



PSC Guide to Herringbone Stitch - Making a Coaster - page 1

One simple stitch, repeated in different colours and threads, can create all sorts of beautiful results.

This small, relaxing project is ideal for beginners, and also a satisfying way for more experienced stitchers to use up scraps of Aida fabric.

Each finished coaster measures approximately 4 inches (10 cm) square.



Aida fabric comes in a range of sizes, often described as 'count' (the number of squares per inch).

Common counts include 7, 10, 11, 12, 14, 16, 18 and 20. The higher the number, the smaller the squares—resulting in finer stitches and the need for thinner thread.

For this coaster, we are using a fairly fine Aida at 14 count, as shown in Picture 1.

Cut a square measuring approximately 4.5 inches (11 cm). This allows a little extra for fraying around the edges. Picture 2.

You will also need a square of Bondaweb for finishing. Details on page 5.

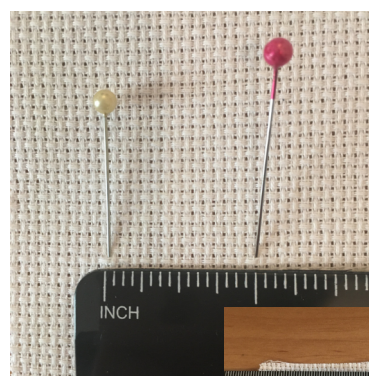
Needles and Thread

For this project, you can use either a medium or large embroidery needle or a small tapestry needle, both of which have a large eye.

Embroidery needles have a sharp point, so take extra care when passing through holes that have already been stitched. Tapestry needles, on the other hand, have a blunt tip and are less likely to split the threads, making them a good choice for beginners.

Choose four shades of your preferred colour in a good-quality embroidery thread. Popular brands include DMC, Anchor, and Madeira.

Cheaper threads are available, but they do not glide through the fabric as smoothly and can make stitching less enjoyable.



Picture 1



Picture 2





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Preparing Your Thread

Each skein of embroidery thread contains six strands. (See *Picture 3*)

Find the end of the thread and gently pull out a length of about 12 inches (30 cm).

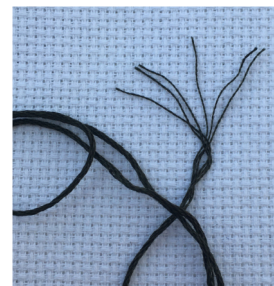
Cut this length from the skein.

Separate the strands by holding three strands in each hand.

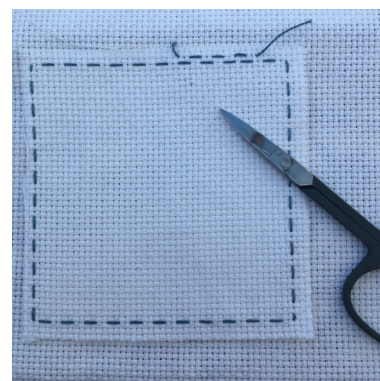
Slowly pull them apart, working gently down the length to avoid tangling.

Set one group of strands aside for later, ready for when you need to re-thread your needle.

Picture 3



Picture 4



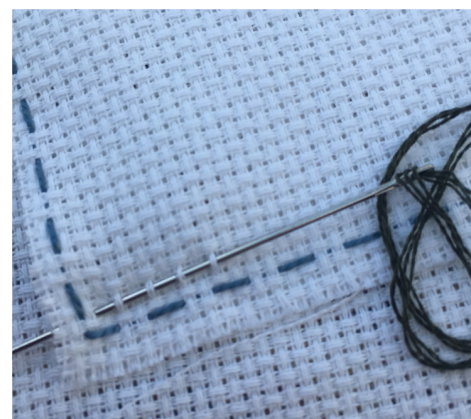
Creating a Temporary Border

Thread your needle with any colour of thread.

Count 44 squares across and 44 squares down, marking each corner with a pin. Then work a simple running stitch all the way around, as shown in *Picture 4*.

This temporary border will be removed once your herringbone stitching is complete.

Picture 5



Starting Your Thread

Now thread your needle using one set of strands from the darkest of your four chosen colours.

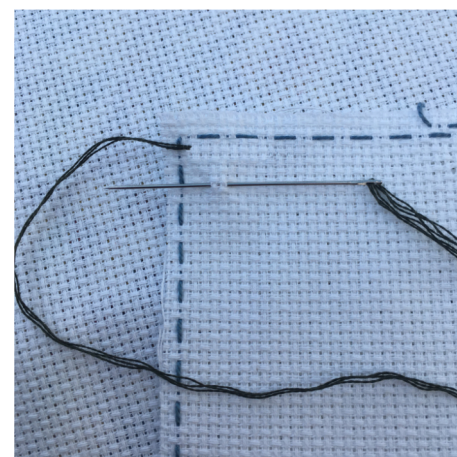
Take a moment to choose which side will be the front of your work, as both sides of Aida look similar.

To start your stitching, work from the back. Gently pass your needle just under the surface of the fabric (this is called running-in), then take it through the hole in the corner to begin working on the right side, as shown in *Picture 5*.

Pull the thread through, leaving the running-in at the back.

Aida is a double-layered fabric, which allows you to secure your thread in this way without it showing on the front. See *Picture 6*.

Picture 6





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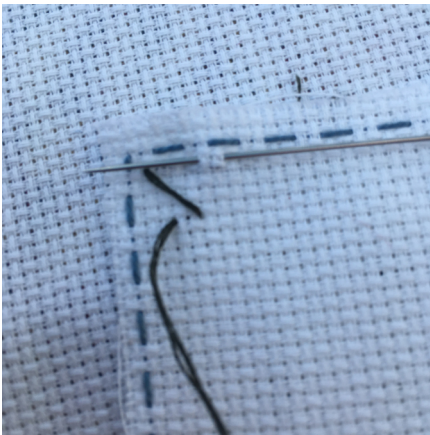
Working the Stitch

The pictures below show the pattern and direction of the needle.

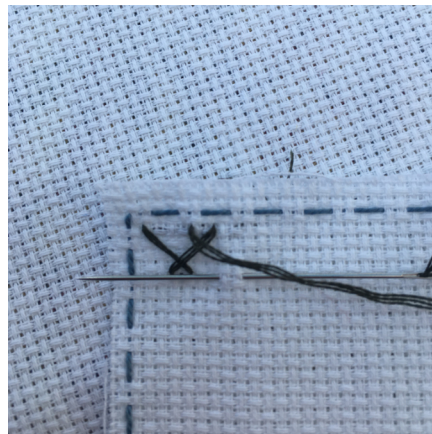
Count the squares carefully to keep your stitches evenly spaced. Pick up 2 squares at a time, working in blocks of four stitches. You will notice the needle points to the left, while the pattern develops towards the right.

Left handed people will need to work in reverse, from the top right corner across to the top left, so the needle will point to the right as you work.

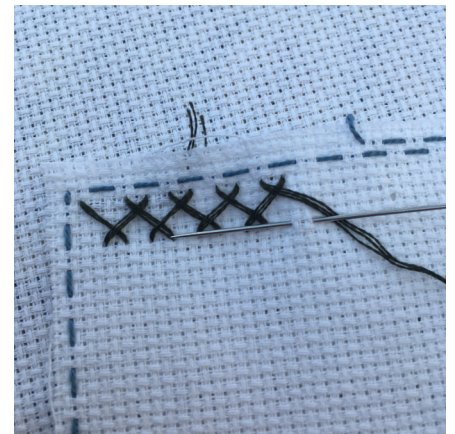
Picture 7



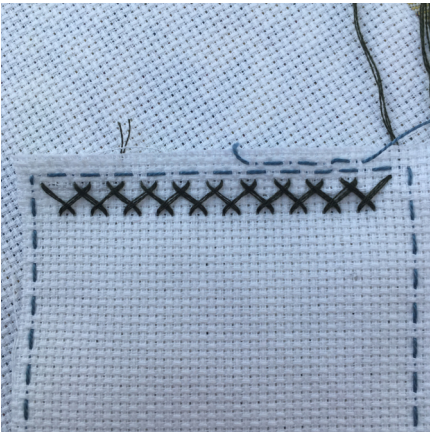
Picture 8



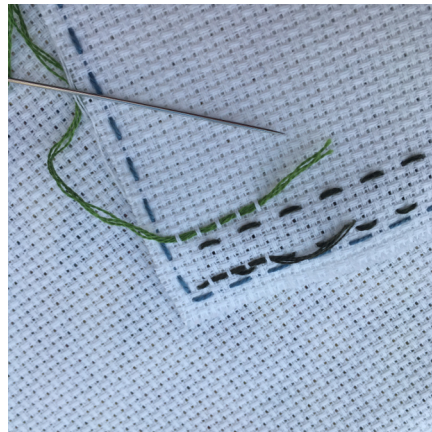
Picture 9



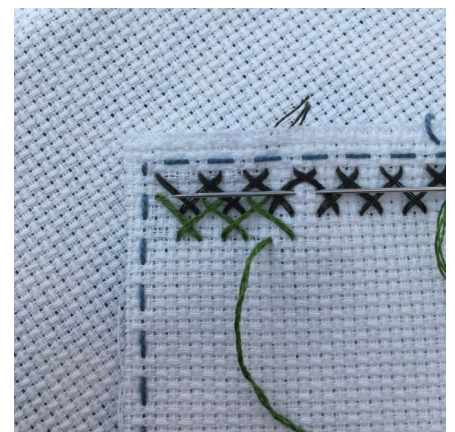
Picture 10



Picture 11



Picture 12 - 2nd colour



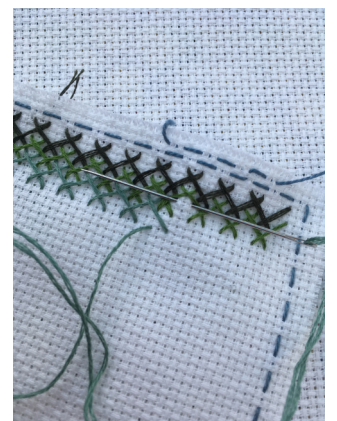
Moving on to the next colour

These images show how the rows build as you introduce the next lightest shade, continuing until four rows are complete.

Take care not to split the thread when working the third and fourth rows, as some holes will already have been used by the previous colour.

Try to keep a steady rhythm so that all stitches slope in the same direction on each row, as shown in Pictures 7 to 13.

Picture 13 - 3rd colour





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Don't worry if your first few stitches feel awkward—this will quickly become easier. If self-doubt creeps in, just keep going.

This happened to me with this very piece, even though I am experienced at stitching. But as I added each row, I could see it coming together.

I hope you'll find the same—and that yours will too.

Completing the Herringbone sections.

Once you have completed one set of four rows, turn your work around and repeat from the opposite side, again starting with the darkest shade.

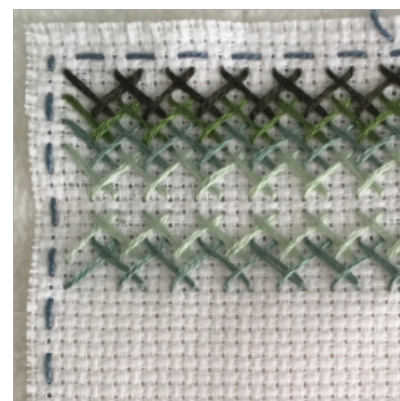
Next, leave one row of squares empty, then work four rows in reverse order (from light to dark). Repeat this at both ends.

You should now have four sets of four rows, each separated by a line of empty squares. See Pictures 14 and 15 (for a close-up)

Picture 14



Picture 15



Picture 16

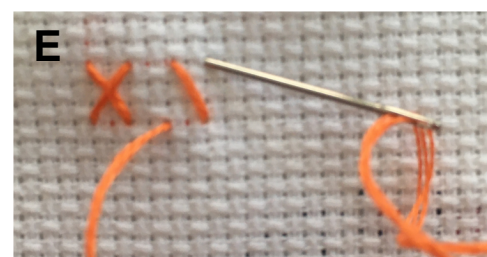
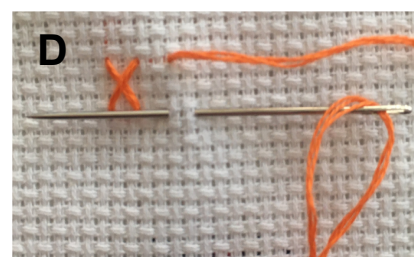
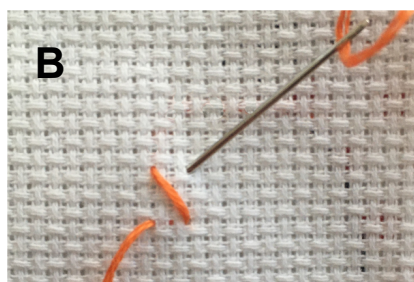
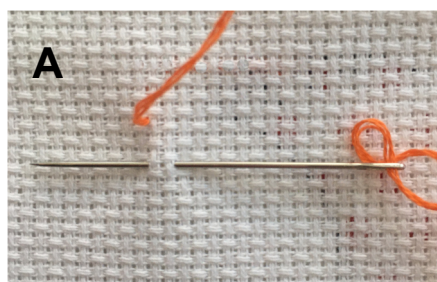


Adding the contrast colour in simple Cross Stitch

To complement your herringbone pattern, work cross stitches that are 3 squares down and 2 squares across, leaving a gap of 2 squares between each stitch, as shown in Pictures 16 and 17.

You may find it helpful to practise cross stitch on a spare piece of Aida first. See the stitch method below.

Picture 17





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Finishing Your Coaster

You've done it! The stitching is complete—now let's put it all together. First, carefully remove the temporary stitching from around the edge.

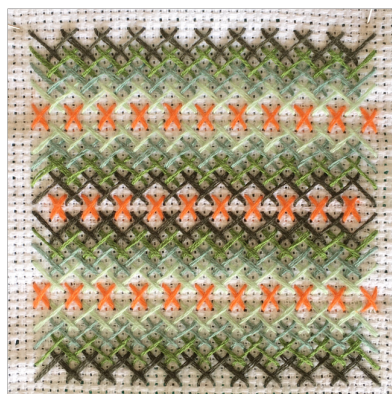
Starting at one point, use your needle to hook under a stitch and gently pull it out. Continue all the way around until the thread is completely removed. See Pictures 18 and 19.

Picture 20 shows the back of your work, with the running-in from the different shades. Lightly iron the back to flatten your stitching (Picture 21).

Picture 18



Picture 19



Picture 20



Picture 21



Preparing for Assembly

Cut a square of **single-sided Bondaweb** and iron it onto the back of your work.

Bondaweb is designed to bond one layer of fabric to another. It has a paper backing and a fine layer of adhesive.

Make sure the **glue side is against your fabric**, and iron on the paper side. Leave the paper in place.

Turn your work over and trim around the edges, leaving a border of one empty square all the way around. This should allow it to fit neatly inside your coaster case. See Pictures 22 and 23.

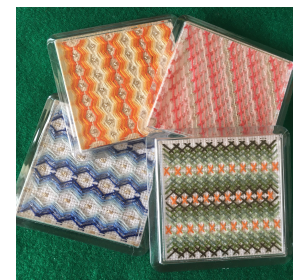
Assemble Your Coaster Place your work face down into the coaster case and click the back plate into position.

Finished! Your coaster is now ready to use. Thank you for trying my downloads - I hope you enjoyed making it.

Picture 22



Picture 23



Acrylic Clear Coasters can be found at 'stitchtastic' on Ebay UK

