



Town Clock Stitchers

Ornament Finishing Techniques

by Anne Gale

The back of the ornament should enhance, not detract from the quality of the finished ornament. There are many ways to finish ornaments depending on type, shape and materials. We will look at some.

Hardanger Ornaments:

1. **Buttonhole edge** – the quickest. Trim fabric along outside edge of buttonhole stitching. Always cut from the back and to the left of the work.
2. **Pillow** – makes a diamond shaped ornament - see Techniques
3. **Back to Back** – 2 hardanger ornaments placed back to back
 - a. Attach cord to hardanger ornament.
 - b. Create a lining for each ornament by cutting two pieces of fabric and tack to the back of each hardanger piece. This fabric could be a contrasting color to enhance the stitching or complementary to the color of the ornament.
 - c. Overcast the edge with matching thread and also stitch through the base of the buttonhole stitch.
 - d. Stuff lightly and finish sewing.

Paper Ornaments

1. Cut around each ornament leaving one unworked row of holes.
2. Cut between these holes and the next for a smooth edge.

Paper ornaments can be backed in two ways:

1. Stitch two identical ornaments. Place them back to back and overcast the edge or run a decorative thread through the unworked edge.
2. Fuse a different backing onto the ornament



Canvas Ornaments

1. Work two rows of tent stitch around the outside edge – using the same color as the last row of stitches. The canvas edge will be folded back between these two rows of stitches. This makes a neater fold and hides the bare canvas edge.
2. Trim the canvas to $\frac{1}{4}$ inch from stitched edge for interlock canvas or $\frac{1}{2}$ inch for mono canvas (mono canvas will ravel but interlock does not).
3. Fold edge back between the rows of tent stitch. Miter the corners and tack edge to the back of the ornament.
4. Attach a hanger and tassel or beads if applicable.
5. Attach backing. The backing may be glued, hand stitched or self-adhesive felt.
6. If desired, glue or stitch a trim around the edge where backing joins the ornament.



Techniques

Fusing technique:

Fusible interfacing – can be purchased at any fabric store – instructions are included.

Method I use:

1. Place ornament right side up on the fusible interfacing. Using a pencil trace the outline of the ornament on the fusible interfacing.
2. Place the ornament right side up on the wrong side of the backing material and trace.
3. Cut out each piece.
4. Place the ornament face down on a thick towel.
5. Pull the paper off one side of the fusible interfacing and place that side on the ornament.
6. Take a damp cloth – wring out well (I use a J-cloth) and place on top of fusible interfacing. Press with a dry iron for a minute.
7. Remove damp cloth and let ornament cool.
8. Pull paper off other side of fusible interfacing and repeat using backing fabric.

Many different backing materials can be used:

1. felt – tends to be a bit too thick
2. self-adhesive felt
3. Shiny knit material – does not fray - I like this best.
4. Ultra suede
5. Wrapping paper or scrapbook paper – use with fusible interfacing or a glue stick.

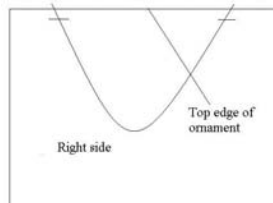


Stuffed Ornaments

Very important - Be sure to attach the hanger first.

These can be any shape – round, heart, diamond, square, and rectangle:

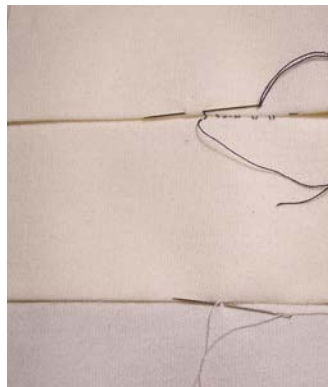
1. Determine how much fabric you want to show around the finished ornament.
Count out your threads and baste on these lines. They should be the same distance from the stitching on each side.



2. Attach hanger to the right side of the ornament. I often use narrow ribbon.
3. Cut a backing piece of fabric and place right side down on right side of ornament.
4. Baste around existing basting line.
5. Stitch leaving an opening on the side or bottom.
6. Turn ornament right side out making sure corners are sharp.
7. Press
8. Stuff with fiberfill and slip stitch opening.

Slip stitching:

The fabric is folded as if with a pleat. Match the thread to the color of the fabric. Working from right to left and with the needle pointing to the left, take a very small stitch in the single layer of fabric. Directly above this stitch, insert the needle in the fold for about $\frac{1}{4}$ inch. Take another very small stitch in the single layer of fabric below the point where the needle emerges from the fold. Continue to the end of the opening, gently pulling the thread to the left as you stitch. The opening should close while the stitches virtually disappear.





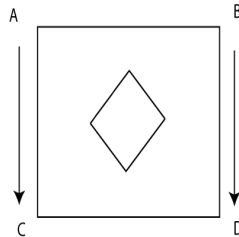
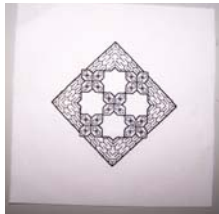
Pillow Ornaments



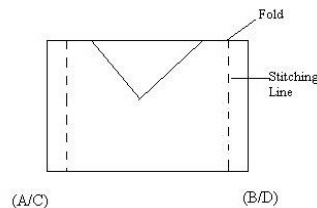
This technique makes a diamond shaped ornament and works best for ornaments stitched on soft materials. It does not work for canvas. There must be plenty of extra fabric around the stitched area.

Cut fabric into a square – determine the size by measuring out from the outside edge of stitched design.

1. Count out the desired number of threads on each side and baste. Make sure each side is the same. Line with a contrasting fabric if needed and slip stitch in place.

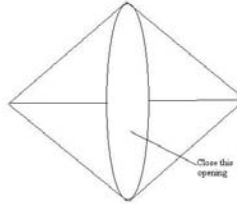


2. With right sides together, fold A to C and B to D.
3. Stitch down the sides on the basting lines, from the folded edge towards A/C and B/D.
4. Trim the seam to $\frac{1}{4}$ inch.



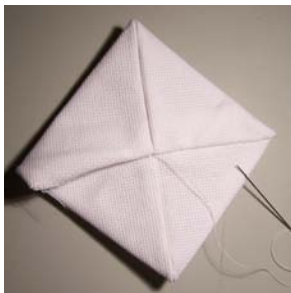


5. Turn the ornament right side out and make sure corners are sharp.



6. Turn the unfinished edges under.

7. Slip stitch half of the edge closed, and then stuff lightly with fiberfill.



8. Close the opening by slip stitching the remainder from the center to the edge. The hanger can be inserted and stitched in place just before the opening is closed.

Back



Front





Joining Ornaments Using a Lacing Technique

This method is best used to join counted fabric ornaments. It is good for most shapes although it is a little harder for heart shaped ornaments.

Round:

1. Use plastic canvas circular coasters, plastic template, lids of plastic containers, or heavy cardboard
2. Determine the size of circle required. This should be equal to the finished size of the ornament.
3. Cut a piece of felt or a piece of fiberfill the same size as the circle for padding.
4. Glue felt or fiberfill to the plastic using craft glue.
5. Cut the stitched piece $\frac{1}{2}$ inch larger than the plastic.
 - a. Method 1 with use of sewing machine - Run a wide zigzag stitch around the outside edge of the stitched piece. Thread perle cotton through the zigzag using a blunt needle. Leave long ends. Gently pull the ends to gather the fabric around the edge.
 - b. Method 2 using hand sewing – Run a loose basting stitch around the outside edge of the circle of fabric. Gently pull the basting thread to gather the fabric.
6. Insert the plastic and adjust stitching so that it is centered on the plastic. Tie a knot to secure.
7. Thread each end through a blunt needle and use these threads to lace across the back.
8. Insert hanger at top and tassel or beads to the bottom.
9. Make a duplicate back ornament or use fabric and cover another piece of plastic as above. A stretchy fabric works best.
10. Sandwich the two pieces back to back and slip stitch them together. Trim as desired.

Square, rectangular and other shapes:

1. Cut two pieces of mat board or heavy cardboard to the desired shape and size.
2. Fold the edges of the stitched piece and the fabric around each board.
3. Using a needle and strong thread and using a lacing technique run the thread back and forth so that the fabric is securely fastened around the board.
4. Continue as in step 8 above for round ornaments.



Fringed Ornament mounted on felt or colored cardboard

1. Cut the felt or cardboard one inch larger than the ornament.
2. Pink the edge of the felt or cardboard or use decorative scissors.
3. Fringe the stitched ornament.
4. Glue ornament to center of felt or cardboard.
5. Attach hanger.

Frames

Ornaments can be inserted into different types of frames – plastic, metal, and wicker wreaths.

Cut ornament slightly larger than the frame or use the template if one came with the frame.

Trim to fit and press into frame. Back can be covered with paper or felt.

Trim

Trim is available in all sorts of sizes, shapes and colors.

Examples:

- Twisted cord – handmade or purchased
- Ribbon
- Pre-gathered lace
- Rickrack braid
- Strings of beads
- Tassels
- Loose beads (do not cut before attaching)
- Perle cotton

Trim can be glued or stitched. Stitching is more secure and neater looking. Use a couching technique using the same color thread as the trim.

Pre-gathered lace should be sandwiched between the front and back of the ornament.

If using cord, leave a small opening to insert the beginning and end of the cord. I often cover this with a bow.



Hangers

Examples:

- Make your own twisted cord
- Purchased cord
- Ribbon
- Perle cotton
- #8 or #12 Kreinik braid
- Make your own beaded hanger using beading thread or floss rubbed with beeswax. Beeswax makes the floss straighter and stronger.