



Blackwork Journey

Techniques

TQ0019

Guide to

Fabric, threads and needles

The eye of a needle!

The Working Environment by Liz Almond

NEEDLE, THREAD AND FABRIC – MAKING CHOICES!

Knowing which threads and needles to use for specific fabrics is important and this PDF aims to provide some basic information on the subject, based entirely on what I have found works for me!

So what is the fabric count?

The fabric count is the number of threads within a specific area. If there are a lot of threads, holes or blocks of thread within a specific length, then the thread count will be high and the design worked on a higher count fabric will be smaller. If there are fewer thread counts in a specific length, then the design will be larger.

How to count the threads:

If you have problems seeing the threads, I suggest you use a magnifying lens. Start by measuring 2.5 cm or 1 inch across the fabric and then use a pin to count how many threads, holes or blocks of thread there are within the 2.5 cm. This will give you the thread count. It is possible to buy a ruler designed for this purpose to identify the most common thread/stitches to inches. These usually cover 11, 14, 16, 18, 22, 28, 32 and 36 count fabric.

Do not assume that because the fabric says it is a specific count, that it is actually correct, so it is suggested that you check the count. There should be the same number of warp and weft threads to the inch if the design is to be even.

To find the correct size of material to use for a project consult the Fabric Calculator in Blackwork Journey. The calculator is in both centimetres and inches. Just follow the instructions, add the information and it will calculate the size of the fabric required.

Aida Calculator

How big is the design?	<input type="text"/>	stitches wide by	<input type="text"/>	stitches high
How much extra fabric on each side?	<input type="text"/>	inches		
What count is the Aida?	<input type="text"/>	squares per inch		
	<input type="button" value="Calculate Size"/>	<input type="button" value="Clear Form"/>		
The fabric should be <input type="text"/> inches wide by <input type="text"/> inches high <small>(Rounded up to the nearest inch)</small>				

Linen/Evenweave Calculator

How big is the design?	<input type="text"/>	stitches wide by	<input type="text"/>	stitches high
How much extra fabric on each side?	<input type="text"/>	inches		
What count is the linen?	<input type="text"/>	threads per inch		
How many threads will each X cover?	<input type="text" value="2"/>	threads		
	<input type="button" value="Calculate Size"/>	<input type="button" value="Clear Form"/>		

Fabric Calculator in inches

Aida Metric Calculator

How big is the design? stitches wide by stitches high
How much extra fabric on each side? centimeters
What count is the Aida? squares per inch centimeter

The fabric should be centimeters wide by centimeters high.
(Rounded up to the nearest centimeter)

Linen/Evenweave Metric Calculator

How big is the design? stitches wide by stitches high
How much extra fabric on each side? centimeters
What count is the linen? threads per inch centimeter
How many threads will each X cover? threads

The fabric should be centimeters wide by centimeters high.
(Rounded up to the nearest centimeter)

Fabric Calculator in metric measure

The chart will frequently show a design area in inches or centimetres. The calculator will give the minimum fabric size required, although you may wish to add additional material for mounting or framing.

For example, CH0326 Bedazzle:

Bedazzle

Author: Elizabeth Almond
Copyright: Elizabeth Almond
Grid Size: 124W x 124H
Design Area: 8.57" x 8.57" (120 x 120 stitches)

The design area is 8.57 x 8.57 inches (120 x 120 stitches). Using a 28 count evenweave fabric and adding the information required, the fabric required should be 13 x 13 inches. If you wish to add extra inches around the design, indicate this in the ‘How much extra fabric on either side?’ section of the calculator.

Linen/Evenweave Calculator

How big is the design? stitches wide by stitches high
How much extra fabric on each side? inches
What count is the linen? threads per inch
How many threads will each X cover? threads

The fabric should be inches wide by inches high
(Rounded up to the nearest inch)

Adding the correct information takes the guesswork out of fabric sizing!

Fabric, Thread and Needle Guide

An evenweave fabric is the most commonly used fabric for counted thread embroidery and has the same number of threads in each direction.

It can be used for cross stitch, pulled and drawn thread work. Canvas can also be suitable for counted thread techniques such as cross stitch, but is less suitable for pulled or drawn thread work because of the stiffness of the canvas. Depending on the fabric count, evenweave is both easy to see and use. Select a fabric count you can see to work on easily. When using a dark fabric, a white cloth placed on your knees will help to emphasise the holes.

Evenweave fabric may be made of cotton, a cotton mix or 100% linen. They each have their advantages and disadvantages, but I have underlined the fabrics I use most frequently from the Zweigart range. The Zweigart website carries the full range of colours available, but there has been a reduction in the lines carried over the past few years.

<http://www.zweigart.de>

Zweigart Cotton Evenweave



ZWEIGART

18 Count Davosa
20 Count Bellana
22 Count Fine Ariosa
22 Count Oslo
25 Count Colmar
25 Count Lugana
27 Count Linda
28 Count Brittney
28 Count Jazlyn
28 Count Trento
28 count Trentino
32 Count Lucan
32 Count Murano

Zweigart Linen Evenweave



ZWEIGART

18 Count Floba
20 Count Cork Linen
25 Count Floba
25 Count Dublin Linen
28 Count Cashel
28 Count Marne Linen
28 Count Quaker Cloth
30 count Linen Band
32 Count Belfast Linen
32 Count Floba
35 Count Floba
36 Count Edinburgh Linen
40 Count Newcastle Linen
55 Count Kingston Linen

Zweigart Canvas



ZWEIGART

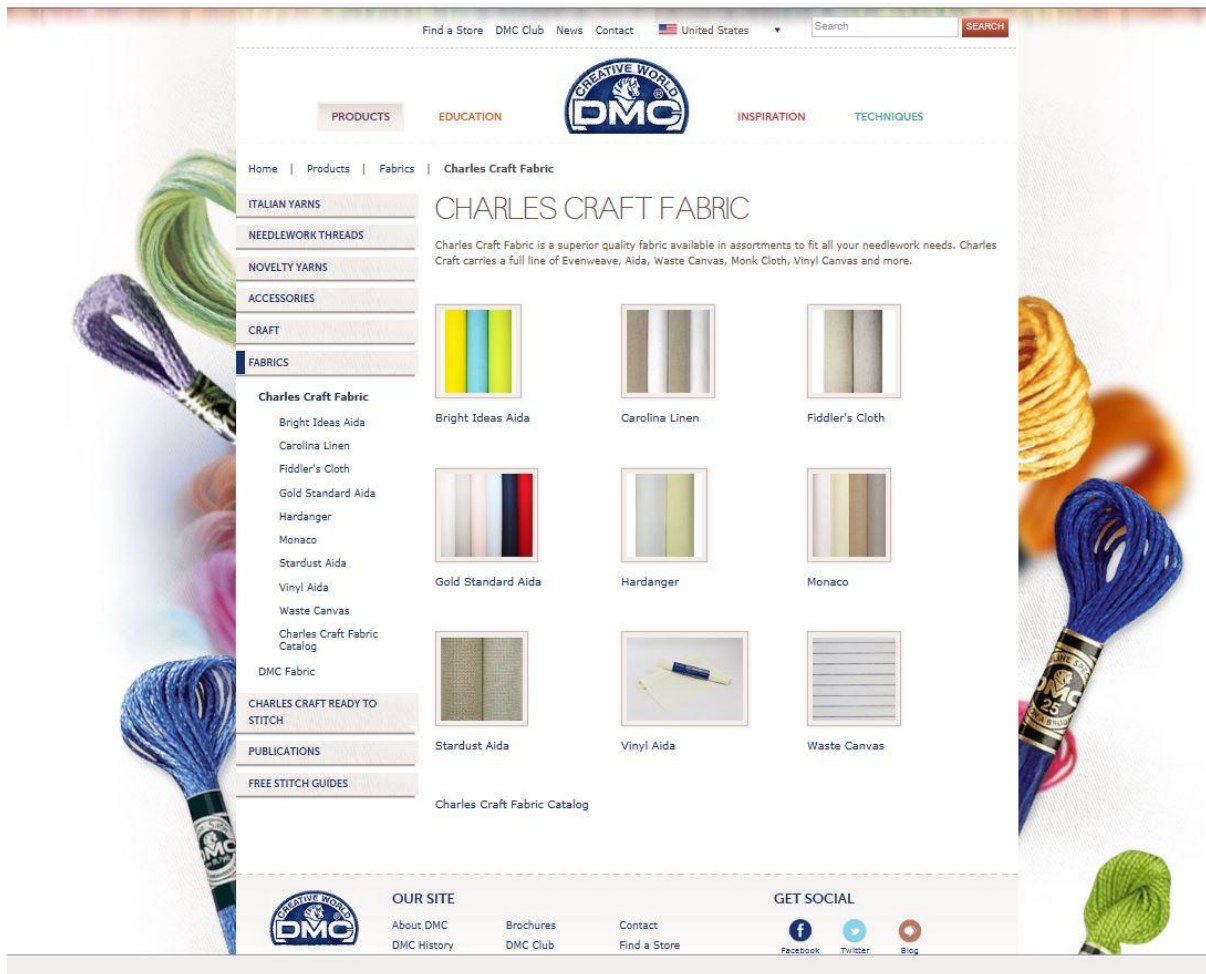
Cordova Canvas
Mono Canvas - Antique
Mono Canvas - White
Rug Canvas
Sudan Canvas
Tapestry Canvas - Antique
Tapestry Canvas - White
White Interlock Canvas



Extract from the Zweigart website. It is easy to navigate and lists all the products, colours and materials currently available.

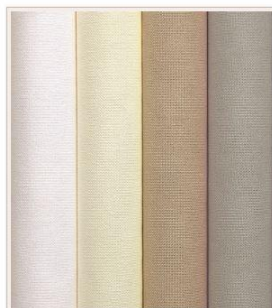
DMC Products

DMC also produce a wide range of embroidery fabrics using the name Charles-Craft-Fabric as well as their own.



Whilst they do not carry the same range of fabrics as Zweigart, they are readily available and of a very high quality. I especially like the Monaco range which I found easy to handle.

MONACO



PRODUCT HIGHLIGHTS

Charles Craft Monaco Evenweave is available in the following pre-cut sizes and colors:

- 28-count Monaco Evenweave 15" x 18" White
- 28-count Monaco Evenweave 20" x 24" White
- 28-count Monaco Evenweave 15" x 18" Antique White
- 28-count Monaco Evenweave 20" x 24" Antique White
- 28-count Monaco Evenweave 20" x 24" Tea Dyed
- 28-count Monaco Evenweave 20" x 24" Glass Blue

[Purchase Charles Craft Monaco Fabric online!](#)

[DETAILS](#) [COLORS](#) [CARE & WASHING](#) [HOW TO USE](#)

DETAILS

An easy to use Evenweave fabric with refined qualities and the ease of 100% cotton. Perfect for cross stitch, machine embroidery, punch needle, ribbon embroidery, crevel and stamped designs.

Monaco 28-count can be stitched over 2 threads. Made in USA.

<http://www.dmc-usa.com/Products/Fabrics/Charles-Craft-Fabric/Monaco.aspx>

As you explore different fabrics you will soon discover the ones that are most suited to your needs.

There are other manufactures of materials, but always choose a good fabric. Many hours will be spent on your embroidery, so your choice is important!

Quick Reference Guide to fabric, threads and needles

Fabric	Count	Thread	Needle
<i>Evenweave</i>	25	<i>Stranded cotton (3 Strands)</i> <i>Pearl cotton No 12</i> <i>Coton a Broder No 12</i>	<i>No.24</i>
	27/28	<i>Stranded cotton (2-3 strands)</i> <i>Pearl cotton No 12</i> <i>Coton a Broder No 16</i>	
<i>Aida</i>	11	<i>Stranded cotton (3 Strands)</i> <i>Coton a Broder No 16</i>	<i>No 24</i>
	14	<i>Stranded cotton (2-3 strands)</i> <i>Pearl cotton No 12</i> <i>Coton a Broder No 16</i>	
	16	<i>Stranded cotton (2 strands)</i> <i>Pearl cotton No 12</i>	
	18	<i>Stranded cotton (1-2 strands)</i>	
<i>Hardanger</i>	22	<i>Pearl Cotton No 5</i> <i>Pearl Cotton No 8</i>	<i>No 20</i> <i>No 24</i>
<i>Binca</i>	6	<i>Stranded Cotton (6 strands)</i> <i>Soft Embroidery Cotton</i> <i>Tapestry wool</i>	<i>No 20</i> <i>No 18</i> <i>No 18</i>
<i>Canvas</i> <i>Interlock, Mono</i> <i>single thread or</i> <i>Double Thread</i> <i>Canvas</i>	7	<i>Soft Embroidery Cotton (Single or double)</i> <i>Tapestry wool(Single or double)</i>	<i>No 18</i>
	10. 12. 13. 14	<i>Soft Embroidery</i> <i>Tapestry wool</i>	<i>No 18</i>
	16 & 18	<i>Stranded cotton (6 strands)</i>	<i>No 20</i>
		<i>Stranded cotton (5 strands)</i>	<i>No 22</i>
		<i>Stranded cotton (4 strands)</i>	<i>No 24</i>
	22	<i>Coton a Broder No 16</i> <i>Stranded Cotton (3-4 strands)</i>	<i>No 24</i>

These are the needles and thread quantities I use with specific fabric counts. The information will vary to suit the individual.

For general sewing:

Sharps



These needles are the most popular needle for general sewing:

Size 2, 3 and 4	suitable for medium to heavy fabrics
Size 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10	suitable for light to medium fabrics
Size 11 and 12	suitable for fine fabrics or creating small delicate stitches

Embroidery and Crewel



Embroidery needles have a long eye which makes threading the needle so much easier when using multiple strands of thread. The most popular sizes used to embroider are size 7 and 9. Because of their large eye these needles are suitable for general sewing. They are ideal for people who have difficulty seeing the eye of a needle.

Tapestry and cross stitch



These needles have a large eye and a blunt round point designed for the use in needlepoint, petit point, countered cross stitch and plastic canvas work.

Size 13, 14	Suitable for use when stitching on Binca or 6hpi Aida fabric.
Size 16, 18, and 20	Suitable for tapestry
Size 22, 24, 26 and 28	Used in cross stitch and petit point.

Eyesight will determine which needle is used. Use a needle you can see to thread and if necessary use a magnifying lens!

Just to recap, the needles I use are sharps, embroidery and crewel needles which have points and are used where the fabric has to be split and tapestry and cross stitch needles which have a blunt end.

With metallic threads it may be necessary to use a needle with a larger eye than usual to reduce the friction on the thread. The needle should pass comfortably through the fabric!

I hope this helps to resolve some of the difficulties when choosing different fabrics, threads and needles.

Happy stitching!

Liz

In the town of Szentendere, Pest, Hungary I visited a little museum which displays an exhibition of the Micro Art of Nikolai Syadristy. This picture of a needle's eye with its camels was taken through a microscope and gives a new dimension to a simple tool!

