

Cretan stitch

LEFT-HANDED



1 Work between two imaginary parallel lines. Come up at the bottom right, insert the needle a little to the left on the top line and come up directly below as shown.



2 Make sure the thread is under the tip of the needle before pulling it through. The stitch can be worked right to left as shown here, or top to bottom.



3 Insert the needle on the bottom line a little to the left of the previous stitch and come up directly above it, keeping the thread under the tip of the needle.



4 Pull the thread through to form the stitch. Cretan stitch is infinitely variable. Here the vertical stitches are quite short – longer ones create a different effect.



5 This is a line of reasonably evenly spaced Cretan stitch with short vertical stitches, giving a zigzag effect along the middle of the stitch.



6 Instead of spacing them apart, you can work the stitches very close together, even touching if you like, to form a solid, textured line. Finish by going down near the middle.



7 Completed line of spaced and closed Cretan stitch. Only the spacing has changed – the width and stitch sizes remain the same. This stitch is related to feather stitch.



8 Instead of working between parallel lines to make a straight border, you can fill a curved shape. Begin at the top and insert the needle on the outside line at the left.



9 Make the short stitch towards the centre of the shape and keep the thread under the needle, forming a small, curved stitch this time.



10 For the second stitch, insert the needle on the opposite side of the shape and come up towards the centre again, keeping the thread under the needle.



11 Continue alternating the stitches from side to side as you gradually fill the shape.



12 Keep the short stitches about the same length each time as the stitches lengthen as the shape widens.



13 Insert the needle at the middle at the bottom of the shape. These shapes are effective as a line of poplars or pine trees or as leaves of course.



14 The back of the work shows the short stitches behind the spaced and closed line of Cretan stitch at the top and the curved shape at the bottom.



15 For a more decorative effect, lace the stitch with a contrasting colour. Start at one end and without piercing the fabric, slide the needle up under the first stitch.



16 Pull the thread through gently. Now slide the needle down under the second stitch so the lacing thread goes around the foundation stitches.



17 Continue lacing the remaining stitches evenly. To finish, insert the needle through the fabric under the last foundation stitch.



18 Add further stitches to create a decorative composite border for crazy patchwork perhaps. Here, colonial knots and detached chain (lazy daisy) stitches are used.