

Our first bulky section - the breast

I hope you have enjoyed stitching the first section of your bird and the legs! In some ways this is actually a hard place to start, as you are dealing with small stitches on the legs, as well as those changes in direction of the stitches. So well done!

Don't forget to re-stretch your fabric before each stitching session. This will start to become quite important as we are adding in quite a bit of heavily stitched areas from now on!

The next stage will see us potentially working a few different stitches, depending on our chosen bird. I know the main bird of choice is the bluebird, however if you are stitching a bird and haven't given any guidance on that particular one, do make sure you share with us either in the Facebook group or the forum. I want you to get the most out of this as possible!

The Bluebird's breast

This is where you get to really practice and improve your satin stitch! I've found that as I'm working the one from Inspirations, which is in stranded cotton, that it is a great exercise in improving satin stitch. It's a great way to practice getting smooth edges too!

If you do have a copy of the Inspirations magazine number 82, you may find the stitching direction lines of use on your Crewelwork bluebird. I'm admittedly not following this particularly closely, and am doing what I prefer, but as a reference guide it may be of use to you.

Things to remember with satin stitch

- Don't forget to outline the shape in small and tight split stitches first. This helps you with getting a smooth outline.
- There's no need to split stitch the edges on the outer edge which will later be covered. It adds bulk and we will cover the edge anyway!
- Always start a fresh thread when doing your satin stitch after stitching in the split stitch. The poor thread condition will be evident when you do change thread.
- Remember to angle your needle under the split stitch line. This helps to create the rolling movement of the thread over the split stitch line, which gives you your crisp edge.
- Try to also angle the needle towards the previous stitch.
- When you are working the satin stitches, I find it is easier to actually turn the piece around and work upside down. This is so that I can properly and easily see where the split stitch line is, to make sure I am getting the needle placed correctly.
- You may find it easier to work from the centre of the shape to one end, and then start again in the middle and work to the other end. This helps you to get the stitch angle correct.
- Don't be scared of drawing in stitch direction lines before stitching. You will cover them and will not see them at all before stitching.



Stem stitch stems

The stems are stitched in rows of stem stitch.

Pay particular attention to which branch sits on top and which on the bottom. Always stitch the lower branch first. I would also stop the stitch at the crossroads point and then pick it up again after the cross over. This will help to eliminate bulk.

When adding the satin stitch around the edge of the flowers, try to work it so it sits just on top of your satin stitch. This will also help to create a smooth edge on those edges!

This is another stitch which takes a bit of rhythm to get into, but as you work it you will find your stitches become evenly stitched.

French Knots

Not everyone's favourite stitch!

You may find my [video](#) on French Knots useful where I go through in more detail how to do them. Nicola does suggest using more than one strand of thread to increase the size of the Knots. I would suggest testing a couple on the side of your fabric and making a choice from there on which one you like best, or find easiest to work.



Take a big breath! You've just completed a large section of your bird!

And in the process you will have had lots of practice on two wonderful stitches that you will use a lot in your embroidery. Well done and congratulations!

The Robin's breast

The robin's breast is stitched with lots and lots of split stitch!

Some tips on working split stitch

Remember to use quite short lengths of thread as the thread does wear down quite quickly.

As this is a decorative split stitch rather than the functional one we use before stitching satin stitch and long and short stitch, you can make your stitches just a little bit longer - say 3 - 4 mm in length. Like with stem stitch, you will find yourself developing a rhythm and your stitches will naturally become a certain length.

Seeding stitch

This is a stitch that I think should be easier than I actually find it!

The idea is to give the look of randomness, but the stitches need to be the same length. For some reason I find this a difficult balance to achieve!



When working with the Appeltons, I found it particularly difficult as the width of the thread in my skein changed so regularly. You will get a better result if the wool is the same width. You can usually cut the thread around either the very fat or very skinny sections of the Appeltons.

Well done on completing a marathon in split stitch!

This is a really long section of split stitch! Well done on finishing it! It's not a stitch I would normally consider as decorative but this does show that it can work very effectively.

The Blackbird's upper back

So we are all stitching similar stitches, the guidance I give here on the blackbird will be in a different order to what the instructions say. This won't be a problem, as I'll make sure to let you know if one section looks like it needs to be worked before another section.

The upper back is worked using a combination of two stitches noted above - satin stitch and seeding stitch.

The instructions on this bird are a little confusing at this point, saying that stem and split stitch are used as well as satin stitch. The image I have isn't clear, so I'm not sure where she is using these stitches, as I would have just used satin stitch. If you do have a clearer image or different ideas on where she is using these stitches, do let me know!



Well done! You have just completed some tricky shapes with satin stitch!

Your section is a little smaller this time round, as the shape of the bird is quite different. But you have some fun coming up!

Don't forget to join in the group conversations!

This is a bulky section for the Robin and Bluebirds being stitched up. You will be masters at these stitches by the end of it! And don't forget to use each other to encourage each other along.

Happy stitching, and if you have any questions, please let me know!

Catherine