There are lots of fun hand embroidery supplies available—some are so cool, you’ll want them just to decorate your sewing room! Here’s what you need to start embroidering by hand.

**Hoops** are made of metal, plastic or wood, and come in different sizes and colors. They hold the fabric taut while you sew, ensuring even stitches.

**Embroidery floss** is made up of six loosely twisted strands, and come in a coil called a skein. Experiment with cotton, rayon or silk varieties that have different sheens.

**Embroidery needles**, or crewel needles, have a long eye to accommodate several strands of floss. The smaller the size, the longer the needle. Use a large size for heavyweight fabrics and a small size for lightweight fabrics.

**Embroidery transfers** are paper patterns that are “transferred” to fabric by heat from an iron. Using a transfer is much easier than creating the design from scratch!

**Embroidery scissors** are often between 3 1/2”- to 4 1/2”-long to ensure proper clipping of even the smallest threads.

**Aida fabric**, a cotton fabric with woven threads, is commonly used for cross-stitching. Aida fabric is also available in linen, rayon/cotton blends or polyester/cotton blends, and in different sizes: 11-, 14-, 16- and 18-count (holes per inch). Use any fabric you like for hand embroidery, but make sure the print (if using) won’t compete with your design.

**SOURCES**

Charles Craft provided the Aida and Evenweave fabrics: (910) 844-3521, charlescraft.com.

Coats and Clark provided the Susan Bates HOOP-La embroidery hoops: (800) 648-1479, coatsandclark.com.

Colonial Needle provided the hand embroidery needles: (800) 963-3353, colonialneedle.com.

DMC Creative World provided the embroidery floss, gold tapestry needles, Marbleized Scissors and My Style, My Stitch Transfer Kit: (973) 589-0606, www.dmc-usa.com.

Sublime Stitching provided the iron-on transfers: sublimestitching.com.
Hand Embroidery Stitches by Sharon Boggon

Learn basic hand embroidery stitches to create beautiful hand embroidered items.

**Blanket Stitch:** The blanket stitch is worked from left to right over two imaginary lines. Bring the thread up at 1 and down at 2. Bring the thread up at 3, catching the thread from the first stitch (A). Repeat (B).

**Chain Stitch:** Knot the thread. Bring the thread up from the wrong side at 1. Make a loop to the left, holding the loop with a thumb, insert the needle at 2 and bring it up at 3. Pull the needle and thread through the loop, but not too tightly. Repeat by inserting the needle inside the first loop at 4 and back up at 5. Repeat to create a chain of stitches (C).

**Couching Stitch:** Position the surface thread, trim or floss on the fabric right side. Bring the couching thread up from the fabric wrong side using a large-eyed needle. Take a small straight stitch over the surface thread at 1 and back through the fabric at 2 (D).

**Cross-Stitch:** The cross-stitch is made by two bisecting diagonal stitches. Bring the needle up to the fabric right side at 1 and back through at 2, and then up again at 3 and down again at 4. Repeat (E). Following the opposite direction, bring the needle up through the fabric at 5, and then back down at 6. Repeat (F).

**Fly Stitch:** Also known as the “Y” stitch, or open loop stitch, the fly stitch is a V-shaped loop that's tied down with a vertical straight stitch. Bring the needle up at 1. Hold a bit of floss down with a thumb and insert the needle at 2. Take a small stitch along the center of the V at 3. Pull it through the fabric and secure it in position with a small loop (G).

**French Knot:** Bring the needle up from the fabric wrong side and hold the thread taut with your thumb. Twist the needle around the thread twice. Holding the thread firmly, insert the needle into the fabric a small distance from where the thread emerged (H). Push the knot down the needle shaft, and hold the knot firm against the fabric (I). Pull the floss through to the fabric wrong side.

**Lazy Daisy Stitch:** Bring the needle up from the fabric wrong side at 1 and hold the thread with your thumb (J). Insert the needle back into where it first came out at 2, and then guide the needle back through the fabric a small distance from the center at 3 (K). With the thread wrapped under the needle point, pull the needle through the fabric, fasten the loop with a small stitch. To make a flower, stitch in a circle with each stitch radiating outward to form petals.

**Leaf (Feather) Stitch:** Bring the needle up from the fabric wrong side and hold the thread down with your thumb. Insert the needle a little to the right of the invisible line and take a small stitch in a downward diagonal motion so that the needle point appears on the center line. Keeping the thread under the needle point, pull the thread through the fabric. Make a second stitch in the same manner (L). Insert the needle a little to the left and make a small diagonal stitch so that the needle point comes out on the center line. Keep the thread under the needle point; pull the thread through the fabric to make the stitch (M). Repeat the stitch, alternating from side to side.

**Running Stitch:** Bring the thread up from the wrong side at 1. Insert the needle at 2, up at 3, in at 4 and up at 5. Pull the thread through (N). Keep the stitches about twice as long as the spaces between them. Knot the thread on the wrong side at the end of the last stitch.

**Split Stitch:** Bring the thread up from the fabric wrong side and take a stitch through the fabric. Point the needle backward along the line and stitch through the thread loop of the previous stitch (O).

**Stem Stitch:** Working from the left to right, bring the floss up from the fabric wrong side. Take a straight stitch, leaving the needle on the fabric wrong side. Bring the needle to the fabric right side, slightly to the right of where it first emerged (P).