
Introduction

Lace has been a luxury for centuries and probably will never go out of style. In times past, only the very wealthy could afford to adorn themselves with all the different styles of lace. Making lace by hand takes a lot of time. Today we can make our own lace fabric and motifs in a fraction of the time using our embroidery machine. The added bonus is having lace in the style, color and fiber that suits your creativity.

Supplies

Lace Design (Designs used in video are from the Anitagoodeesign Collections Butterfly Garland and Lace Jewelry. See information below for types of lace designs)

Embroidery Thread for the needle and bobbin

Floriani Wet N Gone Wash Away Embroidery Stabilizer

Embroidery Needle

Titanium Embroidery Needle for dense designs

Metafill Needle for Metallic thread

Netting as a base fabric for Non-Freestanding Lace Designs

OESD Fuse N Seal

Pressing Sheet

Instructions

Two Types of Lace Designs

There are two types of designs for making lace on your embroidery machine. The first type of design will use a base fabric to support the design. The base can be either traditional fabric or netting such as used in bridal veils. The second type of design is for creating Freestanding Lace. This type does not need a base and creates a structure in thread that the

design builds upon. Always stitch freestanding lace on wash away stabilizer. After stitching and the stabilizer is removed, only the thread remains. Always check the instructions of the embroidery design to identify which kind you will be stitching. If you are unsure, make a test sample or use a stitch simulator in software to check for a base layer of stitching. Stitching a non freestanding lace design without a base layer of fabric or netting would be a disaster. The embroidery would simply fall apart after removing the wash away stabilizer.

Set Up for Embroidery

Unless embroidering the lace design directly on fabric, lace making will always require wash away stabilizer. The wash away stabilizer is the base for the embroidery stitches and holds them in place for alignment prior to removal. Netting provides a base for non-freestanding embroidery, but the openness of the netting doesn't support perfect alignment of stitches. Use wash away stabilizer with netting to fill in the small gaps in the fabric. Netting with smaller gaps will work best for intricate designs. Layer the netting between two layers of wash away stabilizer for best results. Even when embroidering directly on a solid fabric, use a wash away stabilizer as a topper to prevent the embroidery stitches from burying into the fabric. The result will appear more like lace as a layer on top of the fabric. Clear wash away stabilizer is ideal for this purpose.

Wash away stabilizer comes in many forms and the best one for consistent results is the type that looks a lot like a paper towel. Clear wash away stabilizer that has the appearance of plastic wrap will cut along the edge while embroidering because of the density of the stitching. Because freestanding embroidery is stitch intensive, the design needs to stitch over a very stable layer of wash away stabilizer. Most freestanding embroidery will benefit from a double layer of stabilizer securely hooped so as not to move. The stabilizer in the hoop needs to remain rock solid for the embroidery to precisely stitch and precision is very important for freestanding laces. Hoop the stabilizer and then secure it well by both tightening the hoop screw and adding pins to the outside edge to prevent the stabilizer from pulling in past the hoop ring. Use pins as shown in the photo around the outside edge of the hoop to act as stoppers. Use this technique for traditional embroideries that are stitch intensive. It is not suitable for very delicate fabrics that might tear or distort.



Most lace designs are digitized for 40 wt. embroidery thread. Use of a thinner or thicker thread will result in less than optimum results. Lace designs are also not suited for enlarging or reducing the design either in the machine or in the software. Consider using additional motifs to cover a larger area or actually removing part of a motif for a smaller area. When joining motifs, stitch them separately and then join them by abutting the embroideries while securing with a zigzag or triple zigzag stitch. Generally, any 40 wt. thread will work regardless of fiber type.

- o Rayon thread is more lustrous and softer after removing stabilizer.
- o Polyester thread will resist rot and bleaching.
- o Cotton thread will give a matte appearance and require frequent cleaning of the bobbin area.
- o Metallic thread of good quality works well for lace. Floriani Metallic thread has worked very well for me. It is 100% polyester and made in Japan.
- o Silk thread is pricey and beautiful for that over the top project.
- o Variegated thread can sometimes yield good results in lace depending on the design. Stitch a test sample to see if your design will work well with the color changes.
- o When stitching lace, use bobbins of matching thread when stitching the design. Matching thread will result in a completely reversible lace. Note also that **embroidery bobbin thread** is thinner than 40 wt. embroidery thread and may result in a lace that without sufficient body.

Completing the Design

Machine speed should not be a factor when stitching lace except for the following conditions:

- o Dense lace designs can cause heat to build up in the needle. When a needle overheats with friction, thread breakage may result. Use a titanium needle and slow the speed of the machine to reduce friction and heat buildup.
- o Slippery threads can loop and fall off the spool while the machine is running causing thread jams and needle breakage. Use a thread net and slow the machine speed to keep the thread running freely.
- o Bobbins wound with 40 wt. thread will have fewer yards of thread than one wound with thinner embroidery bobbin thread. The bobbin will need to be changed more frequently. Machines with a bobbin sensor will stop and alert for a bobbin change when the bobbin thread is low. Clean the bobbin area well before starting a design. Lint build up in the bobbin area may result in the bobbin sensor to not register an empty bobbin.

Lace Sewn on Denim

Attach lace with thread to match in the needle. A narrow zig zag stitch around the perimeter of smaller lace pieces will work well. Larger pieces may require some stitching on the interior of the lace piece. Use a zig zag foot and engage the pivot feature to stitch around the piece. The pivot feature will raise the foot automatically when the foot control stops the machine allowing easy turning around the lace perimeter. Another option to avoid turning the piece is to freehand stitch around the lace by attaching an open toe darning foot and dropping the feed dogs. Stitch free-motion around the lace catching the edge.

Lace Fused on Denim

Fuse lace onto the base fabric or garment with OESD Fuse and Seal. This specialty product is a clear iron on film for applying to most fabric without sewing. It is especially useful for applying embroidery to hard to reach areas or items that would be difficult to put under the needle. The heat-activated bond is washable. Place the rinsed and dried lace face down on the paper side of the Fuse and Seal. Trace the outline of the lace. (I found a ball point pen to work the best on the slick surface of the paper.) Cut the Fuse and Seal to size. The piece need not completely fill the area such as in the photo. Remove the interior of the shape leaving just a narrow outline along the perimeter for a softer application. Lay the film side down on the back of the lace as shown in the photo. Press with an iron set to “wool” for 8-12 seconds. Cover the ironing surface with a pressing sheet to protect it from any adhesive. Remove the paper and Iron on the lace to your garment or project. This product will fuse to most porous surface that can take heat. Always test the fabric or item in an inconspicuous spot for heat tolerance.

