

LACE TECHNIQUES

One of the primary uses for creating a lace effect in Stitch People portraits for wedding portraits, so the examples here show different styles of lacy wedding dresses and how you might portray them. Keep in mind, these techniques will be useful for lace effects in ANY attire - not just wedding dresses.

ABOUT LACE

When you consider creating a lace effect, take a look at the image of the lace, and ask yourself what *really* makes it look lacy. You might have to put on your abstract-thinking cap here for a minute, in a similar way you must when you're considering the eyes of your Stitch People characters, as explained on pages 6 - 7. The question there is - can you really tell what specific color the eyes are in a far-away family photo? No, not really. Generally speaking you usually only see darker areas where the eyes are, which is why I like to stitch Stitch People eyes using black floss.

The same kind of thinking applies with lace. Is it a kind of lace where you can see every single detail of a floral or geometric lace pattern? Probably not. Sometimes a larger, bolder lace pattern is more visible - and there are methods to represent that - but usually it's absolutely perfect to simply **allude** to the look of lace in your Stitch People portraits by creating non-specific texture and dimension. The building blocks we can use to create texture and dimension are manipulating color, changing stitch direction, and adding stitches.

1. MANIPULATING COLOR

There are a few ways you can manipulate color to your advantage:

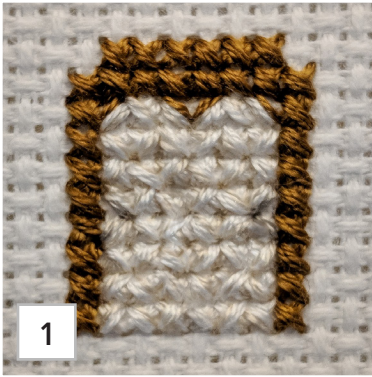
- Combine threads of floss with subtly different colors to encourage a multi-dimensional look
- Create a sheer lace effect by stitching the sheer areas with a color slightly lighter than skin-tone
- Add lace detail using a slightly darker or different color of floss

2. CHANGING STITCH DIRECTION

You've read a hundred times in this book that the way to keep your cross-stitch work looking clean is to be sure all the diagonals of all the stitches are consistent. Thus, a simple way to create a bit of a textured or scattered look that can allude to the presence of lace is to alternate the direction your diagonals. With every-other cross-stitch you complete, alternate the directions of the "under" diagonal stitches, and the "over" diagonal stitches. So, you can break my A-#1 rule, as long as you're breaking it ON PURPOSE to create a lace effect!

3. ADDING STITCHES

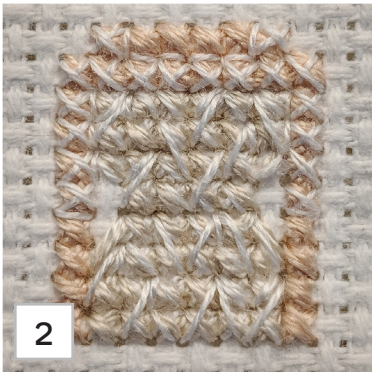
You can utilize other types of stitches, especially simple French knots and back stitches, to add lace-like dimension on top of your uniform cross-stitching. French knots are good for alluding to a rounder, floral lace motif, and back-stitches are good for alluding to a more randomized lace pattern.



EXAMPLE 1:

TECHNIQUES USED: Manipulating Color, Changing Stitch Direction

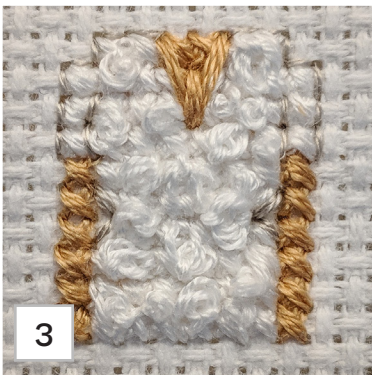
The dress was cross-stitched using a combination of threads: two white (DMC Blanc), and one light gray (DMC 822). The cross-stitches were created by **changing the stitch direction**, alternating the “under” diagonals and the “over” diagonals of each X stitch.



EXAMPLE 2:

TECHNIQUES USED: Manipulating Color, Changing Stitch Direction, Adding Stitches

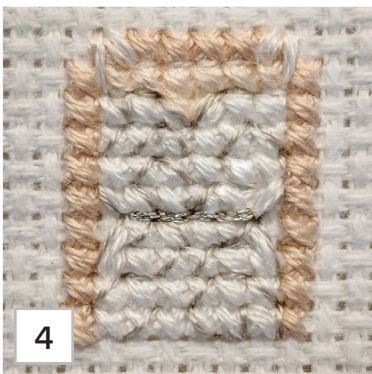
The dress was cross-stitched uniformly (not mixed, as above) using a combination of three threads: one white (DMC Blanc), one shade of light gray (DMC 3033) and another shade of light gray (DMC 822). Diagonal back-stitches of a 2:1 ratio were randomly created atop the cross-stitching using one strand of white floss. Over-top the skin-tone cross-stitches - on the chest and arms - one strand of white floss was used to create cross-stitches to give a **sheer lace effect**.



EXAMPLE 3:

TECHNIQUES USED: Adding Stitches

The dress was cross-stitched uniformly with three strands of white floss (DMC Blanc). **French knots** of a medium tension were created on top of the cross-stitches using two strands of white floss. One strand of gray floss (DMC 648) was used to define the edges of the sleeves and dress from the white Aida fabric using back-stitches.



EXAMPLE 4:

TECHNIQUES USED: Adding Stitches, Manipulating Color

The dress was cross-stitched uniformly with three strands of white floss (DMC Blanc). One strand of gray floss (DMC 648) was used to **create back-stitching** atop the white cross-stitches in a randomized pattern that roughly resembled the example image. A slightly-lighter-than-skin-tone floss (DMC 3770) was used to stitch the second-to-top line of the chest area to allude to a **sheer fabric**, contrasting the skin tone color (DMC 950). One strand of white floss (DMC Blanc) was used to define the tank-top style sleeves of the dress. The belt was back-stitched using one strand of DMC Light Effects floss in silver.



EXAMPLE 5:

TECHNIQUES USED: Manipulating Color, Adding Stitches

The skirt and white areas of the dress were cross-stitched uniformly using three strands of white floss (DMC Blanc). The arms and torso of the character were cross-stitched with a slightly-lighter-than-skin-tone floss (DMC 3862) to contrast the skin tone (DMC 898) and allude to a **sheer effect**. The bolder, chunky-style lace that overlays the sheer fabric is represented using two strands of white floss, cross-stitched and half-stitched on top of the sheer-colored cross-stitches. The skirt utilizes satin stitches atop the cross stitches to create a different skirt effect. The neckline is defined with one strand of back-stitched white floss.