

Fabrics 101: Embroidering on Leather

Click on the image to the right to see the free video tutorial, or read below for written instructions.

Video is viewed best in Internet Explorer with a high-speed connection, and Windows Media Player.



Leather comes in several different types. You'll find cowhide, lambskin, suede, buckskin - a lot of variety. Each type has different qualities: thick, thin, stretchy, or many types that retain their shape with no stretch.



A needle will leave permanent holes in leather -- the perforations won't draw back together like they do when embroidering on fabric.

When selecting designs to embroider on leather, choose light and sheer designs. If you choose designs that are solid with heavy fills and satin stitch columns, all of those needle perforations may cause the design to pop right out of the leather.

A size 80/12 leather needle is a good choice when embroidering onto leather. This kind of needle has a wedged point that reduces the size of the hole or perforation made in the leather.

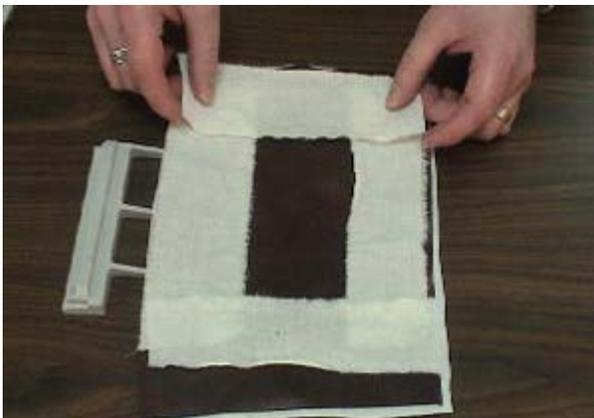


When embroidering on leather, use a piece of medium-weight, cutaway stabilizer. We use temporary spray adhesive between the leather and the stabilizer to make sure that the two stay together nice and tight.

Cut-away stabilizer acts to hold the leather together both during and after the embroidery.



Smooth the leather onto the sticky side of the stabilizer.



Hooing is always recommended to make sure that the sections of the design will line up in the right place (hooping prevents the fabric or leather from shifting as the hoop moves while embroidering).

However, a hoop can leave a permanent mark, or scuff the leather. To avoid scuffing or permanent marks, we're laying strips of muslin on top of the leather before adding the top hoop.

Move the muslin out of the way before you begin to embroider. Then, embroider the design.



Because leather is thicker than fabric, there will be more friction between the needle and the leather. You may see the leather pulling up slightly with each rise of the needle.

To compensate for the increased friction, we generally embroider at a slower speed, about 350 spm.

It's as easy as that! With these tips you can make embellished bookmarks and keychains, or add embroidery to leather jackets and purses.

To find designs that are digitized specifically for leather, look in the [Leather Designs](#) department at www.EmbLibrary.com. You can also embroider [toile](#) (excluding designs with text), [redwork](#), and [Trapunto](#) designs on leather.

Stitching tips for leather:

Needle	80/12 leather needle
Stabilizer	Cutaway (2.5 ounce)
Design Choice	Choose designs that have been digitized specifically for leather, or light and sheer designs.

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