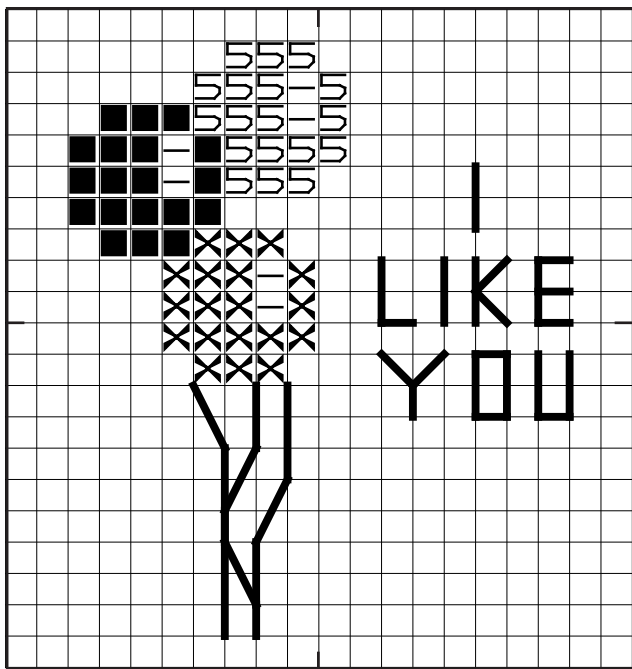


Learn To Cross Stitch In Just 5 Minutes!



Color Codes

- Blue
- 5 Yellow
- X Pink
- White

Design size is 1 1/8" x 1 3/8" tall when stitched on Aida 14. Stitch with 2 strands of floss. Backstitch string and lettering with 1 strand of Blue.

Yarn Tree, Ames, Iowa

Instructions for Counted Cross Stitch

Counted cross stitch transfers a design from a printed graph onto evenweave fabric. The stitcher uses embroidery floss to place X's on the fabric corresponding to symbols on the chart. Each symbol on the chart represents one X on the fabric. The different symbols on the chart represent different colors of floss.

It's easy to learn and requires only a few supplies.

Graph. This is the pattern or design you chose to stitch. There are thousands to choose from.

Evenweave fabric. The fabric for cross stitch is woven in an even manner so that you know exactly where to place your needle. To keep the fabric from raveling either sew the edges on a sewing machine or use one of the products sold to prevent fraying.

Needle. A tapestry needle is used, usually a size 24 or 26 (size 26 is smaller than size 24). A tapestry needle has a blunt point and a large eye.

Floss. Embroidery floss is a cotton thread used for stitching. Floss has 6 strands, but usually you will use only 2 or 3 strands at a time.

Embroidery hoop or frame. Some type of frame is helpful to hold the fabric while you stitch. Remove the fabric when you are not stitching to keep from getting 'hoop marks'.

Scissors. You can start out with any pair of scissors, but pretty soon you will want to get a nice pair of small embroidery scissors. Get a good quality pair with sharp points. A good pair of scissors makes stitching a lot more fun.

Choosing your fabric.

There are dozens of fabrics to choose from. White or ivory Aida 14 is the most common and is an easy fabric to start on. The number of stitches per inch will determine the finished size

of the design. A design that is 28 stitches wide stitched on Aida 14 (14 stitches per inch) will be 2" wide. The same design will be 2 1/2" wide on Aida 11. The finished size equals the number of stitches divided by the fabric count. Most designs show sizes for different fabric counts, but be sure to allow extra fabric for finishing (at least 4" extra).

To Begin

Find the center of the graph. For most patterns this is shown with arrows or a bold line. Next, find the center of your fabric. An easy way to do this is to fold the fabric in half vertically and "pinch" with your finger to make a small crease. Open the fabric, fold in half horizontally and make another "pinch". Open the fabric up. The two creases will mark the center of the fabric. Most stitchers like to start stitching close to the center of the design. For the "I Like You" graph, start with the bottom balloon.

Knots on the back will show through, so **do not use any knots to start or end.** To begin stitching, bring the threaded needle up from the back of the fabric leaving about a 1" tail of thread behind the fabric. Stitch the next 5 or 6 stitches over the tail. Clip off extra thread. To end off, turn your work over and weave your needle back through the last 5 or 6 stitches and clip the thread short so as not to leave a loose tail.

Stitching

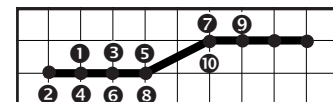
There are two methods. The first method is to work a row of half stitches (///), then work back (\\) to complete the X's. Use this method for most stitching. The second method is to complete each X as you go. Use this method for vertical rows of stitches.

It is important that all the X's are crossed in the same direction. That is, **the top thread of the X should always slant in the same direction** (either \ or /). It does not matter which way they slant, but if they are mixed the finished piece will look uneven.

Relax as you stitch. Your stitches should lay flat on your fabric and not distort the holes or the fabric.

Backstitching

Backstitching is a running stitch (not an X) used to outline an area or to form lettering. In the graph, the words "I Love You" and the strings on the balloons are done in backstitch. Normally you use one less strand of floss for backstitching than you use for cross stitching. Backstitching is done last.



Stitch 'up' on odd numbers, 'down' on even numbers

Carrying Your Thread

Sometimes a color will have only a few stitches and then "jump" to another area. Most of the time you should end off and start again, other times you can carry the thread along the back. Just jumping from area to area is easier than starting and stopping, but sometimes the thread will show through. This can be a problem if you jump a dark thread over an unstitched area of light fabric. You can usually carry the thread to another area if the jump is short, the floss color is light, and you are jumping over a previously stitched area. In the "I Love You" graph, the white highlights on the three balloons can be done by starting at the top balloon, jumping to the middle balloon, and then jumping to the bottom balloon.

Finishing

When your stitching is complete, rinse in cool water using a mild liquid detergent. While still damp, place face down on a terry towel. Place another cloth on top of the needlework and press lightly with a warm iron. Let dry. Then frame or finish as desired.