

Framing Embroidery Designs



After paying exorbitant prices for “professionally framed” embroidery designs, I decided to frame my own designs. The framed picture depicted above is a “framed by myself” project. The design is the Bald Eagle Scene design from Embroidery Library, edited to become an appliqué design and then embroidered on a suitable background fabric. I left enough of the background fabric around the design to create an outdoor setting background. Not only was I thrilled with the end result of framing my own design, but I won first place in an embroidery competition with this project – it is always a great way to make you feel good when you win first place, isn't it?

Why did I choose to frame my own designs? The main reason, of course, is cost. But also my own tastes are taken into consideration, not what the framer thinks should be done. When I took this design into a framer for an estimate he decided that it should be put into a frame with three mattings and the frame size would be 22 inches by 28 inches. Now, unless you have a gallery in your house, that is far too large and imposing a size for this picture. And of course the cost of the matting alone was going to be \$146.00 plus taxes. At that point I didn't even ask about the cost of the frame!

Another reason for framing my own designs is again cost-related. With the lower cost of framing your own designs, you can afford to give these framed masterpieces to friends and relatives as gifts. For those who may want to sell their finished embroidered and framed pictures, the cost becomes reasonable

enough that the purchaser can afford to pay the price you are asking and you still will make a profit for your work.

When framing pictures there are a few things to be taken into consideration:

- The frame should enhance the image it surrounds; it should never compete for attention.
- Choose a suitable mat for the project, taking into consideration the colours you want to enhance or bring to the foreground. The outer or top mat should be a neutral colour and a lesser colour intensity than the picture. Additional inner mats will provide accents for colour coordination with the design or picture they are framing. In the bald eagle scene, if I had chosen a blue matting, the blue colours would overwhelm the eagle, but by choosing a brown matting, and then an inner off-white matting to break up the stark brown against the fabric, the matting enhanced the design.
- Wider mats enhance the design, creating a focus toward the picture.
- Narrow mats are usually distracting if you use a single narrow mat.
- One very important aspect of adding matting to a design is it also separates the picture from direct contact with the glass. The small air space prevents moisture build up and the development of mold and fungus in humid climates.
- The glass you use to complete the frame should be conservation glass. It may cost a bit more, but is well worth the extra cost. Do not choose anti-glare glass as it may cause the picture to seem blurry.
- Always complete your framing project by adding a dust seal, usually brown paper, stretched across the back of the frame, to prevent dirt and insects from damaging the framed design or artwork.

Supplies needed:

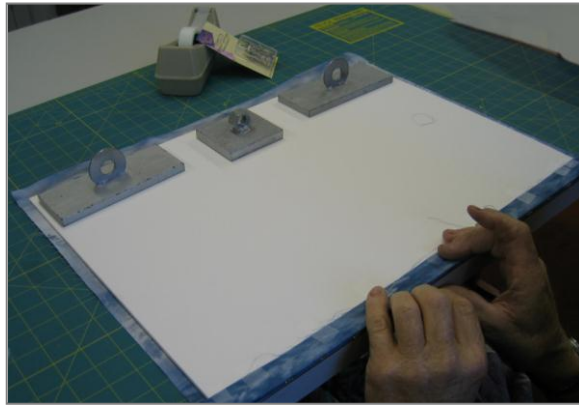
- Frame either pre-cut, ready made or framing strips. Check to make sure the back rim is deep enough to hold the mat, glass and backing.
- Matting pre-cut or if you do a lot of framing, optionally you can purchase a mat cutter. Always use acid-free matting.
- Acid-free tape

- Double-sided tape
- Acid-free foam board
- T-pins (usually purchased at sewing supply stores)
- Screws and picture wire to hang picture
- Glazing points or, alternatively, small tacking nails or brad nails to hold picture in place inside frame
- Glass (conservation glass is recommended)
- White glue
- Brown paper for backing
- Craft board or lightweight board for reverse side of picture.

Steps to Successful Framing

1. Prepare your embroidery design for framing, removing any excess backing, cutting the final embroidery design at least two inches wider than the final framed size of the design. An example would be if you wish to frame your design at a 16 by 20-inch size, then the fabric should be cut to a minimum of 18 by 22 inches.
2. Press your design carefully, being careful to:
 - a) use very little steam as it will pucker the embroidery and/or fabric
 - b) do not iron, but rather press the fabric by lifting the iron up off the fabric and moving it, rather than sliding it across the fabric in an ironing motion.
3. Cut a piece of acid-free foam board approximately 1/8 inch smaller than the inner edge of the frame.
4. Lay the fabric right side down on a table top (to prevent movement of the fabric, you may want to use a blanket or large towel under the fabric).

5. Stretch the fabric over the foam board, one side at a time, using the T-pins to adhere the fabric to the foam board. Place the T-pins approximately one to two inches apart. Smooth the fabric as you work, being careful not to stretch the fabric on the bias when smoothing. Notice how the frame is held steady with fabric weights at the top edge in the graphic below as pins are added to the bottom edge of the foam board.



6. Assemble the frame if it is not a pre-purchased frame.
7. Place the glass in the frame.
8. If using more than one layer of matting, adhere all matting pieces together with a very thin layer of glue.
9. Place the matting inside the frame.
10. Place the foam board with the embroidery design project attached to it on top of the matting. Check for placement of the design in the frame.
11. Remove the foam board from the frame.
12. Attach double-sided tape approximately $\frac{1}{2}$ inch in from the inner edge of the matting.
13. Lay the embroidery design foam board sandwich on top of the double sided tape. Using double-sided tape will not only adhere the foam boarded embroidery design to the matting, but also provide an extra “breathing” layer for the design.

14. Cut the craft board or lightweight cardboard to the correct size and place on top of the foam boarded embroidery design.
15. Place glazing points or brad nails around the inner frame to hold the project in the frame.
16. Cut a piece of brown paper approximately ½ inch smaller than the outer perimeter of the embroidery frame. Run a thin bead of glue around the edge of the frame approximately 5/8-inch inside the frame. Adhere the brown paper to the frame.
17. Measure approximately 1/3 of the way down from the top of the frame on each side. Mark this point with a pencil.
18. With an awl, punch in a small starter hole at each mark for the screw. Twist a screw into each hole.
19. Cut a piece of picture wire approximately 6 inches longer than the distance between the screws. Wind the picture wire around the screw three or four times to secure it to the screw. Check to make sure that the wire will not extend above the picture when it is hung.
20. Finally, on the reverse side of the frame add your signature, the date of the picture and other pertinent information.



Hint: Browse through antique stores or secondhand stores for frames. Quite often you will find a picture someone's Aunt Mabel painted that has a gorgeous frame around it. Remove Aunt Mabel's painting and you now have a very inexpensive frame to use.

Hang your picture and enjoy the results of your framing project and all the compliments you will receive!

Kathy

This lesson is created and published by Kathy Jones.

For more information on this and other lessons available, please visit my website at <http://www.flyingneedle.ca> or e-mail me [at kathy@flyingneedle.ca](mailto:kathy@flyingneedle.ca)

All Rights Reserved.