

# Cross-Stitch — Workbook

This workbook turns the cross-stitch course into hands-on practice and project records you can reuse on every piece. Each section matches a course module, moving from fabric setup and chart-reading to even stitching, fractional stitches, and finishing. Work through the exercises with real Aida and floss in front of you, and keep the worksheets and templates as a project log so your second piece is easier than your first.

## Fabric, Tools, and Setting Up

Match fabric, floss, needle, and hoop to your project, mount the Aida drum-tight, and find an accurate centre.

### Worksheet: Project size and materials plan

Pick a small chart, then work out finished size and materials before buying anything. Divide the design's stitch count by the Aida count to get the finished inches, and add a 3-inch margin on every side for the fabric cut.

Design name / source

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Design size in stitches (width x height)

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Chosen Aida count (11 / 14 / 16 / 18)

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Finished size in inches (stitches divided by count)

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Fabric cut size (finished size + 3 in each side)

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Tapestry needle size for this count

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Strands for cross-stitch / strands for backstitch

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DMC colour numbers needed (from the chart key)

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### Exercise: Strand-separation and coverage test

Cut an 18-inch length of one DMC colour. Separate strands one at a time, then recombine, and stitch three small blocks on a scrap of your chosen Aida using 1, 2, and 3 strands. Compare how fully each covers the fabric.

- Which strand count fully covers the Aida without crowding the holes on your count?

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- What happened to the thread when you pulled two strands out at once instead of one at a time?

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- Did the single-strand block look thin enough for backstitch but too sparse for filling?
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- Which strand count will you use for the cross-stitches on this project, and why?
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### Checklist: Fabric-prep and hoop-mount check

- Aida cut at least 3 inches larger than the design on all four sides
- All four raw edges sealed with tape, zigzag, or whipstitch
- Inner hoop ring bound with cotton tape for grip
- Fabric mounted with the weave running straight, not skewed
- Surface tensioned drum-tight, taut enough to bounce a fingertip
- Floss wound onto labelled bobbins or a project card with DMC numbers
- Original skein bands kept for colour numbers and dye lots

### Exercise: Find and grid the centre

Fold the Aida in half each way to crease the centre lines, then tack a running-stitch gridline along each crease in contrasting thread. Optionally grid every tenth line of holes to match the chart.

- Where do the two centre creases cross, and does it sit in the middle of your fabric?
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- Did you find the centre of the chart where the edge arrows meet?
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- If you gridded in tens, does each fabric block line up with a 10 by 10 block on the chart?
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- What contrasting thread did you use so the grid is easy to remove later?
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## Reading Charts and Starting Thread

Decode symbols, keys, and bold gridlines, plan a stitching route, and start and end thread without knots.

### Exercise: Decode a chart section

Take a 10 by 10 block from your chart's centre. Build a small key listing every symbol in that block next to its DMC number, then translate the block square by square into a written plan of colours.

- How many different symbols (and therefore colours) appear in this one block?
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- Which symbols look similar enough that you might confuse them while stitching?
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- Are there any fractional symbols sitting in a corner rather than filling a square?
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- Are there backstitch lines drawn over this block to add at the end?
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### Worksheet: Stitching route plan

Plan where you will begin and how you will move across the design so you always count from a known edge and never carry thread too far on the back.

Starting block (solid single-colour area near centre)

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Starting DMC colour and chart symbol

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Stitching direction (e.g. left-to-right then down)

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By area or by colour (parking) for this piece

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Maximum thread carry on the back (about 4-5 squares)

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Where to end vs anchor thread for longer gaps

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How you will mark your stop position each time

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### Exercise: Practise three thread starts

On a scrap of Aida, practise a loop start with 2 strands, an away-knot with 1 strand, and ending a thread by weaving under four to five existing stitches. Turn the work over and inspect the back after each.

- Did the loop start anchor cleanly with no knot and no loose tail?
  - When you reached the away-knot, were your stitches already holding the tail before you snipped it?
  - Can you see any starts, ends, or knots from the front of the work?
  - Which start will you use for even strand counts, and which for odd?
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### Checklist: Chart-reading and thread-handling check

- Working from the key by DMC number, not from memory of the symbol shape
- Using a magnetic board, ruler, or sticky note to hold your place on the row
- Highlighting or marking blocks of stitches as they are completed
- Starting at a solid block near the centre and working outward
- Carrying colours no more than about 4-5 squares on the back
- Securing all starts and ends without knots
- Marking the stop position on the chart every time the work is put down

## Stitching: Full Crosses and Even Tension

Form clean full crosses with a uniform top-stitch direction, stitch blocks by the two-journey method, and frog mistakes cleanly.

### Exercise: Ten consistent crosses

Using the stab method on a taut hoop, stitch a row of ten full cross-stitches in one colour, deciding in advance which diagonal is the bottom and which is the top. Keep every top stitch facing the same direction.

- Did you bring the needle up bottom-left, down top-right, up bottom-right, down top-left for each cross?
  - Do all ten top diagonals lean the same way when you tilt the work to the light?
  - Did the stab method help you place each stitch into an exact hole?
  - Does the row read as smooth, even colour rather than scratchy and uneven?
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### Exercise: Two-journey block and tension

Stitch a solid 5 by 5 block of one colour using the two-journey method: lay all the bottom diagonals across each row in one pass, then cross them back in a second pass. Watch the fabric for puckering or sag.

- Were all the crosses in each row identical after the second journey?
  - Did the fabric stay flat, or did it pucker (too tight) or the crosses sag (too loose)?
  - Did letting the needle dangle to untwist the floss change how flat the stitches sat?
  - When would you switch from two journeys to finishing each cross individually?
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## Worksheet: Tension and progress record

Log tension settings and progress so you can repeat what works and catch counting errors at every block. Fill one row each stitching session.

Date / session

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Strands used and DMC colour

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Method (two-journey / cross-each-stitch)

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Tension result (flat / puckered / loose)

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Blocks completed this session (10 x 10 count)

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Count checked against chart at last block? (Y/N)

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Any miscount found and where

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Stop position marked on chart? (Y/N)

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### Checklist: Even-stitching and frogging check

- One consistent crossing order used for every full stitch
- All top diagonals facing the same direction across the piece
- Tension firm and flat, with the hoop re-tensioned regularly
- Floss left to untwist every dozen stitches or so
- Work checked against the chart at the end of every 10 by 10 block
- Mistakes frogged with the fabric picked clean of fuzz
- Removed floss discarded and stitches redone with a fresh length

## Fractional Stitches, Backstitch, and Finishing

Add fractional stitches and backstitch detail, then wash, press, mount, and frame the finished piece.

### Exercise: Fractional stitches on a curve

Find a curved or diagonal edge on your chart and stitch the quarter, half, and three-quarter stitches it calls for, pushing the needle through the centre of the square where needed.

- Could you form a hole in the centre of the square with the blunt needle, or did you need a sharper one?

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• Did the fractional stitches round off the edge that full crosses left blocky?

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• Where two colours shared a square, did their fractions meet neatly at the centre?

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• Which fraction did you find hardest to place cleanly, and why?

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### Exercise: Backstitch an outline

After finishing the cross-stitches in a small area, outline it with backstitch using a single strand, following the charted line square by square. Keep stitches short over curves.

- Did you complete all cross-stitches in the area before starting any backstitch?
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- Is the single-strand line thin and crisp rather than heavy and clumsy?
- Did short stitches let the line follow the curve instead of cutting across it?
- Did pulling too tight dig a trench anywhere, and how did you correct it?

### Worksheet: Finishing and framing plan

Plan the wash, press, mount, and frame so the finished piece looks professional and lasts. Record settings you can reuse on future pieces.

Wash: cool water and mild soap, rinse-until-clear confirmed? (Y/N)

Bleed test on saturated reds/darks result

Press: face-down on a padded towel, heat setting used

Mount board type (acid-free mount / foam board) and cut size

Mounting method (lacing / pinning into board edge)

Frame opening size and spacer/mount to keep glass off stitches

Display location and any label content (name, date)

### Checklist: Finishing and framing check

- Fractional stitches added so curves and points look smooth
- Backstitch worked last, single strand, short stitches over curves
- Piece washed in cool water and rinsed until the water runs clear
- Pressed face-down over a towel so the crosses stay plump
- Design centred on acid-free board using the fabric fold lines
- Fabric laced or pinned square so rows stay level in the frame
- Spacers or a mount used so glass does not crush the stitches

### Your Action Plan

1. Choose a small beginner chart and calculate its finished size by dividing the stitch count by your Aida count
2. Buy 14-count Aida cut 3 inches larger than the design on every side, the listed DMC colours, tapestry needles in sizes 24 and 26, and a bound 5 or 6 inch hoop
3. Seal the fabric edges, wind floss onto labelled bobbins, and mount the Aida drum-tight in the hoop
4. Fold and tack the centre lines, optionally grid in tens, and match the fabric centre to the chart centre
5. Build a small key for the centre block and start with a solid single-colour area using a loop start
6. Stitch full crosses with one consistent crossing order, keeping every top stitch facing the same direction
7. Use the two-journey method for solid blocks and check your count against the chart at every 10 by 10 block
8. Add quarter, half, and three-quarter stitches where the chart shows fractions to round off curves

and edges

9. Outline last with single-strand backstitch, then wash, press face-down, mount on acid-free board, and frame

10. Record what worked on the project log and templates so your next piece starts faster and stitches more evenly











