



Knot the thread

Introduction

If you spend time and effort to sew, the last thing you need to happen is for the thread to unravel and leaving a hole in your work. It is therefore particularly important to make sure that the thread will not come loose where we start to sew, and where we stop. If you make a knot at each end, the stitches will hold.

How are you going to do that?

Today we are going to introduce in new tool to keep in our treasure box. An embroidery-hoop. This hoop stretches fabric taut, so that you can hold it easily and your stitches are even and straight. It also helps that your work does not bunch up. You are going to thread a needle, tie the thread with a sliding knot and learn to make a quilter's knot at the end of the thread. Then you are going stretch a piece of fabric in your embroidery hoop and to appliqué a heart. When the applique is finished, you are going to end of with a French knot. Does it all sound difficult? Not at all. Let's go!

What do you need?

A place to work

For today's project you will need a space where you can work without interruption for at least one hour.

- Table.
- Chair, high enough for you to sit on and work comfortably at the table.
- Enough light to see what you are doing.
- A waste-paper bin for off cuts.

Tools

You will need the following tools:

- Your toolbox with sewing tools
- An appliqué glue stick or other school glue (such as Pritt)
- Needle – Embroidery size 8
- A small embroidery hoop, no bigger than 15cm in diameter.
- Thimble
- A pencil



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Materials

You will need the following materials:

- A piece of calico or light-coloured cotton fabric: 20cm x 20cm. This is the background or base fabric.
- A small piece of off bright coloured felt 10cm x 10cm
- Double strand embroidery thread in a contrasting colour.
- A piece of scrap paper or a page from an old magazine
- Masking tape

Do something fun

Make a quilter's knot

When you see someone making a quilters knot for the first time, it looks like magic, when at completion, a neat little knot appears at the end of the thread.

This is how it is done:

1. Thread your needle with a single strand of embroidery floss or thread and attach it to the needle with a sliding knot to keep the floss in the needle. (Like you did in Lesson 2.)
2. Now to make the knot. Hold the needle in your right hand (dominant hand) between thumb and forefinger with the point sticking out like a sword.



3. Take the end of the thread in your left hand in a similar manner so that you can have a sword fight between the thread and the needle. During the sword fight the sword captures the thread and the thread is laid in form of a cross over the needle with the thumb keeping the thread in place there.

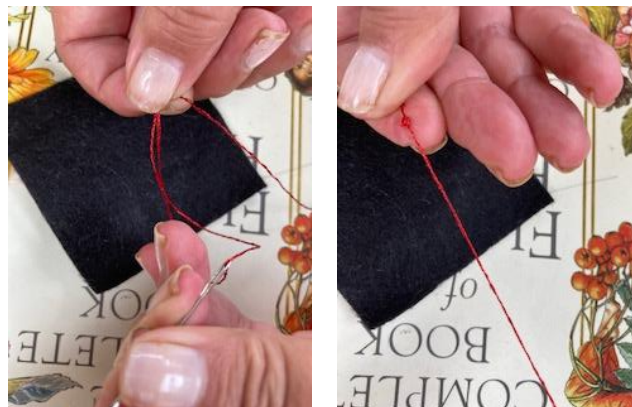
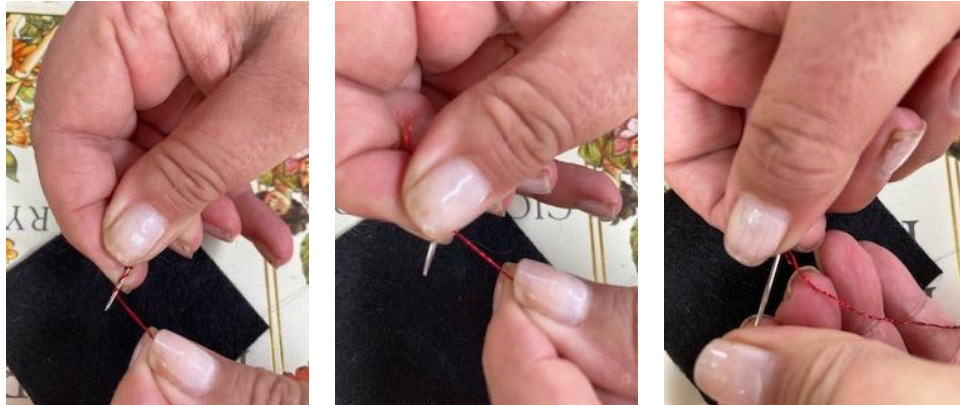
Dictionary

*Time to learn a new word. You are going to **appliqué** – The word **appliqué** is of French origin and means: ornamental needlework in which pieces of fabric are sewn or stuck onto a large piece of fabric to form pictures or patterns.*





4. Holding on to the needle and thread with your right hand, circle the tail of the floss sticking out of the bottom of the needle, three times around the needle and shift your thumb to hold tight to the coils around the needle. Carefully pull the needle through your fingers with your left hand, without letting go of the coils.



5. If all goes well, you will be left with a neat, flat knot at the end of the floss. Practice this a couple of times. It will become second nature to you when sewing. Well done!
6. Remember to keep your needle in the needle book or pincushion. You are going to need it shortly.



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Now to play with the new toy in your toolbox – the embroidery hoop.

Embroidery hoops have been used for many hundreds of years. Embroidery hoops are normally not expensive and come in various sizes. Hoops are made of wood, bamboo, plastic, metal, or a combination thereof. The inside ring is round and sturdy. The outside ring is flexible with a little mechanism that includes a screw to tighten it once the fabric is loaded. Some of the more modern hoops work with spring mechanisms. Today you are going to work with a small embroidery hoop around 15cm in diameter.



A little trick I have learned and have done is to wrap masking tape around the inner ring of the hoop, taking care that no stickiness is on the outside. This helps to grip the fabric firmer so that you can get and keep the fabric as taut as a drum. This in turn makes it easy to stitch on and keeps everything flat.

To position the fabric, fold the fabric twice over, to mark the centre of the base fabric. Take the two rings apart and place the inner ring down on the table. Lay the base fabric over the inner ring. Make sure that the fabric covers the inner ring evenly, with the centre of the fabric roughly in the centre of the hoop.



Position the outer ring so that the screw part is positioned at about 10 to if it was a clock. Now gently push the outer ring over the inner ring to trap the fabric in between. Tighten the screw on the outside ring to keep it in position. Look at the woven threads. Are they straight? If not, try again. If they are crooked your finished project is going to pull a face at you once you are finished. Is the fabric tautly over the rings? The fabric must sound like a drum. Cool! Now you also know how a drum is made!



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The appliqué

Take a piece of paper, 10cm x 10cm. Fold it in half. Draw on it, half a heart. Make sure to use as much of the space on the paper to make a nice fat heart. Cut it out through both layers with your paper scissors. Fold open and measure on the fabric in the embroidery ring. Does it sit nicely in the centre without hanging over the side, or is it so small that it is overwhelmed by the white fabric around? A heart that sits in the middle of the embroidery frame with a bit of space around it, is perfect.

Before cutting the fabric, find the centre like you marked the centre of the fabric that is in the embroidery hoop. This will help you to place the heart easier.

Once you are satisfied with the size of the heart, you can now fold the 10 x 10 piece of contrasting felt in two, fold the paper pattern back in two and draw the pattern onto the wrong side of the felt. Cut out the felt heart exactly on the line, using your fabric scissors.

Traditionally, the heart will be pinned to the bottom fabric, but for simplicity's sake, we are going to glue the heart in place with appliqué glue stick or school glue. On the wrong side of the fabric heart, put a small dab of glue in the middle, now take a pin and pin through the centre of the heart, and then through the centre of the fabric on the ring. Press down to keep the heart in place. Take out the pin and put it back into the pincushion or tin.



Stitch down the appliqué

Your base fabric is stretched over the embroidery hoop, the heart is glue basted to the base fabric, and your needle is threaded with a quilters knot at the end of the thread, right?



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Hold your embroidery hoop up to the light. Can you see the shape of the heart against the light? Measure about $\frac{1}{2}$ cm from the bottom of the heart. You may mark the spot with a pencil. This is where you are going to start, from the underside of the fabric. Push the needle half-way through the fabric and bring your hand to the top of the hoop to pull it through completely on the front. Hold the hoop with your left hand. Don't jerk the last piece of thread because you may pull the knot through and then you'll have a hole in the fabric. Gently.



Different stitches can be used when doing appliqué which holds the fabrics together and appliqué them down. We will use **a Running stitch**. Now to stitch the heart onto the backing fabric, put the needle in and out (this is known as a running stitch). Put the needle into the back, pull the thread gently and pull the needle back up through the base fabric, up to the top of the hoop. Keep your stitches an even space apart. Make neat stitches all around the heart about $\frac{1}{2}$ cm from the edge.

At the end – the French knot

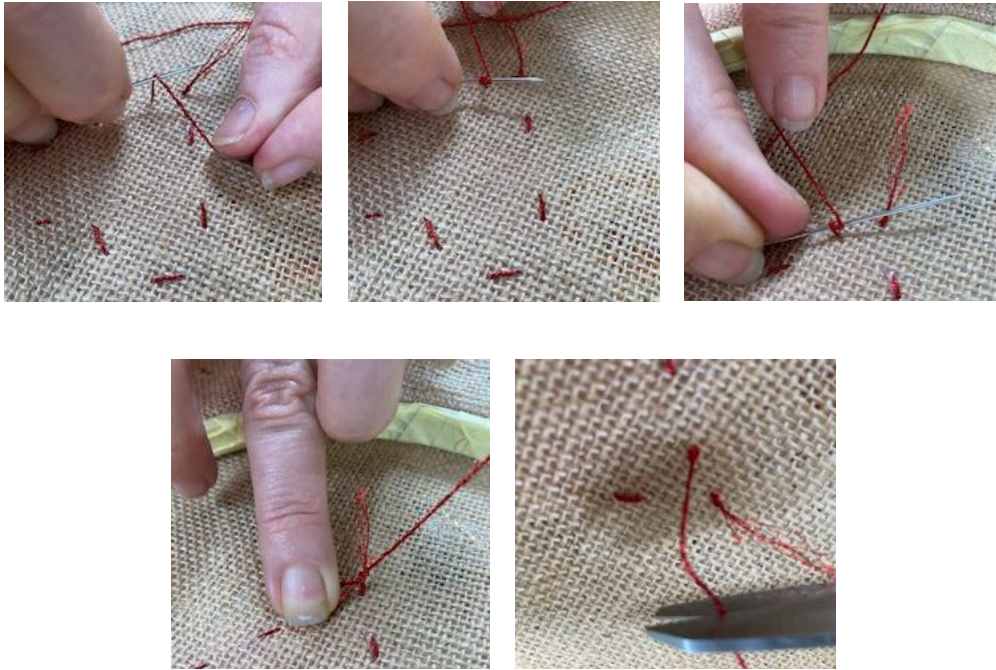
We are going to end off the stitches with a French knot. That sounds fancy, doesn't it? Yes indeed. This is also an essential skill and one that you can practice often until it becomes second nature. The function of the knot is to make sure that the thread is secure when you end your stitching. French knots are normally used as embroidery stitches - a decoration stitch. When you look at embroidered cloth or work, you will see that they are used to make little dots, also called bullion knots.

You have now stitched all around your heart and is back to the tip. Make sure the needle and thread is on the underside of your work. Turn the hoop over to the wrong side. Hold the needle with your right hand, close to where it came through the fabric, and with your left hand, wind the thread around the needle three times.



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Don't bring the needle right to the front, hold the coils of thread on the needle with your right hand as close to the fabric as possible and pull the needle and thread through with your left hand. A knot is formed. Magic? You may now carefully snip off the thread, leaving around a 1cm tail.

Carefully loosen the screw on the embroidery hoop and take out your picture. WOW! Can you believe you did it yourself? Well done!

Clean up time!

Remember to pin all your needles into a piece of felt and put all your quilting tools back into the treasure box. Be sure to drop pieces of thread and other offcuts direct into the waste-paper bin. Leave your workspace as neat as you found it. You can be proud of yourself today!

Show and tell

You can ask your parents to help you frame this heart to put on your wall or mount it in a card for Grandma. Ask for help to post one or more pictures of your appliqué heart to the #saqqc4y WhatsApp group.

What's next?

How to Pin – We are going to make a beautiful Christmas decoration with pins.

Did I miss something?

Keep a look out on the #saqqc4y WhatsApp group and on the SAQG website at <https://www.quiltsouthafrica.co.za/> for more cool stuff or projects that you missed.

- What do I need to quilt?
- How to thread a needle



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