

# Embroidery 101

The handout we used in the workshop was based on Mollie Johanson's Wild Olive Embroidery Basics tutorials, found here: <http://wildolive.blogspot.com/p/embroidery-basics.html>  
These tutorials are more detailed than this handout and are super helpful! I also recommend watching videos if you are having trouble with a stitch. Happy stitching!

## Materials:

- Hoop
- Fabric
- Needle
- Embroidery Floss

## Transferring a Pattern:

- Tracing – Lay material over your pattern, tape or hold it up against a brightly lit window, and just trace! You can use a pencil or a water-soluble pen or pencil. This works best on light-colored and lightweight fabrics. (This is the method I usually use. You can get a water-soluble pen or pencil at a craft store in the embroidery section.)
- Transfer paper – Place your fabric on the bottom, lay the transfer paper face-down, and place your pattern on top. Use a regular pen or stylus to trace over the design. The color that was on the paper is transferred to your material!
- Tracing paper – Trace the pattern on to the tracing paper, hold or pin the paper onto the fabric, then stitch through the fabric and paper all at the same time. Then carefully tear away the tracing paper.

## Getting Ready:

- Cut a length of floss – 24 inches is good; shorter and you'll have to cut too many new strands; longer and you're asking for tangles.
- Decide how many strands you want to use
- To split the strands of floss, tap on the end, then separate the number you want and slowly pull the ends away from each other.
- Thread the needle
- Tie a knot in the end of your floss.

## Running Stitch:

With running stitch, you can make the stitches as long as you like. Come up from the back, then go back down again. Leave a space about the same length as the first stitch, then come up from the back again. Go back down again. If you are stitching on a pattern that won't wash away, a running stitch isn't the best choice.



## Back Stitch:



Come up from the back, but instead of starting at the end of the line, start about one stitch length in. Go back down, but in the opposite direction that you are stitching. Come up again to the front, a stitch-length from the first stitch. Go back down, back-stitching to the end of the first stitch.

## Stem Stitch:

*Sewing method of stem stitch:* Come up from the back. Push the needle through to the back and then back up to the front, all in one stitch. The needle comes up on the line, just a bit behind where you inserted the needle. Pull the floss through and take another stitch as you did the first.

*Another option for doing stem stitch:* Start out with a back stitch. Come up again about a stitch length from your first stitch, then insert the needle just behind the end of the first stitch. It should go underneath the floss from the first stitch. Again, come up like you're back stitching, and go back down behind the previous stitch.



## Split Stitch:



Even numbers of threads are a good idea for split stitch. Take a single stitch, moving forward. Come up from the back with the needle splitting apart the first stitch. Go back down so the total length of the stitch is about  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch, including the part that overlaps with the previous stitch. Come up again, splitting the previous stitch.

## French Knots:

Come up from the back, and wrap the floss around the needle. Wrap the floss around the needle a second time. Hold on to the free end of the floss close to the needle, and be sure to keep the tension firm around the needle, but not too tight. Insert the needle into the fabric, right next to where you came up from. Keep holding the free end of the floss. At this point, it's good to pull a little tighter. Slowly pull the needle and floss through, and keep holding the end of the floss. When the loop gets close, you can let go and keep pulling the floss through.



You can change the size of the knot by changing the number of floss strands, or you can change the number of times you wrap the floss.

## Satin Stitch:



Come up on one side of the area, and go down on the other side. Come back up on the first side, just next to your first stitch, and back down on the other side, just next to the first stitch. It's like you are wrapping the area on the front and the back. Repeat until the area is filled in. The trick is to keep the edges smooth and the area solid.

You can add dimension to a satin stitched area by stitching an outline and some rice stitches inside it first, then stitching over it with a regular satin stitch.

You can make satin stitch more casual by doing a modified satin stitch. Come up on one side of the area, and go down on the other. Then come up on the same side as you went down, then down on the other side of the area. The stitches will be more open than regular satin stitch.



## Other Ways to Fill an Area:

- Seed stitch or rice stitch: Fill in the area with short little straight stitches.
- Rows of running stitch
- Back stitch or split stitch, stitched in rows following along your outer line
- French knots – you can place them really close together for more of a fuzzy look, or space them out for a more dotted area.

## Finishing your Stitching:

- This is my favorite method to tie-off a piece of floss. First, make a loose knot. Insert the needle into the knot, and press it against the back of the fabric. Use the needle to hold the floss tight to the fabric while you pull the end of the floss to make the knot tight. This will give you a knot that is snug against the back of your fabric.
- Then just trim the floss close to the knot.

## Two great resources with tutorials (and patterns I like)

- Sublime Stitching – [sublimestitching.com](http://sublimestitching.com)
- Wild Olive – [wildolive.blogspot.com](http://wildolive.blogspot.com)

*Credit to Mollie Johanson of Wild Olive for the images, and for the general outline, which I borrowed from her awesome tutorials.*