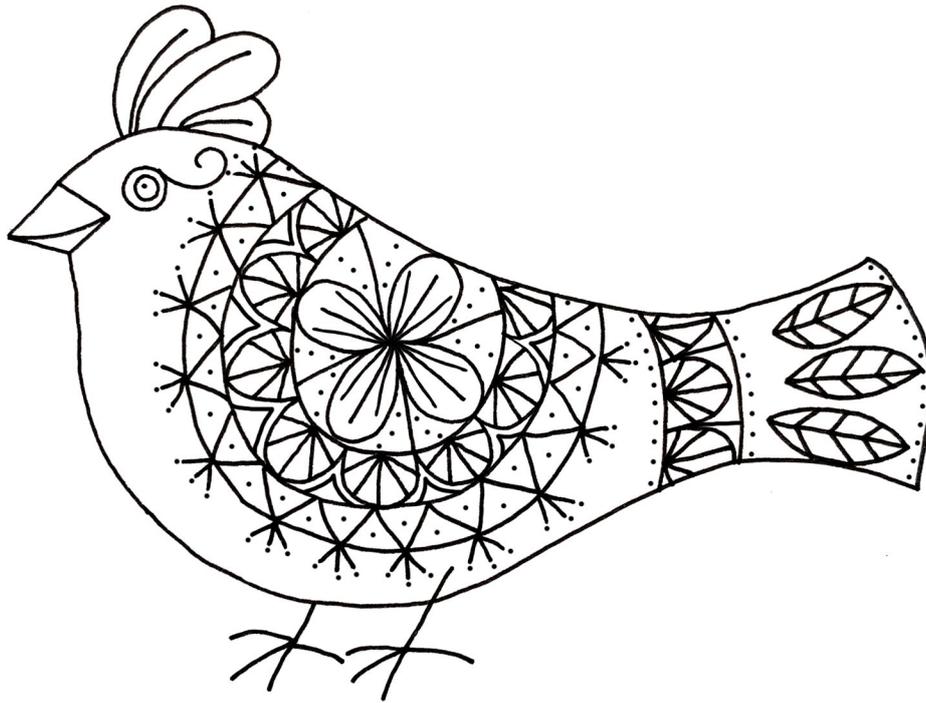


Folk art bird embroidery pattern



You will need: a 6" embroidery hoop (or larger), a needle (I use a size 7 embroidery needle) approximately four colours of thread (solid or variegated colours) a small length of white thread, a pair of scissors and the pattern (above) printed off from your computer.

1. Stretch one piece of fabric in an embroidery hoop (this pattern is sized for a 6" hoop) referring to the 'How to stretch fabric in an embroidery hoop' sheet for guidance. I like to use plain cotton calico or an off white cotton fabric, but do feel free to experiment with other fabrics too. This pattern could look really good on coloured fabric, though coloured fabric can be a little more of a challenge to transfer a pattern to.

2. Print off this sheet, and follow the instructions on the 'Transferring an embroidery pattern to fabric' sheet to transfer your bird pattern onto the fabric and get it ready for stitching.

3. Use threads in colours of your choice to stitch around all of the lines marked on the pattern using back stitch (see the 'Stitch guide' resource sheets to find out how to do this) You could use one colour, lots of different colours or even a variegated thread to stitch the design. DMC Coloris thread is really fun to use for this sort of design, as it has short sections of each colour meaning the colour changes often as you stitch. I have noted the DMC thread colours I have used on the following page. I have used three strands of thread to stitch the design, but you could experiment with using just one strand for a more delicate looking embroidery or even using more strands for a bolder look.

4. Make a French knot on each of the dots marked on the design. Alternatively, you could add a bead to each one; to stitch a bead on, simply bring your needle up through the fabric as though you were about to start stitching, thread a small bead on, and take the needle back down, bringing it down at the side of the bead and back down through the hole where you brought the needle up (or as near to this as possible) or if you would prefer not to use French knots and don't have any beads to hand, you can simply add small straight stitches or perhaps two small straight stitches crossing over one another to make a tiny cross shape covering each dot.

5. Beside the French knot, bead or stitch you have made over the dot in the bird's eye, add another French knot or stitch in white. This will bring a little bit of light into the bird's eye and bring him or her to life.

6. Use the 'How to finish the back of an embroidery hoop' guide to tidily finish the back of your hoop, ready to hang on your wall or perhaps display on a shelf :)

I hope you enjoyed this free pattern and I'd love to see your creations! If you would like to share, you can tag me on Instagram @chloeredfernembroidery / #chloeredfernembroidery

On the following two pages I have included a number of photographs to show how the pattern is stitched. I have also noted the colour numbers of the DMC stranded cotton I have used in case you would like to stitch the pattern using the same colours I have. Enjoy!



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How to stretch fabric in an embroidery hoop

Stretching fabric correctly in an embroidery hoop gives a nice taut, flat surface for you to work on. It is very simple to do, just follow the steps below. You can also use this method to stretch two layers of fabric together, it might just take a little more time to get it taut in the hoop. I'd also recommend gently re stretching the fabric and tightening the screw occasionally as you work on your embroidery.

1. To begin, loosen the screw at the top of your hoop and separate the inner and outer pieces. Have a piece of fabric a little larger than your hoop ready to stretch.



2. Take the middle part of the hoop (the complete round part) and place it underneath your fabric, making sure it's in the centre. Next, place the outer hoop on top and gently press it down over the inner hoop. If it doesn't want to fit, you may need to loosen the screw slightly.

3. Tighten the screw at the top of the hoop to hold the fabric firmly in place. Don't worry about making it too tight just yet, just nice and snug.



4. Next, begin to gently tug the edges of the fabric down and out away from the hoop, making sure to not pull too hard. Hold the hoop firmly in your other hand whilst you are doing this to prevent the two pieces popping apart. Work your way around the hoop pulling the fabric to stretch it evenly, rotating the hoop as you go.

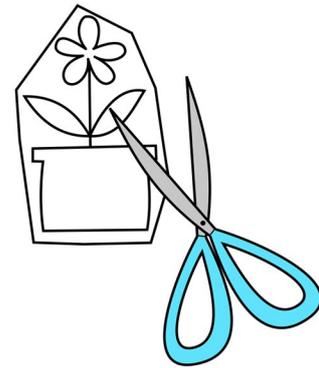
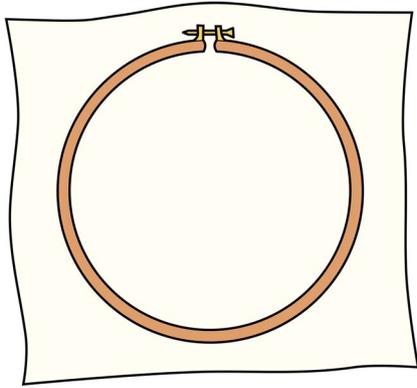


5. Tighten the screw once more (you may even want to carefully tighten it using a screw driver to make it extra firm) and snip some of the excess fabric off from around the edge of the hoop, leaving at least half an inch all the way around to allow you to tidily finish the back. Your hoop is now ready for you to transfer a pattern to your fabric or to start stitching!

Transferring your pattern

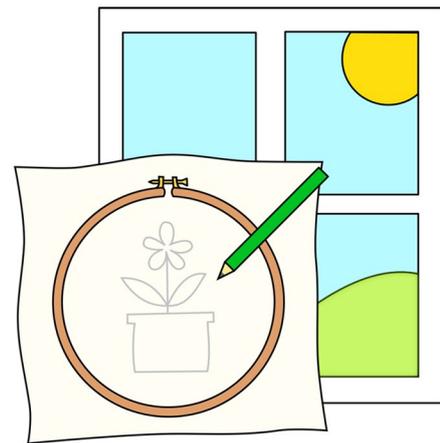
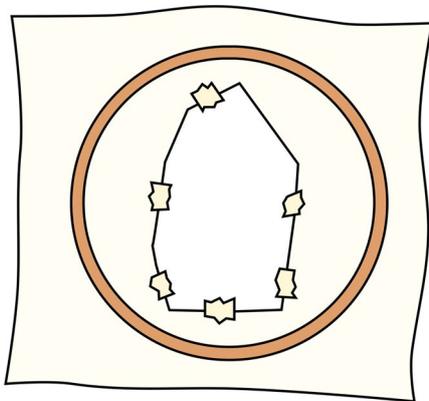
There are many methods for transferring your pattern to fabric but this is my favourite, as it's relatively quick and simple and requires minimal materials.

1. Take a piece of fabric slightly larger than your hoop (eg, for a 6" hoop use a piece of fabric around 8" square) and stretch it tightly in your hoop, pulling the fabric around the edges and tightening the screw to hold it in place.



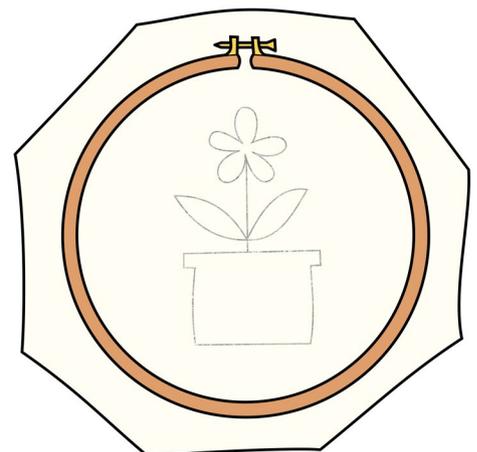
2. Print off the pattern from your computer onto ordinary A4 printer paper. Make sure the print settings are set to A4 paper and fit to size (or 100% depending on your computer/printer options) and cut it out, not cutting around the lines but sticking close to the edge as shown.

3. Flip the hoop over and using little pieces of tape (masking tape is ideal) tape the cut out pattern onto the back of the fabric so that the pattern is facing forwards (ie against the fabric, towards the front of the hoop)



4. Hold your hoop up to a light source (a window is ideal but a lamp would also work) with one hand, and with the other carefully trace around the pattern using a very sharp pencil to make as fine a line as possible. The light will shine through the paper and fabric, making the pattern visible on the front of the fabric. You may need to lightly press the paper pattern against the back of the fabric with your hand.

5. Remove the taped on pattern from the back of your fabric. You can now begin to stitch right away if you would like to, alternatively you can do what I do and add an extra layer of fabric; this helps stop any stitches showing through from the back. To do this, simply un-hoop your fabric, add another layer behind it and re stretch these two layers together in your hoop (as though you were stretching one, but just with two layers) Tighten the screw up, trim the edges a little to make your hoop easier to handle (making sure to leave at least half an inch all the way around to allow the back to be finished neatly) and you are all set to start stitching!



How to finish the back of an embroidery hoop

This guide will show you how to tidily finish the back of an embroidery hoop.

1. If you have not done so already, trim the fabric around the edge of your hoop to leave approximately half an inch all the way around. Next, work stitches around the edge, keeping the stitches relatively long (just over half an inch/ 2cm, though it doesn't matter if they vary a bit) It can help to flip your hoop over to do this. Start with pushing the needle through from the front of the hoop towards the back and ensure the thread exits going from back to front, so that the two ends emerge from the same side of the fabric.



2. Next, gently pull the two thread ends to draw the fabric together at the back of the hoop, rather like a drawstring bag. Knot the two ends together to secure the thread.



3. Remove the outer hoop from your embroidery (the fabric will now stay in place) and draw around the inside of it onto a piece of felt. Replace the outer hoop, making sure to tighten the screw, cut out the felt circle and place it onto the back of your embroidery.

4. To secure the circle of felt onto the back of your embroidery, use whip stitch. You will need quite a long piece of thread for this, as it's easier to work your way around using just one piece rather than running out and having to start a new one part way around. If you do run out though you can knot a new piece to the end of the piece which has run out and simply continue stitching. I have used fairly thick blue thread here to make it easier to see where the thread goes, but for the best tidy finish it's a good idea to use a single strand of thread which matches the colour of your felt.

Begin the whip stitch by starting a little way in from the edge of the felt circle, push the needle through the felt, out towards the edge of the hoop, catching a tiny bit of the fabric at the edge of the hoop. Pull the needle through. Repeat this step gradually working your way around the edge of the hoop, inserting the needle a little distance from where you inserted it for the last stitch each time and pushing it out towards the edge of the hoop, catching a little piece of fabric from under the edge of the felt each time. To make the final stitch, push the needle through where the initial knot is located, then again out



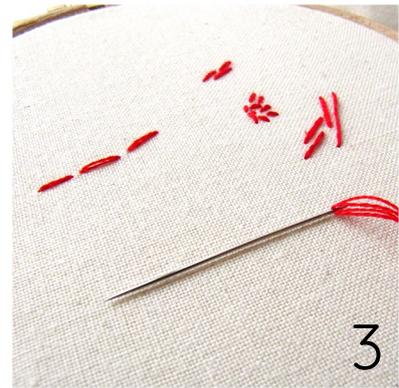
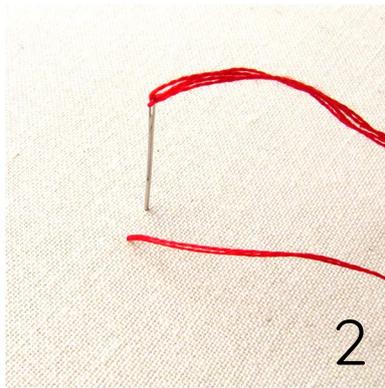
Stitch guide

This stitch guide will walk you through how to do the simple embroidery stitches used in this pattern.

Straight stitch

Straight stitch is probably the simplest stitch there is, it is very easy to do and is very versatile.

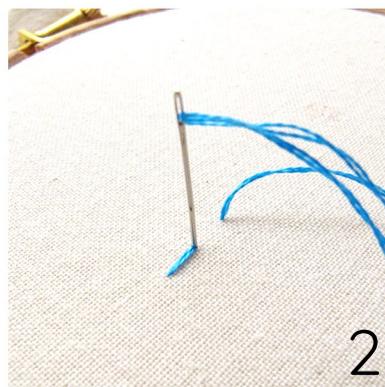
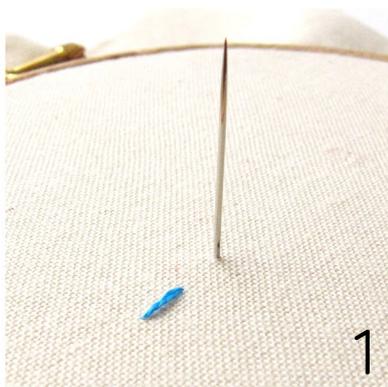
1. Bring the needle up through the fabric and pull the length of thread through.
2. Simply insert the needle back into the fabric a small distance away and pull through. You can make the stitches any length that you like.
3. You can use straight stitch in many different ways. It can be used to make lines, or to fill in areas. You can make stitches as small or as large as you like, place them far apart or closer together, and have them all facing the same way or in different directions.



Back stitch

Back stitch is particularly useful for outlining shapes.

1. Make a single straight stitch to begin.
2. Bring the needle up through the fabric a short distance away from your first stitch, and insert it back into the fabric at the end of your initial stitch. Pull the thread through.
3. Continue in this way to make a continuous line of connected stitches. You can vary the length of stitches slightly to work tidily around curves and complex shapes.



French knot

French knots are really useful when stitching plants and flowers to make flower centers or to add other detail such as buds and petals. They can also be used to fill in areas.

1. Begin by bringing the needle up through the fabric. Draw your thread through.
2. Next, turn the needle to point to the left (or to the right may be easier if you are left handed) and holding onto the thread, wrap it around the needle, with the eye of the needle nearest where the thread exited the fabric. You can wrap it once for a small knot, or more for a chunkier knot.
3. Turn the needle to go back into the hole it came up through, pulling the thread snugly around it as you go.
4. Still holding the thread to prevent the knot springing out, pull your needle back through the fabric to create a French knot.

