

Printing instructions for

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Instructions on back of this page

Booklet begins on third page

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Permission is granted to print this book
for an individual and for teachers to
print for their students. Additional
information below the Table of
Contents.

Printing instructions:

The booklet was sized to easily fit in with your BE Stitching Supplies.

Print in landscape mode (horizontal) on both sides (duplex printing) flipping on the SHORT edge.

If the book is printed in portrait mode (vertical) the pages will not print in a logical sequence.

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The booklet looks better in color but the illustrations will still be clear if printed in black and white.

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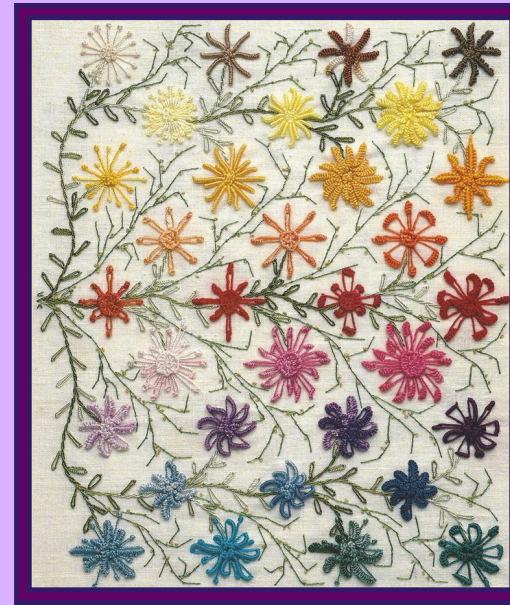
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If you like this booklet or have suggestions for future editions, please contact us to let us know. Contact information can be found at:

[http://www.bdeig.org/
contact-us.html](http://www.bdeig.org/contact-us.html)

A Beginner's Guide to Brazilian Embroidery



Compiled by
the
Brazilian
Dimensional
Embroidery
International
Guild
(BDEIG)

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who have taught us all
that BE is a beautiful,
and *achievable*,
needle art form.

Finally,
thank you to all Brazilian Embroidery enthusiasts
who continue to keep this art form

Cover Design Credits

Front Cover:

Upper Left: Debbie Kelley — *Simply Irresistible* (3829)

Lower Left: Virginia Chapman — *Floss Flowers* (Floss
Flowers Book 1)

Upper Right: Loretta Holzberger — *Alpine Meadow* (2628)

Lower Right: Rosalie Wakefield — *Big Bad Bug* (856)

Back Cover:

Upper Left: Virginia Chapman — *Cactus Dahlia* (Floss
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Middle Left: Jinx Shearer — *Floral Butterfly* (1141)

Lower Left: Jinx Shearer — *Millennium Rose* (1136)

Upper Right: Loretta Holzberger — *Summer Bouquet* (2628)

Lower Right: Debbie Kelley — *Thistle Teach Me* (3859)

From this beginning, a tradition was born. Every year BDEIG holds a seminar with five full days — ten sessions of classes with multiple class offerings each session. Each class is typically one or two sessions long and is rated as a beginner, intermediate, or advanced class. Since 1991, BDEIG has offered 1400 classes at Seminar. Seminars are typically held in June. In addition to the classes taught at Seminar, a showcase of pieces stitched by members is held every year and is on display to the public (Show and Share). Additionally, there is a “Merchant’s Mall” where BE designs and supplies are readily available.

BDEIG publishes a quarterly newsletter, The BE Wrap-up, for its members. The newsletter always has Education Pages, tips, and a free design (or two) for its members. It also has Guild business information, news from our chapters world-wide, news from our merchants and BE suppliers, and other items of interest to BE enthusiasts.

While you must be a member to attend the annual seminar and to receive the newsletter, the Guild also maintains a website, <http://www.bdeig.org> which is open to the general public. The website has online stitch instructions, some free designs, and contact information for suppliers. There is also information about the annual seminar including many pictures both of the upcoming classes to be taught, and of the winners of awards from the previous Show and Share. You can find information about joining the Guild and about chapters in your area.

<http://www.bdeig.org/membership.html>

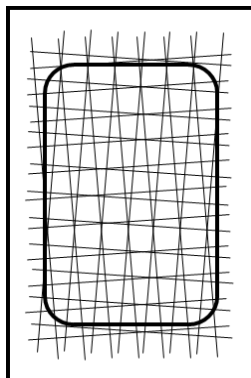
BDEIG is one of the most affordable needle arts guilds. We work hard to keep our membership fees and seminar costs down so more can afford to take part. If you are not a member yet, consider joining today.

Where to Find BE Designs

One of the first places to look is at the BDEIG website services page: <http://www.bdeig.org/services.html>. This is where you found this book. Here you will also find a page of free small designs. Additionally you will find two other links. The first is to the BE Boutique where you will find books of designs published by BDEIG. The other link is to the “At A Glance” list of members with physical and online shops. They will be happy to satisfy your need for BE designs, threads, and more. The BE Wrap-up also has at least one design in each issue.

Framing

Your finished piece is now clean and ready to be framed. Bind your piece to a piece of acid-free foam board before putting it in the frame. A layer of padding can add dimension to a framed piece. Binding will help preserve your stitching and provide a backbone for the framed design. Some people find unwaxed dental floss an ideal 'thread' for doing the binding. Pin the piece on the foam board to center it the way you want. Crisscross stitch the across the back of the piece to secure it to the foam board.



It is not necessary to put the stitched design under glass in a frame. Rayon is a wood forest product and letting it 'breathe' is good. Framed pieces without glass can be 'dusted' with a hand-held hairdryer. If you do decide to use glass on your piece, make sure it doesn't crush your embroidery and consider using non-glare glass.

Suggested Supply List

This list of suggested supplies is a starting place for doing Brazilian Embroidery. Your personal supply list will change with each design and piece.

- Good Pair of Scissors
- Milliners Needles (1, 3, 5, 7, 15)
- A Tapestry Needle (or 2)
- Doodle Cloth
- Additional light
- Pen and Paper for notes
- Glue Stick or Dots for Regluing Thread Tabs if needed
- A Wash-out or Iron-out Pen
- Threads for your Design
- Several Needle Threaders
- Darners and Long Darners
- Drizzle Pad or Pincushion
- Magnification
- Needle Pullers
- A Project Bag or Box
- A J-shaped Piece of Strapping Tape for preparing your threads
- Your Design with Instructions
- This Booklet

Brazilian Dimensional Embroidery International Guild (BDEIG)

In 1991, Virginia Chapman hosted a seminar for people she had found who were interested in Brazilian Embroidery. At the conclusion of that first seminar, the Brazilian Dimensional Embroidery International Guild (BDEIG) was formed. Twenty-five years later, BDEIG is still going strong.

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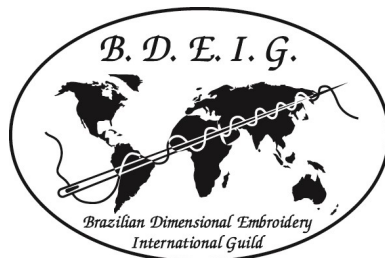
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Teachers are granted permission make copies for their students as long as they are provided to the students at no cost except to cover the cost of printing.

This booklet celebrates the 25th anniversary of BDEIG and is the Guild's gift to our members, our future members, and to the rest of the needle arts community who may be interested in exploring the wonderful and colorful world of Brazilian Embroidery.



Blocking, Laundering and Thread Bleeding

When you have finished a piece, you will want to block it to maintain the shape. One way to do this is to attach it to a wooden frame using brass tacks. These frames come in a variety of sizes and can be put together to accommodate virtually any size of project. Make sure you put the brass tacks far enough away from the design so any inadvertent hole they create will not show. Most brass tacks today are brass coated, not pure brass. The good news is that they are magnetic, allowing use of a knob-like tool (EZ Tack It) for placing them. The bad news is that if they are left in a piece for too long, there is a chance they could rust.



After your design is tacked onto the frame, you can wash it to remove any dirt or oil from your hands. Use a few drops of dish soap that cuts grease (Dawn) and cool water to hand wash a design you plan to frame. An alternative, some BE-ers wash the piece before putting it on the frame to dry. Others use their iron to block the piece and don't use the frame at all.

Rayon threads have a tendency to bleed, especially the deeper red tones. To avoid having the bleeding ruin your design, try using a product like Johnson & Johnson's Color Catchers. Put a Color Catcher below and above your design, weight it down, cover the design and Color Catchers with water, and let the reds bleed into the color catcher. You may have to repeat this process several times. When you are satisfied that no more bleeding will occur, blot the design dry, or roll it in a clean towel. Then use a hair dryer to quickly dry the entire design and lock the color into the threads. Remove brass tacks and your piece is ready to be framed.

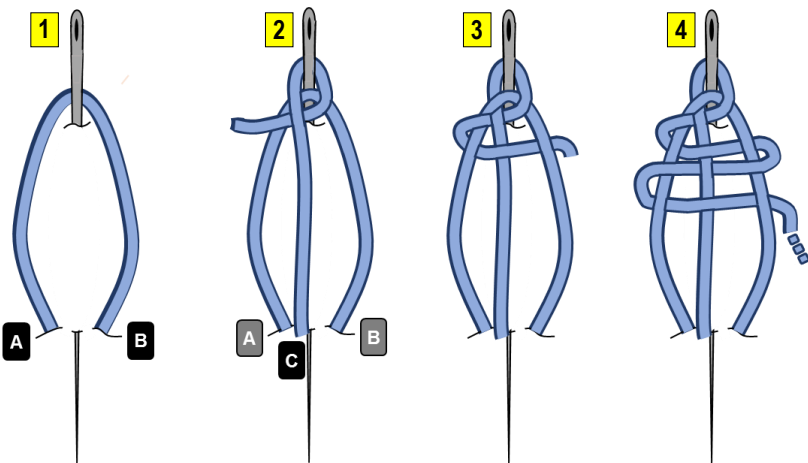
Many people use BE to add personal decorations to their clothing. Some threads, such as Ciré, will not take machine washing as well as others. You won't have to worry about the threads bleeding on your clothes if you take the steps listed above to insure the excess dye has washed out.

Needle Weaving

Needle weaving is similar to the drizzle in that it is only attached to the fabric at one end. While it is often used for free standing leaves, it can also be used for flower petals. A tapestry needle is a good choice for the weaving part of this stitch because it is shorter and has a blunt point. Most of this stitching is done above the fabric.



1. Place an unthreaded needle in and out of the fabric the length of the stitch. Thread a second needle, come up at **A**, take the thread around the back of the first needle and go down at **B**.
2. Come back up at **C**. Take the thread around the back of the first needle once more. You now have three foundation threads for weaving (**A** on the left, **C** in the middle, and **B** on the right). Take the working thread under foundation thread **C** and over foundation thread **A**.
3. Continue weaving by taking the working thread around going under foundation thread A, over foundation thread C, and under foundation thread B. Push the horizontal working thread up to the top of the foundation to snug up the weaving.
4. Continue weaving back and fourth across the three foundation threads until you reach the bottom. Each time you finish a row, snug it up against the previous row.
5. When you reach the bottom of the foundation threads, take the needle to the back of the fabric near foundation thread C. Knot off, then pull the unthreaded needle out of the fabric.



What is Brazilian Embroidery and Why is it Unique?

Brazilian Embroidery (BE) is a type of hand-stitched raised surface embroidery that uses a z-twist rayon thread to create dimensional stitching (stitching does not lie flat against the fabric). Though many designs are floral, it is not a requirement for a BE design to be floral. The z-twist rayon thread has a high sheen which gives designs stitched with it a luster that is missing from many other types of embroidery.

In the 1960s, a Brazilian woman, Mrs. Elisa Hirsch, became dissatisfied with the options available to her for embroidery. She developed a dyeing method to create vividly colored floss. With the creation of this thread, Brazilian Embroidery was born. Since that time, many talented needle artists have expanded upon traditional embroidery stitches with stitch variations and stitch combinations that make this type of embroidery truly dimensional. For this reason, Brazilian Embroidery is also known as Brazilian Dimensional Embroidery (BDE).

The type of threads used for BE can also be used in other types of needle art, such as Hardanger, pulled work, and for some types of lace. BE elements can be integrated with these other types of embroidery for a piece that celebrates both.

Before We Go Any Further

There are three things to remember about Brazilian Embroidery. The first is that it is a beautiful form of needle art that enchants those who see it. The second is that it is one of the most forgiving types of embroidery — even mistakes usually look very good. Don't admit they are a mistake and no one will know! The last thing is that it looks intimidating but it is not. While advanced stitches can be challenging, the basic stitches are fairly simple and the 'slippery' rayon thread helps them glide through the fabric.

There is only one thing to remember about this booklet. The primary intent of this booklet is to help someone who is brand new to BE. Therefore, it has a lot of information, and can seem overwhelming, but most is for reference only. A secondary purpose is to be a tote-able reference for all BE-ers. Read through the booklet and earmark the info you want to remember. Make this booklet your guide to the wonderful world of Brazilian Embroidery.

All About Brazilian Threads

Z-Twist Rayon

Rayon is a hybrid fiber — it is manufactured from a natural wood byproduct, cellulose. The manufacturing process gives it a high sheen. Most threads and floss used for embroidery have an S-twist, the threads are twisted in a clockwise direction. Threads used for Brazilian Embroidery are twisted in a counter clockwise direction giving them the distinctive Z-twist.

Today, the EdMar Company is the principal manufacturer of threads used for BE. EdMar offers more than 240 colors in eight weights of threads. You can also find z-twist rayon thread that has been overdyed for even more color options. Rayon thread is often used in machine embroidery as well, but unless it has a z-twist, it should not be used for BE.

As with most yarns and many flosses, there will be a variation in color between dye lots. EdMar does not create dye lot identification. Make sure you purchase enough of each thread weight and color to complete your design.

Today, most designers refer to the EdMar threads in their design directions. Since EdMar is the primary supplier of BE threads, this booklet will focus on their product.

EdMar Threads

EdMar threads are meant to be used as they are — never split the plies. The working length is roughly one yard (or one meter). In the chart on the next page, each strand is one working length. Most BE enthusiasts follow a standard process for cutting the skein to create the appropriate number of strands.

One yard may seem like an overly long length but once you start wrapping the thread or making cast-ons, you'll find the length to be a good one.

Since EdMar refers to their product as 'threads' instead of 'floss', this booklet will also call them threads.



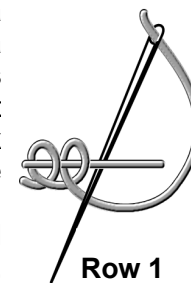
S-Twist
(on left)
and
Z-Twist
(on right)

Detached Buttonhole

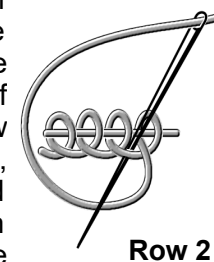
This is the primary stitch used in needle lace, but in Brazilian Embroidery we use it a bit differently. Here, rows of detached buttonhole stitch are worked over a single straight stitch, or added to the outer edge of other stitches. The final petal or design element generally stays loose from the fabric except at the beginning join point.



Begin with a straight stitch as a foundation. A tapestry needle which has a blunt point will be easier to use for this stitch. Come up at one end of the straight stitch. If you are only working one row, work clockwise. If making more than one row, some have found it best if the final row is worked clockwise, but alternating rows in between will be worked counter-clockwise. On the example, the first row is being worked counter-clockwise and the second row clockwise.



Each stitch is worked by forming a loop in the direction of the work and taking the needle behind the foundation or stitch in the previous row and over the loop of thread. When you reach the end of the row after making the desired number of stitches, reverse the direction of the thread loop and work back in the loops between stitches. Keep the stitches somewhat loose but not sloppy.



When extra stitches are required in a row, you may increase by making two stitches into one loop, or by making stitches both into the loops between stitches and the little e that is formed by the stitch. Some suggest that making stitches in the e's creates a sturdier petal.

Finally, after all rows have been made, weave back down one side to the fabric and take the needle down to the back. The petal may also be finished by taking the needle down at the tip of the petal, thereby holding it in place, rather than leaving the petal tip free of the fabric.

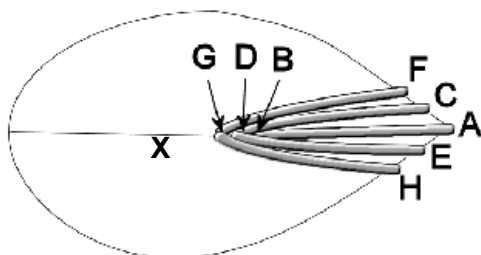
Leaf Stitch (Alternating Satin Stitch)

This variation of the satin stitch is a basic for creating leaves in Brazilian Embroidery.

1. Anchor the knot within the body of the leaf (X) by taking a small stitch. This stitch will be unseen at the completion of the leaf.
2. Come up at A, at the tip of the leaf.
3. Go down at B, about 1/3 of the way from the tip of the leaf.



4. Come up at C, and go down at D. Come back up at E, going back down at D. Continue alternating satin stitches from the left and right of the tip and always go back down at the vein, but move the stitches



Leaf Stitch

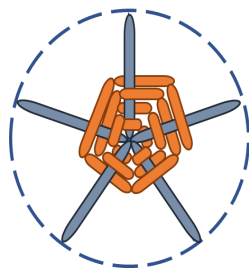
down the vein as well as down the edges. Like any directional satin stitch, keeping the angle pleasing is something that requires practice.

Spider Web Weaving

This stitch is mostly done on top of the fabric. It is especially pretty with loosely twisted threads such as Ciré and Nova. This example uses stem stitch on the edge to give it a more scalloped look.



1. Divide your circle into an odd number of segments. Make a straight stitch from the center of the circle to the edge for each of the divisions. Tie the knot in the back of the fabric.
2. Come up next to the center adjacent to a spoke. Switch to a tapestry needle, or use the 'eye end' of your needle. Keeping your needle above the fabric, weave over and under each spoke until the circle is filled. Take care not to pull too tightly or the weaving will go under the previous stitch on that spoke. When the circle is filled, go back to a sharp needle, take the thread to the back of the fabric and knot off.



EdMar Embroidery Thread Size Chart

Thread Name / Tab Color	Weight	Ply	Twist	Skein Length in Yards / Meters	Strands per Skein	Recommended Needle size
Glory / Pink	Fine	2	Somewhat loose	21.5 / 20	20	Milliner #7
Iris / Purple	Medium	2	Somewhat loose	16 / 15	15	Milliner #5
Frost / Green	Medium	3	Very tight	16 / 15	15	Milliner #1 Milliner #3
Ciré / White	Heavy	3	Very loose	10.5 / 10	10	Milliner #1
Lola / Orange	Heavy	3	Tight	20.7 / 19	19	Milliner #1
Tabé / Yellow	Heavy	2	Somewhat loose	10.5 / 10	10	Milliner #1
Nova / Blue	Extra heavy	6	Loose	10.5 / 10	10	Darner #18 Milliner #15
Bouclé / Ivory	Heavy	4	Bumpy / Knotted	10.5 / 10	10	Darner #18 Milliner #15

About the Skein

EdMar packages their skeins of threads as pictured on the previous page. The skein is about 9.5 inches in length, including the informational tab on the top. Skeins are twisted in a double loop that is threaded through the informational tab.

The front of the tab displays the weight (Glory) and the color number (206) as well as telling you it is an EdMar product. Today, EdMar color - codes the tabs by weight of the thread (see above chart).



The back of the tab shows the length in yardage and meters, and tells you that it is rayon. It also says that it is colorfast, but more on that later. Finally it gives you the web address for EdMar.



Only wholesalers can buy directly from Edmar. However, their website does have helpful information for BE stitchers, including thread charts, washing instructions, and tips for stitching with rayon.

Preparing a New Skein

It would seem logical to get that paper tab off and get rid of it, but don't do it. Not only will the tab be future reference for the skein, if the skein is properly cut the tab will hold the working lengths ready to be used. In the instructions that follow, the information for left handed stitchers is in *italics*.

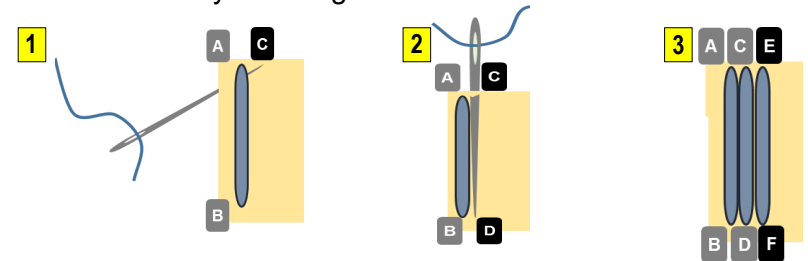
1. With left (*right*) hand, hold the skein of thread near the base of the paper tab.
2. With the right (*left*) hand, gently pull the tab to your right revealing two separate loops. A knot will be revealed..
3. Isolate the knot by pulling the other loop away with one hand while holding the knot with your other hand.
4. Cut off the knot. Make sure you only cut through the loop with the knot. Do not cut the other loop.
5. Pull loose end out of the tab, then shake loosely to let thread unwind naturally. You can help the process by poking your finger in the gap under the tab, then running the finger down separating the thread into two. You now have working length strands of thread ready to be used.



6. To secure the thread to the tab you'll need a J-shaped tool. Many BE stitchers use one they have made from plastic banding or banding tape such as that strapped around boxes of paper. Alternatively you can use a large crochet hook (J or K) or even a paper clip that has been straightened out to make a 'J' shape. If you are using the banding tape, cut a piece about four inches long. Round the edges of each end so you don't have sharp corners. About an inch from one end, fold the tape back onto itself, making a sharp crease in the tape. If you need help creating the crease, use a pair of pliers.



1. As with most stitches begin by coming up at **A** and going down at **B**. Next bring your needle up and out at **C**. Note that **C** is at the top, right next to **A**.
2. Now lay your needle down next to the first stitch and take it out at **D**. The first two stitches are now complete.
3. Continue working top to bottom until you have completed that section of your design.

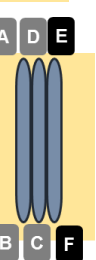


Satin Stitch vs. the Thread-Saver Stitch

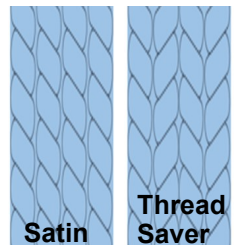
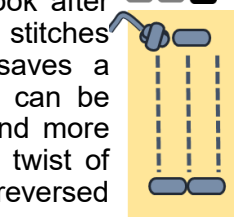
Satin stitch is a thread hog. You have as much thread on the back of your piece as you do on the front. This shows what the back of your fabric looks like after completing three stitches.

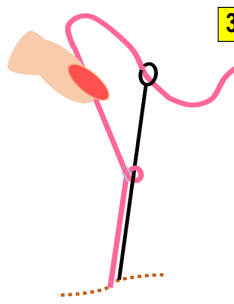
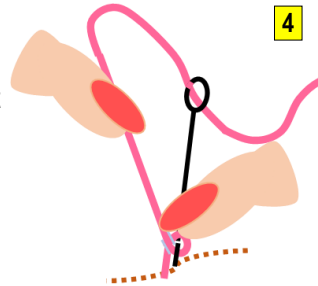


The thread-saver stitch can save you a lot of thread, but it may not give you the desired look. The thread-saver stitch starts the same way the satin stitch does, coming up at **A** and going down at **B**. Where it differs is that the second stitch begins at the bottom (**C**) and ends at the top (**D**). The third stitch starts at the top (**E**) and ends at the bottom (**F**), etc.



This is how the back of the fabric will look after three stitches. The dotted lines represent the stitches on the front of the fabric. Clearly this saves a considerable amount of thread. However it can be noticeable, especially with heavier weights and more loosely woven threads. This is because the twist of the thread is consistent with satin stitch but is reversed with the thread-saver stitch. This will not only affect the consistent appearance of your satin stitching, it will affect the dimensionality of the stitching. With all the thread below the surface of the fabric, a true satin stitch will stand higher than a thread saver stitch. This could be a consideration when you are using the satin stitch as padding.



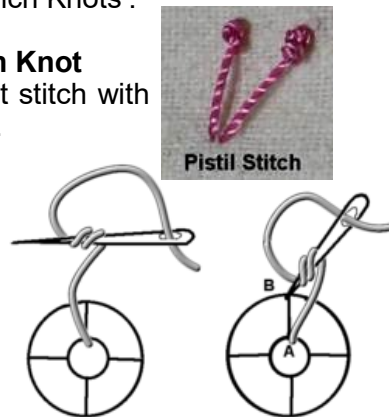
- 
- 3** 3. When you have the desired number of wraps, turn the needle around and plunge it into the fabric one or two threads away from where it came up. Be careful not to split the thread as you go back down.
- 
- 4** 4. Keep your finger on the wraps and tension on the thread as it goes into the fabric so your knot is snugged down well and does not have an extra loop on the top. Keeping tension on the thread as you execute a French knot is the difference between success and failure.

If you are using French knots as field flowers, consider making some a bit looser than others to give the flowers some variation in the size of your flowers. Martha Michler, a crazy quilt author and designer, calls these looser knots 'Sloppy French Knots'.

Pistil Stitch or Long-Tailed French Knot

A Pistil stitch is simply a straight stitch with an attached French or Colonial knot.

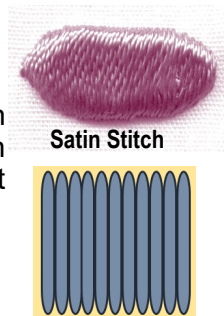
1. Come up at **A**.
2. Holding the thread, wrap the needle 2-3 times clockwise.
3. Bring the needle down at **B**, keeping the thread taut.



Various design instructions will typically specify the number of wraps needed for that particular element.

Satin Stitch

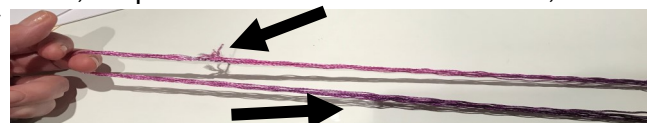
Satin stitch is one of those stitches that can seem to be intimidating. If you think of satin stitch as nothing more than a series of straight stitches, the intimidation factor will disappear!



7. Use your J-shaped tool to thread the right side of the skein back through the tab (7A and 7B). Your threads are now ready to use (7C). Pull single thread lengths from the loop at the bottom of the tab.



For multi-colored threads, you may want to cut at a color change instead of the knot. This allows you to stitch with the different colors at your discretion. To cut at a color change, carefully separate the tab opening at the top, remove the skein to have one long loop. Cut at the desired location, loop the thread back onto the tab, then tape or glue the top of the tab shut.



Thread Straightening

Most BE enthusiasts straighten their threads before using them. Some iron them on a setting for rayon or use a hair straightener on a low setting. Others steam them by holding them over the steam from a tea kettle. Still others will wrap each end of the thread around their fingers and pull the thread straight. Each has its merits and faults — there is no one correct way to straighten your threads.

Thread Storage

Many BE stitchers like to use these plastic sleeves. One advantage is that you can easily see, and enjoy, the colors of your threads. A disadvantage could be having to move threads to insert a new color or weight while maintaining the order.

Other stitchers use floss bags to store their threads. These bags have holes punched in them so you can store them on jointed rings or shower hooks. This system might be more easily maintained, but the colors are not as easily seen.



A newer system that some have adopted is the Annie's Keeper system. Like the plastic sleeves you have good visibility of your colors. However you have to re-thread, and re-identify, each skein on an Annie's Keeper tab. These tabs fit into storage slides that are the same size as hanging file folders. You then store your threads in file folder boxes.

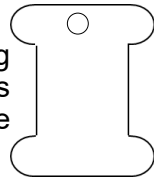


Jointed binder rings and shower hooks are also popular ways of storing threads. These rings come in many sizes and are relatively inexpensive. The ring is shown open here to demonstrate how the threads are stored. One disadvantage of this system is that your threads are still 'exposed' unless you store the ringed threads in a bag or box.

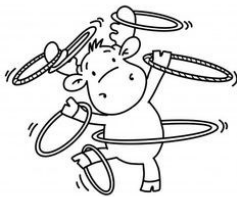


There are other ways you can store your threads so they are protected. These are just four of the most popular. You may choose to store your stash of threads one way, such as Annie's Keepers, then store your project threads another way, such as on rings.

One way that is not recommended for storing these rayon threads is the use of thread cards such as these. Rayon threads wound on these cards may develop kinks.



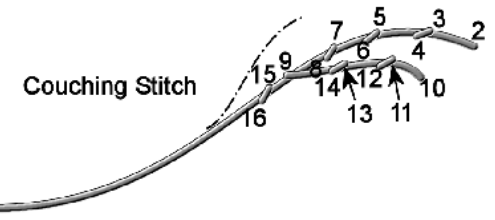
To Hoop or Not to Hoop



Using a hoop, or a frame, is a matter of preference. EdMar recommends it to help keep a uniform pressure and prevent the fabric from puckering. Most BE-ers use a hoop or frame. However, some BE stitchers prefer to be hoopless! If you use a hoop, here are a couple of tips to help you out:

- Use a hoop big enough to contain the entire design. You don't want to have to push the hoop down over your stitching.
- Plastic hoops can be washed on the top shelf of a dishwasher.
- Consider wrapping the inner hoop with gauze to add additional tightness. Remove the hoop every time you

1. Using a finer-weight thread, come up at 1 and down at 2. Do not pull the thread tight. Let it lie loosely on the top of the fabric along the pattern line.



2. Come up at 3, down at 4, up at 5, down at 6 and so on. Continue until the thread is securely couched down along the pattern line.
3. If there are side branches off the stem, work them on your way down the stem as shown in 9-14.

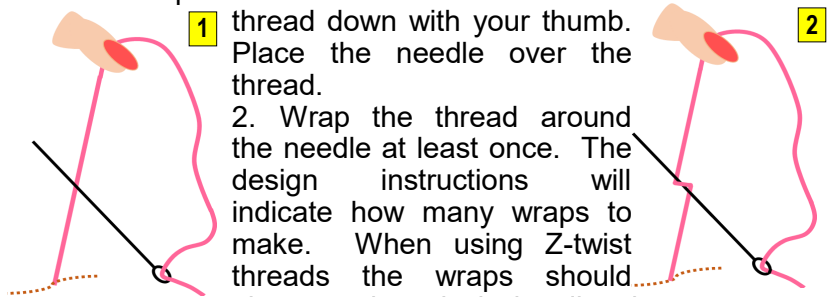
When doing the couching, make short angled stitches that follow the line of the thread twist and your couching will blend in better. Areas that are curved need to be couched more closely than straighter sections.

If you take your thread from one area of a design to another part without tying off first, your thread is 'traveling'. This can be tempting to do, especially when couching. If you do this, the thread that traveled across your design may show up as a shadow on your completed design. It is better to knot off and start again.

French Knot

In virtually all Brazilian Embroidery, French knots and Colonial knots are used interchangeably. These knots are so similar it is hard to tell one from another when looking at a finished knot. Instructions are given here for the French knot and the long legged French knot, aka the pistil stitch.

1. Come up out of the fabric and hold the thread down with your thumb. Place the needle over the thread.



2. Wrap the thread around the needle at least once. The design instructions will indicate how many wraps to make. When using Z-twist threads the wraps should always go in a clockwise direction.

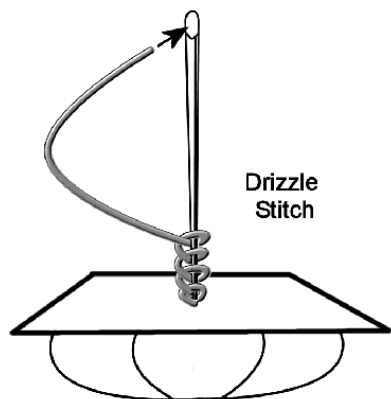
Drizzle

This is a version of the cast-on stitch. The difference is that it is only attached to the fabric at one end. Use a milliners needle or darning needle for easier threading. Any cast-on stitch can become a drizzle stitch.



Single Up-Down Double

1. Come up through the fabric with your needle and thread.
2. Unthread the needle. Place your fabric over a pincushion and insert the needle near the thread and into the pincushion. The needle eye will be up at the top.
3. Make the desired number of cast-on loops over the eye of the needle. These can be plain, up-down, loose or any variation of the cast-on stitch you would like to use. The plain cast-on will create a spiraling drizzle. The up-down cast-on will make a firm drizzle that does not spiral.
4. Rethread the needle and take the tail of the thread back through the loops and fabric. Pull only as tight as you want it; then knot the thread.



Couching

Couching stitch is often used in Brazilian Embroidery to create fine lines of green growth, called "fine growth".



have finished stitching for the day. Failure to do so can result in permanent marks on your design.

An alternative to a hoop is a wooden frame and brass tacks. If you decide to use a frame:

- Wrap the cloth around the frame to one side to help keep it taut. If you only tack the design to the top of the frame it will be more likely to stretch and sag.
- A layer of gauze will help here too.
- If the piece is going to be in the frame for some time, make sure you use brass tacks, not coated brass tacks. The coated tacks could rust if the coating wears thin. Pure brass is not magnetic. If the piece is going to be in the frame for a short period of time, or is going to be in a frame for washing, blocking, and quickly drying, there is no concern about using coated tacks.

Hoop or frame stands and hands-free hoops are nice when you feel like you need a free hand. However they are not necessary and have drawbacks as well. Some more advanced stitches require the use of a drizzle pad (pin cushion). For these stitches, you may not want to use a hands-free hoop or frame.

Needle Knowledge

Basics

There are three parts to a needle — the eye, the shank, and the point. The individual characteristics of these parts determine the type of needle. The principle difference between a tapestry needle and a chenille needle is that the tapestry needle has a blunt point and the chenille needle has a sharp point. The characteristics of needles primarily used by BE enthusiasts will be explored below.

Needles are numbered according to their size. With a few exceptions, the smaller the number of the needle, the larger the needle will be.

Here are two online resources for printable needle guides. This one, from EdMar, lists uses specific for Brazilian Embroidery. Make sure to add the new thread-weight Tabé under Milliners #1.

<http://edmar-co.com/catalog/needles/needlesizeguide.pdf>

This second printable needle guide is from needle manufacturer John James. This needle guide is more

comprehensive, but has no information specific to BE. If you are interested in seeing how needles are manufactured, there is a video on this website as well.

<https://www.ijneedles.com/needles-guide>



Milliners Needles (Straw Needles)

If you only want to remember one type of needle for BE stitching, remember the milliner needle. Many BE-ers use milliner needles for all BE stitching to keep from having to change needles. Milliners needles have a long shank, a sharp point and a small eye that is not elongated. They were originally engineered for hat makers. The shank of milliners needles is not tapered and does not bulge at the eye. For this reason, it is the needle of choice for bullions, cast-ons, and drizzles.

Tapestry Needles

Tapestry needles have a long oval eye, a tapered shaft, and a blunt point. These needles are especially good for needle weaving and detached button hole, stitches that don't pierce the fabric. They are also good when you don't want to pierce your thread. Some also use tapestry needles to assist in removing stitches.

Embroidery Needles (Crewel Needles)

Embroidery needles have a large eye and a sharp point. They are shorter than milliners needles. The eye will accommodate thicker threads. These needles can be used for satin stitch.

Darners, Long Darners, and Extra Long Darners

Darners are long needles, with a long eye and a sharp point. Sizes 14 to 18 are commonly known as 'yarn darners'. These needles are especially useful for double cast-on stitches as they can easily accommodate having multiple threads at once. Some find extra long darners are helpful when making very long cast-ons or bullions.

Chenille Needles

Chenille needles have a long eye, a sharp point, and a tapered shaft. Because the eye of the needle is somewhat wider than the rest of the needle, chenille needles open the fabric a bit more to allow ease in pulling thread through. For heavier threads such as Nova and Bouclé this is a very helpful feature.

Loose Cast-on

If you want the cast-on loop to be fluffy or looser, insert 1 or 2 extra large darners next to the working needle as it is planted in the fabric for the cast-ons. Cast on over all the needles. Pull out the extra needles before pulling the thread through with the main needle. The extra needle method can be used for all cast-on and drizzle stitches.



Loose Cast-on Stitch

Double Cast-on

When you make a simple cast-on, all of the loops go on one side of the needle. With the double cast-on, you put loops on both sides of the needle.

1. For this variation you will need two working threads. Either knot both ends of a strand, or thread two strands of floss in your milliners needle.
2. Come up at **A**. Go down at **B** and bring the point of the needle back up at **A** but do not pull through.
3. Arrange your threads so one lies on the left and one on the right. Pick up the left thread with the right hand. Make a twist around the left index finger and drop the loop on the point of the needle. Snug it down.
4. Now pick up the right thread with the left hand. Make a twist around the index finger of the right hand and drop the loop on the needle.
5. Alternate between threads until you have enough loops cast onto the needle.
6. Hold the loops with the left hand and pull the needle through.
7. Take the needle and threads down at **B**.

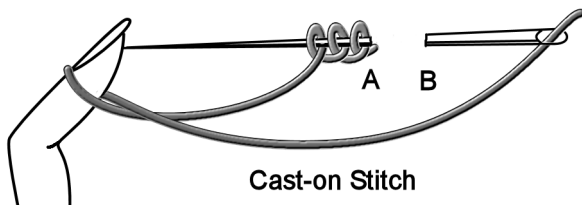


Double Cast-On Stitch

If you have a short thread, or are having trouble with this stitch, you can unthread the needle at the end of Step 2 and rethread it before Step 6. This only works if you are using two separate threads, not one thread knotted at both ends.

Standard Cast-On

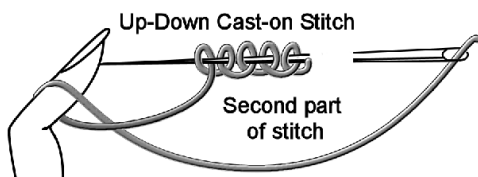
1. Come up and out at **A**. Go in at **B** and back up at **A** but leave the needle there in the fabric just like doing a bullion stitch.
2. Grasp the thread a few inches out from **A** with your right hand. Put your left index finger on top of the thread and give it a twist down and around the thread picking up a twisted loop. Drop the loop over the end of the needle and snug it down to **A**. This creates a half hitch knot on your needle. Continue twisting loops and dropping them on the needle until you have the desired number.
3. Wrap the end of the thread behind the needle once in a clockwise direction. Hold the loops and pull the needle through the fabric and loops. A needle puller may be helpful whenever you get ready to pull the needle through wraps or loops. Pull until the thread and loops are snug. Take the needle down and out at **B**.



The same logic for making bullions curve up or down applies to cast-ons. Go low to make the cast-on go high, and if you go high, your cast-on will be low.

Up-Down Cast-on Stitch

For the basic cast-on, you are dropping half hitches onto the needle. For this stitch, you are making both the halves of a tatted double stitch rather than making all the stitches just the first half. Some designers call this the double stitch.



After making the first cast-on loop in the regular way, put your finger under the thread next time, bend the index finger to grab the thread and twist down and around to make the loop. Drop it on the needle. Alternating between the two stitches will create an up-down cast-on buttonhole stitch, which is identical to tating. When you have completed the number of cast-ons, pull the needle through and finish the stitch in the same way as the plain cast-on stitch.

Quilting Needles (Betweens)

Quilting needles have a very short length, a small round eye, and a sharp point. The smaller sizes of quilting needles are sometimes used for adding beads to embroidery. They are a good alternative to beading needles because the short length and the slightly sturdier shank are more appropriate to bead embroidery embellishments than longer and thinner beading needles. Smaller sizes of milliners needles are also sometimes used for adding beads to embroidery.

Some Needler Pointers (Pun Intended)

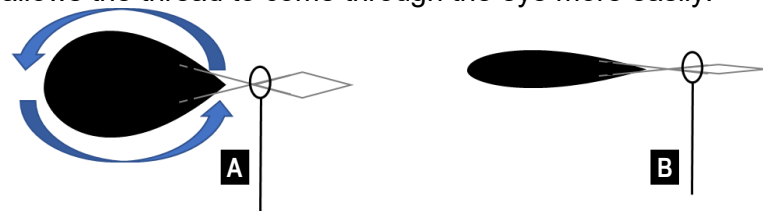


- Keep a package of silica gel or desiccant with your needles to keep the moisture at bay. Moisture will corrode your needles.
- Clean new needles before use by passing them through a spare fabric swatch several times.
- Wool felt will help keep needles from corroding.
- A needle book or needle holder that separates the types of needles is helpful to find the right needle when you need it.
- A needle sharpener/cleaner is also helpful. These are often found as the little strawberry attached to a tomato pincushion.

Needle Threaders

The style of needle threader most commonly used looks like the drawing below. Although they are now available in red as well as black, they are commonly known as black beauties.

- Save your threader by putting a drop of glue, nail polish, or tape over the area where the wires attach to the flat metal. If you use colored nail polish or colorful tape it can also identify that needle threader as being yours.
- The needle threader will be easier to pick up if you bend the back of it up or fold it over.
- If you have trouble getting thread through the needle eye, turn the threader (**A**) until the wire diamond is aiming sideways (**B**) to the needle instead of up and down. This allows the thread to come through the eye more easily.



Fabrics

As a beginner you will most likely purchase designs printed on fabric. The most common fabric used for BE is Trigger Cloth, also known as Blazer Poplin. This is a polyester cotton blend that comes in many colors, but white and cream are the two used most often. Trigger cloth is relatively inexpensive. It is a good fabric for making practice cloths, also known as doodle cloths.

Brazilian Embroidery is a freeform type of surface embroidery, not counted work. Therefore evenweave fabric is not required. However, some designers use evenweave fabric so they can add counted work such as Hardanger or pulled thread to the background.

Brazilian Embroidery is particularly good for clothing. Stitch BE on tee shirts, sweatshirts, and jeans. If stitching on knits, make sure to use a hoop so the end result is not puckered. Other fabrics commonly used for BE include polyester shantung, moiré and silk. If you are not using a prepackaged design, make sure to preshrink the fabric before using it — even if the use is just for a doodle cloth. You may decide to keep that doodle cloth but it might need laundering after it is finished. Shrink before, not after, stitching! Prepackaged designs are preshrunk. They are also printed with washout ink, so do not wash these before stitching.

If stitching on light weight fabrics, you can use a stabilizing backing. A light cotton chambray or muslin works well. Light batting is also sometimes used. Some swear by fusible stabilizer and others swear at it instead — use this with your own discretion.

Brazilian Embroidery Stitches

Overview of Stitches

All embroidery stitches can be incorporated into Brazilian Embroidery. In addition to using Z-twist rayon thread, the other defining characteristic of Brazilian Embroidery is that it is dimensional. Does this mean that every stitch you take has to be dimensional? Of course not! Many stitches that are common to BE are not dimensional. For the sake of consistency, BDEIG has created lists of stitches to define the complexity of designs. The table that follows lists stitches that are beginner, intermediate, and advanced. Stitches that are not on these lists can still be BE stitches — just use Z-twist rayon thread!

The founder of BDEIG, Virginia Chapman, discovered the methodology to make your bullions curve up or down. This explanation breaks **A** and **B** into two steps.

To make the bullion curve downward, the second time you come up at **A** must be above where you came up originally. Likewise, the second time you go down at **B**, it must also be above the original **B**. The differences in where you come up and go down only needs to be a couple of fabric threads apart.



Reverse the process to make a bullion curve upward. The second time you come up at **A** it is below where you came up originally. The second time you go down at **B** is also below where you came up originally.



An easy way to remember this is to remember that with bullions, opposites attract. Go high to curve low, and go low to curve high.

To make a straight line bullion, the second time you come up and go down are outside the original **A** and **B**.



Cast-on Family of Stitches



This poor little fellow has a different type of cast-on.

This family of stitches includes the cast-on, the up-down cast-on, the loose cast-on, and the double cast-on. The double cast-on is considered an intermediate stitch. Cast-on stitches are closely related to drizzle stitches.



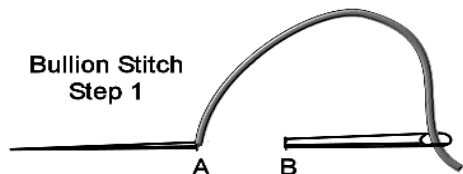
Cast-On Buttonhole Stitch 10 loops each
Normal Loose Up-Down Double

Bullion

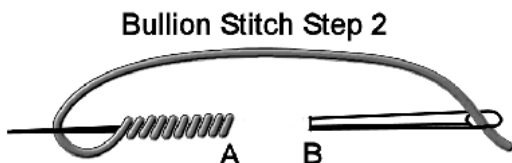
This stitch is best worked with a milliners needle. This is the another stitch where using Z-twist thread makes a difference. The difference here is that you wrap in a clockwise motion for Z-twist and a counter-clockwise motion for S-twist.



1. Come up at **A** and pull the thread through. Insert needle at **B** and back out at **A** but do not pull the needle through the fabric. Hold the needle and fabric in your left hand and pick up the thread at **A** with the right hand.



2. Wrap the point of the needle with the thread in a clockwise direction. The wraps around the needle need to be at least equal to the space between **A** and **B**. For a loop that stands above the fabric, the wrapped area of the needle needs to be GREATER than the distance between **A** and **B**.



3. When you have enough wraps on the needle, gently hold the wraps with one hand and pull the needle through with the other. Pull the thread in an upward motion until the bullion wraps are nearly down to the fabric. Straighten out the wraps with the shank of your needle, rubbing them back and forth. You might also roll the wraps back and forth between your thumb and index finger to smooth them. Now pull the thread down toward **B**. If you hold the wraps at the thread end under your thumb as you pull the thread down it will help keep them tidy. Complete the stitch by taking the needle down and out at **B**. Some find that using a needle puller (a small piece of rubber) helps to grip the needle better when pulling the wraps through.

Stitch Level Chart

Beginner	Intermediate	Advanced
Bullions (under 35 wraps)	Detached Buttonhole Stitch (2 row, 7 loop maximum)	Technical Innovations
Cast-ons (under 35 loops)	Double Cast-On	Combination Stitches
French Knot / Colonial Knot	Bullions (35—80 wraps)	Specialty Stitches
Pistil Stitch	Cast-ons (35 to 80 loops)	Detached Buttonhole (more than 2 rows, 7 loops)
Lazy Daisy	Needle Weaving	Bullions (81+ wraps)
Blanket Stitch	Variation on Beginner Stitches	Cast-ons (81+ loops)
Satin Stitch		
Drizzle		
Couching		
Stem Stitch		
Outline Stitch		
Alternating Satin Stitch		
Spider Web Weaving		

Quilter's Knot / Circle Knot (for Starting)

This knot is used as a starting knot for your embroidery. It is made before you begin to stitch on the fabric.

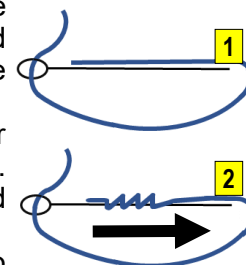
1. After threading your needle, bring the other end of your thread back to face the eye of the needle.
2. Wrap the end around the needle. The number of times is dependent upon the type of fabric and the type of thread.
3. Hold onto the wraps and pull the needle through them.

Tailor's Knot (for Finishing)

This knot is just like the quilter's knot. The only difference is that the thread is anchored so you don't have to lay the thread beside the needle before wrapping.

1. On the back of your stitching, slip your needle under a couple of near stitches. Alternatively, take a two or three thread fabric bite that will not show on the front.
2. Wrap the thread around your needle two or three times.
3. Hold onto the wraps and pull the needle through them.

You can now clip and fray the thread. Leave approximately 1/2 inch. Alternatively, run the needle under some stitches to hide the end. Then clip the thread where it exits the stitches hiding the end.

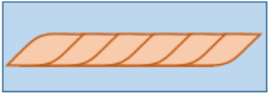
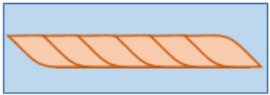
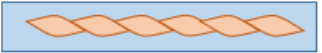
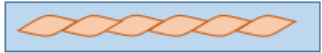


Stem Stitch and Outline Stitch

From a visual perspective, the difference between the stem stitch and the outline stitch is that the stem stitch is more dimensional and has a rope-like appearance while the outline stitch is flatter and has a more linear appearance.

From a stitching perspective, the difference between the outline stitch and the stem stitch is whether the needle comes from above the previous stitch or from below it.

A defining characteristic of Brazilian Embroidery (BE) is that it uses Z-twist rayon thread. Though there are exceptions, most non B. E. threads are S-twist. For many stitches, the twist of the thread is nonconsequential. However, the outline stitch and the stem stitch are two of the exceptions. The twist of the thread determines how the thread will lie for these two stitches. The table below summarizes the differences.

Outline Stitch	S-Twist Thread	Z-Twist Thread
Appearance: Flatter -- Smooth		
Needle placement	Below previous stitch	Above previous stitch
Stem Stitch	S-Twist Thread	Z-Twist Thread
Appearance: Rope-like		
Needle placement	Above previous stitch	Below previous stitch

With Z twisted Brazilian Embroidery threads, the **stem stitch** will have the thread carried above the line rather than below. The length of each stitch will depend on the thread weight and look you desire. Generally the length will be less than 1/4" and more than 1/8". After a short beginning stitch, each stitch will move 2 spaces right and 1 space back. The stem stitch gives more of a twisted rope like look.



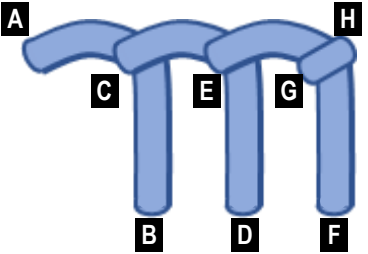
If you hold the thread below the stitching line, you create an **outline stitch** and the look will be a flatter, smooth line.

Blanket Stitch / Buttonhole Stitch

Once upon a time there was a perceived difference between these two stitches. Today, most references refer to these as the same stitch. This is a member of the chain stitch family of stitches. This family of stitches all have three motions—Up, Down, Catch.



1. Come up at **A** and down at **B**, leaving a loose loop of thread on the top of the fabric.
2. Bring the needle back up at **C**, catching the loose loop.
3. Pull up to tighten the loop, then go back down at **D**, leaving a loop of thread on top of the fabric.
4. Come up at **E**, catching the loose loop. Pull up to tighten the loop and go down at **F**.
5. Come up at **G** and repeat this process until the length of stitching is complete. Secure the last loose loop by going down immediately behind where you last brought your needle to the front of the fabric (**H**).



Some people like to start this stitch with a Lazy Daisy because it positions the thread in the right place.

Lazy Daisy or Chain Stitch

This stitch can be a stand alone stitch, or it can be 'chained' together.



1. Come up at **A**. Put your finger on the thread before taking the needle to the back of the fabric at **B**.
2. Complete a single lazy daisy stitch by coming up at **C** and going down at **D**.
3. If a chain is desired, then C and D are side-by-side like A and B until the end of the chain.

