

A General Guide to Stitching Needlepoint/Tapestry

Introduction

Needlepoint or Tapestry. Two words that really mean the very same thing - the wonderfully relaxing and peaceful pastime of stitching onto printed canvas, or from a chart onto plain canvas.

For One Off Needlework kits: all designs on **14 count** canvas use Appleton's Crewel Wool and **three** strands of wool should be threaded together in your needle. For all designs on **12 or 10 count canvas**, Appleton's Tapestry Wool is supplied; thread your needle with **one** strand just as it is.

For Kits from Manufacturers other than One Off - you need to be certain that you have the right number of threads in your needle and that you are using the stitch recommended in your kit. Different stitches use up differing amounts of yarn so check the notes supplied with your kit.

Preparation

When you have close shades of colours to deal with, it is important that you establish exactly which colour is which. Some printed colours on the canvas may not be accurate to the yarn colours in order to increase the contrast between close shades and make the printed canvas easier to follow. If you have a key at the edge of your canvas, attach a short strand of each yarn to the coloured squares of the key. This helps when selecting colours in artificial light.

By the way, If you ever need to draw or write on your canvas, use only a hard (3H) pencil! Felt pens, markers and ball point pens etc are not colour fast and can do terrible damage to your finished work.

Frames

You will minimize distortion and more easily keep your stitching even, if you mount your canvas onto a rectangular needlework frame before you begin.

If you choose not to use a frame, your needlework will become distorted as you stitch. This can be disheartening but is quite normal and instructions for stretching it back into shape are towards the end of this guide.

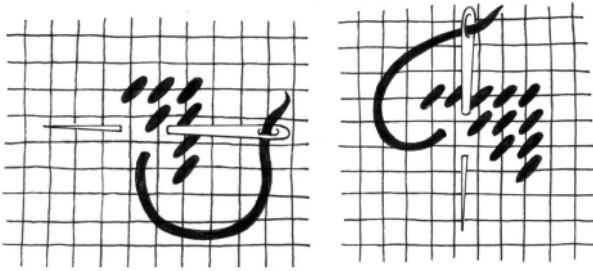
Straight lines and 'misprints'

The weaving of the natural fibres in the manufacture of canvas rarely is perfectly straight. Consequently, the printed design may occasionally appear untrue and you will have to decide the colour of a stitch. This is not something to be agonised over; most kits supply a chart, **so refer to it to establish what is intended** and then make up your own mind to get the best result. If you get it "wrong" - no one, not even you, will find it once you have moved on.

Getting started As previously mentioned, make sure you are using the stitch recommended by your kit manufacturer - you may run out of yarn if you make a change.

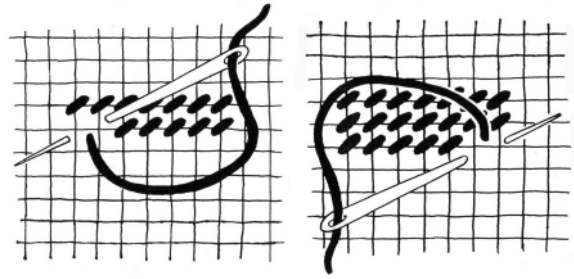
Tent stitch diagrams are on the next page. Put a knot at the end of your yarn and decide where you wish to begin. About an inch (2cms) away from there, push your needle down through one of the holes leaving the knot on the front of the canvas in the path of your first few stitches. Bring your needle back up in the hole where you want to start your first stitch. As you stitch towards the knot, you will catch the yarn at the back so that when you reach it, you can snip it off safely. To finish off, when you are about 2ins (5cms) from the end of your yarn, slide the needle under a few stitches at the back of the work and snip it off. From now on, you can do this to start new threads. **If you are using Half Cross Stitch you need to use the 'catching' method to both start and finish threads as there is far less wool on the back of the work to slide the needle under.**

The Stitches Two versions of Tent Stitch and the choice is yours; however I recommend Basketweave.



Basketweave Tent Stitch

So called because of the woven effect on the back. It is best for any large areas of colour, as it does not distort the canvas and gives a more even finish. Work up and down the diagonals, fitting each row into the previous row. This stitch is well worth learning if you are not used to it. It will quickly become second nature.



Continental Tent Stitch

This stitch is worked in rows horizontally, or vertically, from the left or from the right. It is suitable for small areas of colour, but on large areas can look 'ridgy' and it does distort the canvas as you work.

Finishing

When you have completed all your stitching, check over your work by holding it up to the light to see any missed stitches that may need to be added. Tidy up any loose or straggly ends at the back by tucking them behind a few stitches before snipping them off.

When you are satisfied, you can detach your work from the frame.

DO NOT TRIM YOUR CANVAS AT THIS STAGE

If you have been using a frame, your finished needlework should have kept its shape quite well but some distortion is normal. You can have it stretched professionally or you can straighten it out quite easily yourself by the following method.

Blocking

You will need a lot of drawing pins and a board that will withstand getting wet but is soft enough to take the pins.

Measure the width and depth of your piece of needlework and with pencil and ruler, draw a square onto the board to match, extending the lines where they cross by 3 or 4 inches (10cms.). This makes the lines easier to see through the unworked part of the canvas.

Next, pin the work (every inch - or less on small canvases) to the shape you have marked on the board, pulling and straightening it as follows.

Pin well away from the worked part of the canvas and at least $\frac{1}{2}$ an inch (1.5cms) in from the cut edge.

Pin one side, then the opposite, pulling the corners square and pinning as you go. Pin the last two sides in the same way, returning to the first sides to adjust the pins where necessary. You may have to do this two or three times before you are satisfied.

When you are happy with the shape, and all your edges are straight, dampen your work by wringing out an old, preferably faded and unpatterned towel in clean water, folding it and resting it flat on the work. Do not drench your work for fear of colour-runs. Leave it all overnight, then you can remove the towel and leave your work for a few days to become fully dry. If you unpin it too soon, it will distort again.

You will be pleasantly surprised to see how beautifully flat and even your work has become.

It is now ready to be made up as a cushion or perhaps a framed piece of work according to your choice.