



Basic Stitch Instructions

Bead Embroidery

Bead embroidery is the decoration with beads on the surface of a fabric.

Bead embroidery can be worked on any fabric or, indeed, any surface that can have holes made in it for a needle to go through. If the fabric is lightweight, you will find it helpful to put it into an embroidery frame to hold it steady while you stitch. If it is firm, you may need to make holes in it with a heavy duty needle first and then stitch through these holes with your beading needle.

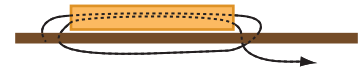
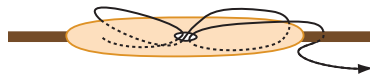
The beads can be stitched directly on to the fabric, singly or in groups, or can be held in place by stitches going across the thread between the beads (called couching), or a combination of these. Some of the different possibilities are illustrated in the diagrams. The one you choose will be determined by the nature of your fabric and design. You might want just a scattering of beads for a little sparkle or you may want the whole surface to be covered with beads. As a general rule, a bead is most firmly held in place if it is stitched down direct, but the work grows most quickly if beads are couched down in groups.

Start by securing your thread into the back of the fabric with two or three small back stitches. If your beads are to be well spaced out, you may find that you can run the thread through the fabric between them if it is thick enough, or you can have lines of thread lying across the reverse of the work. Be careful not to pull the thread up too tight or the fabric will pucker. If the fabric is too fine or is transparent such that the thread would show through, the thread for each bead needs to be secured (little back stitches again) and cut off before moving to the next bead.

When stitching groups of beads down, it is a good idea to bring the needle back and go through the last few beads again before picking up the next group. This is great for working small areas where you want your placement to be precise.

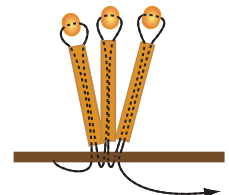
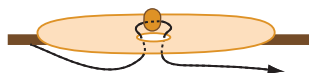
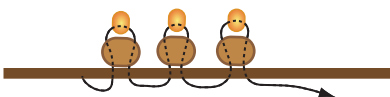
Stitching on the spot

Secure each bead with two or three stitches - bear in mind that the thread will show with this technique.



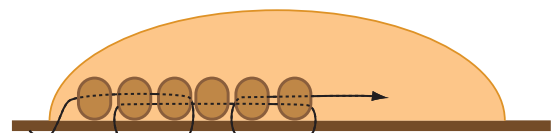
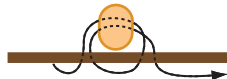
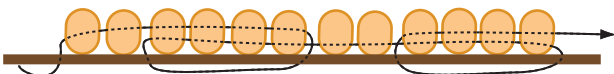
Using 'anchor' beads

Each bead is secured with a smaller 'anchor' bead which hides the thread.



Backstitching

This can be done singly or in groups and is useful for going around a cabochon.



Couching

There are lots of choices with this technique. You can have your beads all picked up on one thread, stitch it on to the fabric at each end of the beads and then use a second thread to stitch over the first between the beads, at whatever interval you decide to use. If you have the first thread quite loose, you can pull the beads on it into the shape of your design as you couch along. Alternatively you can pick up a group of beads, take the needle down into the fabric at the end of the group and then bring it back up at the beginning of the group and stitch over the thread between each (or some) of the beads in the group; you are then ready to pick up the next group of beads.

