

## Bullion Stitch



The **bullion stitch** is a wrapped stitch. It is almost identical to the French knot, except for the number of wraps. A French knot has 1-3 wraps, and a bullion can have as many as desired.

Bullions are commonly grouped together to form roses and rose buds as crazy patch embellishments. The number of bullion stitches in a rose is a choice of its creator. Larger roses require more bullions or smaller threads might also result in the need for more bullions. For example, this rose has twelve bullions to form its bud...which measures only 4/16 inch wide and 5/16 tall. It is stitched in single strand silk embroidery thread which is very thin. A larger thread, such as Perle or multiple thread floss would produce a larger rose; but would not produce such a delicate one.

### Creating the Bullion Stitch Rose — Option One

The bullion stitch is not difficult to learn; but it can be tedious if the wraps do not lay uniformly on the surface fabric. Practice is necessary. The stitch should be done with a needle having the same size shaft and eye diameter. A milliners or straw needle is the recommended choice for single threads and floss. Other needles can be used, but the results are often lumpy due to the strain on the loops being stretched around a larger eye, after being formed on the smaller shaft portion of the needle. However, this might be necessary if you are using Perle cotton or multiple strands of floss for larger roses. The rose will still be nicely done, just not precise or award quality stitching.

**Step 1:** Bring your needle up at A, pull needle and thread completely through.

**Step 2:** Bring your needle down at B and up again at C (same hole as made by A), but do not pull needle completely through. (Figure 1) Note: the distance between A and B will be the size of your bullion.

**Step 3:** Bring thread behind needle and wrap the thread around the needle in a clock-wise manner. The number of loops should result in a stack of loops equal to the distance between A and B. (Figure 2) Note: Keep the loops close together by scooting them down the needle towards the eye as you loop the thread.

**Step 4:** Place your thumb over the loops (Figure 3) and pull the needle and thread through the fabric in an upward motion. Tug slightly to tighten the loops onto the fabric without moving your thumb. (Figure 4)

**Step 5:** Use the needle to smooth out the loops and continue pulling the thread tail until you are happy with the bullion shape. (Figure 5) Note: This photo jumps ahead slightly, as one bullion is already completed. (it took me one bullion to realize I could operate the camera with my left hand)

**Step 6:** Needle down at the base of the bullion, near B to anchor the stitch. (Figure 6) Repeat Steps 1 through 6 until sufficient bullions have been made to create a rose, rose bud, or other decorative stitch using bullions. (Note: Page 2 has a suggested layout for bullions to produce a basic rose bud.)

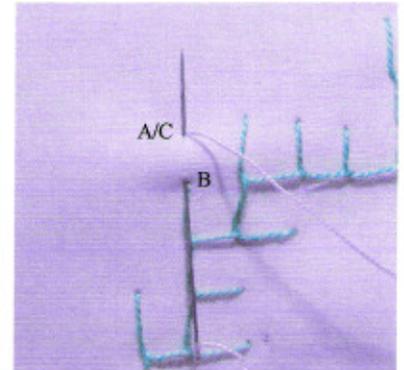


Figure 1

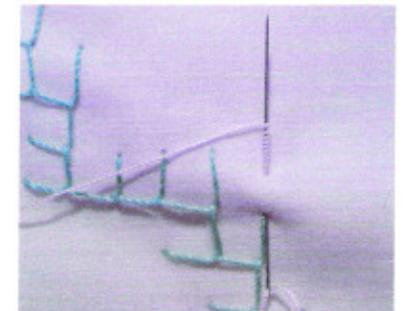


Figure 2



Figure 3

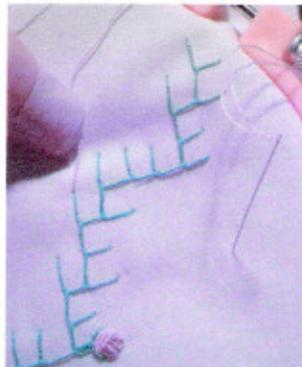


Figure 4

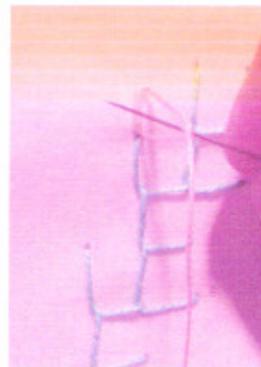


Figure 5



Figure 6

## Creating the Bullion Stitch Rose — Option Two

Some people find the stitch to be cumbersome to execute. If that is the case, try this slight change in Steps 3 and 4:

**Step 3:** Use your finger to hold the tip of the needle up in a vertical position. Bring thread behind needle and wrap the thread around the needle in a clockwise manner. The number of loops should result in a stack of loops equal to the distance between A and B. (Figure 2a) Note: Keep the loops close together by scooting them down the needle towards the eye as you loop the thread.

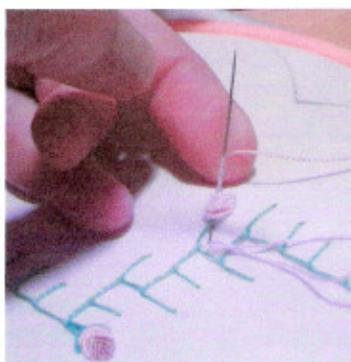


Figure 2a

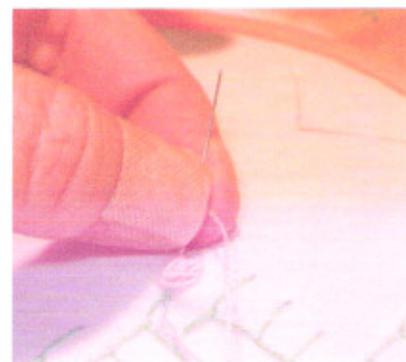


Figure 3a

**Step 4:** Pinch the needle and loops (Figure 3a) and pull the needle and thread through the fabric in an upward motion. Tug slightly to tighten the loops onto the fabric.

### Layout of a Budding Rose



Start with 2 bullions side by side.



Add a side bullion. Top should be slightly lower and the bottom should be past center.



Add a second side bullion. Top should be slightly lower and the bottom should be past center opposite from the previous one.



Continue adding side bullions, always drop top slightly lower than previous stitch. Add as many as is pleasing to your eye. Lastly, add one (or more) bullion that begin on one side and ends on the other with enough loops to act as a "scoop" to anchor the bud.

**Bullion Inspiration:** These photos are from [www.flickr.com](http://www.flickr.com) public access files.

