

# Felting

Felt making is an ancient craft, perhaps the first way that fabric was made. The process of felting causes fibers to intertwine and hold together in a bonded, random order. Once fibers are felted, the process is not reversible.

Most animal fibers that have overlapping scales can be felted. The most commonly used fiber is wool from sheep. Fibers differ greatly in how they felt, even fibers from different animals of the same species.

## Methods

There are basically three methods of causing fibers to felt or hold together.

**Wet felting** needs only water, wool, and your hands, but it often includes soap and some simple tools to help the process. Fibers also can be felted by agitating them with water and soap in the washing machine.

**Dry felting** or **needle felting** uses long, barbed needles to push the fibers together and cause them to interlock. The needles can vary in diameter, shape, and the depth of the barb. Wet and dry felting can be used on the same project.

**Fulling** is the process of felting an item that was first created by loose knitting, crocheting, or weaving. Fulling usually is done by the wet method either by hand or in a washing machine.

## Skill building and project ideas

It is best to start with small, simple designs so members can experience the technique and complete several small projects. That way, they can receive feedback sooner and evaluate their work to see where they might improve.

### Members

Develop your felting skills by trying more techniques, larger or more advanced projects, and individual creative design. More advanced projects increase in size, complexity, and number of parts.

Projects can be either wearable or decorative items. Possibilities include beads and buttons, inserts for cards, and cut shapes for ornaments or embellishment. Flat pieces could be left flat for wall hangings or sewn into simple bags or pillows.

A progression of projects from simple to more difficult in wet felting might be: rope making, beads and balls, flat pieces with or without surface designs, flat pieces which can be sewn together to make items, flat pieces shaped to become three-dimensional, vessels, seamless wearable items.

Dry felting projects might be divided into flat work or sculptures. The more intricate or involved the design, the greater the difficulty of the project.

Members might need to learn weaving, knitting, and/or crocheting to produce items for fulling. They might be interested in learning to dye the fibers they choose. There are many dyeing methods. This leads to an understanding of color and color theory.

### Members

Use the 4-H *Fiber Arts Exhibit Explanation Card* (see “Resources for felting”) to describe the techniques you have used, skills you have improved, and new things you have learned.

## Standards for evaluating

**The goal is for members to develop an understanding of what makes good-quality work.**

The goal is for members to develop an understanding of what makes good-quality work. Members learn to evaluate their felting projects for the following characteristics.

- Firmly felted. Fibers do not change position when pressed or pulled upon; the intended shape is maintained.
- Evenly felted. There are no thin or thick areas unless they are intended for the design.
- Materials and structure are suitable for the intended use of the project.
- Wearable items fit as intended.
- Basic elements and principles of design are pleasing.

## Resources for felting

You might find many of these books in local libraries or for sale in bookstores.

*Fundamentals of Felting* by Patricia Spark, 1989, Unicorn Press (ISBN 0-916658-48-1).

Basic felting including choosing and processing fiber, flat and three-dimensional techniques, finishing the felt, and methods for creative design. There is a source directory for supplies and additional resources.

*Needle Felting* by Anne Einset Vickrey, 2002, Craft Works Publishing (ISBN 0-9619053-2-8).

Techniques, equipment and materials, and instructions for various projects including flat and sculpted items; a source

directory for supplies; and additional resources.

*Scandinavian-Style Felting* by Patricia Spark, 1992, Unicorn Press (ISBN 0-916658-50-3).

A more advanced book on the regional Scandinavian felting methods of making three-dimensional objects held together with felted rather than sewn seams. Includes materials and equipment, projects of increasing difficulty, and resources.

*The Art of Felting* by Anne Einset Vickrey, 1997, Watson-Guptill Publications (ISBN 0-8230-0262-4).

History, wet method materials and tools, and instructions for various projects including simple ropes, beads, rope and bead figures, flat felt and surface designs, felt balls, masks, vessels, seamless wearables, and puppets. There are pictures of the steps, lots of finished products that might appeal to youth, and a source directory for supplies.

*The Weekend Crafter: Felting* by Chad Alice Hagen, 2002, Lark Books (ISBN 1-57990-252-9).

History, wet method materials and tools, and instructions for various projects built on balls, ropes, and flat felted pieces. There are instructions for lots of decorative and wearable items that might appeal to youth.

## Oregon 4-H publications

*Fiber Arts Exhibit Explanation Card*—available on the Oregon 4-H website under “Expressive Arts Materials” <http://oregon.4h.oregonstate.edu/resources/materials.html>

# Macramé and Knotting

Macramé is the art of ornamental knotting. It originated as a decorative way to finish a woven fabric and became a technique for creating entire items or garments. Tatting also is based on knotting and forms a type of lace or decorative motif.

## Methods

There are many different **macramé** knots and techniques to choose. More intricate pieces are a combination of different knots. Macramé usually is worked on a flat surface called a **knotting board**. The board supports the work, and pins hold the work in place. A grid on the surface can help keep the cords and knots spaced evenly. An alternate method is to secure cords to a support (cord, dowel, ring, or belt buckle held firmly in place) so they can be tied under tension.

Knot-tying materials vary in type of fiber, both natural and synthetic, and diameter of the cord, thread, or rope. Use material that is strong enough to withstand the abrasion of repeated knotting and does not have too much give or elasticity.

**Tatting** uses one knot called a **double stitch**, worked in groups over a single thread. A tatting shuttle carries the thread and helps form the knots. Tatting also can be done using a long needle of even diameter with a blunt tip at one end and an eye for the thread at the other. The needle size must be matched to the thread being used. The knots are worked over the needle and then transferred to the thread. Tatting usually is worked with fine, smooth cotton thread so it forms a strong but delicate looking lace.

## Skill building

For macramé, it is best to start with small items using materials that are pliable, uniform, and of a size appropriate to the item but not too fine. The smaller the diameter of the materials, the harder it is to see the knot being formed, and more knots

might be needed. Members can build their skill by trying larger projects using more complicated knots.

Start tatting with small, basic motifs. Needle tatting is easier than shuttle tatting. Patterns and books often show basic, intermediate, and advanced skills.

### Members

Use the 4-H *Fiber Arts Exhibit Explanation Card* (see “Resources for macramé and knotting”) to describe the techniques you have used, skills you have improved, and new things you have learned.

## Project ideas

For macramé, members can try coasters, belts, placemats, animal leads or leashes, napkin rings, key chains, hatbands, jewelry, and purses or bags.

For tatting, good starting projects are small motifs to decorate note cards or simple lace edgings to attach to another item.

As their skill grows, members can make larger, more intricate items, work with more than one color, or add beads with either type of knotting.

## Standards for evaluating

The goal is for members to develop an understanding of what makes good-quality work. Members learn to evaluate their macramé and tatting projects for the following characteristics.

- Knots are tied correctly.
- Spacing of knots follows the intended pattern.
- Cords or threads are added inconspicuously.
- Ends are finished securely.
- Basic elements and principles of design are pleasing.

### 4-H Project Leader

The goal is for members to develop an understanding of what makes good-quality work.

## Resources for macramé and knotting

You might find many of these books in local libraries or for sale in bookstores.

*Friendship Bands* by Marlies Busch, Nadja Layer, Angelika Neeb, and Elisabeth Walch, 1997, Sterling Publishing Co. (ISBN 0-8069-0309-0).

Instructions for making bands using braiding, weaving, and knotting techniques.

*Friendship Bracelets* by Camilla Gryski, 1993, William Morrow & Co. (ISBN 0-688-12437-2).

Instructions for making friendship bracelets using knotting techniques.

*Friendship Bracelets* by Veronique Follet, 1995, Search Press (ISBN 0 85532 803 7). More friendship bracelets using knotting techniques; some are more advanced.

*Learn Needle Tatting Step by Step* by Barbara Foster, 1998, Handy Hands, Inc. (ISBN 1-883432-05-7).

Photos and text describe basic steps of needle tatting, including instructions for left-handed tatters. Some simple projects are included.

*Reader's Digest Complete Guide to Needlework*, Virginia Colton, editor, 1979, Reader's Digest Association (ISBN 0-89577-059-8).

Includes information on both macramé and tatting.

*The Complete Book of Tatting* by Rebecca Jones, 1985, LACIS Berkeley (ISBN 0-916896-39-0).

Complete instructions for getting started and suggestions for projects.

*The Weekend Crafter: Macramé* by Jim Gentry, 2002, Lark Books (ISBN 1-57990-280-4).

Photos and instructions for many small projects that might appeal to youth.

### Oregon 4-H publications

*Fiber Arts Exhibit Explanation Card*—available on the Oregon 4-H website under “Expressive Arts Materials” <http://oregon.4h.oregonstate.edu/resources/materials.html>

### Websites

<http://www.handyhandstatting.com>

Handy Hands Tatting website.

A comprehensive, informative site for patterns, books, and supplies. Includes basic online instruction with photos.

# Braiding

Braiding intertwines multiple strands of fiber to form ropes, cords, or other shapes such as lace. It is somewhat like weaving, except that braiding does not use separate warp and weft fibers.

## Methods

**Three-strand braiding** is probably the most common form. It is done using three strands of fiber and, while keeping tension on the strands, alternately crossing the left strand and then the right strand over center. This makes a flat, pliable braid that can be laced into round and oval shapes. Alterations in the sequence produce rounded or square corners on a flat piece. Three-strand braiding commonly is used for floor rugs, but you also can make things like coasters, placemats, or ropes (see “Project ideas”).

As more strands are added (4, 5, 6, or 7 strands), the braid becomes wider and less flexible. You can give braids a different appearance by varying the braiding pattern.

**Bobbin lace** is a form of braiding using very fine materials. Bobbin lace uses a support surface, called a **lace pillow**, and an actual-size pattern, called a **pricking**. Pins hold the work in place, and the thread is carried on lace bobbins. The bobbins act as handles to move the thread and weights to keep tension on the thread. A wide range of styles can be created, from geometric to complex floral or pictorial designs.

**Japanese braiding (Kumihimo)** is the art of cord-making using braiding. Traditional Japanese braids are made using a stand to support the strands. The ends of the strands are wound around weighted bobbins.

**Wheat weaving** is an ancient craft found in almost every culture that raises grains for food. It was originally a way to please the gods and save seed for the next year’s planting. Today, wheat weaving has grown to include some very large and intricate designs. Although it is called weaving, the technique is primarily braiding. Stalks of wheat are soaked in water to become pliable enough to bend without breaking.

## Skill building

It is easier to make smaller projects working with fewer strands of fiber. Three-strand braiding is much easier than 4-, 5-, 6-, or 7-strand braiding. Materials that are consistently pliable and hold the braid without slipping are the easiest to use. As members progress from basic skills, they can learn to design their own items.

### Members

Use the 4-H *Fiber Arts Exhibit Explanation Card* (see “Resources for braiding”) to describe the techniques you have used, skills you have improved, and new things you have learned.

## Project ideas

Start with small items so members can experience the technique and complete several small projects. That way, they can receive feedback sooner and evaluate their work to see where they might improve.

Fabric braiding commonly is used to make rugs. Using various other fibers, members can make belts, bracelets or necklaces, key chains, zipper pulls, coasters, mats, ropes, and animal leads or tack. As members expand their skills, projects become larger or more intricate. Design, perhaps especially related to color or pattern, is something members can develop to express their individual creativity.

## Standards for evaluating

**The goal is for members to develop an understanding of what makes good-quality work.**

The goal is for members to develop an understanding of what makes good-quality work. Members learn to evaluate their braiding projects for the following characteristics.

- Even tension is applied to the strands.
- The pattern is maintained correctly.
- New materials are added inconspicuously.
- The final project has the desired shape.
- Ends are finished appropriately.
- Materials are appropriate for the intended use.
- Basic elements and principles of design are pleasing.

## Resources for braiding

You might find many of these books in local libraries or for sale in bookstores.

*Friendship Bands* by Marlies Busch, Nadja Layer, Angelika Neeb, and Elisabeth Walch, 1997, Sterling Publishing Co. (ISBN 0-8069-0309-0).

Instructions for making bands using braiding, weaving, and knotting techniques; short, simple projects using inexpensive embroidery floss.

*Kumihimo: Japanese Silk Braiding Techniques* by Catherine Martin, 1986, Lark Books (ISBN 0-937274-59-3).

A small book consisting exclusively of 16 bobbin designs. Very traditional (Japanese) describing only Maru Dai (round stand) techniques.

*Reader's Digest Complete Guide to Needlework*, Virginia Colton, editor, 1979, Reader's Digest Association (ISBN 0-89577-059-8). Includes chapters on bobbin lace and rug braiding using fabric strips.

*The Beginner's Guide to Braiding: The Craft of Kumihimo* by Jacqui Carey, 1997, Search Press, Limited (ISBN: 0855328282). Instructions use simple materials to produce square, round, flat, honeycomb, hollow, and rounded flat braids. There are suggestions for making a simple stand from cardboard and a lamp frame, and bobbins from film canisters.

*The Book of Wheat Weaving and Straw Craft* by Morgyn Owens-Celli, Sterling Publishing/Lark Books, 1998 (ISBN 157990078X).

There are instructions for natural projects ranging from simple to more elaborate. Twenty different weaving techniques include fans and harps, love knots, Celtic knots, Earth Mother, and Glory Braid.

*The Good Housekeeping Illustrated Book of Needlecrafts*, Cecelia K. Toth, editor, 1997, Search Press Limited (ISBN 0688126391).

Includes basic instructions for rectangular and round or oval braided rugs, including lacing and finishing techniques.

## Oregon 4-H publications

*Fiber Arts Exhibit Explanation Card*—available on the Oregon 4-H website under “Expressive Arts Materials” <http://oregon.4h.oregonstate.edu/resources/materials.html>

# Hooking

Pulling loops or short strands of yarn or fabric through a backing material to make a pile surface is called **hooking**. The pile can be patterned and/or textured.

## Methods

There are several hooking methods. They differ by type of hook used; type of fiber, yarn, or fabric used for the surface of the item; and type of base material. The type of fiber used and the height of the pile combine to make slightly different-looking surfaces.

**Latch hook.** A latch hook helps pull the ends of a cut piece of yarn around the crosswise threads of rug canvas. This forms a knot to hold the yarn in place. This may look similar to a Rya rug, although true Rya rugs are made using a tapestry needle to make stitches on a heavy, woven, Swedish backing fabric. The loops that form between the Rya stitches can be left as loops or cut.

**Hand hook.** A hand hook pulls loops of fabric through the base fabric. The pile generally is short, and the loops are uncut. The texture of the pile depends on the width of the strip and the fabric used to make it. Medium weight, firmly woven woolens are the most common fabrics used with a hand hook. Strips are usually between  $\frac{3}{32}$  inch and  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch wide. The rug base usually is burlap or monk's cloth.

**Locker hook.** A locker hook looks much like a crochet hook but with a large needle eye at the end opposite the hook. It pulls loops of fiber, commonly fleece or roving, through the squares of rug canvas. The loops are carried on the shaft of the hook and then locked into place by pulling a strong yarn threaded in the eye of the hook through the loops as they slide off the hook. Yarn or strips of fabric can be used in place of wool or roving.

**Anchored loop** is another name for this technique.

**Punch hook or needle.** A punch needle commonly is used with rug or tapestry yarn. By pushing the hollow threaded needle in and out of the base fabric, the pile automatically forms on one side. A pile gauge on the needle helps determine the height of the pile. The base fabric usually is either monk's cloth or burlap.

## Skill building

Start with small items so members can experience the technique and complete several small projects. That way, they can receive feedback sooner and evaluate their work to see where they might improve.

Precut rug yarns for latch hooking may be an easy starting point. Latch hooking and locker hooking use rug canvas that determines the spacing of the yarns or fabric by the size of the mesh. Sometimes the colors for the design are marked directly on the canvas as a guide.

Using monk's cloth or burlap backing requires and develops more skill, as members must control the spacing of the hooked fibers. More skill is required when the design is charted or graphed, especially as the design becomes more complex. Choosing the colors of the fabrics or yarns, cutting the strips themselves, and dyeing fabrics also require and develop more skill and understanding.

### Members

Use the 4-H *Fiber Arts Exhibit Explanation Card* (see "Resources for hooking") to describe the techniques you have used, skills you have improved, and new things you have learned.

## Project ideas

Depending on the height of the nap and the type of filling material, possible projects might include: coasters, potholders, trivets, pillows, wall hangings, bags or purses, area rugs, vests or other clothing items. Members also can explore dyeing fibers,

yarns, and fabrics to create the colors they desire. Hooking is a technique to which members can readily apply the elements and principles of design in creating original projects.

## Standards for evaluating

The goal is for members to develop an understanding of what makes good-quality work. Members learn to evaluate their hooking projects for the following characteristics.

**The goal is for members to develop an understanding of what makes good-quality work.**

- Loops or yarn ends are even in height and length unless purposely designed otherwise.
- The spacing of the surface material is close enough to cover the backing. There are no holes.
- Coordination of method and materials holds the pile in place. Yarn or fabric strips do not pull out of the backing.
- Backing is appropriate to size of filling material.
- Pattern is followed correctly to reproduce the design.
- Project is finished appropriately.
- Project is clean and presentable.
- Basic elements and principles of design are pleasing.

## Resources for hooking

You might find many of these books in local libraries or for sale in bookstores.

*Basic Rug Hooking* by Alice Beatty and Mary Sargent, 1990, Stackpole Books (ISBN 0811723062).

Step-by-step instruction for creating traditional hand-hooked rugs in the primitive style. Includes much information on colors and dyeing of fabric as well as suggestions for directional hooking.

*Creative Locker Hooking* by Leone Peguero, 1998, Lacis Publishing (ISBN 0916896951).

Basic instruction for locker hooking.

*Reader's Digest Complete Guide to Needlework*, Virginia Colton, editor, 1979, Reader's Digest Association (ISBN 0-89577-059-8). Includes information on hooking and knotting (latch hooking) rugs, including finishing techniques.

*Rug Hooking for the First Time* by Donna Lovelady, 2003, Sterling Publishing Co. (ISBN 0806993871).

This book focuses on the primitive style of rug hooking using wool strips. It offers very easy-to-understand, basic information covering supplies and techniques plus instructions and patterns for a variety of items including pillows, purses, tote bags, wall hangings, and rugs.

*The Complete Book of Rug Hooking* by Joan Moshimer, 1975, Dover Publications (ISBN 0-486-25945-5).

Complete information on hand-hooking rugs from basic skills to more advanced. Includes dyeing and detailed shading of fruits, flowers, and animals.

*The Good Housekeeping Illustrated Book of Needlecrafts*, Cecelia K. Toth, editor, 1994, Hearst Books (ISBN 0688126391). Includes information on hand hooking, latch hooking, and punch hooking related to rug making. Also includes finishing techniques.

## Oregon 4-H publications

*Fiber Arts Exhibit Explanation Card*—available on the Oregon 4-H website under “Expressive Arts Materials” <http://oregon.4h.oregonstate.edu/resources/materials.html>

## Websites

There are a number of commercial websites with instructions and supplies for locker hooking. Search using the words “locker hooking.”

# Embroidery

**Embroidery** is the embellishment of fabric with needlework. Needlework uses many types of stitching and hundreds of different stitches. Some combinations of style, stitch type, fabric, and sometimes color have become **types of embroidery** with particular names.

## Methods

Basic embroidery simply adds a design of thread or yarn to the surface of fabric by stitching. The different types of embroidery are defined mostly by type of materials used (base material and thread or fiber) and certain types of stitches. More intricate stitches are combinations and variations of a few basic ones.

Most types of embroidery traditionally are done by hand, but some embroidery also can be done by freehand guiding of a sewing machine. Some home sewing machines use a small computer to stitch digital designs automatically.

For both hand and sewing machine embroidery, a frame or hoop often is used to hold the fabric taut during stitching. This helps keep the stitches more even in tension and avoids puckers in the base fabric. Machine embroidery also uses a variety of stabilizers with the base fabric.

For hand embroidery, there are many patterns or designs to follow as a graph or chart, and others that are transferred to the surface of the fabric as a guide. Charted designs are used with fabric that is suitable for counting threads or squares to guide the stitching.

## Stitch families

Stitches are the basic units of a design. They either outline or fill in a shape. Each stitch family has a base stitch with a basic sequence, and many variations can be built from the basic sequence.

**Backstitch.** These require a stitch backward before the stitch moves forward.

They are used mostly for outline but can be used for filling an area.

**Blanket stitch.** Blanket stitches carry a line of the yarn or thread across the base of upright legs. They work very well as an edging and are also used to outline.

**Chain stitch.** These are looped stitches that resemble the links of a chain. They often are used for outlines and decorative borders.

**Couching.** Couching is done using two working yarns or threads. The first is laid across the design area and the second yarn holds it in place with various stitches over the top. Couching can outline or fill in designs.

**Cross stitch.** All cross stitches are made with two crossing stitches. They can be used as outlines, borders, or to fill in an area.

**Feather stitch.** Feather stitches are open, looped stitches with the opening alternating from right to left.

**Filling stitch (detached).** Detached filling stitches make a pattern while filling an area with separate, individual stitches that do not connect to each other.

**Filling stitch (laid).** Laid filling stitches create a grid or lattice to fill in a design area. First, long threads are laid in two or more directions across the area. Then, anchoring stitches are taken, usually where the laid threads intersect.

**Running stitch.** Running stitches are simple in-and-out stitches leaving at least a thread or two of fabric between each stitch in the line. Running stitches generally are used for outlining. Variations of this stitch are used for hand quilting and darning.

**Satin stitch.** Satin stitches are closely set, straight stitches used to fill in a design smoothly and completely.

**Weaving stitch.** Weaving stitches weave over a base network of threads. They can be used to cover an area with a textured surface. Raised needle weaving creates a shape that lifts slightly from the surface of the fabric.

## **Embroidery fabric**

Almost any fabric can be embroidered, but there are three types that are used most.

**Common weave** fabrics are firmly woven fabrics with a relatively smooth surface. Organdy, linen, hopsacking, and burlap are examples from this group.

**Even-weave** fabrics have the same number of threads per square inch in both the warp and weft directions. Single even-weave, Hardanger, and Aida cloth all belong to this group.

The third type of fabric has an **evenly spaced surface pattern**. Ticking, gingham, and dotted Swiss are examples of this group.

## **Threads and yarns**

The most common threads and yarns used for embroidery include: embroidery floss, pearl cotton, matte embroidery cotton, narrow ribbon, crewel yarn, Persian yarn, tapestry yarn, knitting yarn, rug yarn, machine embroidery thread, and metallic threads. Generally, these are uniform throughout their length without thick or thin areas or slubs.

Needles for hand embroidery vary depending on the diameter of the thread or yarn and whether a sharp or blunt tip works best. There are special machine needles to use with metallic threads.

## **Specialty types of embroidery**

**Blackwork.** A counted thread embroidery traditionally done with black silk thread on white linen. Repetitive patterns are used to fill in the design area.

**Crewel.** An embroidery traditionally done with very fine wool yarns, although other fibers also are used. A transferred design usually is used.

**Cross stitch.** A traditional embroidery in which the design is worked in a simple stitch that crosses threads to form an X. Variations of the stitch also may be used. Embroidery floss is used most often with many types of fabric. Even weaves are

especially suitable, because the fabric creates a natural grid to help guide stitch placement. Fabrics with an evenly spaced surface pattern also are used.

Assisi is a type of reverse cross stitch in which the background is filled with cross stitch and the design area is open.

**Cutwork.** An openwork embroidery in which the outline of the design is worked in a fine buttonhole stitch before parts of the design are cut away. Closely woven fabrics and pearl cotton or embroidery floss are used most often.

**Drawn thread.** A counted thread embroidery in which some of the warp or weft threads are removed from an area before the stitches are worked. Then, the stitching pulls the remaining threads together into a pattern. It is typically used for a border on linens.

**Hardanger.** An openwork embroidery in which the design is framed by blocks of satin stitch. Warp and weft threads are clipped and drawn out in some places. It is most typically done on even-weave Hardanger cloth.

**Pulled thread.** A counted thread embroidery in which each stitch pulls threads of the fabric together, creating open, lace-like patterns.

**Ribbon.** An embroidery done with narrow ribbons.

**Smocking.** This type of embroidery decorates and gathers the fabric into small pleats. The pleating can be done prior to the decorative stitching or as part of making the stitches. It is usually worked on soft, lightweight fabrics with pearl cotton or embroidery floss.

**Swedish weaving or huck weaving.** An embroidery done specifically on huck toweling. Most designs are worked on the double floats (longer surface threads) across the width of the fabric. Embroidery floss and pearl cotton are the most commonly used threads.

## Skill building

Start with small items and easily handled materials so members can experience the technique and complete several small projects. That way, they can receive feedback sooner and evaluate their work to see where they might improve. Look for designs that are simple and do not involve a lot of color changes. If charts are used, they should be easy to read. It is usually easier to start with outline stitches, progress to fill-in stitches, and then learn cutwork. Encourage members to try various types of embroidery to build their skills.

Within each stitch family or embroidery type, there is generally a progression from simple to similar but more involved stitches. It is best to master the basic stitch in a stitch family before trying the more advanced variations. The type of yarn, ribbon, or floss used also influences difficulty. Freehand machine embroidery requires more physical coordination.

Members may use kits, but as they progress, they can do more of the design work, from choosing colors and stitches to drawing or designing the entire pattern.

Members

Use the 4-H *Fiber Arts Exhibit Explanation Card* (see “Resources for embroidery”) to describe the techniques you have used, skills you have improved, and new things you have learned.

## Project ideas

Members can embroider many kinds of decorative or wearable items. Beginning projects might include gift tags, card inserts, ornaments, and embellishments on pockets, collars, and pillows. Members can practice a variety of stitches by making samplers or wall hangings. Some types of embroidery suggest particular types of projects. Embroidery is an ideal medium to expand understanding of the elements and principles of design.

Members

As your skills progress, try using various fabrics, different types of threads, and more complex designs, and choose larger, more elaborate projects.

Members may find it interesting to investigate and share the different cultural backgrounds of embroidery.

## Standards for evaluating

The goal is for members to develop an understanding of what makes good-quality work. Members learn to evaluate their embroidery for the following characteristics.

- Transferred design is not visible on finished work.
- Stitches are even and correctly done.
- Thread or yarn is not too worn looking.
- Thread ends are fastened securely without the use of knots.
- There are no long carry-over threads on the back.
- No unintended loops or thread ends are visible on the front of the work.
- Stitches do not pull the base fabric out of square or cause puckers or wrinkles.
- Project is clean, unwrinkled, and has been finished appropriately.
- Basic elements and principles of design are pleasing.

4-H Project Leader

**The goal is for members to develop an understanding of what makes good-quality work.**

## Resources for embroidery

You might find these books in local libraries or for sale in bookstores.

*Reader's Digest Complete Guide to Needlework*, Virginia Colton, editor, 1979, Reader's Digest Association (ISBN 0-89577-059-8). Includes complete discussion of different types of embroidery, tools and supplies,

and easy-to-follow drawings for making the hand stitches in each stitch family.

*The Good Housekeeping Illustrated Book of Needlecrafts*, Cecelia K. Toth, editor, 1994, Hearst Books (ISBN 0688126391). Good photographs of basic stitches and lots of examples of embroidered work.

### **Oregon 4-H publications**

*Fiber Arts Exhibit Explanation Card*—available on the Oregon 4-H website under “Expressive Arts Materials”  
<http://oregon.4h.oregonstate.edu/resources/materials.html>

### **Websites**

<http://www.stitchguide.com> At this site, find instructions with illustrations, videos, and in many cases, patterns to help you practice individual stitches.