

Finishing off

Back stitching around a design can help to make it stand out, especially if you have a similarly coloured background to the main feature of the piece. Use a contrasting colour to make a row of stitches around the edge of the design, e.g. if you have a black silhouette, outline it in white. For the best results, do this after all the cross stitches have been completed.

Simply bring the needle from the under side at the right hand bottom hole, and back through on the next left hand hole along. Move to the next left hand hole, and back into the right hand hole and so on, until your design is outlined. You can use either one or two strands of thread for back stitch.

To frame your work, use the glass from your chosen frame as a template to cut your fabric to size. Some people prefer to wash and then “block” their work before framing - this means to gently handwash your work and then gently pull the fabric back out into shape and letting it dry. We, of course, don't do that. Careful handling whilst stitching and a lint roller gently taken over the top of your stitching before framing is perfectly sufficient to ensure a clean and neat finished piece.

If you're using a hoop to display, carefully centre your work over the bottom ring before pushing the top ring over the top of the fabric, tightening the bolt to secure. Trim the fabric underneath or tuck it in and cover the back with fabric, felt or card for a neat finish.

For more information on cross stitch and learning more advanced techniques, or for diagrams and videos, please visit our website at

WWW.THEBELLWETHER.CO.UK

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GUIDE TO MODERN CROSS STITCH

THEBELLWETHER 

Designed and made in the UK

Cross stitch ain't rocket science

It doesn't need to be mind-bendingly complex. It should be enjoyable, relaxing and a pleasure to do.

That's why The Bellwether cross stitch kits are designed to be as simple as possible. We don't adhere to the rules, we bend them to make needlework more accessible.

Our designs are lighthearted and fun and our instructions easy to understand, so pretty soon, you'll be all stitched up. Happy stitching!

Getting started

Find the centre of the fabric by folding it lightly in half and then in half again. Try not to crease the fabric but press lightly so a slight indentation will lead you to roughly the centre point of the fabric.

If you have an embroidery hoop, place the fabric in this now. A hoop is not essential, but it does make it easier to hold and keeps your fabric smooth.

You can either start at the centre of the pattern, as marked by the arrows on the chart, or count the squares and start at an edge - whichever you prefer.

Cut a length of thread roughly 12 inches long and separate it into the number of threads specified on the chart. If this is not specified, then use two strands of thread at a time.

Thread the needle and tie a knot at the end if you wish. Many guides tell you to never tie knots in your thread and to weave the thread into the back of your stitches instead, but this is the Bellwether guide! We want to teach you the easiest way to achieve results, not dictate to you on perfect skills. Our website has information on expanding your skills once you're up and running.

Start Stitching

Once you've chosen where you're starting, take your threaded needle to the underside of the fabric and locate the left hand bottom corner of the square you are starting with. Draw the thread through the hole slowly, taking care to keep the thread running smoothly to ensure it does not knot or get snarled up.

Don't pull too hard or the thread will come all the way through. (This is where that illicit knot comes in handy.) Once the thread has been drawn through, insert the needle into the top right hand corner of the same square from the top side of the fabric and pull the thread through.

Now repeat this to form the second leg of the cross - from the under side, insert the needle into the top left hand corner of the same square and pull the thread through, with the cross being completed by entering the bottom right hand corner from the top side.

You've done your first cross! Easy, wasn't it? Carry the thread on the under side on to start your next cross. You can also carry the thread over several rows on the underside of the fabric, or when you come to the end of your thread or design, complete the cross you're stitching and weave the end of the thread in and out of the back of your stitches a few times, being careful not to sew through to the top side and ruin your beautiful stitches. Snip the end of the thread and you're done.

Continue with the rest of the pattern and once you're finished, fish your iron out from the back of the cupboard and fire it up to a medium setting. Yes, we're going to iron it - well, you don't want your hard work to look creased, do you?

It's safest to place a clean cotton tea towel over your stitching to iron it - this stops your stitches being flattened and minimises the risk of scorching the fabric or thread. A light press will ensure the fabric gets straightened out and a blast of steam will stiffen it slightly, making it easier to cut to size if you're framing it.