

Mexican Embroidery – Otomi Style

Stitch Worksheet

The second part of this project is **stitch**, you will learn the stitches needed to embroider your design in Otomi style.

There is no time limit, you don't need to complete your stitching before you begin the next project, you can carry on stitching through the spring and summer.

It's up to you if you want to set aside a time each week to stitch or just work on it whenever you have some spare time.

Once you have mastered the stitch I hope you will find it enjoyable and relaxing to work on your embroidery and will look forward to stitching.

Because the design is split up into small sections and the stitch is the same for each section, it's easy to start and stop as often as you like without getting lost!

Also because the colours change all the time and it doesn't matter which colour goes where it should be fun to work on.

I like to listen to music or a talking book whilst I stitch, you might like to try that?



Example of a finished piece of Otomi Embroidery from the town of Tenango and a close up detail of the stitching.

For the stitch project you will need:

From your Kit	From home
Your fabric with the Mexican design drawn on it The smaller piece of fabric to sample the stitches Embroidery hoop, threads and needle Pencil	Scissors to cut threads A comfy chair to sew in!

To complete your embroidery you will use two different stitches, the shapes are filled in with a herringbone stitch and the lines are drawn with a stem stitch.

If you do a lot of embroidery you may already know these stitches but if you don't or if you need a reminder you can follow these notes and diagrams.

The small piece of fabric is your sample piece for trying out the stitches and how they fit into the shapes.

Prepare your sample by following the instructions below.

Place your small piece of fabric over this circle diagram so that the circle is in the centre of the fabric.

Use your pencil to trace the shapes and lines onto your fabric, you don't need to trace the outer circle, this is just to show where your hoop will be.

Check you have traced all the shapes and then fit your fabric into the hoop as shown on page 17.



We will use a hoop to keep the tension of your stitches correct so that your finished embroidery lies flat and not lumpy.

Loosen the screw at the top of your hoop to separate the two pieces – see Fig 6.

Place your sample fabric over the smaller, inner hoop – see Fig 7.

Replace the larger hoop over the fabric onto the smaller hoop and tighten the screw, pull the fabric down around the edges until it is stretched and smooth, it should sound like a drum if you tap it – see Fig 8.

You need the fabric to be taut but if you tighten your screw too much you may need pliers to undo it.



Fig 6



Fig 7



Fig 8

Don't worry - the shapes in the example are different to the ones you have drawn!

Prepare your thread – Fig 9

You have stranded cottons, each thread is made up of 6 thin strands that can be separated to make different thicknesses. For this project we will use 3 strands at a time.

Measure a piece of thread, hold one end between your thumb and forefinger and take the thread down to your elbow, about 40-45cm (16-18inches) this is a good length to stitch with. If your thread is too long it will get tangled and knotted when you stitch. Securing the threads gets quicker and easier the more you do it.

To separate the strands hold the thread close to one end between your thumb and forefinger, you should be able to see the 6 strands, use your other hand to gently pull out 1 strand at a time, when you have pulled out 3 strands knot them together at one end and smooth the thread through your fingers.

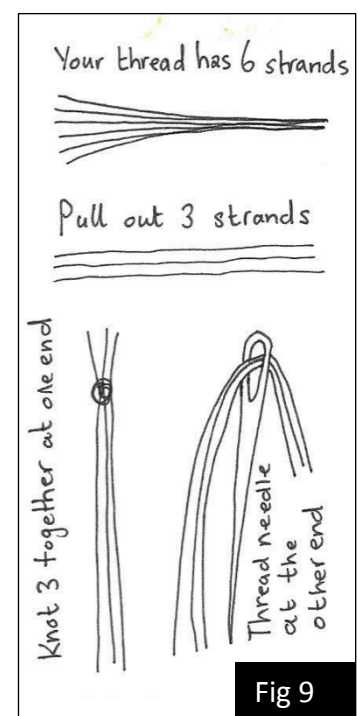


Fig 9

You will have 3 strands left so knot these together and you have another thread ready.

Thread your needle at the opposite end to the knot. Make sure that you thread all 3 strands and that your strands are lying smoothly and not knotted.

To avoid knots and tangles keep smoothing your threads by running them through your fingers or by running your threaded needle up and down the length of the thread.

Securing your threads, if you don't secure your threads your stitching can come undone. The simplest way to start is by using a knot and/or 2 tiny stitches on top of each other. If you are using the tiny stitches keep them inside the shape you are stitching, where they will be covered by your herringbone stitch, and not on the white background areas.

Always finish off before your thread gets too short leaving enough thread to secure it easily. You can finish off by weaving your thread through some of the tiny stitches on the back of your work or with a knot or 2 tiny stitches on top of each other.

If in doubt leave your threads hanging, never cut your thread if it is not secure!

All the shapes in your design will be filled with herringbone stitch, the lines will be worked in stem stitch. The stitch instructions begin on page 19.

If you have internet access we have made a video demonstrating the stitches, you can find it on High Peak Community Arts website, facebook and youtube, the link will be www.highpeakarts.org/mex5 and it will be available from March 8th.

Remember to keep your fabric stretched in your hoop. You don't want it too tight or it will be difficult to make your stitch in one movement but if the fabric is too loose the stitches will pull the fabric out of shape and your embroidery will never lie flat. Keep pulling the fabric tight around the edges and tighten the screw if necessary.

Begin stitching anywhere on your design and move about from one area to another whenever you feel like a change. You will need to move your hoop around as you work because only a small part of the design will fit inside.

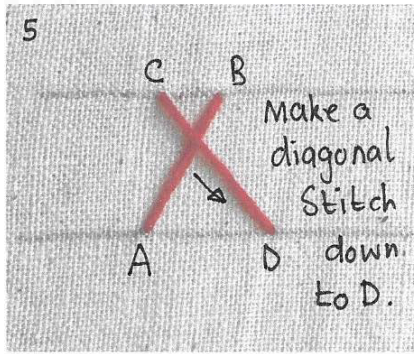
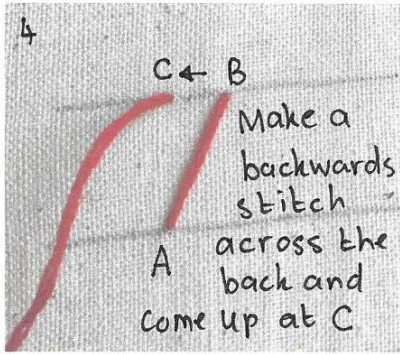
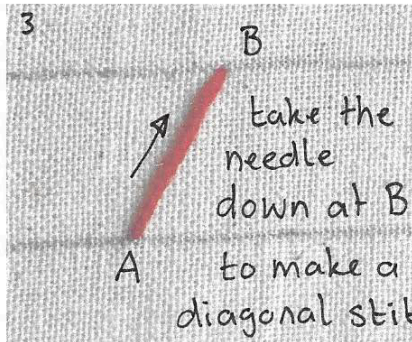
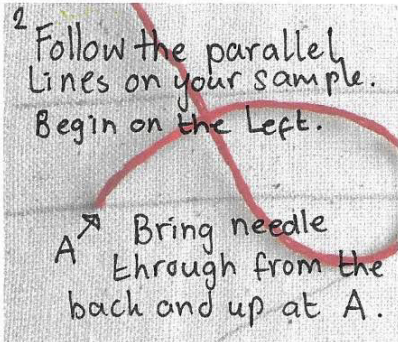
Make sure you don't catch the loose material at the back in your stitches.

You can turn the hoop round as you work so that you are always stitching in the position that is most comfortable for you, it doesn't matter which way up your design is whilst you are stitching.

If a shape has sections that are wider than about 1.5cm or 3 quarters of an inch you can draw a line across the middle to split it in two so your stitches don't get too tall.

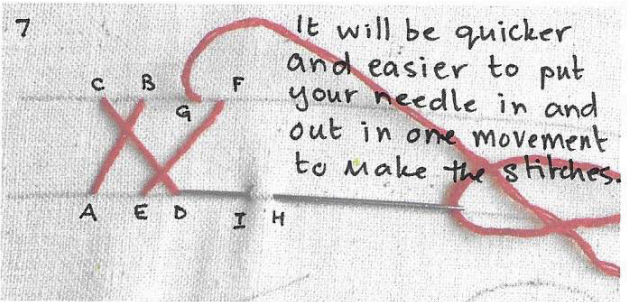
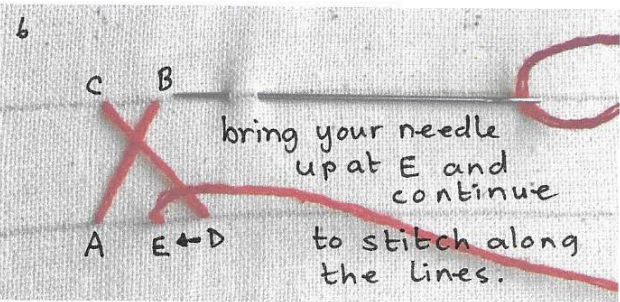
Post your Otomi embroidery – when you have finished please return your embroidery to High Peak Community Arts in the stamped addressed envelope provided.

Please also include the evaluation forms with any questions or comments you have.



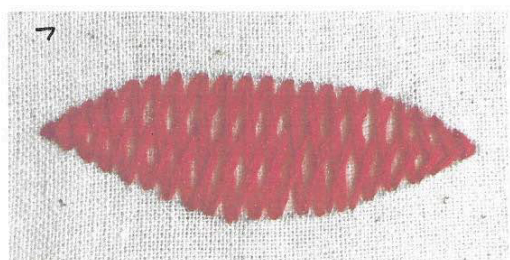
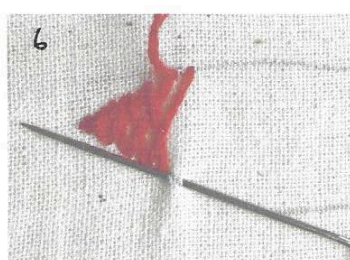
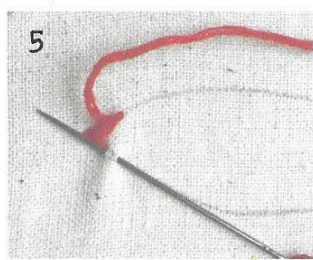
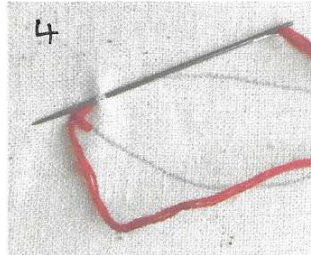
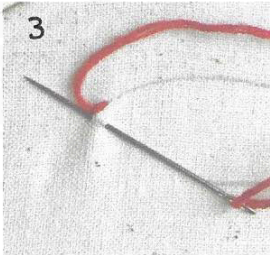
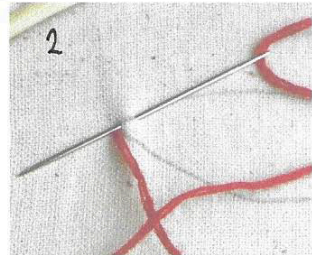
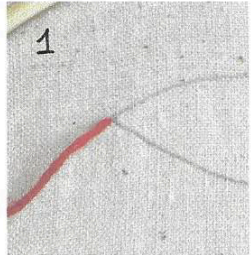
Herringbone stitch.

this stitch is worked from left to right across the fabric but the needle moves from right to left to make the stitches.



To fill a shape the stitch is the same but worked closer together. The height of the stitches will vary with the shape, just keep following the lines at the top and the bottom.

Try filling the leaf shape on your sample by following the pictures below. Your stitches will be very small at the beginning and end of the shape but taller in the centre. Keep them close together all the time.




Follow the same rules to fill in the scalloped stripes on the oval shape.

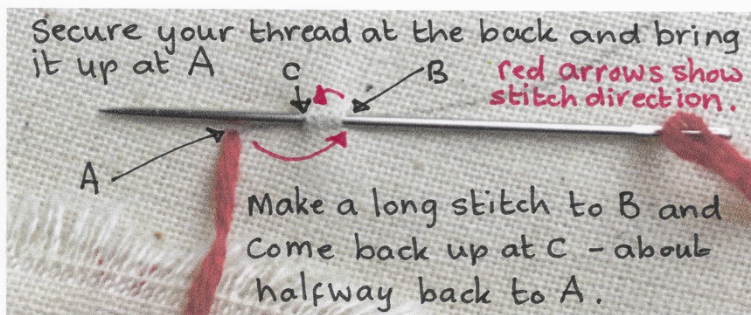
When you begin a new row change colour and work your stitches close to the row above.

Follow the scalloped lines below and your previous stitches above.



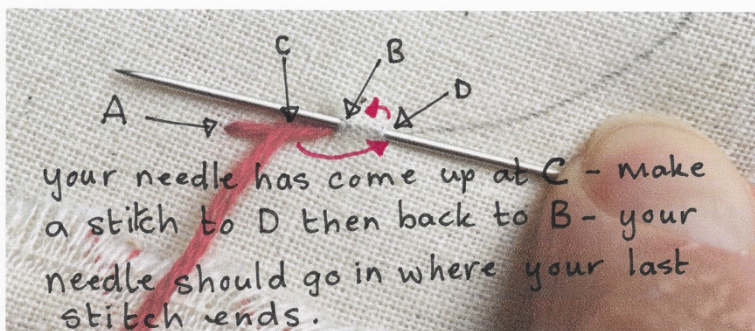
STEM STITCH

Any Lines in your design Like the swirl  on your sample will be worked in stem stitch



This stitch behaves like herringbone it travels across the fabric from left to right but the needle makes a backwards stitch from right to left.

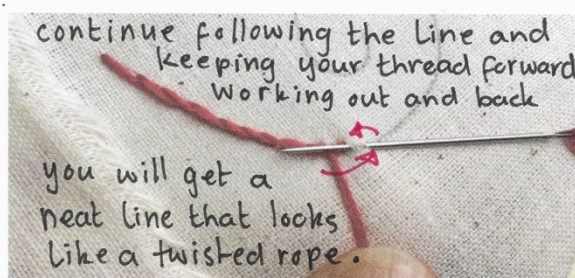
There are 2 important things to remember:

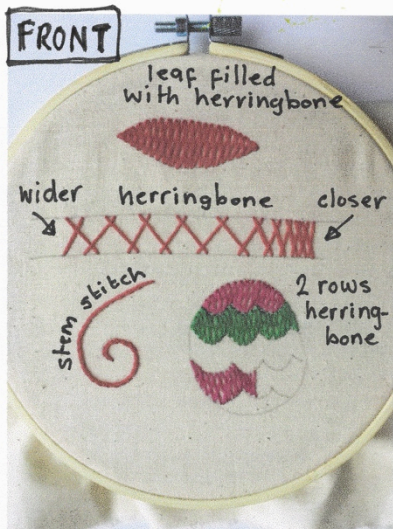


① The first stitch is different from all the others. It is an extra long stitch - about 1 1/2 times the length of the other stitches

② Always keep your thread pulled in front of the stitch line.

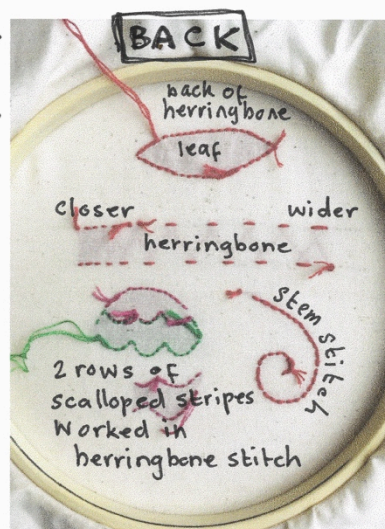
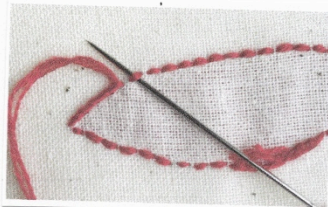
So long as you remember these 2 things then stem stitch is quick and easy.



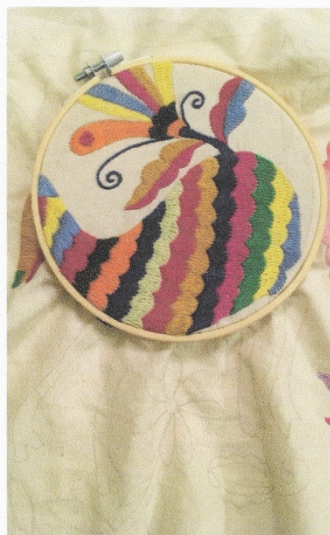
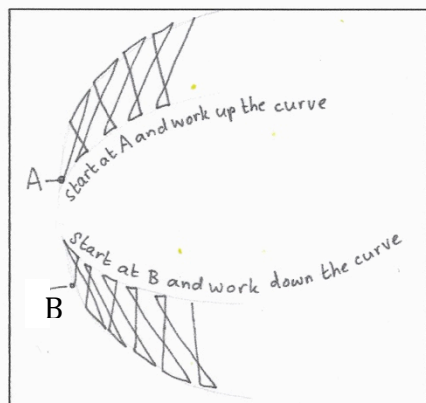
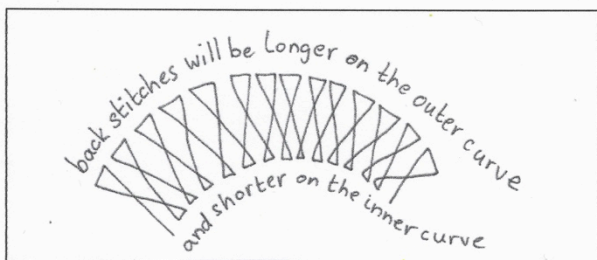


← Your sample →
← Like this →

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You can finish off the ends of your threads by weaving them into the stitches on the back



These diagrams show how to stitch around the different curves.



Fit your hoop onto an area of your design and begin your colourful embroidery.



When you have completed an area move your hoop onto the next section.



The back should look something like this.

If you can't get to grips with the herringbone and stem stem stitches just fill your design with bright coloured running stitch like on the bug quilt, or any stitches you like!
Enjoy your stitching we are looking forward to seeing the finished pieces.