

# Cross Stitch a Needlebook

By Baroness Lynnette de Sandoval del Valle de los Unicornios

Tired of not having the correct size needle handy? Can't fit your beading, tapestry, or leatherwork needles in your needle case?

Fear not! This cross stitch decorated needlebook carries a large number of any size needles, neatly and compactly!

Needles were a valued commodity during the Middle Ages, not something to be used recklessly or easily replaced. The lady of the manor's belt chatelaine usually contained a needlecase to keep them near at hand and safe. These needlecases were of many materials: metal, wood, bone, horn, etc, and took many forms, decorative as well functional.

Needles are less dear today and we're more interested in carrying a wide assortment of needles than we are about the needles getting lost, so our chatelaine will include a fabric needlebook rather than a needlecase.

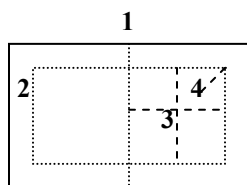
We'll be using cross stitch for the book cover decoration. Cross stitch was used in the Middle Ages, but not in the format we use it today. It was almost never used as the ONLY stitch in a project, and seems to have been used mostly as a base stitch or quick filler. Additionally Medieval cross stitch was often of the "long arm" type when one arm or leg of the X was longer than the rest and was part of the next stitch space. Long arm cross stitch covered more closely and lent it self more to the overall patterns of the time than it does to today's "spot" decoration.

## Cross Stitch Needlebook Materials List

- |  |                                 |
|--|---------------------------------|
| 2 pieces 14 count cross-stitch fabric, each 5 x 9 inches   | -- Needlebook cover             |
| 1 piece iron on interfacing, 4 x 8 inches  | -- Cover support                |
| 2 pieces ribbon, each 12 inches long   | -- To tie the book shut         |
| 1 piece of ribbon, 2 ½ inches long<br>(sew ends together to form a 1 inch diameter loop)                 | -- To attach book to chatelaine |
| 2 pieces felt or flannel, each 3 ½ x 7 ½ inches<br>(cut flannel with pinking shears to avoid unraveling) | -- The needle pages             |
| Embroidery thread -- as needed for the cross stitch decorations  |                                 |
| Sewing thread -- as needed to mark out the cover and assemble the book                                   |                                 |
| Tapestry needle, size 24   |                                 |

# Cross Stitch a Needlebook

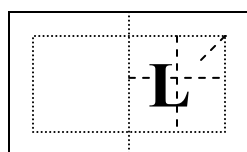
## Needlebook construction



Bottom

### Step 1: Preparing Cover for Cross Stitch

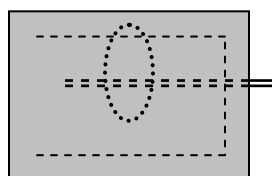
- Mark the vertical center of the cover (1)
- Mark a 1/2 inch seam allowance around the outside of the cover (2)
- Stitch the horizontal and vertical center of the RIGHT FRONT (3)
- Make a diagonal stitch in the upper right corner of the cover (4)



Bottom

### Step 2: Cross Stitching the Front Cover

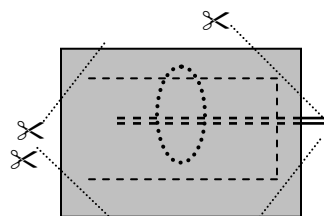
- Mark the horizontal and vertical on the PATTERN (paper copy)
- Cross stitch the design on the RIGHT FRONT of the cover, matching center cross of the pattern to the center cross on the cover
- Work the bottom of each cross stitch in same direction as the diagonal stitch you placed in the upper corner



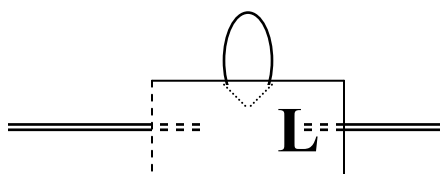
Bottom

### Step 3: Attaching the Inside Cover

- Remove all the marking stitches from the front cover
- Pin inside and front cover together, right side to right side
- Pin ribbon loop between cover layers at TOP CENTER, crossing the seam line. With the loop's sewn part at the top.
- Pin one long ribbon at the CENTER of the short side nearest the cross stitching, crossing the seamline
- Sew the 2 long sides and the short side nearest the cross stitching
- Iron interfacing inside the seamline, on the WRONG side of the BACK (non-decorated side) of the cover – Shiny side down
- Clip corners off diagonally (as indicated by the ✂s). Be careful NOT to clip into the seam lines.



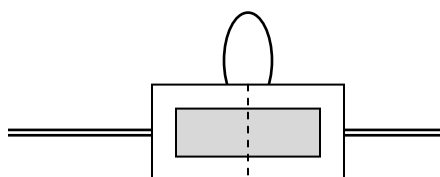
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Bottom

### Step 4: Sewing Cover Closed

- Turn cover right side OUT
- Fold unsewn short side INTO the cover at the seamline
- Pin remaining long ribbon at the CENTER of the unsewn side
- Hand sew or machine sew the remaining short side closed



Bottom

### Step 5: Adding the Pages

- Center the pages on the INSIDE cover and pin them down
- Fold the book in half (ribbon to ribbon)
- Mark the center spine
- Open the book, and sew down the center spine

# Cross Stitch a Needlebook

## Additional Construction Suggestions:

- **Cover ideas**
  - Needlepoint canvas
  - Plastic canvas
  - Woven fabric
  - Leather
  - Felt
  
- **Decoration ideas**
  - Needlepoint
  - Beading
  - Embroidery
  - Decorative fabric
  - Painting
  - Ribbon weaving
  
- **Closure ideas**
  - A button on the front cover and a loop of elastic sewn into the seam of the back cover
  - Velcro or snap on the insides of the cover
  - A button on the front cover, a button hole on the back cover and then lengthen the cover so the back wraps around to the front
  
- **Additions**
  - Attach a felt or fabric pocket (with closable flap) inside the cover to hold needle threaders, thread, scissors, buttons, or other tools
  - Print or sew needle sizes/types on each page to organize the needles
  - Pad the back cover with cotton to make a pin cushion
  - Sew a small thimble pouch of the same fabric to tie to the center ribbon.
  
- **Shape / Size**
  - Make the needle book three or four fold to allow for more pages, pockets, etc
  - Make it in the shape of a fan, cat, castle, butterfly, etc
  - Make a tiny book that holds only a few needles, it can fit into a small sewing kit

**Use your imagination and have fun!!!**

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## Resources

### Books:

69 Creative Alphabets. Designs By Gloria & Pat, 39 pages. 1990

The Medieval Penguin Presents a Book of Medieval Needlework. Volume I, An Illustrated Guide to Those Legendary Medieval Needleworks by Alifhea Merchrhys of Birchum (Kingdom of Caithness). The Medieval Penguin, 168 pages. 1984.

Needlework Tools: A guide to Collecting by Eleanor Johnson. Shire Publications Ltd (Shire Album #38), 32 pages. 1978. ISBN: 0852634463

The New Carolingian Modelbook by Ianthé d'Averoigne. Outlaw Press, 206 pages. 1995. ISBN: 0964208229

### Website:

Counted Cross Stitch Tutorial – Everything you could ever want to know about how to cross stitch:  
<http://home.comcast.net/~kathydyer>

Cross Stitch Embroidery in the Middle Ages and Renaissance by Karen Larsdatter  
<http://www.florilegium.org/files/TEXTILES/p-x-stitch-art.text>

DMC Cross Stitch Center: Free designs, instructions, and more.  
[http://www.dmc-usa.com/majic/pageServer/1d0100003n/en\\_US/Cross-stitch-home.html](http://www.dmc-usa.com/majic/pageServer/1d0100003n/en_US/Cross-stitch-home.html)

Janet's Little Needle Book Swap (2002) – Lots of ideas for needle book designs and formats, some links are out of date, but many interesting pages still exist.  
<http://sresafehaven.tripod.com/swaps/littlenb/index.htm>

Some Cross Stitch pattern sites

- Celtic cross stitch alphabet generator: <http://www.celticxstitch.ie/cgi-bin/stitches.cgi>
- Free Bird Cross Stitch Patterns: <http://www.birdcrossstitch.com/>
- Jenny's Free Cross Stitch Pattern Links):  
<http://www.birdcrossstitch.com/crossstitch/guide2.html>
- DragonBear: Arts, Crafts, and Literature -- Arts, Crafts and Literature: articles on medieval history, needlework and across-stitch patterns, free web graphics with medieval themes –  
<http://www.dragonbear.com/index.html>

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