



## “Take Heart” Stitching Project by Stephanie Ackerman

- 5 x 5 squares of assorted “Low Volume” fabric
  - Mixed fabric colors for collage heart layers
  - Glue stick or lightweight Heat-N-Bond
  - Fusible Fleece
  - Iron
  - Assorted embroidery floss colors
  - Needles
  - Scissors
- The idea of this ongoing project has a few options:
- Start by: Cutting 5" x 5" blocks from “low volume” fabric. Hand or machine stitch one collaged heart to each block. Use blocks in stitch books, adhere to other projects or sew together to create a quilt.
  - Start By: machine stitch 5" x 5" squares together to start a background and hand stitch individual hearts to each background square.
- \*Low volume fabric is fabric that is very light in color, but not necessarily white. It's a print fabric, not a solid. If you have a print that it a little darker, just flip it over and use the wrong side as your block.





## Creating Collaged Hearts

Let's start by creating some "collage fabric" to cut our hearts from.

I am using Fusible Fleece.

I use the Pellon Brand: Quilting Interfacing 987F White Fusible Fleece.

It is available by the yard at your local quilt shop or by the yard or bolt from Joann's. Make sure to watch for a coupon.



There are two sides to Fusible Fleece.

The rougher side is the side you will want to iron/press your scraps onto.

**IMPORTANT:** Make sure not to let your hot iron touch any uncovered part of the rough side of the fusible fleece.

**Idea/Tip/Thought:** consider running your entire piece through your sewing machine all different directions before cutting into squares. This will add a "quilted" look and give it a little texture and depth.



Once you have created collaged fabric to cut from, use the attached pattern and trace onto the to cut out heart.





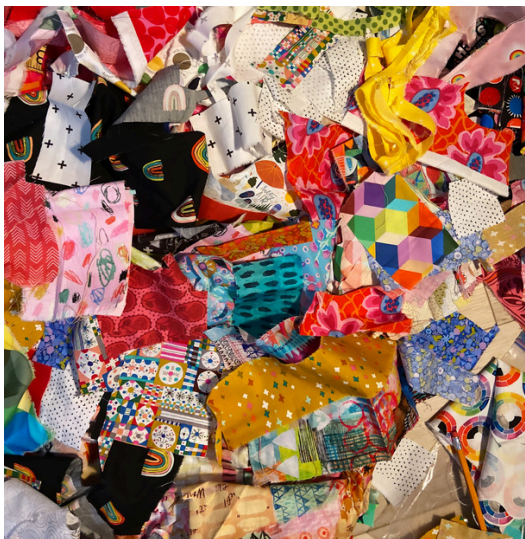
## Creating Collaged Hearts

When using your scraps, you can either use one color way in different shades and patterns or a combination of all colors, shapes and patterns.

Place your fabric scraps wrong side down on the rough side of the Fusible Fleece. Try your best to place pieces right up next to one another without too much overlap but enough to cover the fleece. If you have overlap, that is not a problem because you will add stitches to it later.



You will want to lightly **PRESS**, **not slide** your iron over the scraps. It only takes a few seconds for the heat to activate and adhere the fabric to the fleece. Continue pressing until all pieces have been adhered.



## Creating Collaged Hearts

Once you have created collaged fabric to cut from, trace patten of shape on the back of your fabric (soft side of fleece) and cut out.



TIP: Make as many as you can at one time so that you have them ready to stitch.  
I recently made a very large piece to cut from and I got 91 hearts!





## Stitching Hearts to Blocks

I am going to be using 5 x 5 squares of assorted “Low Volume” fabrics for my blocks. I want to make a “throw” or a “quilt” but because I am NOT a quilter, do not follow a pattern and REALLY do not like to measure, I am just going to start by making blocks.

### Note/Thought/Advice:

I wanted to make a sample to show for this class so I stitched, by machine, 12 5" x 5" squares together BEFORE I stitched on my hearts. It wasn't “hard” to hand stitch the hearts on but it wasn't super easy to maneuver the piece as I stitched. I decided I would baste/machine stitch the hearts to the blocks and then go back and add hand stitches but BEFORE I did that, I laid out the hearts I had and took a picture with my phone so that I could look at it to remember the placement.



One at a time, I used a glue stick to lightly adhere the heart to the block and then machine stitched it on. In a matter of minutes, I had all of my hearts in place ready to add hand stitches.



Another way you could do this is to stitch individual hearts to individual blocks first. Just make sure to place in center of block to allow for seam allowance.





# Adding Hand Stitches

I am a very simple slow stitcher. This is where what I call “mindless concentration” comes in.

You are focussed on what you are doing at the same time you are relaxed. It takes a little practice to NOT THINK ABOUT what the end result of this project will be. Once you develop the mindset to just stitch for the sake of stitching, it becomes very relaxing, enjoyable and dare I say, addictive?

The only three stitches I ever use are:  
 The Straight Stitch  
 The Backstitch and the occasional French Knot.  
 That is it.

I often share that the hardest part of stitching is having to thread the needle.

I use DMC embroidery floss for all of my stitching. When you pull the initial thread out, there are 6 strands. I stitch using 2 strands so you will need to divide the thread. The more thread you use, the more heavy/thick the stitch will be. The less you use, the thinner and tidy your stitches will look.

TIP: make your stitches short, tight and all the same length to get a real clean looking stitch.





## Adding Hand Stitches

I add stitches to the outside of the heart and each place the scraps meet up together. Do not worry if there is slightly visible fleece between the pieces. Just add stitches and it will either pull the two pieces together or fill in the gap with floss.

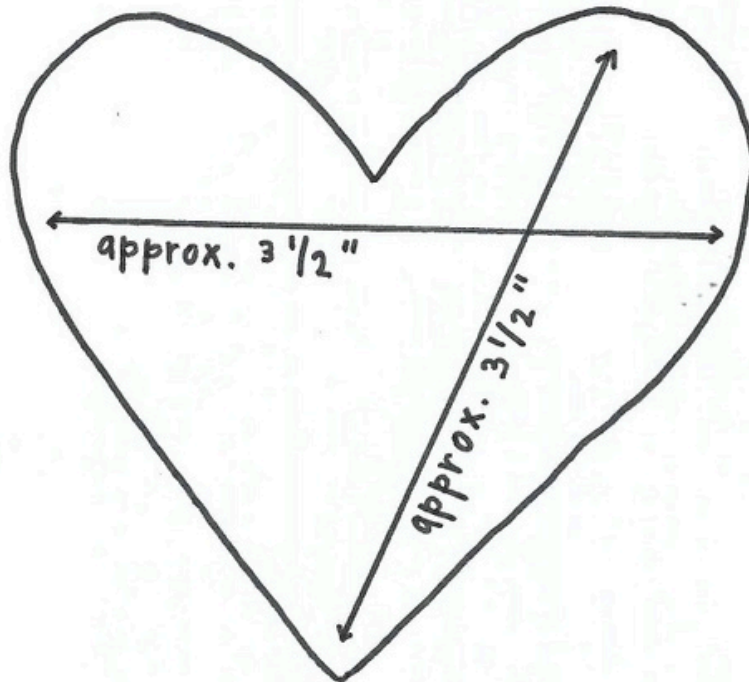
Sometimes, depending on the pattern and design on the fabric, I will use coordinating threads to outline or add stitches to the pattern/design.



That is it for making these blocks! I will continue to make them until I decide to use them to make something but until then, I will just enjoy the process!

# Collage Heart Pattern

by Stephanie Ackerman



Depending on the size heart you want, this pattern may need to be enlarged or trimmed to 3 1/2" for a 5" square.