

Needle Lace Basics and Stitches

Preparing the Pattern:

A paper pattern needs some support to be used. My preferred method is to iron a piece of heavy fusible interfacing to the back side. Be sure to protect your iron and ironing board with press cloths above and below the paper and fusible that you are pressing together.

Another method is to put a piece of clear Contact paper over the pattern paper and baste 2 or more layers of fabric such as muslin below.

Threads to use:

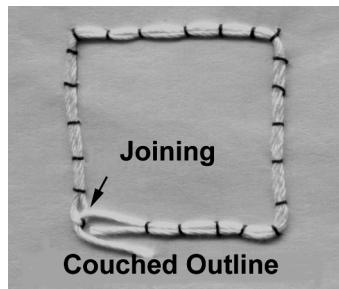
Anything can be used for making needle lace from knitting yarn to very fine lace thread. Be sure to choose threads that are appropriate for the size of the pattern. The outline thread is often heavier than the working lace stitch threads.

Couching the outlines

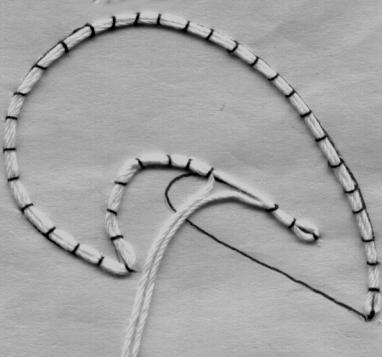
A double strand of thread must be couched to the outlines of the pattern. Any place the lines intersect, this thread needs to be joined together.

The couching is done with sewing thread. This is the only thread that pierces the pattern paper. After the couching is finished all work is done on the surface and is attached to the couched outlines.

It is important to plan a line that is continuous, interlocking intersections and always having just 2 strands of the outlining thread couched



Couched Cord with Side Branch



down. Sometimes one strand can be taken out one direction and returned to form side branches.

Stitching the lace:

Fill open areas of the design with your choice of needle lace filling stitch. Begin and end threads by overcasting the outline. Try to do this in different directions so you do not pile up too much extra thread all in one spot.

As you reach the end of a row, overcast the side outline once for closely spaced stitching, or twice or more for very open rows.

As you reach the bottom of an area, whip the last row to the bottom outline.

Generally the final step in stitching a piece of needle lace is placing a row of closely spaced buttonhole stitches over the outline edges. This will often be done with added padding threads held over it and the buttonhole stitches will go over everything, that is over the original outline, over the connecting threads and beginning and ending threads that are there, and over the padding threads you are holding in place. Most right handed people will find that if they are adding padding thread, it is easier to work around the edge from right to left, so they can control the padding threads with the left hand.

Removing the lace from the pattern:

If you have at least 2 layers of fabric behind the work, you may use a sharp blade and cut all the couching thread between the two layers of fabric.

If on the other hand you only have a piece of fused interfacing on the back of the fabric, you will clip and pull out the couching thread from the back of the interfacing. Tweezers are helpful for removing the final pieces of couching thread from the lace.

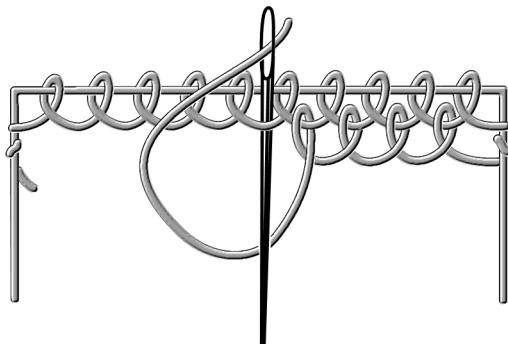
Final finishing:

If your piece needs washing, do so. You may want to pin it to a padded board (ironing board) in shape to dry. Depending on its use, starch or fabric sizing may be added.

Basic Needle Lace Stitches

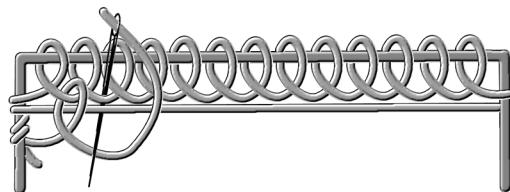
Single Buttonhole Stitch

Buttonhole stitches are placed rather close together, and are evenly spaced. At the end of a row, overcast the outline thread once and return making a buttonhole stitch into each loop of the previous row.



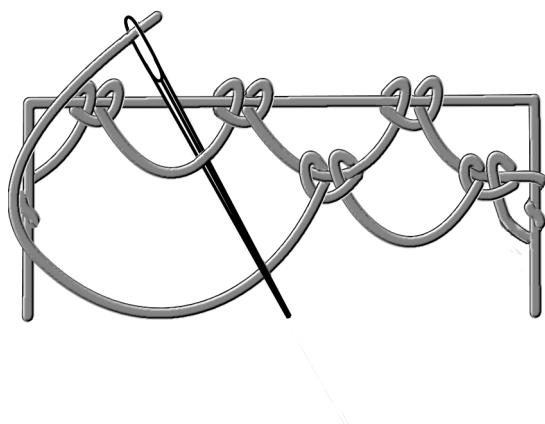
Corded Buttonhole or Cloth Stitch

This is a solid stitch worked by making closely spaced buttonhole stitches across the area from left to right and returning with one long stitch back to the left. The next row covers the long thread and is worked into each loop of the previous row.



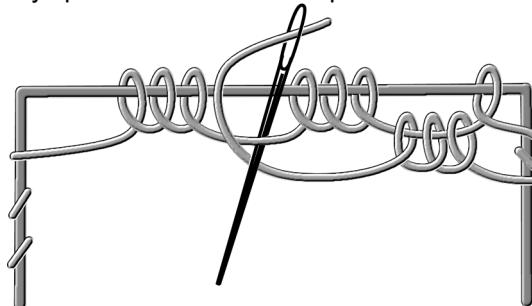
Double Buttonhole Stitch

Make two buttonhole stitches close together, leave a longer space and then two more stitches close together. Overcast the outline couching twice before making the return row. On the return row place the two buttonhole stitches together on the longer loops of the previous row.



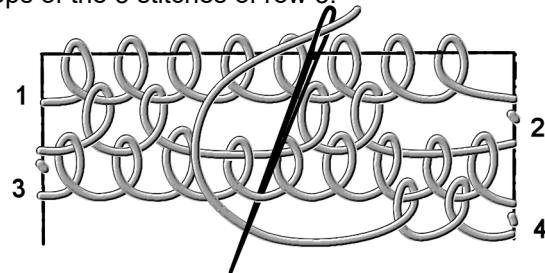
Triple Buttonhole Stitch

Worked like the double buttonhole stitch, but making 3 closely spaced stitches and a space.



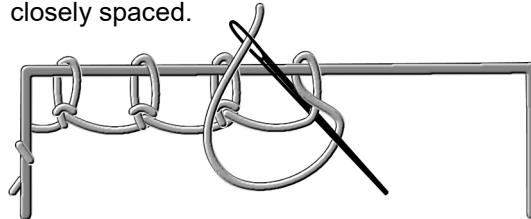
Pea Stitch

Start with a row of closely spaced buttonhole stitches. On row 2 skip two loops, make stitches in the next two. Continue across. On row 3 make 1 stitch into the small loop, and 3 stitches into the long loop. Row 4 make the two stitches into the middle loops of the 3 stitches of row 3.



Knotted Buttonhole Stitch

Make one stitch, followed by a second stitch with thread reversed, and into the loop just made. This is a stable stitch, and can be used spaced out or closely spaced.



Point de Grain is a needlelace stitch made with a spaced forward buttonhole stitch working from left to right followed by three stitches over the loop just made. These three stitches are made in order from left to right. Keep the stitches rather snug to make it look good.

