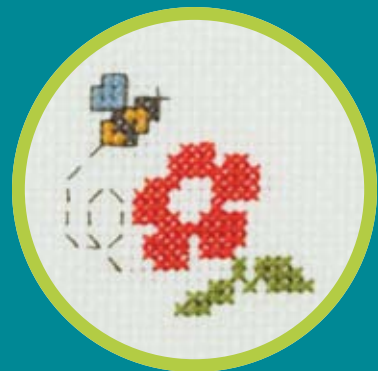


Cross-stitch has never been so cute—or simple! Perfect for the no-spare-time crafter, *Miss Woolly's Mini Cross-Stitch* will teach you this fun craft in a jiffy. Miss Woolly, aka craft-maven and blogger Eliza Edwards, outlines all the super-easy techniques you need to know and offers instructions for 12 adorable projects—including a hungry caterpillar, hooting owl, scrumptious burger, and a scary ghost. Plus, each project offers a finishing technique to turn your cross-stitch design into a one-of-a-kind accessory or gift, such as a keychain, potholder, or iPod cozy.

MISS WOOLLY'S MINI CROSS-STITCH

MISS WOOLLY'S mini cross-stitch

ELIZA EDWARDS



EDWARDS



cute
cross-stitch
in a snap



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MISS WOOLLY'S
mini cross-stitch

XX

ELIZA EDWARDS



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NEW YORK



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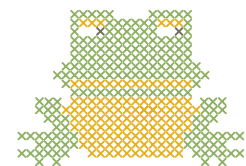
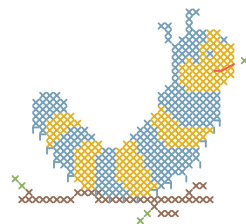
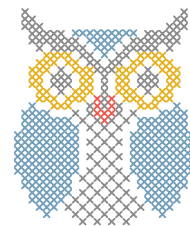
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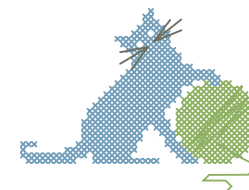
CONTENTS

Introduction.....	4
Cross-Stitch 101: Tools and Techniques.....	6

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CROSS-STITCH PROJECTS

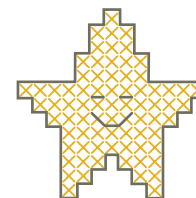
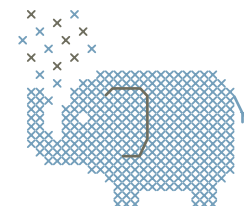
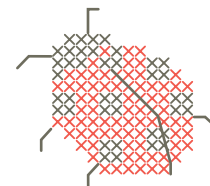
Ladylike Ladybug	18
Burger Time.....	22
Boo! The Scary Ghost	26
Buzzy Bee.....	30
Ellie Elephant.....	34
Washing Day	38
Star Light, Star Bright	42
Ribbit.....	46
Early Bird	50
Whiskers.....	54



The Hungry Caterpillar	58
Hoot Hoot!.....	62

xxx

Cross-Stitch Alphabet.....	66
Accents and Borders	67
Design-Your-Own Cross-Stitch Chart	68
Resources	69
Acknowledgments.....	71
Index	72



Welcome, Stitchers!

What makes cross-stitch such a great craft? Well, great craft is in the creating, and cross-stitch is easy to do and satisfying on completion. When working from a pattern, cross-stitch is straightforward and beginner-friendly—you're simply replicating a design from paper with thread on cloth, one stitch at a time. A form of embroidery, it's also one of the more relaxing crafts you'll ever try: the repetitive stitches create a steady rhythm that will soothe your nerves as your design appears before your eyes.

With a background in both graphic and textile design, I was naturally drawn to cross-stitch, as it combines both

image-making and stitching. I have always loved to create things, whether I'm printing my own wrapping paper or making everything wrapped up inside. *Miss Woolly*, my craft-centric online diary, grew out of this love of creating and my desire to share it with others. At heart, *Miss Woolly* is a crafty lady with a contemporary twist. My blog (misswoolly.blogspot.com) has been running for more than two years, serving as both a rich source of inspiration and a forum where crafters can interact and share ideas. In late 2006, I started creating mini cross-stitch kits in response to the lack of designs on the market that were at once quick, easy, and—most important—cute.



Small projects that could be completed on a weekend away or a long road trip, they received a great response via the Internet and in stores around the world.

The twelve designs in this book are happy little projects to lighten up your day. They don't take long to complete and are oh-so-simple to make—there's really only one stitch to master! The rest of the fun is simply watching your artwork appear. From adorable critters such as The Hungry Caterpillar and Ladylike Ladybug to the fun and funky Burger Time and Boo! The Scary Ghost, *Miss Woolly's*

Mini Cross-Stitch is packed with precious designs for kids and adults alike. I've also compiled some great little applications for each design—a pot holder, drink coaster, keychain, quilted pillowcase, pincushion, pencil case, apron, needlebook, and even an iPod cover! To add a little flair to your cross-stitch, flip to page 66 for an alphabet and cute patterns for accents. When you're ready to create your own design, copy the blank chart on page 68 and let your imagination go wild. The best thing about all this is you only need a few simple tools and, before you know it, you'll be stitching like a pro!

Cross-Stitch 101: Tools and Techniques

Tools

Craft stores are packed with a wide variety of needlework supplies, but all you'll really need to get started on these easy cross-stitch projects are the tools listed below.

Needles The best and most commonly used needles for cross-stitch are tapestry needles. They have blunt points that push aside the woven fibers in your fabric, rather than pierce through them, and large eyes to accommodate multiple strands of floss. Sizes range from 28 to 13 (smallest to largest), and the proper size depends on your particular fabric count. The best needle for Miss Woolly's cross-stitch projects is size 24. As a rule of thumb, the tapestry needle you choose for each project should be large enough to push aside the fibers of the fabric without leaving a hole.

Even-weave fabric Even-weave fabrics come in various forms, including linens, needlepoint canvas, and Aida fabric, which is the material of choice for beginning cross-stitchers. Even-weave gets its catchy name from the vertical "warp" threads and horizontal "weft" threads that are woven together evenly to make one piece of fabric.

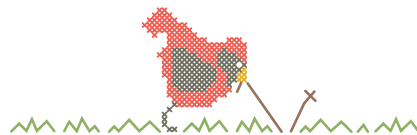
Aida fabric All designs in this book use Aida, which is a type of even-weave fabric specifically designed for counted cross-stitch. Aida is perfect for cross-stitch newbies because it's woven



in tiny squares, just like graph paper, making it easy to find accurate placement in the handy grid. It is 100 percent cotton, easy to wash and care for, and durable enough to withstand repeated handling during the stitching process. Because it's intended for use in cross-stitch projects, Aida cloth is stiff and easy to hold, so an embroidery hoop may not be necessary (see page 8 for more on embroidery hoops).

When looking for the right fabric, take note of the fabric count, which refers to the number of threads or squares per inch in the material. These counts range from 28 squares per inch to 6 squares per inch—the higher the count, the finer and smaller the finished design will be. For beginners, 14-count Aida is the top choice, and it has 14 squares per inch.

Embroidery floss Also known as stranded cotton, embroidery floss is a loosely twisted, sheen-y thread made up of six strands per length in a skein. It is most often made of cotton but also manufactured in silk, rayon, and linen. For all of the projects in *Miss Woolly's Mini Cross-Stitch*, you'll use two strands of cotton floss at a time, but any fine details require only one. All my designs use DMC embroidery flosses, the most widely used and easy-to-find brand. Each color is identified by number, so check the DMC website (www.dmc-usa.com) or your local craft store to find the floss you need.



Embroidery hoop Best used with larger cross-stitch projects, an embroidery hoop serves as a temporary frame that stretches your cloth for easier stitching. It has two (often wooden) hoops that are concentric to one another—one smaller, one larger. Your fabric sits on top of the smaller of the two hoops, and the larger hoop is placed over the top, pressed down, tightened, and secured with its adjustable screw. When working with small pieces of Aida, a hoop is generally not required, as the stiffness of the Aida suffices.

Embroidery scissors Small and sharp with a fine tip to snip in small areas, embroidery scissors can be found at most good craft stores.

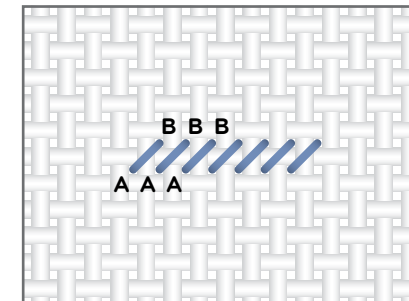


Stitches

There's only one basic stitch to know as you begin your adventures in cross-stitch—the cross-stitch! However, in addition to that master technique, the following super-easy stitches are great for details, and they'll help you turn your cross-stitch hobby projects into masterpieces.

Half stitch A half stitch is exactly as the name suggests—one half of an X, or /, a diagonal stitch from corner to corner in one square of your Aida grid. Every cross-stitch begins with a half stitch. In fact, when stitching up a design, I recommend you first make all half stitches in one row before returning to finish the X stitch (for more on this technique, see page 10). To figure out which direction to start from—bottom left corner to top right corner or bottom right to top left—take a look at your cross-stitch chart for reference. Be sure to complete all half stitches in the same direction for a clean, polished look.

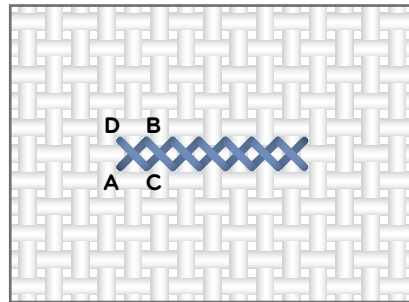
Half stitches are also used to achieve smoother-looking corners in your design (for an example, see *Washing Day* on page 39). They can also provide shading in some multi-dimensional designs (for an example, see “shading” on page 15).



Half stitch Bring your needle up at A and down at B to form a diagonal stitch. Make all of your stitches in the same direction if stitching in a broader section.

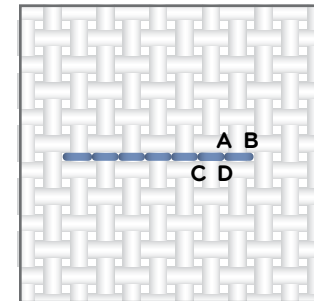


X stitch When working on Aida, one cross-stitch, or X, is worked over each square on your cloth, starting with one diagonal half stitch (/) and finishing with another half stitch in the opposite direction (\). Make sure all adjacent half stitches run in the same direction—from bottom left corner to top right corner, or bottom right to top left, and so forth—and then complete the X's with stitches in the opposite direction (for an example, see the illustration at right). It's best to work this stitch from either left to right or right to left, or in columns up or down when filling in sections of your design.



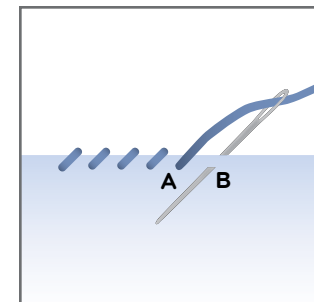
X stitch Bring your needle up at A and down at B to form a diagonal stitch. Repeat this one stitch for the entire section of this particular color. Then return to your first stitch and bring the needle up at C and down at D to complete your cross-stitch. Repeat this over all half stitches in the same color, and work your way along the rows until the design is complete.

Backstitch This is commonly used to outline and define shapes, enhancing your design in specific areas. It aims to look like a solid line and is worked in such a manner—each backstitch appears adjacent to the next one, creating an even straight line. The technique begins with one stitch backward on top of your fabric. Then count two squares forward and make your next stitch up from the underside, followed by one stitch back again, then two counts forward, one stitch back, and so forth.



Backstitch Bring your needle up at A and down at B, making one stitch backward. Count two squares forward and bring your needle up at C from the underside of the fabric. Count one square backward and bring your needle down at D. Repeat stitching two squares forward and one square back to complete your backstitches.

Whipstitch This stitch is used to sew separate pieces of fabric together at their edges. With the edges held together, the stitch loops over the ends of the fabric and binds them along a seam. For great examples of whipstitching, see the Make It project instructions for the Ladylike Ladybug pincushion (page 21) and Star Light, Star Bright needlebook (page 45).



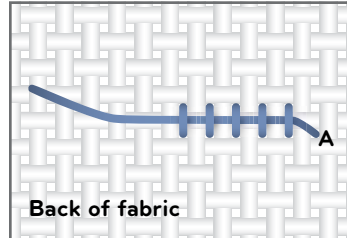
Whipstitch Hold the edges of your fabrics together and bring your needle through both at A. Loop, or “whip,” your needle around the top of the edges and through both fabrics again at B. Continue whipstitches around all closed edges.

Stitching Techniques

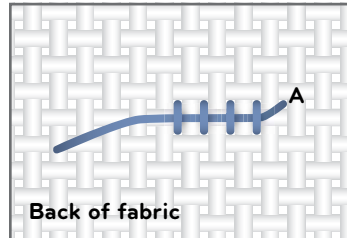
Cross-stitch rule to remember: NO knots! Knots in your embroidery leave lumps and will eventually work loose and catch. Instead, use the following stitching tricks to start off, end off, carry, and smooth out your stitches.

Starting off To start off your cross-stitch project, secure your floss by bringing your threaded needle up through the back of your fabric and leaving behind a tail that's about 1 inch (2.5 cm) long. As you begin your first half stitches, hold down the tail to the fabric and stitch over it. Make the next four to five stitches over the tail behind your design and snip off the excess thread.

Ending off Hooray! You've nearly finished a section of a particular color—but what do you do when you can't tie a knot? To end off, all you have to do is weave your needle through your last four to five stitches on the back, clip off the excess, and you're done!



Starting off: Bring your needle up through the back of your fabric at A, leaving a tail of thread behind. Hold down the tail and make half stitches over it to secure your thread.



Ending off: Bring your needle through the back of your fabric at A. Weave it through the last four stitches on the back of your fabric and snip off the end.



Carrying your floss When stitching the same color floss in a few small spots in your design, you might sometimes opt to carry your floss from one spot to the next, instead of ending off and starting again. This is a helpful technique if the areas are near one another, the floss color is light and won't show through the fabric, and you're jumping over a previously stitched area. Once you've finished stitching in one area, simply move your needle along the back of your fabric to the nearest one and begin again.

Railroading This is a “combing” technique that can make your work look especially polished—it prevents knots and twists in your stitches, producing a smooth, neat final product. Just after completing your half stitches, use either a larger tapestry needle or a laying tool (which is designed for this purpose) and run it between

the strands of floss in each stitch to separate any twists and smooth them down. Repeat again over completed X's for a perfect finish.

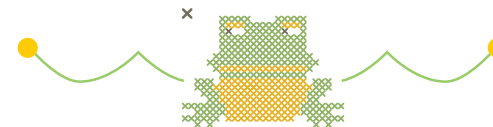
Frogging Rip it, rip it, rip it! Frogging is a slang term used by stitchers and refers to the removal of stitches when you make a mistake. Just un-thread from your needle, slip the needle underneath the stitch, and rip it. Well, pull it gently—you don't want to destroy your little masterpiece-in-the-making!

Snipping If you notice a mistake when you're already well past it—say, eight or nine rows after the errant stitch—instead of frogging, carefully snip each subsequent stitch with your fine embroidery scissors. Take your time and snip with great care—you don't want to catch your fabric with the scissors!

Designing a Cross-Stitch Project

If you love to draw, you can create your own cross-stitch design quite easily. All you need is some graph paper, colored pencils, and your imagination! When contemplating your design, consider proportion, perspective, and color just like you would a painting. Graph paper is a great tool to help gauge how your artwork will translate into cross-stitch. It'll act as a guide as you transfer your design's proportions onto fabric—using the squares in the graph, you can figure out how many stitches your design will need. There are also plenty of free cross-stitch patterns available online, as well as cross-stitch software that allows you to upload photos or draw original designs and print them on graph paper (for more info, see Resources on page 69).

Color is another important consideration when designing your own cross-stitch. Embroidery floss comes in multitudes of colors in varying shades, but know that the colors you love on the store shelves may appear darker on stitching. Test out your designs in colored pencil first, then try to match the colors in your drawing to the floss you find in a craft store or on a color chart. Based on your vision for the project, determine whether the colors would benefit from any of the following color techniques.



Shading To create backgrounds or soften colors in your design, use half stitches to “shade” particular areas and reach your desired look.

Tweeding If you'd like to create a subtle blended-color effect, try tweeding, which combines two or more colors of floss in one needle.



Shading

Outlining The backstitching technique also creates a nice color effect, as it can outline a form in your design or emphasize a particular part of it.

Since cross-stitching is labor-intensive, I recommend taking the time to adjust your design to exactly the size, form, and colors you'd like before you begin stitching, as there's nothing worse than realizing mistakes part way in!

Cross-Stitch Step-by-Step

So, you've got all your tools at the ready and your techniques down pat. Think you're prepared to finally get stitchin'? Take a peek at the following basic cross-stitch instructions, and refer back to them as you complete the projects in this book.

Prep Steps

1. Thread the Needle Just wet the ends of your floss, pinch them between your fingers, hold them up to the eye of your needle, and push them through. Some crafters use a needle threader, and if needed, a little beeswax applied to the ends of the floss can keep them straight and secured to each other.

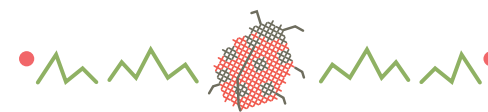
2. Ready Your Fabric Cut the fabric to size, leaving space around the design—I recommend 1 to 2 inches (2.5 to 5 cm), but when in doubt, cut larger. Bind the edges with masking tape to keep the ends from unraveling. Then remove or cut it off when the project is complete.

Basic Cross-Stitch How-To

1. Find the center of your Aida fabric by folding it in half horizontally and then in half again vertically. This will leave a temporary crease.

2. Use the arrows to locate the center square on the design chart. In this book, the center is marked by a black square. If the square is blank, count the squares on your fabric out from the center to figure out where your design begins. Sometimes it begins right in the center—lucky you!

3. Separate two strands of floss from the six-strand length in the skein you've chosen for your first color. Thread your needle. Do not knot your



thread (remember: NO knots!). Instead, start off by bringing your threaded needle up through the back of your fabric, leaving a 1-inch (2.5-cm) tail behind. Hold down the tail to your fabric and secure your floss with a row of half stitches over it (for more on starting off, see page 12).

4. Stitch all the areas of your first color, first stitching an entire row of half stitches, and then going back to complete the X's (for more on the X stitch, see page 10). If you're stitching your way up from the center of one color section, you'll have to end off your floss when you reach the very top (for more on ending off, see page 12). The same goes if you're stitching your way down, to the left, or to the right. Then, simply go back to the center square, start off your floss again, and finish stitching the rest of the color (for more on starting off, see page 12). Once you've completed all the X's, you'll start to see the design appear.

5. End off your first color by bringing your needle out to the back of the fabric. Weave it gently through the backs of the preceding stitches and cut off the extra tail once it's secured. Then move on to your next color and repeat steps 3 through 5.

Finishing

1. When your stitching is complete, wash your finished design in cool water using a mild liquid detergent. Rinse well but don't wring.

2. Roll the stitched fabric in a clean towel to absorb most of the water.

3. While still damp, place it facedown on a towel. Place another cloth on top of the needlework and press lightly with a warm iron. Let it dry.

4. Frame or finish as desired. See the Make It applications at the end of each project for creative applications.