

## Embroidery frames and hoops

A suitable frame or hoop greatly enhances your enjoyment of the finished piece.

### About rectangular frames

Working on a rectangular wooden frame for this design is a good idea – the roses on the corners and sides would be covered by the customary round hoop. The size of the design is 29.03 x 38.2cm (11.43 x 15.039”) and it should have a generous border of fabric around so that it fits easily onto a frame. The size of the fabric block, which the image is printed onto, is 60 x 60cm (23 x 23”).

The rectangular frame should be larger than the printed image – this will allow enough space so the edge of the wooden frame won't be in the way whilst you stitch.

There are many kinds of frames: needlework frames, stretcher bars or bar frames, ratchet frames, scroll frames and lap frames. These are available from needlecraft stores and websites.

Popular products are the Evertite Stretcher Bar frames – also known as Evertite Stitchery Frames or Evertites – which have an adjustable tension, come in a number of sizes, and are obtainable from needlecraft outlets in the USA. I am sure that the frames are available in other countries too, and if you search for Evertite Stretcher Frames on Google, you may find a store or website that will post one on to you. Have a look at the article written by Mary Corbett on her website: [www.needlenthread.com](http://www.needlenthread.com) Search for: Evertite Stretcher Bar frames.

### Wooden frames

You could ask your local framer to make a frame for you, like I do. Ask the framer to make a lightweight wooden frame measuring, from the outside of the frame, 37 x 49cm (14½ x 19”). The wood should be soft enough for you to push drawing pins (brass thumbtacks) into.

### Stretching your fabric onto the frame

Before stretching the panel onto a frame, you will need to add a second layer of fabric on the back of your embroidery – see *about backing fabric* on page 15. You will stitch through both layers of fabric. The backing fabric acts as a stabiliser and it is easier to end off at the back. Place backing fabric on a flat surface; lay your embroidery panel on top, right side up. Tack the two layers along the edge, working through both layers to join them.



*Hint: Another way to find a suitable frame is to purchase a ready-blocked artist's canvas which is about 49cm x 37cm (19 x 14½”) in size. These are available from art and craft stores. Simply remove the canvas and if necessary, sandpaper the frame until it is smooth, before stretching your embroidery panel onto it.*

### Using brass thumbtacks or drawing pins

Use brass thumbtacks or drawing pins to secure the panel onto your frame. Place the frame on the right side of your embroidery panel and position frame until the panel is centred with equal parts of white showing along the sides. Use a pencil and draw the outline of the frame onto the white border of the fabric. The lines will help in the next step.

Place both layers of fabric on frame, positioning it so that pencil marks line up with the frame. Insert first tack in the centre of one edge; work to the corner and then to the other corner until first side is tacked down. Repeat on the opposite side of the frame, checking that the pencil line is straight. As you stretch, the lines will move further down the side of the frame. Pull gently on both layers of fabric as you tack to stretch the layers. Don't distort the fabric; a gentle, even tension is required.

Tack the third and fourth sides as you did above until layers are straightened firmly in the frame, but not so much that the fabric is warped.

Cover the tacks with masking tape so that your threads won't catch on them as you work.

*Hint: You could ask your framer or someone who is familiar with a staple gun or machine – also known as a trigger tacker – to stretch and staple the cloth to the frame. **DO NOT** try this yourself unless you are familiar with the stapler and you are aware of all the safety rules.*

The frame can be attached to a stand, which is available from some needlecraft or quilting stores. Alternatively, lean part of the frame against the edge of your worktable or sofa, to prop it up whilst you embroider.

*Hint: The upside of using a rectangular frame is that you will be able to use it to display your work in.*

### Round hoops

A round 15cm (6”) embroidery hoop is used for the small shapes which are made separately and then applied to your design, for example the butterflies and stumpwork leaves. It is also useful when making a single rose or panel in this book.

