

Pillowcase Embroidery Projects

Embroidery, the act of adding stitches to fabric, has a long and rich history. Crafty types discovering embroidery have realized how easy it is to personalize clothing and home linens to make it their own. By learning a few stitches, you too can use color and design to liven up any fabric, including pillowcases.

Machine Versus Hand Embroidery

Modern sewing machines enable users to machine embroider designs in half the time. The problem with using a machine to embroider a pillowcase is that the case itself is difficult to maneuver under the needle. The seams must be either taken apart or the embroidery must be limited to the edges of the pillowcase. Consider adding a decorative border edge to a case this way, using thread in a color to match existing bed linens or use a contrasting color to liven up the edges.

Pillowcases can be embroidered by hand easily, although this method takes longer. Using an embroidery hoop, which holds the fabric still, and a needle and thread, the entire case is your canvas. The basic embroidery stitches, according to Aimee Ray in her book “Doodle-Stitch,” include outline stitches, such as the straight stitch; fill stitches, such as the satin stitch and decorative stitches, such as the blanket stitch.

Modern Design

In her book, Ray, as well as Jenny Hart in her book, “Sublime Stitching,” suggest using simple designs in embroidery projects versus the more complex embroidery patterns of the past. Consider stitching barnyard animals or a sun and moon in different colors on a child's pillowcase. Stitch designs of instruments on a pillowcase for a music lover, stitch books for a reader, flowers for someone who loves to garden, household pets for someone who has cats, dogs or birds or even initials for newlyweds.

Folk Art

Go back to your roots and discover new design possibilities. Folk art, the decoration that is used by cultures the world over to add design to everyday items, is another a great source of inspiration. Many cultures made use of bright, vivid colors in their designs. Flower motifs are universal in their appeal. Experiment with different flowers using crewel wool, a type of tapestry yarn, for a thicker texture in the design. Stitch barnyard animals, such as roosters and chickens in bright yellows and greens, repeating the pattern across the edge of the case. Or use Native American motifs, such as a turtle, sun and basket design in golds, greens and reds.

Doodle-Stitching; Aimee Ray; 2007

Sublime Stitching; Jenny Hart; 2006

Better Homes and Gardens Embroidery; Gerald Knox; 1978