Stitch Guide

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Starting And Finishing The Embroidery

Starting A Thread:
There are a number of ways to start your thread. Again it is personal preference as to which method you use.

❖ Knots - When the project is to be backed or framed, I feel it is all right to use a knot - as long as it doesn’t show through the fabric. When working multiple strands of thread, a knot can be necessary, as a split stitch may not hold securely.

❖ Split Stitch - works particularly well when using single strands of thread. Work this where the tiny stitch on the surface will be covered by the embroidery. On the back of the work, pick up a small stitch. Stitch back through again and split the thread you are working.

❖ Split Back Stitch - Work this where the tiny stitch on the surface will be covered by the embroidery. Come up from the back of the work and hold the tail of the thread underneath. Work a tiny stitch and come back up through the centre of the stitch to split the thread.

❖ Waste Knot - Put a knot in the end of the thread. Go down into the fabric from the top at least 5-8cm (2”-3”) from the start of the embroidery. Work the embroidery. When finished, clip off the knot on the surface so the thread is on the wrong side of the work. Thread into a needle and secure into the stitching on the back of the work.

Finishing The Thread:
The thread end may be woven into the back of the work. I like to use a split stitch to ensure that it is secure.

To work the split stitch, stitch into a thread(s) on the back of the work. Make sure you pierce or 'split' the thread. Pull through. Stitch again and 'split' the thread and this time split the thread on the needle as well. Pull through and snip the end.

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**Transferring The Design**

When working with blanketing or towelling etc, it is often difficult to transfer the design. There are a few different methods available and you will need to experiment to determine which ones you prefer and which ones work best on the fabric you are using.

- Use a light box and trace the design using a pencil or a very fine water-soluble pen. This method is only suitable for more sheer fabrics.

- Use a transfer pencil or pen - you will need to experiment with the pencil/pen to see if it will wash out. If not, you will need to make sure that the embroidery completely covers the marking lines.

- Trace the design onto a piece of stabiliser paper with a pencil or water-soluble pen. Tack/baste the paper to the fabric and work the heavier stitches (e.g. stem stitch, french knots centres, daisy stitch) and make sure you pull the stitches quite tightly through the paper and then tear it away. Finish the rest of the embroidery.

**Needles & Thread**

You need to select needles to be compatible with your thread selection. The chart below will give you a guide.

- **Chenille Needles:** Extra long oval eye, medium length, thick shaft and sharp tip. Great for wool threads. Easy to thread.

- **Tapestry Needles:** Same shape as the chenille needle but a blunt end. Great for weaving stitches.

- **Crewel(Embroidery) Needles:** Long oval eye, medium length and thickness, sharp point. General purpose needle.

- **Milliners (Straw) Needle:** Round eye, long slender shaft that does not widen at the eye. Sharp tip. Essential for bullion knots.

**Needle And Thread Selection**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thread Type</th>
<th>Chenille/Tapestry</th>
<th>Crewel/Embroidery</th>
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<td></td>
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<td>#26</td>
<td>#10</td>
<td>#10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>#24 or #26</td>
<td>#8 or #9</td>
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<td>#5</td>
<td>#1 or #3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>3 - 4 Strands</td>
<td>#18</td>
<td>Not suitable</td>
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</table>
**Slip Stitch**

This is the stitch used to invisibly stitch the applique motif to the fabric. Stitches need to be about 2-3mm (1/4") long. Pick up the motif along the seam line just into the underside so the pile is not disturbed.

1. Knot the thread and starting 2.5cm (1") in from the edge of the motif on the wrong side, make small running stitches to the edge. This will hide the knot and secure the thread before beginning the slip stitching.

2. Come out at A on the seam line of the motif - just into the underside (non-fluffy) fabric.

3. Push the needle into the background fabric at B directly opposite A. Pick up about 2-3mm (1/4") of background fabric and pull the needle through at C.

4. Slide the needle along the seam line of the motif directly opposite C and pick up about 2-3mm (1/4").

5. Continue in this way, pulling the thread firmly so the motif sits flat on the surface of the background fabric, but be careful not to pucker the background fabric.
**Back Stitch**

Back stitch can be used for such things as lettering, stems of flowers and balloon strings. Stitches need to be very small when working curves.

Back stitch is also used for the seams and paw-pads and surface markings on the applique animals. For this you just need to pick up the top layer of velour and the stitches will be seen clearly on the surface.

1. Begin a stitch length in from the start of the stitching line. This is point ‘A’. Bring the needle out at A and pull the thread through.

2. Go down at B and pick up the fabric, coming out at C. Pull the thread through.

3. Take the needle down at A and bring it up at D. Then pull the thread through.

4. Continue to repeat this sequence.

**Quilting Back Stitch**

This variation of back stitch is used to sculpt the applique animals. It acts like a quilting stitch to pull the background fabric, wadding and velour layers together to give shape to the animals. Because of all these layers, you will need to stab the needle up and down rather than picking up the stitch on the needle. The stitch will tend to disappear in the valley formed by the quilting.

1. Begin a stitch length in from the start of the stitching line. This is point ‘A’. Bring the needle out at A and pull the thread through. Stab the needle down at B and pull through to the back.

2. Bring the needle out at C and pull the thread through. Stab the needle down at A and pull through to the back. Bring the needle up at D.

3. Continue to repeat this sequence.
**Whipped Back Stitch**

1. Work the line of back stitch.

2. Start a new thread (this can be the same colour or a contrasting colour) and place in a blunt needle.

3. Bring the new thread up at A. Pull through. Slide the needle under the second stitch and pull through. Do not stitch into the fabric.

4. Continue whipping each stitch or every second stitch.

**Split Back Stitch**

Split stitch is a variation of back stitch and forms a tiny chain. It is excellent for curves and can be used for the balloon strings, bows and stems. This stitch can also be used to outline a shape before satin stitching.

1. Begin a stitch length in from the start of the stitching line. This is point ‘A’. Bring the needle out at A and pull the thread through. Stab the needle down at B and pull through to the back.

2. Bring the needle out at C and pull the thread through. Stab the needle down into the stitch formed, splitting the thread in half.

3. Bring the needle up at D, and worked back to split the last stitch formed. Continue this sequence. Stitches should be the same length.
**Stem/Outline Stitch**

Stem/Outline stitch is excellent for narrow, curved lines. Stem stitch has the thread held below the line and outline stitch has the thread held above the line. The selection of the stitch depends on the direction of the curve worked.

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**Stem Stitch**

This is best for concave curves.

1. Bring the needle up at A and pull the thread through. Go down at B and out again (at C) half way between A & B. Hold the thread below the line and pull through.

2. With the thread still below the line, go down at D and back up at B.

The distance pick up on the needle is always the same, ie. half the length of the initial stitch (A-B).

3. Continue making sure the thread is below the line worked.

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**Outline Stitch**

This is best for convex curves. Work as for stem stitch with the thread above all the time.
Satin Stitch

1. Bring the thread up at A and pull through. Place the needle in at B and bring out at C – about a needle’s width below A. Pull through.

2. Place the needle in at D and bring up at E. Pull through. Continue, keeping the stitches parallel and even and do not overlap. No fabric should be visible between the stitches. Do not pull too tightly.

Animal Noses

1. When working the nose of the animal, work the widest part (I usually work 3 stitches on top of each other to build up the nose). Always work the stitches on top of the fabric rather than stabbing through.

2. Then work 2 stitches above this first stitch – with each one slightly shorter – to form a curve.

3. Now work below the initial long stitch and work a triangle of stitches to form the rest of the nose. Usually this takes 3-5 stitches.
**Fly Stitch**

This stitch is formed like an open lazy daisy stitch and makes a ‘Y’ shape. It is used to form the bear’s muzzle and is also excellent for rosebuds, flowers and leaves.

1. Bring the needle out at A and pull through. Make sure the thread is looped down and to the right. Put the needle in at B and angle down to C. The loop should be underneath the needle. Pull the thread through.

2. Put the needle in at D to anchor the loop.

**Fly Stitch Variations**

- **Bear Face:**
  The distance to D can vary. Make the anchor stitch short like a couching stitch. This is how to make the smile on the bear’s face.

- **Rosebud:**
  For a rosebud the distance to D can be much longer and if very long can be couched into position.

- **Leaves:**
  Leaves can be formed starting at the top point with a lazy daisy and work stacked fly stitch.

- **Flowers:**
  Agapanthus flowers can be formed by working the fly stitch into a circle.
Lazy Daisy Stitch/
Detached Chain Stitch

A wonderful stitch for daisies, leaves, bluebells and iris.

1. Bring the needle out at A and pull through. Make a loop and go back into A and out at B. Make sure the thread loop is behind the needle. Pull the thread through to catch the loop. Do not pull the loop too tightly.

2. Catch down the loop by inserting the needle back into or close to B, on the outside of the loop.

Lazy Daisy Variations

❖ Flowers:
Work a ring of lazy daisy stitches.

❖ Reverse Daisies:
Work a ring of lazy daisies with the anchor stitch to the centre. The anchor stitch will need to be slightly longer.

❖ Bluebells:
Hang clusters of bluebells on a straight stitch stem. Start working from the base of the flower to the top so the stitches overlap.

❖ Iris
1. Work a lazy daisy stitch with the anchor stitch at the top.

2. Come out at A, slide the needle behind the loop of the lazy daisy stitch and anchor at B. Do not pull too tightly.

3. Repeat with yellow thread, above the first stitch. Make this second stitch slightly shorter.

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**Chain Stitch**

1. Bring needle up at A and pull through. Loop the thread down and around to the right. Take the needle back into the same hole (A) and come out at B. Make sure the thread loop is behind the needle. Pull the needle through loop - not too tightly.

2. Make another loop. Take the needle down at B, making sure needle is in the same hole. Bring out at C.

3. Continue in this way. Make an anchor/couching stitch to hold the last loop down.

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**Twisted Chain**

1. Bring the needle up at A and pull through. Loop the thread down and to the right – as if making a normal chain stitch. Insert the needle at B and bring out at C. Pull the needle through the loop – do not pull too tightly, so the thread crosses over.

2. Make another loop down and around to the right. Insert needle at D, just outside the first loop. Pull the needle through.

3. Continue in this manner. Make an anchor/couching stitch at the end.
**Couching Stitch**

1. Bring the thread to be couched, up at the start of the design line. Place it along the design line.

2. Bring a matching or contrasting thread (couching thread) up at A, just in from the end of the laid thread.

3. Take the couching thread over the laid thread and down on the other side to make a small straight stitch to catch down the laid thread.

4. Now come out a short distance from the first couching stitch and repeat.

**Blanket Stitch**

The name blanket and buttonhole stitch are often used for this stitch. It may be worked in straight lines or scallops or along the edge of a blanket to finish it.

1. Bring the needle up at A and pull the thread through.

2. Insert the needle into B and bring the needle out a C. Make sure the thread is looped down and behind the needle. Pull through.

3. Loop the thread down and to the right. Insert the needle at D and bring out at E. Make sure the thread is looped down and behind the needle. Pull through catching the looped thread.

4. Continue in this pattern.

**Note:**

Blanket stitch may be worked with long or short stitches or a combination and with different stitch densities.

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**Blanket Stitch Variations**

**Eyelets:**
Eyelet blanket stitch is used to work hollyhocks and other flowers.

1. Draw a circle to guide in the placement of the eyelet.

2. Bring the needle up at A on the outside edge of the eyelet and pull the thread through. Insert the needle into the centre of the eyelet (B) and bring the needle out a C. Make sure the thread is looped behind the needle. Pull through.

3. Loop the thread down and to the right. Insert the needle into the centre again (B) and bring up at D. Pull through catching the looped thread. Continue anti-clockwise until the circle is filled.

The look of this eyelet will vary with the density of the stitches.

**Joining**
It can be very difficult to join this stitch if you run out of thread.

1. Do not finish off your first thread. Leave it hanging on the surface of your work.

2. Bring in the new thread from underneath the work. Come up next to the old thread - in the same hole if you can and work with this thread until the eyelet is finished. End off the second thread.

3. Thread up the end of the first thread and take it through to the back - check the surface to see the tension is even and end off.
Blanket Stitch Variations

Bells:
You can work a small segment of the eyelet to form foxgloves, daffodils and bell shaped flowers. I find it useful to draw the bell shape with a water-soluble pen to help with correct positioning.

1. Draw the bell shape or arc of the circle.
2. Come out at A. I usually make the first stitch slant up more and make it slightly longer.
3. Insert the needle into the top of the bell (B) and out at C, on the edge of the bell. Make sure the thread is looped under the needle.
4. Continue working the blanket stitch eyelet - pivoting from the top of the bell at B. The size of the bells can be graded by increasing the number of stitches in the bell.
5. When finished the bell you will need to work a fly stitch to keep the bell shape. Insert the needle in at F and out close to E, with the thread looped under the needle pull into position so this last stitch angles up.
6. Catch down the loop close to E.

Hearts:
1. Transfer the heart shape onto the background fabric.
2. Work a lazy daisy stitch starting at the bottom of the heart (A) and bringing the needle out at the top-centre (B), but do not anchor the stitch - this will loop under the needle for the blanket stitch.
3. Put the needle in at c on the lower edge of the heart and out at D on the upper edge. Make sure the thread is looped under the needle for the blanket stitch.
4. Continue to work blanket stitch in this way along the side of the heart.
5. On the last stitch, firmly pull the anchor stitch to curve around the heart shape and take through to the back.
6. To work the other half of the heart, go back to the centre and come up inside the lazy daisy at the top edge and work blanket stitch for the other side.

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**Blanket Stitch Variations**

**Leaves:**
Beautiful leaves can be formed with blanket stitch.

1. Work a lazy daisy stitch, but do not anchor the stitch - this will loop under the needle for the blanket stitch.

2. Using A as the eyelet centre, work blanket stitch around the leaf shape, pivoting in the centre as indicated.

**Butterflies:**
Butterflies are worked with the four wings worked individually. The big challenge is to get an even regular shape. If possible trace the butterfly onto the background fabric with a water-soluble pen. For heavy fabrics such as blanketing use the stabiliser paper method.

1. Transfer the butterfly shape onto the background fabric.

**Stabiliser Method:**
Trace the butterfly shape onto stabiliser paper or water-soluble stabiliser and pin or tack onto the background fabric.

2. Work the wings in four sections using the same technique as the leaf. Pivot at the base of the wing.

3. If using stabiliser: Place your finger firmly on the butterfly and tear away the outside edge of the stabiliser. Then carefully remove the inside section.
   I often use a pin to hook the paper out.

4. Work a fly stitch for the feelers and use a longer anchor stitch for the body.
**French Knots**

1. Bring the needle up at A.

2. Hold the thread in the left hand about 5cm (or more) away from A.

3. Lay the needle on top of the thread and wrap thread once or twice (no more!) around the needle.

4. Support the wraps with the right forefinger while inserting the needle back close to A (but not in the same hole).

5. Pull gently on the thread so the knot slides down the needle and rests on the fabric.

6. Pull needle through.

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**French Knot Variations**

**Long Armed French Knots:**

These are ideal for insect feelers, flowers and flower stamens.

1. Work steps 1-5 as for French Knots.

2. Support the wraps with the right forefinger while inserting the needle at B, a short distance from A but in any direction.

3. Pull gently on the thread so the knot slides down the needle and rests on the fabric.

4. Pull the needle through.

5. These look wonderful worked in a circle.

**Forget-Me-Not:**

1. Work the centre yellow knot first.

2. Work 4, 5 or 6 knots around the central knot. Make sure they sit snugly up against the central knot.

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**Bullion Knots**

1. Make sure that your thread is well anchored. Bring the MILLINERS needle up at A.

   *HINT* The end of the bullion where the thread first comes out of the fabric (A) will be the fattest end when making a tapered bullion.

2. Go down at B (The size of the stitch will depend on the size you want your bullion) and back through near A. Do not pull the needle through. Do not catch the thread at A.

   *HINT* If you go back down at A and then to B you will get a thread running beside your bullion.

   *HINT* If you do not go back close to A you will get a loop at one end of the bullion.

3. Fold the fabric so you have complete control of the wraps as they go on the needle. Your pointer finger will tap them and hold them in position.

4. You can now start wrapping. Wrap the thread around the needle close to the fabric until it looks the same distance as the stitch in the fabric. Add 2-3 extra wraps. Determining the number of wraps takes a little practice.

   *HINT* Do not spiral the thread up the needle and push them into position. This gives an unevenly wrapped bullion.

   *HINT* Adding more wraps to a bullion makes it curve more.

5. Fold the fabric so you have complete control of the wraps as they go on the needle. Your pointer finger will tap them and hold them in position.

6. With the other hand pull the needle through. Do not let go of the wraps and pull the thread tight.

   *HINT* Pull the needle rather than pushing from the eye as this tends to lock the wraps onto the needle.

7. Be quite brutal with your bullion at this stage. Keep pulling tightly as you flip the bullion towards point B. Take the needle down at B to finish.

   *HINT* If you wish to tighten or make adjustment to the bullion, do this before you go down to finish.

   *HINT* If the bullion is too loose, or uneven or a disaster, ‘tickle it’s tummy with the eye of the needle’ and pull the thread to tighten.

   *HINT* When shaping bullions, position the bullion and put your thumb on top to hold it in place and tug the thread to ‘lock’ the bullion into position.

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**Bullion Variations**

**Loops And Circles:**
You may put as many wraps on a bullion as you wish. The smaller the stitch in the fabric and the greater the wraps, the bigger the loop that results. These can be left loose or anchored into position with a couching stitch or even formed into a circle.

1. Make sure that your thread is well anchored. Bring the needle up at A.

2. Take a small stitch in the fabric. Go down at B and back through near A. Do not pull the needle through. Do not catch the thread at A.

3. Fold the fabric back and wrap as many times as you want. Try 30-40 times. Make sure you wrap evenly but not too tightly.

4. Place your thumb and finger to hold the wraps on both sides. With the other hand pull the needle through. Do not let go of the wraps and pull the thread tight.

5. Flip the bullion into a ring towards point B. Pull tightly and 'tickle' if necessary.

6. To form a loop, just take needle down at B.

7. To form a circle take needle down at A. Work an anchor stitch if you wish.

8. To form any shape, place the loop in the shape you wish, hold in position and pull the thread to 'lock' it in position. Hold permanently in position with anchor stitches.

**HINT**
Anchor stitches are couching stitches. Work in 1 strand of marching thread. After working each anchor stitch, finish with a backstitch on the back of the work. This prevents the bullion distorting when the thread is pulled in subsequent stitches.

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**Straight Stitch**

Used for grass, stems and flower petals.

1. Bring the needle out at A.

2. Take the needle down at B. Your straight stitch is complete.

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**Straight Stitch Variations**

**Simple Flowers:**
Work the straight stitch from the tip of the petal into the centre each time.

**3-Stitch Flowers:**

1. Work the straight stitch from the tip of the petal into the centre.

2. Work 2 more straight stitches from the tip of the petal. Fan out the stitches either side of the first stitch and go into the same hole at the base of the petal. The two stitches can be the same length or slightly shorter than the central stitch.

3. Work 4-5 petals in a circle to form a flower. It is often easier to leave a small circle in the centre. Fill with french knots or a straight stitch into each petal.
**Padded Straight Stitch**

1. To start, bring the needle out at A.

2. Work a straight stitch by going down at B and back up at A (same hole). Pull the stitch through. This is stitch #1.

3. Slide a pin or a blunt tapestry needle under this stitch (#1).

4. Slide the thread from A behind the pin on the right-hand side and go down at B. Pull the stitch into position.

5. Slide the thread from A behind the pin on the left-hand side and go down at B. Pull the stitch into position. The pin will hold the second and third stitches so they sit side-by-side with the first stitch.

6. Remove the pin and slide it back under stitches 1, 2 & 3.

7. Repeat the sequence. Slide the thread from A behind the pin on the right-hand side and go down at B. Pull the stitch into position.

8. Slide the thread from A behind the pin on the left-hand side and go down at B. Pull the stitch into position.

9. Continue with this sequence, alternating right and left until you have a petal the size you desire.
**Padded Straight Stitch Variations**

**Flowers:**
These are beautiful blossom flowers.

1. The blossom flowers will be marked on the design with the following:

2. Work a padded straight stitch for each of the petals. Be careful not to fill the centre circle. Work the petals only to the edge of the circle.

3. Work shading on the blossom. In a contrasting colour, work a straight stitch from the base of the petal to about halfway up the petal.

4. Work 2 more straight stitches from the base of the petal and fanning out either side of the first stitch. These two stitches will be slightly shorter.

5. **Optional:** In a contrasting colour work a fly stitch at the tip of the blossom. Work down approximately a quarter to a third of the distance from the tip. Finish with a straight stitch at the tip.

6. Work 5 straight stitches in green. Start the stitch where the petals start to divide and work into the middle of the centre circle. Pull tightly so the stitches sit between the petals.

7. Fill the centre with a french knot or a cluster of knots.
Buds:
1. Work a padded straight stitch.

2. Work shading on the bud. In a contrasting colour, work a straight stitch from the base of the bud to about half way up the bud.

3. Work 2 more straight stitches from the base of the bud and fanning out either side of the first stitch. These two stitches will be slightly shorter.

4. Work a fly stitch around the bud in green. Add extra straight stitches where required.

Bees:
Fun to add to flower gardens.

1. Work a padded straight stitch in yellow to the size you wish for the bee body.

2. In a black or navy thread work 2 couching stitches over the padded straight stitch to form stripes on the bee body.

3. Work a single stitch at the end of the bee for his ‘stinger’ and 2 long armed french knots at the head end to form feelers.

4. To work the wings, thread a metallic thread and a cream thread into the same needle and work four lazy daisy stitches. The two upper wings are larger and tilted forward. They are worked high up on the body.

5. The two lower wings are smaller and tilt down. These come from the same point as the upper wings.

Ladybugs/Ladybirds:
1. With a red thread work a padded straight stitch to the body size you require.

2. Thread up with a black thread and lay a stitch down the centre of the body.

3. In black, work 2 spots on the wings. Work french knots and pull them down hard so they sit in among the satin stitches. Or you may wish to work straight stitches.

4. In black, work 2-3 stitches across the top of body for the head.

5. In black, work feelers and legs (optional).
**Turkey Knots**

This stitch creates a wonderful fluffy effect for bunny tails, hair, wattle, bottlebrush and insect bodies.

1. Always work this stitch from the left to right. Do not anchor or knot the thread. It starts differently from any other stitch as you start from the top of the work.

2. From the top of the work, stitch down at A, leaving a tail of about 2.5cm (1”). Hold the tail down with your thumb while you pull the thread through to the back.

3. Come out at B, about 2mm (⅛”) to the right of A. Up on the right.

4. Go down at C, about 2mm (⅛”) to the left of A. This forms the anchor stitch - and forms a ‘T’ shape. Down on the left.

5. Come out at A again, making sure to pierce through the anchor ‘T’ stitch. Split the top of the ‘T’.

6. Pull the thread down to from a second tail and hold with your thumb.

*(Continued overleaf)*
7. Now it is time to start the next ‘Turkey Knot’. Go in at D, approx 2mm (⅛") right of A. The loop this forms in the thread should be about 1cm (½") long. You can make this longer if you wish. Make them long enough to hold easily.

8. Come out at E, and about 2mm (⅛") to the right of D. Up on the right.

9. Go down at B. This forms an anchor ‘T’ stitch at the base of the loop. Down on the left.

10. Come out at D again, making sure to pierce through the anchor stitch. Split the top of the ‘T’.

11. Pull the thread down to form a second loop and hold with your thumb.

12. Continue the rest of the row.

13. Cut all the loops, comb and trim to the desired length and shape.

14. When working rows of Turkey Knots together, remember to always work the row from left to right. You may work parallel rows or work them back to back.