The Resourceful Stitcher

Look, as thorough as this book is, I’d be lying if I said I had taught you everything there is to know about stitching in one measly tome. To make up for any failings on my part, I’ve included this nifty appendix of resources. In these pages you’ll find pointers to various books, magazines, Web sites, and the like that will instruct and/or inspire.

Books

Half of me wants to persuade you that my book is the only book you’ll ever need. The other half of me knows that the first half is totally full of it. Per my better half, here are some books, not written by me, that I heartily recommend:

♦ *The Embroidery Stitch Bible* by Betty Barnden  Seriously, it’s not just because “B,” for Barnden, is so early in the alphabet that this book is listed first. With great photographs and easy-to-follow charts and instructions, it demonstrates the creation of more than 200 cross-stitch, embroidery, and needlepoint stitches. If you’re looking to take your stitching beyond what you’ve learned here, this is unequivocally the book for you. (Sorry, no *Embroidery Stitch Talmud* or *Embroidery Stitch Koran* as yet.)

♦ *Embroidery: Techniques & Patterns* by Marie-Noelle Bayard  In addition to covering basic how-to stuff and stepping the reader through more than 100 stitches, this book has 20-plus excellent projects ranging from jeweled buttons to an advent calendar. *Charmant.*
♦ **Rosey Grier’s Needlepoint for Men** by Roosevelt “Rosey” Grier  Honestly. Need I say more?

♦ **Color on Color: Elegant Designs to Stitch** by Janet Haigh  If you’re looking to inject pizzazz into your wardrobe and décor, this is the book for you. In it, you’ll find instructions for 12 nifty projects that range from stitching a floral motif on a pair of espadrilles to working a bull’s-eye pillow.

♦ **Stitch-It Kit** by Jenny Hart  The sublime Miss Jenny Hart, founder of Sublime Stitching and contributor to this book (see the project “Coffee, Tea, or Me,” in chapter 7), has published her own embroidery how-to. In addition to featuring an illustrated instructional booklet, Hart’s *Stitch-It Kit* also includes an embroidery needle, two blank tea towels, an embroidery hoop, 7 skeins of floss, and 35 reusable iron-on patterns that range in subject matter from hula girls to French poodles.

♦ **Sublime Stitching: Hundreds of Hip Embroidery Patterns and How-To** by Jenny Hart  Hart published this title to expand the offerings of her *Stitch-It Kit*. Here you’ll find instructions and tips, as well as a boatload of excellent ready-to-use iron-on patterns that you can use—and re-use—to create all sorts of stylish stuff.

♦ **Subversive Cross Stitch** by Julie Jackson  Home Sweet Home, meet This Place Sucks. If you’ve had it up to here with saccharine cross-stitch designs, this snarky little book chock-full of pithy—and pissy—cross-stitched sayings is for you. Jackson even provides tips on creating one-of-a-kind designs to express your own subversive sentiments.

♦ **Embroidery to Embellish Everything: 30 New Hand-Stitched Designs** by Sharon and Kristin Jankowicz  This mother-daughter team has ganged up on hapless crafters everywhere to offer step-by-step instructions and full-sized patterns for all sorts of nifty quick and easy designs. Also offered: a “Basics” section that covers various types of stitches, as well as tips and tricks for embroidering on various types of materials.

♦ **Say It With Stitches: New Embroidery Designs for Letters and Words** by Sharon and Kristin Jankowicz  If you’re tired of fussy fonts, this book is for you. Also by the mother-daughter Jankowicz team, it features contemporary letter designs that are just the ticket for expressing yourself and embellishing your stuff.

♦ **Ulysses** by James Joyce  I’m totally kidding. I just wanted to see if you were paying attention.

♦ **Designer Bead Embroidery: 150 Patterns and Complete Techniques** by Kenneth D. King  Hooked on beads? If so, check out *Designer Bead Embroidery*. It features 150 designs for beaded borders, backgrounds, and more—perfect for pimping bridal fashions and evening wear on the cheap.

♦ **Donna Kooler’s Encyclopedia of Needlework** by Donna Kooler  This comprehensive tome features how-to info and patterns for embroidery, cross stitch, and needlepoint. Of particular use: The in-depth discussion of the necessary tools for needlework. The stitch guides found in each section are also enormously helpful.
§ *Colorful Stitchery: 65 Hot Embroidery Projects to Personalize Your Home* by Kristin Nicholas  Pillow covers, tea cozies, napkins, tablecloths, hot water–bottle covers—by the looks of the projects in this book, you have to think Nicholas would stitch on a Formica counter if she could. Deriving inspiration from gardens, architecture, ethnic and vintage textiles, even postcards, Nicholas, who, in addition to being a seasoned stitcher is a star knitter, shows readers how to punch up their pads with stitching.

§ *Kids’ Embroidery: Projects for Kids of All Ages* by Kristin Nicholas  So, okay, no offence or anything, but if you’re having trouble getting the hang of this stitching thing, or if you’re just, like, rully immature, you might want to check out this how-to for the kiddie set. *Kids’ Embroidery* steps you through needlepoint, cross-stitch, and embroidery basics, with bright, hand-painted illustrations to supplement the text. Completing 15 fun projects, ranging from bags to lampshades, will help you master each technique.

§ *Needleworker’s Companion* by Shay Pendray  If the logistics of needlework trip you up—i.e., figuring out what size needle you need, what type of canvas to use, etc.—you’ll appreciate this handy reference guide, written by the host of the PBS television program *Needle Arts Studio with Shay Pendray*.

§ *The New Crewel: Exquisite Designs in Contemporary Embroidery* by Katherine Shaughnessy  If you’ve always wanted to stitch a triptych, this book is for you; you’ll find instructions for one among the dozen lovely projects. (Others include a colorful tote and a table runner.) It also features basic how-to info about stitching with crewel wool, with 30 practice designs to help you perfect various stitch techniques.

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**Print Magazines**

If you’re looking for a steady stream of technique tutorials and project ideas, needlework magazines are the way to go. Unfortunately, the audience for most stitching-related magazines appears to be the helmet-hair set—read: not you. To protect you from the horrors associated with excessively sentimental, painfully precious, terribly treacly, outright vomit-inducing designs, we have waded through dozens of needlecrafts publications; following are some that are mostly acceptable:

§ *Creative Needle Magazine*  If you’re serious about your stitching, you’ll find some challenging projects here; they generally involve stitching heirloom clothing, especially for wee drooling types, as well as gifts and home décor items.

§ *Cross Stitch & Needlework*  Geared toward novice and experienced stitchers alike, this magazine includes techniques and projects primarily for cross stitch and needlepoint, but does dip into felting, ribbon embroidery, punch needle, Hardanger, and beyond.

§ *The Cross Stitcher*  The 20+ designs in each issue of *The Cross Stitcher* feature specially enlarged, easy-to-read charts suitable for all stitching abilities; stitch demonstrations, and how-tos for finishing your projects.
♦ **Embroidery** If you’re passionate about stitching, *Embroidery*, which is published by the UK Embroiderers’ Guild and features articles about internationally renowned textile artists, ethnographic embroidery, important private collections, and the history of the craft, is essential.

♦ **Embroidery & Cross Stitch** This Aussie rag provides charts, diagrams, and full-size design outlines for both traditional and contemporary cross-stitch and embroidery projects.

♦ **Inspirations** Yet another publication from down under, *Inspirations* features projects by needlework designers from around the globe. Although many of these projects look complicated, the magazine’s clear directions and diagrams mean that even the most clueless stitcher can succeed. For full-sized patterns, see the magazine’s centerfold. (Turn-ons: Puppies, walks on the beach, waffles; Turn-offs: Clouds, insensitive people.)

♦ **Just Cross Stitch** I guess it goes without saying that this publication is for the cross-stitch set. Here you’ll find articles about cross-stitch shops around the country, as well as graphs and instructions for projects along with photos of finished pieces. Step-by-step directions for adapting your cross-stitched pieces into pillows, bags, and more are included.

♦ **needlepoint now** Dedicated solely to needlepoint, *needlepoint now* offers educational features, profiles on needlepoint personalities, tutorials, and listings of current needlepoint-related events.

♦ **Needle Pointers** The official publication of the American Needlepoint Guild (ANG), *Needle Pointers* keeps readers up to date about local and national events, reviews needlepoint-related books and videos, and includes educational articles and projects with charted designs. To subscribe, join the ANG (www.needlepoint.org).

♦ **Piecework** In addition to supplying needlecrafters with projects, this crossover publication also covers quilting, knitting, crocheting, basketry, beadwork, lacemaking, and more—plus the stories and ethnic traditions behind each craft.

♦ **Stitch** Another magazine published by the UK Embroiderers’ Guild, *Stitch* features instructions for mastering needlework techniques from around the world, projects, and articles about historical and contemporary needlework.

Of course, in addition to these needlecrafts-centric publications, there are those that cover crafting in general—including, on occasion, stitching. My favorite? *Adorn*. It’s geared toward hipsters like you.
Online Resources

God only knows what people did before the Internet. Life without eBay, without online shopping of any kind—I just can’t think about it. In this section, I’ll show you how you can harness the power of the Internet to feed your stitching addiction. These sites are a) related to needlework and b) cool. Some sell supplies, while others feature instructional material. Still others provide a community for crafters, including us stitching types.

♦ **Alita Designs** ([www.alitadesigns.com](http://www.alitadesigns.com)) For free needlework designs, visit this site. You’ll find charts for animals, flowers, marine life, and more.

♦ **Charles Craft** ([www.charlescraft.com](http://www.charlescraft.com)) Click the Cross Stitch & Craft link to peruse the Charles Craft collection of stitching supplies, including the hand towels used in the project “Wash Your Damn Hands!” Also available: the tea towels needed for “Coffee, Tea, or Me?”—here, called “flour cloth towels.”

♦ **Craftster.org** ([www.craftster.org](http://www.craftster.org)) This site describes itself as “a forum for people who like to make things but who are not inspired by cross-stitched home sweet home plaques.” If that doesn’t convince you to visit, the site’s tag line will: “No tea cozies without irony.” Trust me: These are your peeps.

♦ **DMC** ([www.dmc-usa.com](http://www.dmc-usa.com)) The online home of the ubiquitous DMC thread, this site offers embroidery and cross-stitch tutorials, free designs, and reference tools such as color-conversion charts.

♦ **Etsy** ([www.etsy.com](http://www.etsy.com)) Visit Etsy to buy, sell, or just be inspired by crafts of all types, including cross stitch, embroidery, and needlepoint.

♦ **GetCrafty** ([www.getcrafty.com](http://www.getcrafty.com)) Find craft-related forums, blogs, projects, and inspiration among the “craftistas” at GetCrafty, a site devoted to making home-ec hip.

♦ **Herrschners** ([www.herrschners.com](http://www.herrschners.com)) This online outlet offers tons of craft supplies, including an excellent selection of needlework goodies.

♦ **Long Dog Samplers** ([http://perso.orange.fr/longdog](http://perso.orange.fr/longdog)) Look, I won’t lie to you: I’m generally not a huge fan of the sampler. But dude, these ones are absolutely gorgeous.

♦ **M&J Trimming** ([www.mjtrim.com](http://www.mjtrim.com)) Okay, so it’s not technically a needlecraft-centric online storefront. You’ll also find purse handles, ribbons, fabric, trim, rhinestones, belt buckles, and more—but all of these can come in handy when it comes time to turn your piece into a purse or belt embellished with ribbons and rhinestones.

♦ **MSCanvasHouse.com** ([http://mscanvashouse.com](http://mscanvashouse.com)) Oh. My. God. This site has some most excellent painted canvases and needlepoint kits (think purses, picture frames, belts, even shoes). My favorite: the beer logos belt canvas.

♦ **Needlecrafter.com** ([www.needlecrafter.com](http://www.needlecrafter.com)) This site features a stitch library, message board, projects, and, best of all, free vintage embroidery patterns. (Did I mention the free vintage patterns?)
The Silk Mill (www.thesilkmill.com)  The Silk Mill sells drool-inducing needlepoint kits, each one including a color chart and a picture of the finished piece, printed canvas, silk thread and two gold needles. My favorites: designs based on Dutch tile. Too bad so sad: Prices are in British pounds, which sucks for Yanks for the time being.

Sublime Stitching (www.sublimestitching.com)  Widely credited for banishing bonneted geese from needlecrafts design, the abovementioned Miss Jenny Hart’s Sublime Stitching line of cheeky embroidery patterns are available here.

Subversive Cross Stitch (www.subversivecrossstitch.com)  The first time I saw a pattern by Julie Jackson, purveyor of the wonderfully snarky Subversive Cross Stitch pattern line, at an Urban Outfitters in New York, I nearly peed my pants. Luckily, you can browse them on this site from the comfort of your own home, which, presumably, has a readily available bathroom.

Tinsel Trading Company (www.tinseltrading.com)  Martha Stewart calls Tinsel Trading Company’s brick-and-mortar outlet, which, like its online store, sells the trim, buttons, buckles, cord, ribbons, and such you’ll need to turn your needlework pieces into fabulous objets d’art, “her favorite store in all of the world.” ‘Nuff said.

Brick-and-Mortar Needlework Shops

Rather than list the 34-gazillion needlework shops that dot the Earth, I figured I’d save some trees by citing a Web site that you can use to quickly and easily locate a shop in your area: www.stitching.com. Click the Retailers link to search for one near you.

Needlecraft Organizations

It’s inevitable: You’ll get hooked on stitching—which means you’ll certainly want to hook up with others who share your weakness. (Hello, not that kind of hooking up. Or, well, maybe. I mean, I guess.) These national needlecraft organizations, most of which have local chapters, are just the ticket:

The American Needlepoint Guild (www.needlepoint.org)  The American Needlepoint Guild, ANG for short, is an educational, nonprofit organization that welcomes all needlepoint enthusiasts, be they amateur or professional, novice or experienced. The only requirement? A love of needlepoint and $33 per year.

The Embroiderers’ Association of Canada (http://eac.ca)  If, like me, you’re one election away from chucking it all and moving to Canada, you’ll be glad to know that the Embroiderers’ Association of Canada, EAC for short, provides fellowship for needlework enthusiasts in the North.
♦ **The Embroiderers’ Guild of America (www.egausa.org)** All embroiderers, regardless of skill level, should consider joining the Embroiderers’ Guild of America (EGA), a national, nonprofit educational organization that promotes the study and preservation of the heritage and art of embroidery. Members can attend meetings, workshops, lectures, and stitch-ins at their local chapters or connect with fellow stitchers on a national level.

♦ **The National Academy of Needlearts (www.needleart.org)** This organization devotes itself to the advancement of embroidery not just as a craft, but as an art form. Focused on education, NAN offers certification for needlework teachers and judges, as well as instruction for artists, designers, and enthusiasts.