Though a plain old pencil will do the trick, having a water or heat erasable fabric marker can be very handy. Once your design is complete, remove any visible tracing lines with heat or water.

Take your time on this step. It may feel tedious and I know you are excited to get stitching, but having clear, accurate lines will make a big difference!

Mount your fabric in your hoop (if you didn't before tracing). Pull it snug, but not so tight that you are warping the design. Now, you are ready to begin!!

Carbon Paper

For transferring your pattern onto darker colors, special opaque fabric carbon papers are a great option. Be sure to follow the directions with your paper.

NOTE: I do not recommend using regular carbon paper on lighter fabric. I tried this and almost ruined my finished piece. It left a purple mess wherever the carbon contacted the fabric. Thankfully, it came out after soaking it in OxiClean, but I definitely don't recommend this as an option.

Stick & Stitch Transfers

I LOVE this option to be able to print your design, stick it on your fabric (works great on darker fabrics and thicker fabrics, like jeans, canvas or other clothing), stitch, then immerse your fabric in water and the stabilizer dissolves. It's a bit like magic!

I have purchased these printable, water soluble stabilizer sheets through Amazon: <https://a.co/d/b9rsOH0>

Printing on Fabric with an Ink Jet Printer

This is the method I use for the majority of my personal designs and for my kits. This process requires:

- Inkjet printer (I use an HP OfficeJet 8020)
- cutter (optional) or scissors/ruler
- full page sticker sheets - Amazon: <https://a.co/d/6Yw2m9B>
- Your fabric cut into an 8.5"x8.5" square

Though this may seem daunting, I assure you that it is easier than you think! I have never had any trouble with the fabric jamming in my printer and I am able to reuse the sticky sheets MANY times (like 20-30 or more) before the fabric doesn't adhere quite as well.

How to print on fabric with your inkjet printer (for 6" designs):

- Choose your design - if you are using one of my PDF patterns/designs, I include a printable pattern for you, positioned on the page so that it will be centered on an 8.5" x8.5" fabric square and opacity decreased to 50% so that the lines won't be too bold on your fabric. In my opinion, it is better to have them a bit light, than for them to show through your stitching.
- Prepare your sticky sheet (see visual on next page):
 - peel the backing off of the sheet and set the sticky paper face up on your surface
 - cut a 2.5" x 8.5" piece from the backing to 'block' the bottom of the sheet so that it will not jam in your printer
 - Stick the 2.5" x 8.5" piece onto the sticky side of your full page
 - Stick your fabric to the top 8.5"x8.5" exposed sticky area
 - Place fabric on sticky sheet face down (note: your printer may feed your paper differently - be sure to test which side it prints) in your printer paper tray and click print on your design. I choose "auto select" for paper type and "draft" for quality to ensure a quick print and not have my design over saturated.

A couple things to note:

- If your fabric corners (at the top of your page in particular) no longer stick, it is time to create a new sticky page.
- If you are concerned about printer warranty, you may not want to attempt this. I have never had any issues, but I am guessing that every manufacturer is different.
- If you are choosing a random image that you want to print, be aware of its size and where it will print on your page and adjust your fabric placement accordingly. In this case, you may want to print your image onto paper first to be sure it will fit in your hoop and where you may need to move your fabric on the page for best results.

Printing directly onto fabric has made my life so much easier and has encouraged me to create and attempt much more intricate designs. I hope it will inspire you, too!



STONES
+
GLASS
designs

SETTING UP YOUR FABRIC TO BE ABLE TO RUN IT THROUGH YOUR INKJET PRINTER:

PREPARE YOUR STICKY SHEET:

- * PEEL THE BACKING OFF OF THE SHEET AND SET THE STICKY PAPER FACE UP ON YOUR SURFACE
- * CUT A 2.5" X 8.5" PIECE FROM THE BACKING TO 'BLOCK' THE BOTTOM OF THE SHEET SO THAT IT WILL NOT JAM IN YOUR PRINTER
- * STICK THE 2.5" X 8.5" PIECE ONTO THE STICKY SIDE OF YOUR FULL PAGE
- * STICK YOUR FABRIC TO THE TOP 8.5"X8.5" EXPOSED STICKY AREA

8.5"X8.5" FABRIC

2.5"X8.5" BACKING

VISIT [HTTPS://STONESANDGLASSDESIGNS.COM/EMBROIDERY](https://stonesandglassdesigns.com/embroidery)
FOR MORE TUTORIALS AND EMBROIDERY PATTERNS

Get Stitching!

Once you have your pattern transferred to your fabric, centre your fabric over the inner hoop, then place the outer hoop on top. Tighten the screw and pull the edges of your fabric until it is even (you want it to be fairly tight to avoid puckering or warping of your design).

Note: having your fabric tight like a drum in your hoop is ESSENTIAL!! Your stitches will look nicer and it will be so much easier to stitch when your fabric is tight. Be sure to tighten your hoop periodically as you stitch, as well. Make a habit of doing so when you rethread your needle (as needed).

Next, cut your thread (about an arms length or 20-24" at most, to avoid tangles and wear on your thread as you work). Your pattern will let you know how many strands to use (between 1 and 6). If required, separate your strands. 'Sharpen' your floss with a lick and a snip with your embroidery scissors for easier threading. You can also use a threader tool, if you'd like.

How to use a THREADER: put the metal end of the threader through the eye of the needle, thread your floss through the opening and then pull thread back through the eye of the needle by the handle

Tie a solid knot at the end of your thread (I like to double my knot and then snip off any excess thread before inserting it into my piece). A solid first knot is very important to keep your piece from unraveling - especially if it will be getting washed and worn. You will also want to fasten off your thread with a knot in one of your last stitches.

Now, HAVE FUN!! If your pattern has a suggestion of stitching order, follow that. If not, start where you'd like! Don't be afraid to try different stitches and if they don't work out or you don't like how they look, gently pull them (or cut them) out. Use tweezers if you'd like. Embroidery is very forgiving in this way, so practice, play and enjoy the process.



Tools to make stitching easier:

NEEDLE MINDERS: these can come in many forms - mine are cute little enamel charms with POWERFUL magnets to 'hold' your needle between stitches. They are a super handy tool to keep you from dropping/losing your needle down couch cushions/car seats! You can likely use a couple of magnets from your fridge, but if you want something fun that matches your piece or your personality, be sure to check out my shop!

FLOSS BALM (aka floss conditioner): If you are working with a floss that is fraying, tangling easy or just tough to work with (like metallic floss), you can use a floss conditioner - like bees wax - to coat your thread and reduce friction.

A BALLOON (or needle grips): I keep a (deflated) balloon in my embroidery kit/supplies for those times that your needle is a bit tough to pull through your fabric! Works like a charm!

Finishing

The easiest way to finish off your work is by framing it in the hoop you worked it in! Even it out (pull it snug), tighten the screw and cut off / cinch in / glue back the excess fabric. If you don't wish to be able to see your exposed stitches, you can glue (or sew) a piece of felt, fabric or cardstock/chip board to the back of your hoop. View my "BACKING YOUR HOOP WITH CARDSTOCK" video tutorial on my embroidery page.

Other ways to showcase your work:

- In a picture frame or stretched over a canvas
- As a patch on clothing or a bag (use Heat N Bond or something of the sort to iron it on)
- Mini creations in jewelry

I truly hope that you will enjoy embroidery as much as I do. I am still fairly new to the craft, but have found it to be very relaxing and enjoyable. Check my site often for new free and paid patterns, kits, tutorials, tips and techniques! Video tutorials coming soon!!

<https://stonesandglassdesigns.com/embroidery>

One of my favorite things about embroidery is that if you can envision it, you can create it! Using a handful of basic stitches and colors, I love watching my pieces magically come to life and know that you will, too! Don't be afraid to grab a picture or a coloring page, trace the outline onto a fresh piece of fabric and just PLAY! So much can be learned through practice and who knows, maybe you will discover a new stitch or the next hot design!!

Happy Stitching!!!

Do you have questions? A custom design request?
Please feel free to contact me!
email: julieschappert@gmail.com
web: stonesandglassdesigns.com
Instagram & facebook: [@stonesandglassdesigns](https://www.instagram.com/stonesandglassdesigns)

