

[ABC-Embroidery-Designs.com](http://abc-embroidery-designs.com)

Secrets of Machine Cross Stitching - Introduction

This topic is dedicated to a series of questions about cross-stitch designs - **MACHINE** cross-stitch designs - which we are constantly asked.

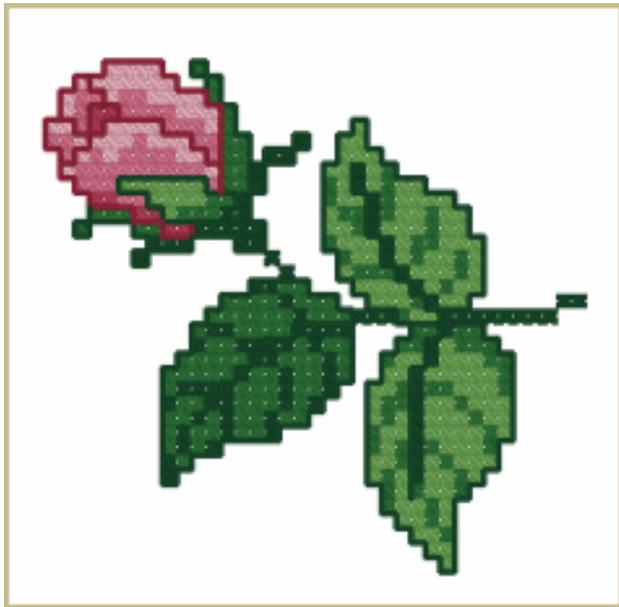
(Caution: What you might read now might change the way you feel about embroidery designs.)

Have you ever tried the Cross Stitch technique? Well, you might be surprised to know that you do not need any special software or any other "Add-Ons". Just you and your embroidery machine...

If you've never tried Cross Stitch, or maybe you haven't even heard about it, here you'll find some basic tips, instructions and free patterns for beginners.

We know you will fall in love with machine cross stitching and recognize that it is art in itself; the same way we did.

[As a bonus, we are also including a freebie rose design for you:](#)



What Is "Count Size"?

Although each design (and even each separate object within an embroidery design) has some kind of stitch count, we are now specifically referring to machine cross-stitch designs.

You can see that our **Cross-Stitch embroidery designs** are offered in 3 count sizes - 14, 16 and 18.

These count-size numbers indicate how many stitches per inch are in each version. The higher the count number, the denser and smaller will be the design. It goes this way:

- 14 counts/inch - large-sized designs - fairly loose
- 16 counts/inch - medium- sized designs - medium density
- 18 counts/inch - smallest-sized designs - most dense

Here is a close-up photo of the same rosebud, embroidered in different counts:





How to decide which count to pick up for your project

- 1.** First, check out the final size of the design in each count, and decide which SIZE of the design will better fit your specific project. This should be the main reason for choosing between 14-, 16- or 18-count versions of the same design.

- 2.** In case the size of the design doesn't make a big difference for your project, or if you have two possible options, do as follows:
 - 2.1** For scenery designs, select 16 or 18 count, because designs featuring landscape scenes and people look nicer when they're quite dense. This is probably because our eyes start to look for details, which are more recognizable on dense, higher contrast designs.

 - 2.2** If the design is floral, abstract, or lettering, pick up 14- or 16-count. The individual cross stitches can be seen well in 14 count, and the final embroideries look more like traditional hand cross stitch.

 - 2.3** If your fabric is medium- to heavy-weight and you want it to be covered completely with stitches, without any background showing through, select 18-count. It will also look more like a regular embroidery design, and less like a cross-stitched one.

 - 2.4** For lightweight fabric, it's best to use 14-count, because of its low density. If you're determined to use 16- or 18-counts, avoid lightweight fabrics.

- 3.** Sometimes it's great to use one design in all three count sizes. It may not sound reasonable at first, so we will try to show it "live":



As you can see, the same rose design in three different counts has been embroidered on the tablecloth. The largest design is closest to the sitting person, while the smaller ones are towards the table's center.

Such positioning of designs, one after another, creates a feeling of perspective and depth, because our brain thinks that the smaller roses are a lot farther away than they really are.

You may take advantage of this trick every time you want to create a composition effect of prospect or depths.

[Also, you may download this rose, in all three counts, for free, here:](#)



What Thread to Use for Machine Cross-Stitch?

Machine cross-stitch designs embroider beautifully, using popular polyester & rayon 40wt thread, which is exactly the type of thread you use for all other machine-embroidery designs.

In case you feel a need for more colors, because cross stitch designs include many gradient colors, please [**click here to order an amazing kit of machine embroidery thread**](#) with a great color palette:

If you have access to good colors of thick (30 wt) cotton machine-embroidery thread, it will also look very nice with 14-count designs. (On 16- and 18-count, the cotton looks too bulky).

What Fabrics to Choose?

Cross-stitch designs usually look great on fabric types that aren't particularly delicate. For example, they look beautiful on linen, denim, and cotton/polyester blends - simple, inexpensive types of fabrics. Also, make sure the fabric you select isn't too stretchy.

Stabilizing Cross-Stitch Designs:

This depends on your fabric and the specific project, so you will need to follow the regular stabilizing rules. We can, however, suggest a couple of techniques that will work well for most cross-stitch creations.

1. Hoop your fabric with backing under it. If your fabric is very light, use NO-SHOW cut-away. If your fabric is medium- or high-weight, use regular cut-away. And if you really want the stabilizer to go away completely, you can use heavy, water-soluble backing and wash it away after the embroidery is finished.
2. Place thin water-soluble topping film over the fabric, if its weave is not very dense, or has tendency for absorbing stitches. The topping will prevent this highly undesired effect, and will make your design look more beautiful, because it helps the stitches "stand out."
3. Embroider the design, carefully removing jumps **AFTER EACH COLOR STOP!**
4. When your embroidery is finished, un-hoop it and remove the stabilizer.

Tip:

Avoid using tear-away with cross-stitch designs. When tearing them, especially on lower counts, you may damage the stitches and fabric. Cross-stitch designs usually aren't dense enough for "cutting out" the tear-away (making it easily removable), as happens with satin stitches.

To hunt for [embroidery stabilizers](#), please [click here](#).

We hope you love cross stitch designs as much as we do. Usually, it's not possible to achieve so much details and shading with regular embroidery, while maintaining low thickness of the embroidery. That's why cross-stitch technique is so wonderful!

Below you can see some projects with cross stitch designs from our customers:









