



# Beginner's guide to embroidery

## Introduction

*My fascination with embroidery all began with a few threads and pieces of canvas combined with a skill and passion passed on by my grandmother in traditional embroidery, which I later enriched by training up on a variety of stitches : stem, satin, chain, blanket, palestrina ... all of which left me with a strong desire to create more modern models, in line with current trends in decoration.*

*Being accessible to everyone, the traditional embroidery kits from " Un Chat dans l'Aiguille " allow you to discover the pleasure of embroidery and the satisfaction of making useful and decorative objects. So as to accompany you step-by-step in the realization of your projects, you will find in our kits, together with the precise technical sheets, all the colors of thread you need, pre-printed fabrics, detailed diagrams for each stitch of embroidery as well as very simple sewing assembly guides.*

*Blessed with the French touch, " Un Chat dans l'Aiguille " is appreciated all over the world. You can find us in France and pretty much everywhere else on the planet !*

*As a beginner, you will have to ask yourself many questions like : where do I start? Which threads should I use? Which points are the best suited ?*

*Do not worry. This guide has been designed to answer all your questions and allow you to discover the joyful pastime of traditional embroidery*

*Our leitmotiv is :*

*Have fun  
while  
embroidering*

*Embroidery  
is easy*

*Embroidery  
is good for  
you*

# 01. Basic Material





## The fabric

In traditional embroidery, unlike the counted stitch, we do not count the woven threads. The patterns you will be embroidering are directly reproduced or printed on the canvas, allowing you to simply follow the drawing. The fabric can be made of cotton, linen or silk. It can be thin or thick, but in either case, choose an even weave fabric with a regular pattern woven in. The tighter it is, the easier the job will be. It is up to you to choose the most suitable fabric according to its intended use. One more important thing : your fabric must be washable.

Our preferences:

- For a delicate and fine work, a linen or Métis (50% cotton and 50% linen) 20 thread fabric is perfect.
- For a more rustic work, a linen or Métis16 thread fabric will do the trick.

Here are the threads we use :

- Mouliné cotton (also called "embroidery floss" in the US) is made up of 6 strands milled to form a skein. Each length of thread can be divided to work with any number of strands depending on how thick you want your stitches to be, which makes it very versatile.

In our kits, the threads are a meter long. To avoid damaging them, we advise you to embroider with a 50 cm thread (see the double thread technique below). We mostly use two strands. It is specified whenever we use more.

- Pearl cotton n ° 8 is a shiny, twisted yarn.
- Metallic thread is made up of several strands. To embroider, we use one strand. This thread is fragile. In order to avoid damaging it, we advise you to embroider with a thread of about 30 cm or to use a needle with a larger eye.



## Threads

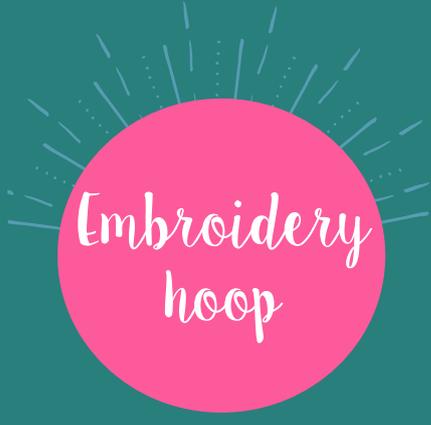


## Needles

The embroidery needles are not the same as those used for the counted stitch. They have a pointed tip and a wide eye so that the threads do not get damaged. It makes threading them easy, especially if you are stitching with several strands of thread. There are different sizes of needles ranging from 3 to 10. The smaller the number, the bigger the needle and the eye. In general, when embroidering with two threads, we use a needle size 9. If your needle gets bent, be sure to change it.

In all our kits, you will find a needle size 9. You will quickly find that using a needle per color will save you a lot of time. We use a wide variety of colors so don't hesitate to stock up and buy a needle pack on our website.

For some stitches such as the Boulogne stitch, which requires to use at least four threads, you may need to use a needle size 5 with a larger eye.



## Embroidery hoop

If you have not used one before, think of doing so. Hoops are inexpensive and essential for getting your fabric tension nice and taut while you stitch. If you do not use one, it can be really tricky not to pull too hard as you embroider, which can cause the fabric to pucker. Therefore, an embroidery hoop is essential. It must be small in order to allow you to hold the work comfortably in your hand while retaining access to the drawing. A hoop may leave marks so remember to remove it when you stop embroidering.

If you want to add or transfer designs to a fabric, you can use non-permanent pens. There are several different pens you can use, so you are sure to find one that works best for you :

Heat erasable pens :

Pilot's FriXion Erasable Pens erase with friction (eraser at the tip) and heat. The design can be erased with an iron or a hair dryer. But they are a bit controversial. Ink may reappear when exposed to very cold temperatures. However, the lines can be erased again with heat. Long term effects are not known, so please test them out before using them on an embroidery project.

Water erasable pens :

Available with three different tip thicknesses : ultra-fine, fine and thick. The ink will wash off with water, so you will need to rinse your work to remove the drawn lines. Please test your fabric first ! In addition, note that it is important to keep their caps tightly closed otherwise the tips will dry very quickly!

Our preference is for the fine point.



## Non permanent pens



## Scissors

These should be sharp and small, around 12 cm. If you want to keep them in good condition, be sure to use them only on your embroidery.

Our preference : choose steel scissors, they will be more solid and the blades will snip easily through the threads.

# 02.

## How to learn to embroider



### Content of our kits

Buying one of our kits is the easiest and most convenient way to start embroidering. You will be guided step-by-step with the necessary material to carry out your work.

«Un Chat Dans l'Aiguille» kits are therefore sold with:

- the pre-printed fabric,
- all the DMC embroidery threads,
- one embroidery needle size 9,
- several technical sheets of the stiches and colors used,
- explanatory sheets of the points used in the project,
- a color chart with all the yarn colors,
- a visual of the finalized work.

### YouTube video tutorials

You can find numerous tutorials on our YouTube channel «Un Chat Dans l'Aiguille». The videos will allow you to understand and better comprehend the different stiches, some of which may be difficult for you.

### Book : Embroidery notebook

Our book “Leçon de broderie” is a great tool for learning how to embroider. In addition to helping the embroidery notebook project, the book explains 54 different stitches and includes, for each one of the points, a QR code link to a video tutorial.



# 03.

## How to start ?



### *One embroidery at a time*

It is best to start with a single project. You will quickly find that traditional embroidery is much faster than the counted stitch (if you have used that method before). Getting to the end of your project will give you confidence !

Gather the material in one place (needle stick, needles, threads, scissors, embroidery hoop...).

Creating a pouch with all your accessories is the best way to be sure of always having your equipment with you and not forgetting anything, especially when traveling !

### *DMC chart*

You will find the new DMC color chart on our website. It is a repertoire that lists all the different DMC thread colors using samples of yarns. As well as being beautiful, it is an essential tool for every embroiderer.

### *Remember to sort your threads*

To do this, use the color chart provided in the kit. It will allow you to separate your threads by color. In some kits, you will find a small number above each color (x2) : it indicates the number of threads provided in the kit for this color.

### *Use a thread keep*

The ones you can find on our website are made of wood. In order to make your life easier, write down the numbers of the yarn colors on small self-adhesive patches for you to position in front of each hole. You can also make a thread keep yourself. Use a cardboard sheet, a small punch and there you have it !

## Take ownership of the project

Feel free to customize your work by changing the colors or the stitches. If some points seem a little complicated when you start, change them ! A twisted chain stitch can be replaced by a stem stitch or a simple chain stitch, a buttonhole bar stitch can be replaced by a straight stitch... The most important thing is to cover the drawing !

## Take care of your back

It is essential to look after your back. To do that, choose a good seat and as my grandmother used to say : "Your work comes to your face and not the other way round !"

## Take care of yourself

(use glasses and lamps and remember your work comes to your face and not the other way round).

Taking care of your eyes means keeping them healthy, which allow you to make nice regular stitches !

Don't forget your glasses. If your arms are too short to hold your embroidery far enough away, it's time to see your optician ! You can embroider in daylight or use a «daylight» lamp. There are all kinds of lamps, either fixed for at home or portable ones for globetrotters ! They can be bought in your sewing shop/haberdashery or over the internet.

Some of you, even if you are wearing glasses, may need a magnifying glass. These also come in different shapes and sizes.



## Set the hoop up right (right tension, right size)

Using a hoop is essential to make nice regular stitches, especially when you are a beginner. The tension of your canvas should be neither too strong nor too flexible. Test it, and adopt the tension you like !

The pattern you are embroidering should be in the center of the hoop so that you can slide the thread under your thumb at all times.

«The ability to slide the thread under the thumb» is the guarantee of having the right tension and therefore a regular stitch. It will also help you to get the right direction of the stitch.

## Thread the needle

It is important to ensure your embroidery stays in place so that the stitches do not come undone later on. In order to do that, you must know how to fix the thread at the beginning and at the end of your work.

Avoid leaving a knot on the reverse side of the first stitch. Use one of the following methods :





## The weaving method

This process involves sliding the thread between the previously embroidered stitches on the back of the work (under about 4 to 5 stitches).

You can also use this method to use the remainders of your threads.



## The lost knot method

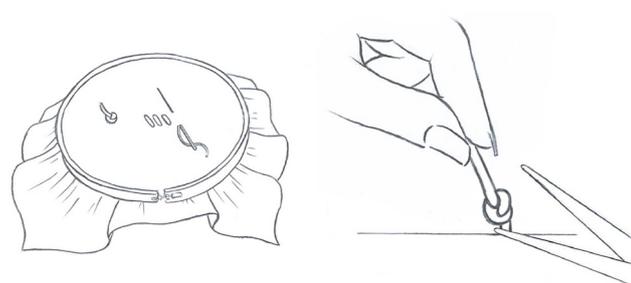
1 - Tie a knot at the end of the thread and prick the needle about 5 cm (2 inches) from the first stitch on the front of the fabric.

2 - Bring out the needle on the front where you want to start your embroidery.

3 - After few stitches, lift the knot to cut it.

4 - On the reverse side, thread your needle with the end of the thread and pass it under the previously embroidered stitches. Cut the remaining thread.

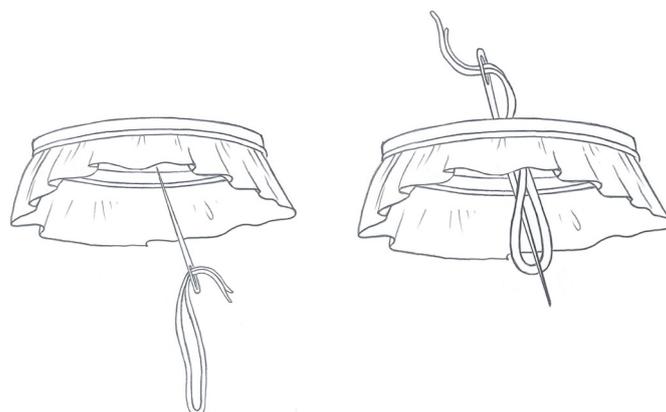
Tips : avoid running the yarn on the reverse side as it will show up on the front (especially with dark yarns on white or light fabrics).



## The loop method

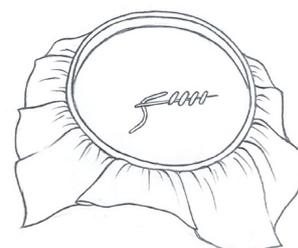
1- Take a thread and fold it in half to create a loop at one end. Thread your needle with the two tail ends. Bring the needle up to the front of your fabric leaving the small hoop of thread on the reverse and make your first little stitch.

2- Once on the back of the canvas, pass the needle through the loop and then pull to secure the thread.



## How to complete a point with the weaving method

This process involves sliding the thread between the stitches on the back of the work (under about 4 to 5 stitches). Once this is done, cut the remaining thread.



## How to finish

Clutches, pencil cases, paintings, bags, cushions, wall suspensions, quilts...our models can be adapted to all your desires.

If you are in need of inspiration, do not hesitate to join our group on our FB page «Vos ouvrages un chat dans l'aiguille». There, you will find many assembly ideas by embroiderers from all over the world.



Clutches



needle holder



Cushions



decorations



customization



## Don't embroider on your own

Join our community on social media. Our groups are made up of beginners and experienced embroiderers, all of them have joined out of their own good will. Each one is happy to share her experience and progress. If you have a question or need an explanation, you will be sure to have the answer within a few hours or even minutes though one of our groups.

## Make mistakes

Do and undo, that's how you learn!

"Don't be afraid of making a mistake : the real mistake is not to try."

Don't be too demanding of yourself. It is important to be happy with what you do at the beginning ! The more you embroider the better you become !

## Start small

Prefer a small project by choosing a beginner level kit (mentioned by the number of needles at the bottom right of the cover of our kits).

Take a quick look at our website :

- The collection of 15 cm circles is perfect for beginners.
- The small embroidery notebook project will also allow you to learn many stitches.



## Trust

Have confidence in yourself. This is fundamental ! There is no reason to fail, even more so with all the support we offer you : tutorials available on our YouTube channel, step-by-step explanatory sheets in the kits, lives and of course our benevolent community who will help and support you.

## The ultimate trick

My ultimate tip... «The thread under the thumb». Each time you start a stitch, you have to have that in mind !

## The Perfect Reverse ?

It is the front of our work that interests us and not the back ! So yes, avoid knots, hanging threads... but keep in mind that behind an embroidery, there is often a lining, or a wall.



## The designer's little note

I wish you a whole lot of fun discovering all these pretty embroidery stitches.

Over time, you will perfect your skills and experience hours of fun and pleasure embroidering whilst getting a magical result in soft, toned and trendy colors.

Remember that embroidering is a great way of taking care of yourself. It is relaxing, it engages your mind and it keeps your hands busy. :)

