

General Cross Stitch Instructions

1. Working with the Pattern

The design is stitched using DMC embroidery floss to place X's on the fabric corresponding to symbols on the chart. Each symbol on the chart represents one X on the fabric. With larger patterns you can have quite a few pages. Most people start on the page in the middle of the pattern and start stitching at the center of the pattern and center of the fabric. You can really start anywhere though (like the top left) as long as you count the fabric weave carefully to make sure the design will end up centered on the fabric.

2. Fabric

Even though it's listed on the pattern, you are free to choose any type, count or color of evenweave fabric to stitch on such as Aida or linen, etc. The only thing that will change is the stitch size of your finished piece if you should choose a different count of fabric. Alternate counts and stitched sizes may be listed on the pattern. Make sure to add at least 3" or 4" inches of extra fabric on each side to allow for finishing and framing.

3. Needle

Counted cross stitch should be done with a tapestry needle. Again, there are no set rules but generally you use a #22 needle if the fabric is 14 count or less, a #24 or #26 needle if the fabric count is 16-18 count, and a #26 needle if the fabric is finer than 18. The floss thickness and number of strands used may also affect your choice of needle size.

4. Number of Strands

The number of strands of floss will be shown on the pattern but, as with most things in cross stitch, it is open to individual choice. Traditionally, you want a certain amount of the background cloth to remain visible but some people prefer a fuller look. Some common choices are 2-3 strands for 14 count, 2 strands for 18 count, and 3-4 strands for 11 count. Before you stitch, separate the floss into individual strands and then recombine them.

5. How to Stitch

The design should be centered. Find the center of the fabric by folding it in half, then folding it in half the other way. Locate the center of the design, marked by arrows, on your chart. You can either start stitching in the middle or count the number of squares (stitches) over from the center on both the chart and the fabric to where you want to start. The top left is a common starting place

Do not use any knots to start or end. To begin stitching, bring the threaded needle up from the back of the fabric leaving about a 1" tail of thread behind the fabric. Stitch the next 5 or 6 stitches over the tail. Clip off extra thread. To end off, weave your needle back through the last 5 or 6 stitches and clip the thread short so as not to leave a loose tail.

There are two methods to stitch. The first method is to work a row of half stitches //, then work back \ to complete the X's. Use this method for most stitching. The second method is to complete each X as you go. In all cases the X's should be crossed in the same direction or the finished piece will look uneven. That is, the top thread of the X should always slant in the same direction. It does not matter which way they slant, as long as they are consistent. As you stitch, the thread can twist, so you should frequently let the needle and thread hang free until it un-twists.