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Hand Appliqué *The Template Free Way!*

We love this method of needle-turned hand appliqué because we can begin stitching right away!

Preparing the background:

You will trace the appliqué design onto the *wrong side* of the background fabric. Position your pattern to the background fabric and pin in place. Lay tracing paper like Chacopy wax side up on the work surface. Lay your fabric and pattern right side up on top. Trace over the pattern with a pen and the design will appear on the wrong side of the fabric. It will be reversed which is just what you want!

Basting Fabric in Place:

Working from the right side, prepare to appliqué the first piece. Lay the appropriate fabric over the design area and pin in place. Don't pre-cut the fabric. Just lay the piece in place and pin.

Working from the reverse side, baste the fabric into place. Use a heavy weight thread (buttonhole weight) and a large-eyed needle (chenille or tapestry). Stitch carefully along the exact design line. There is no need to begin or end with a knot.

Working from the right side, cut the appliqué shape along the basting line, leaving a small seam allowance.

Appliquing the Design:

Thread an appliqué needle with thread that matches the appliqué piece and knot.

Clip and remove a small section of the basting thread in the area where you will begin stitching.

Needle turn the seam allowance of the appliqué piece under until the edge of the fabric lines up with the holes made by the basting thread.

Secure the knot in the seam allowance of the piece and bring the needle up right at the stitching line.

Take a small **stitch** through the background fabric just under the edge of the appliqué piece. Catch the very edge of the piece with a small stitch. **Continue to remove** the basting thread as you appliqué the piece in place. **Keep turning** under the edge and stitching until the piece is sewn into place. Make a small knot on the reverse side. Close stitches create a smooth edge.

Appliquing Points and Curves:

Adjust the size of your basting stitch according to the shape and size of the appliqué piece. Use small stitches to follow curves. Make sure your basting stitch goes right through any points. The basting stitches are transferring the design to the front of your work so you want to be as accurate as possible. If the curves are long and gentle or the edge is relatively straight, you can take longer stitches.

FAQ:

What if I can't see the holes from my basting? The holes are harder to see on dark fabrics or looser weaves but the technique still works. Before removing the basting thread, draw along the line with a marking pencil. Sometimes you can follow the holes in the background fabric.

I find it hard to place the fabric piece in the right place. What can I do? Some quilters use a light box to help them. Others find that a few pins marking the outer edges of the design area in question help them to place the fabric correctly.

What's so great about this method? Template free appliqué eliminates many preparation steps. More than that, it is the best way to accurately reproduce the design in fabric. You'll be amazed at how your stitches follow the design lines exactly. Your work never covers up the design and each piece is in its correct position.

For a complete guide, refer to the book *Template Free Appliqué* by Katie Friesen