

Long & Short Stitch

Lesson 4: Circles, Both Flat and Round

Objectives:

- To practice long and short stitch shading of a circular shape, to achieve a stylized, flat shading and to achieve a more realistic, dimensional shading.
- To note the difference between “textbook” long and short stitch and the more natural shading achieved by a less rigid approach to the stitch

Materials:

- Project in hoop or frame, with Element Three: Circles centered in hoop (lower right corner of design)
- #9 or #10 crewel needles
- Small, sharp embroidery scissors
- DMC stranded cotton in the following colors: 347, 349, 351, 353, 3855, 745

NOTE: Refer to the long and short stitch videos included in Lesson Two on Needle ‘n Thread (www.needlenthread.com) for basic technique

Procedure:

To Begin:

- Begin with the top circle.
- Anchor your thread according to your favorite method, or use the method demonstrated in the video tutorial, part 1.
- Work a split stitch line around the first circle in 351.
- Beginning in the center of the top of the circle, draw a vertical line to the opposite edge. Draw several more vertical lines across the circle, to match the following diagram:





The thread is anchored for split stitching the edge, and the directional lines are drawn in pencil.

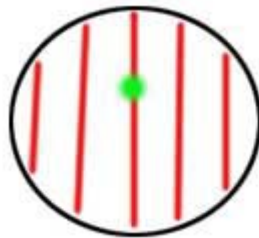
CIRCLE ONE (top circle)

First Row – Red (349)

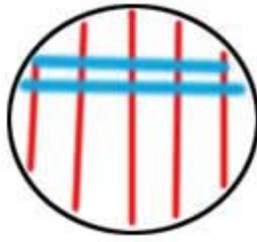
- Circle one will be filled in the “textbook” method of long and short stitch. This is the typical method outlined in most brief stitch dictionaries, with a diagram showing uniform long and short stitches.

I think it is good to see the difference in the two methods of long and short stitch, so you can decide for yourself which method and which results you like better.

- Once you have split stitched around the circle, begin with your needle coming up about one third of the way down the diameter of the circle on the middle vertical line, as shown by the dot in the diagram below:



- Emerge from the fabric at this point, stitch over the top of the split stitch line, and come up again right next to your first stitch, but slightly higher. If you need to draw a couple lines on the fabric to help you determine where to begin and end your stitches, you might draw something like the lines indicated in blue:



Stitch your long stitches to the second line and your short stitches to the first line.

- Work from the center to the right, and then move back from the center and work to the left, keeping your stitches vertical



Your first row will look approximately like this. Notice that a couple of my shorter stitches are not quite even, and I have one long stitch longer than the rest, on the right. Notice as well that I stopped as I came near the edge.

- Begin the second row (in 351) in the middle, splitting a long stitch only slightly into the stitch. To gauge where to split the first long stitch, you might line up your splitting point with the lower tip of the short stitches. Then, go about an equal distance into the short stitches to split them.



Your second row will end up looking more or less like this.

- Continue this method with the third row, in 353, and then with the last row, in 745.



Third row completed



Fourth row (final row) completed, in 745.

- With the final row, make sure you stitch outside the split stitch line.

CIRCLE 2 (second one down on the right)

Circle 2 will be a little more natural looking. Make sure you mark in your stitch direction lines as shown in the photos below. You will find them really handy on this one!



- Begin by drawing an elongated dot at 11:00 o'clock on the circle, if you look at it like a clock face.



- Then, draw directional lines radiating from that elongated dot, as shown in the photo above.



- Split stitch around the outside of the circle in 353. Then stitch the first “row” of stitches around the elongated dot. You’ll leave the center of the dot empty, and consider the edge of the dot as your stitch line. At the top left side of the circle (the narrowest area between the elongated dot and the outline), you’ll take the thread over the split stitched line.
- Fan the stitches out, following your directional lines. As you come to the sides of the elongated dot, stretch your stitches towards the edge, but not necessarily over the edge (though it won’t hurt to stitch a couple of them over the edge...)



- Work the second row in 351, filling in and fanning out around the stitches in the first row. As you stretch towards the edge up near the top of the circle, go ahead and cross over the split stitch line.



- I didn't like the left side of the top of the circle – the paler stitches in 353 didn't stretch as far as I thought they should, for the circle to look balanced. So I went back and added a stitch. Another testimony to the forgiving nature of long and short stitch, when worked in this way!



Not 100% better, but I like it better than I did before!

- Now, move on to the next row, which is in 351 as well. With this next row, you are simply filling in more in the middle and thickening up the “base” of stitches, as show in the photo below:



- Finally, switch your thread to 349, and proceed to fill in two more rows with 349.



- Continue to fill the circle with 349 until your last row stretches over the split stitch edge of the “berry.”



- You can then go back and fill in the hole in the middle with 347, using small satin stitches.

CIRCLE 3: (lower left circle)

- Begin by split stitching the outer edge of the circle in 349.
- Next, mark the circle as shown in the photo below:



- Draw a thickish dot on the right edge of the circle, a little bit in from the outline. Radiate your stitch direction lines from this dot. You may also wish to sketch in the “layers” of the colors to help you with your color changes.



- Using 353, stitch in your directional stitches as you did with the second circle, fanning the stitches out from the edge of the dot, and, where necessary, over the split stitch line.



- Fill in between the directional stitches with shorter stitches, to give a full foundation in which to stitch your next layer of color. Leave some space on the outside right of the circle (radiating from the dot) for the second color.



- Using 351, fill in the next layer of color. Make sure to fill in between the lighter stitches on the right side of the circle, between the dot and over the split stitch line.



- When necessary, remember that you can pull on your working thread in the direction that you want your stitch to lie, and take your needle down behind the working thread, to establish your stitch direction.



- When you finish the second row, it will look more or less like this.



- Stitch the third row in 349, leaving room for a final row in 347. The final row will extend to the outside of the split stitch line.



- As you did with the previous circle, fill in the blank dot with a few little satin stitches in dark red, 347.

Congratulations! You have now completed three elements on your Long and Short Stitch Shading Sampler!

You will probably notice that, of the three circles, the last two are more realistic, while the first is very rigid and flat. In most needle painting ventures, the stitcher strives for a realistic look. The techniques used in the last two circles would be the same techniques you would use to work such things as fruit (cherries, berries, round larger fruit, etc.) or vegetables (peas?) or any spherical item that you want to look somewhat dimensional.