



THE  
*Crafty Cat*  
CROSS-STITCH  
GUIDE

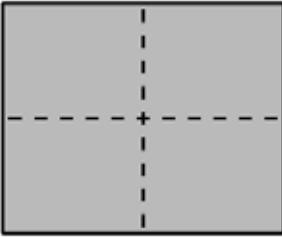
*Peter Tucker*

craftycat.im



## The Crafty Cat Cross-stitch Guide

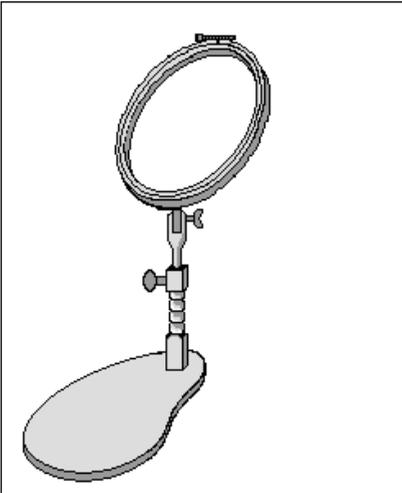
1. Make sure that your design will end up nicely centred on your piece of fabric, with a generous margin all round to make it easy to mount, ready for framing, when it is completed. Don't forget to allow for a mountcard border, and an extra couple of inches if it is to be laced at the back. (See page 5)



First mark the centre of the fabric by folding it from top-to-bottom and side-to-side, marking the folds with lines of tacking thread. Where the lines cross is where you should begin working the pattern, starting with the centre stitch on the chart, which will be shown by pairs of small arrows.

Before you start working, though, stick lengths of masking tape, or Sellotape, over the cut edges of the fabric, or oversew them, to prevent the material from fraying as it is being handled.

An embroidery hoop isn't essential, as the cross-stitches pull evenly on the material, and the picture does not become pulled out of shape; (unlike 'tapestry', which **must** be done on a special rectangular tapestry frame or it will distort due to uneven tension).



However, for larger designs, an embroidery hoop is a great help. By far the easiest type to use is one with a little base that you sit on, and a support that holds the frame for you at an adjustable angle.

You then have both hands free to work above and below the material, and the circular hoop can be easily swivelled or turned over for working on the back. The hoops do come in different sizes, but we think that the easiest size to use is the eight inch diameter one, as the bigger ones are rather heavier, and more cumbersome. It is very easy to reposition the hoop, so that the area that you are working on lies in the middle of the circle.

If you leave the work for a while, slacken off the

hoop tension, and let the material lie loosely in the frame, to avoid straining the fabric.

**DON'T USE A TAPESTRY FRAME**, which only pulls from top to bottom, and is designed for use with canvas.

2. The six-stranded embroidery cotton will be found ready looped onto the project card. Choose the right colour, remove one length from the card, and **separate it into the six individual strands.**
3. \* \* \* \* **CHECK ON THE PROJECT CARD TO SEE** \* \* \* \*  
**HOW MANY STRANDS ARE TO BE USED FOR THE CROSS-STITCHES.**

Example:

<p><b><u>CROSS-STITCH</u></b> 14- count material 2 strands</p>
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Depending on the design, and the number of stitches to the inch, there may be one, two, or three strands used for each cross-stitch.

After separating all six strands, recombine the required number, as indicated on the sheet, and thread the needle.

Don't twist the threads together, let them lie side-by-side.



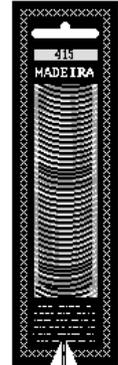
↑ ↑  
**CUT  
HERE**

These kits use Madeira thread, but if you should purchase additional materials, you will find that Madeira threads come in easy-to-use 10 metre sachets. These are designed to feed smoothly from the **BOTTOM** of the pack.

Make two small cuts with scissors either side of where the thread emerges from the bottom of the sachet, and twist off the triangular tag, which should contain the bottom end of the thread.

You can usually either see, or feel, exactly where the thread emerges from the bottom of the sachet, somewhere near the middle, and then the two cuts are made either side of this.

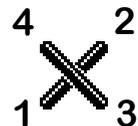
The rest of the thread should run easily, and without tangles, from the bottom of the pack. You can use the loop at the top of the sachet either to clip the loose packets together with a Madeira clip, (shaped like a padlock), or to tie on any odd lengths of thread.



↑  
**PULL OUT  
THREAD**

4. Never use a knot to secure the end of a thread. Leaving a short tail of thread on the wrong side of the work, bring the needle up through the fabric, holding the tail of the thread until it is secured in place by the underside of the next few stitches. Similarly, when you get to the end of the thread, slide the needle behind some of the stitches already completed, on the wrong side of the work, and cut off the end.

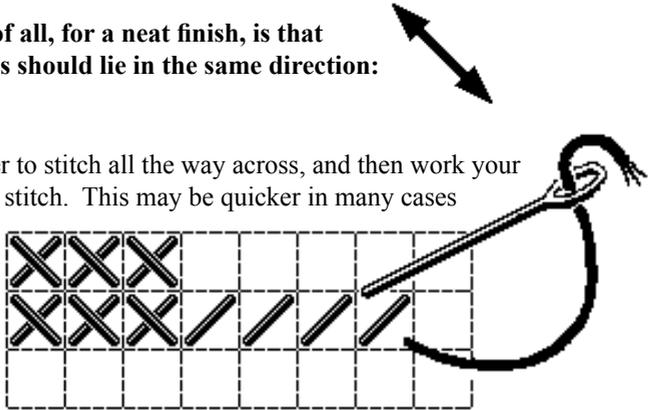
5. Make one cross-stitch for each symbol on the chart. Bring the needle **UP** at 1, **DOWN** at 2, **UP** at 3, and **DOWN** at 4. (Alternatively: **UP** at 2, **DOWN** at 1, **UP** at 4, **DOWN** at 3



Keep an even tension, and by planning ahead, try to bring the needle UP through an empty hole, and DOWN into one that already has a thread in it whenever possible. This helps to grip the thread, and stops it pulling too tight when making the following stitch. It is also a lot easier to find the right place when coming up through an empty spot in the material, rather than one that already has several stitches passing through it.

**The most important rule of all, for a neat finish, is that all the top threads of the crosses should lie in the same direction:**

For horizontal rows, you may prefer to stitch all the way across, and then work your way back with the top half of each stitch. This may be quicker in many cases than crossing the stitches one at a time, but it can result in a straight line patterning effect in the finished work - so use this method with caution!



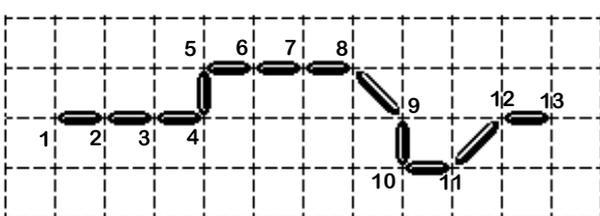
Once you have started at the centre of the design, which positions the picture in the right place on the material, it doesn't matter in which direction you start to make your picture 'grow'. It will probably be better, though, if you work from the centre upwards to the top, and then downwards from the centre to the bottom. In this way, you will not always be working over the finished part, and it will remain cleaner.

To help you keep your place, when working stitches from the chart, we have included a yellow highlighter for you to mark off the stitches as you complete them. (If you should make a mistake, the symbols can still be seen through the yellow marker.)

There are no quarter or three-quarter stitches in any of the charts, and the only other types of symbol that you will come across are for back-stitching for some of the outlines and finer detail, and the occasional French Knot.

### **BACK-STITCH**

A line of back-stitch would be done in the following manner:



UP at 2, DOWN at 1,  
3, 2,  
4, 3,  
5, 4, etc.

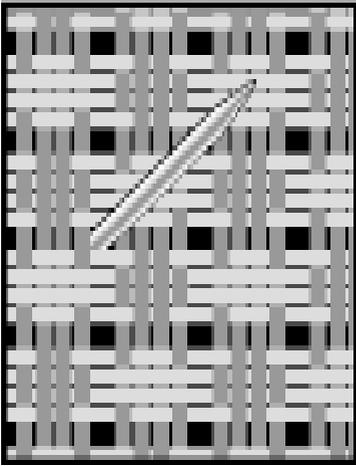
**FRENCH KNOT**

Fig.1

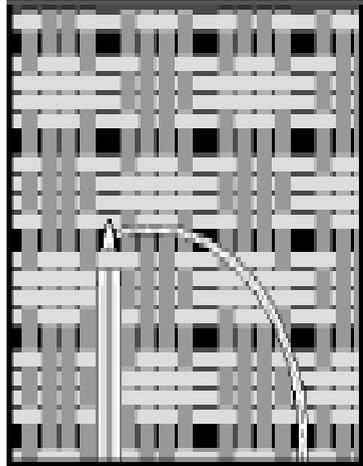


Fig.2

- a. Bring the needle UP and completely through the material in the position that the finished knot is required. (Fig.1)
- b. Bring the needle back, and catching just one strand of the material, bring the needle UP out of the same hole as before. (Fig.2) This time pull the needle only halfway through.

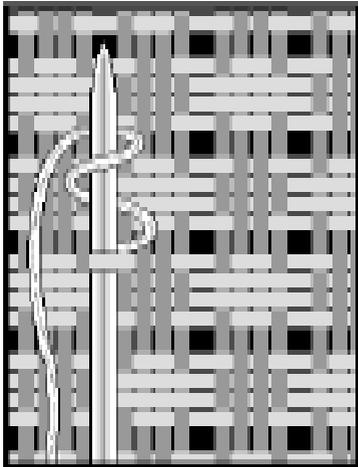


Fig.3

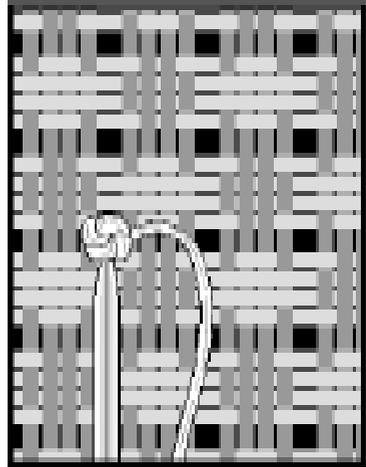


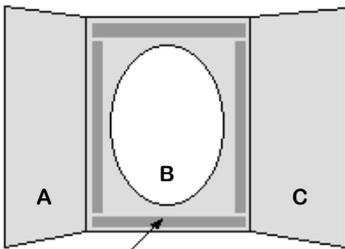
Fig.4

- c. Wind the thread behind and once round the needle in an anti-clockwise direction. (Fig.3)
- d. Gently holding the twisted thread in place against the material with finger and thumb of left hand, pull the needle the rest of the way through the material with the right hand, and continue pulling the loose thread until the French Knot forms on top of the material. (Fig.4) Complete the knot by pushing the needle back DOWN the same hole that it came out of, but do not pull the thread too tight, or the knot may sink down into the weave and disappear.

6. When the work is completed, it may need to be washed. Use a mild hand-washing liquid like *Stergene*, and rinse well in lukewarm water. Pad an ironing board with a towel, and place the work on it, finished side down, and lay a thin clean cloth above it. Carefully press, and iron until the material is dry, pulling it as you go, to remove wrinkles. The thickness of the towel will stop the stitches from being ironed flat, and will absorb the moisture, and the thin cloth will help protect your work from the hot iron, but be careful that it is not too hot, or your work may be scorched.

7. The embroidery should now be framed, either in a card, or laced onto a mountboard, or put into a flexi-hoop. Also available now is an American mounting board with an adhesive surface, called "*Press-on*", which is extremely easy to use, as you can re-position the work on the tacky surface until it is correctly aligned. You should be able to obtain this from your local craft shop.

### To assemble a Greetings Card:

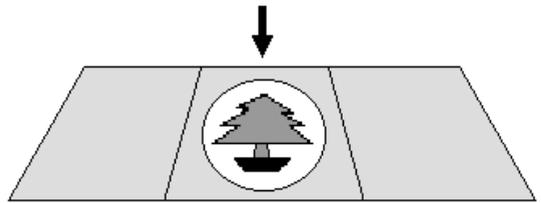


GLUE



PICTURE FACE UP

Fig.1



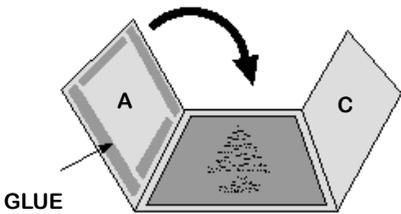
PRESS CARD DOWN ONTO PICTURE

Fig.2

a. Place strips of double-sided tape, or spread a small amount of glue - *Pritt-Stick* is ideal - onto the inside of the window section 'B' of the card. (Fig.1)

b. Place your finished cross-stitch face upwards on a flat surface. Turn your card over and hold it centrally above the stitched design. When it is lined-up correctly, press the card down onto the fabric until it holds firmly. (Fig.2)

c. Turn the card over so that it is face down, with the bottom of the design towards you. Spread the glue, or put strips of double-sided tape on the outside edges of 'A'. Firmly press 'A' down onto the back of your work.



GLUE

FOLD 'A' ONTO BACK OF PICTURE

Fig.3

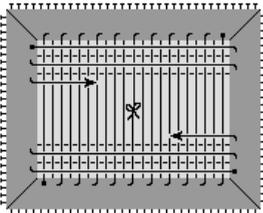
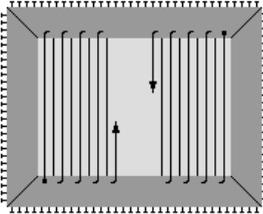
If you are using glue, keep a cloth handy to remove any excess.

Place the finished card under a heavy weight to ensure that it holds securely.

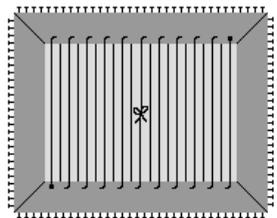
If you are using tape, this will not be necessary.

### To mount your work in a picture frame:

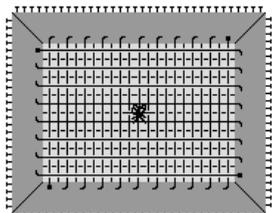
- Before framing, the material must be stretched and laced over a thick card backing - white mountboard is ideal. Place the work over the card, with the design in the centre, right side up, and the extra material wrapped over the edge. (Don't forget to allow for the width of a coloured framing mountboard round the picture - this also keeps the glass clear of the stitches.)
- Hold in place with a row of closely spaced pins along the top edge, going through the fabric and lightly into the edge of the board, starting from the centre and working outwards.
- Pull the fabric gently, and pin along the bottom edge in the same way.
- Repeat for the left and right edges, making sure that the material is square and taut - adjusting and re-pinning where necessary. Mitre the corners for a flat, neat finish.



- Working from the back of the project, using a large-eyed needle, threaded with crochet cotton, and with the end tied to the fabric, begin to lace the folded-over material, working from each side to the centre, using a circular motion, under and over. When the two ends meet in the middle, pull the threads tightly and evenly, and tie them together. If you run out of thread before the ends meet, join on a further length with a reef knot.

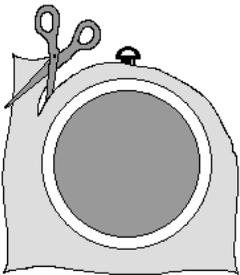


- Repeat this for the other two opposite sides. Oversew the mitred corners, and remove pins. The picture can now be mounted in a frame.



### Framing with a Flexi-hoop:

- Use the inside ring of the flexi-hoop as a template to cut out a felt backing disc.
- Place the finished design centrally in the flexi-hoop. Pull the material taut and square. The elastic outer ring will hold it in place.



- Leaving about one inch all the way round, cut away any excess material.
- Make a row of running stitches about half an inch in from the edge of the fabric, and gather up tightly, and secure the thread.
- Place the felt backing disc over the back of the flexi-hoop and secure with a row of small hemming stitches on the edge.



*We hope that you enjoy making up this design.*

*Happy Stitching!*

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