



MATERIALS



The traditional, cheap wood hoop is my go-to. You can afford to have a couple sizes on hand, and painted (or not), they make a nice frame for your work.

Vintage hoops can be hit or miss. I have some that are sooo nice to stitch in. They hold better than new ones...but others no longer seem to have the right tension. Still, they make your finished work look fantastic.

A tiny spring tension hoop is my favorite for working small. This hoop works by squeezing the metal piece, then releasing it inside the plastic track. I have a larger one, but it sometimes distorts the weave of the fabric, and loosens easily.

Other hoop options include plastic versions of the wood hoops (like Susan Bates or Clover) or Q-Snap.



Osnaburg. This is 100% cotton, but looks very much like linen. There are different colors available, and the open weave works well for embroidery with all six strands of floss.



Weaver's Cloth. This is a cotton/poly blend, and a slightly tighter weave than the Osnaburg. It's lightweight, and easy to stitch on.



Canvas. 100% cotton, and really heavy. I use a lightweight canvas, but it's still much thicker than other fabrics. It can be a little more difficult to hoop, but it still works. I also like adding felt applique to canvas.



Quilting Cotton. Usually 100% cotton, this fabric has the most options. Seriously there is an endless supply of colors and prints to stitch on. It does, however, have a tight weave, which can make stitching a little more work.



Felt. There are many types of felt, but most of my stitching happens on wool/rayon blend. The polyester kind is much more difficult to work on, which is why the stability of wool makes me happy. Plus it just feels lovely.

Sometimes I also use muslin, or broadcloth, or many others. The biggest thing for me is that I don't want to spend a ton of material (which is why I don't use real linen).



There are two basic needle types: Ballpoint (left) and Sharps (right).

Ballpoint. These needles, often called cross-stitch needles, are fairly dull and they work best on fabrics with a more open weave. They don't damage the fibers (or your fingers!) as they pass through the fabric. I use these on the osnaburg and weaver's cloth.

Sharps. Often labeled as embroidery needles, they are sharp, and far more likely to draw blood. For fabrics with a tight weave, they do a fine job of creating a hole for your floss to go through. I use them for canvas, quilting cotton, and felt.

This is Mollie's favorite floss!



The size of the needle should be proportionate to the size of the floss you are using. Thicker floss=thicker needle. Essentially the needle is paving the way for your floss to glide through, and it can make all the difference for how well a length of floss holds up.

I'm a traditional girl, and I love DMC floss. (Yes, they did sponsor a class I taught last year, but I was devoted to them long before that.) There are many brands out there and they are just fine. But I do love DMC.

I don't love the packs of craft floss that you get a bargain on. They don't have the same sheen as more "expensive" floss, and they pill faster. Splurge on some 39 cent floss, okay?

On the left is flower thread, which compared to the regular six strand floss, is quite thin. It does not separate into strands.

There is also pearl cotton. Again, this doesn't separate into strands, but as you can see, it comes in different thicknesses. (Anchor brand? How did that get in there?) I'm still in the early stages of working with pearl cotton.

I'm lucky enough to have a specialty needlework shop nearby, but if you do a Google search for these different kinds of floss, you can find lots of online shops.

There are lots of other tools and materials that you can use, but these are the things that are most essential. They are what will get you started and keep you stitching for a long time!