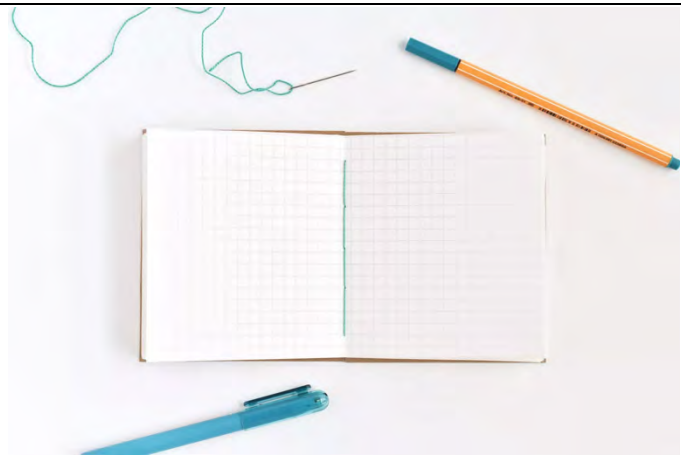


How to Do Coptic Stitch by Mollie Johanson

Mollie Johanson is a professional needlecrafter with over 10 years of hands-on embroidery, sewing, and knitting experience. She is the author of "Stitch Love: Sweet Creatures Big & Small." Mollie also designs and sells stitching projects, co-hosts a crafting podcast, and has taught online embroidery courses.

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The Spruce Crafts / Mollie Johanson



Project Overview

Working Time: 1 hr

Total Time: 1 hr

Yield: 1 bound book

Skill Level: Intermediate

Estimated Cost: \$10

Have you ever wanted to make your own book? Learn how to do coptic stitch and you can create blank journals and books with any kind of paper you want! It's a great way to recycle extra paper from notepads as well as a way to craft truly special gifts.

You can also show off beautiful fabric by wrapping the chipboard covers or embellishing the cardboard with hand-stitched patches.

There are lots of hand-stitched binding methods. Coptic stitch is similar to the chain stitch in embroidery. Instead of stitching on fabric, you form a chain while connecting the binding of the book!

Ready to learn a new DIY technique to impress? Grab your supplies and get started!

What You'll Need

Equipment / Tools

1 push pin or awl

1 ruler

1 pencil

Beeswax or thread protectant

1 needle

Materials

20 to 50 pieces paper

2 pieces chipboard

1 skein perle cotton embroidery thread

Instructions

Prepare the Pages and Covers

Before you start stitching, you need to prepare the paper pages and cardboard cover pieces. You can make these any size you want. You can also include as many pages as you want. It's best to start with at least 20 pieces of paper, but you can have many more.

Cut the paper pieces all the same size and twice as wide as you want the pages to be. Group the pieces into stacks of 4 to 8 pieces and then fold them in half. Each folded stack is called a signature.

Cut the front and back covers from chipboard so they are a little larger than the paper signatures.

Stack all the signatures and use a ruler and pencil to mark the folded edge with evenly spaced marks. Mark the covers with the same spacing.

Use a push pin or awl to make holes on the markings on the fold for each signature and on the cover pieces. Be sure to keep the folded pieces stacked and all going the same direction.

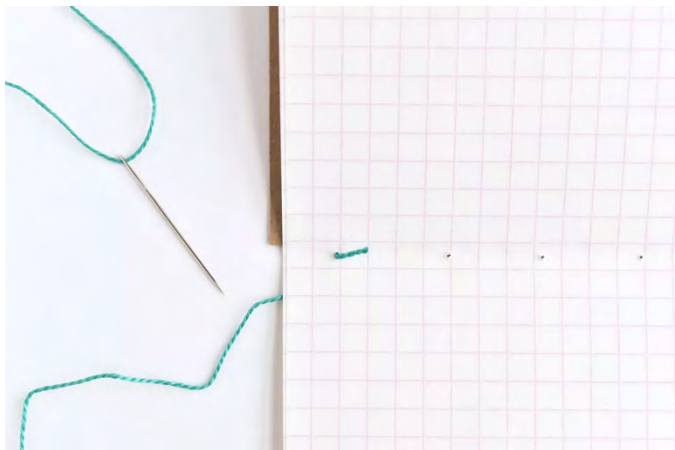
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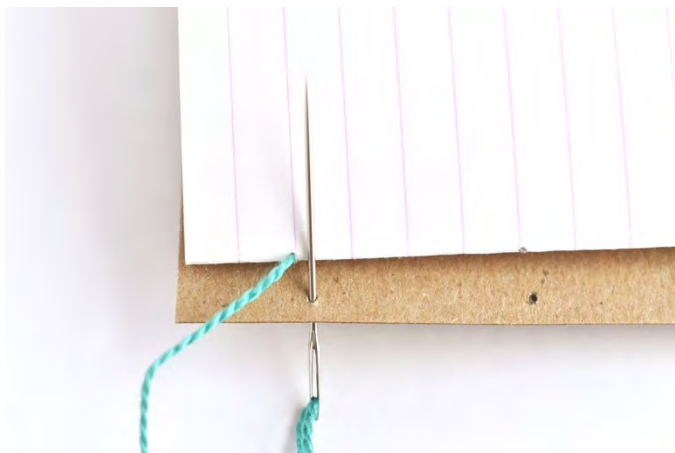
Cut Thread and Begin Stitching

Cut several yards of perle cotton embroidery thread. For stronger coptic stitch binding, measure the yardage and then double it. Coat the thread generously with beeswax. Thread your needle and tie a knot at the other end. If you are doubling the thread, double it before knotting.

Open the first signature and bring the needle through the first hole, going from the inside of the fold to the outside.



Place the signature on the back cover and bring the needle up through the back cover. The thread will wrap around the edge of the cover piece making a stitch.



Bring the needle and thread over the stitch and then slide the needle behind the stitch.



Insert the needle back in the same hole on the signature.

Bring the needle out through the second hole, then repeat these steps to the end. Stop before inserting the needle through the last hole.



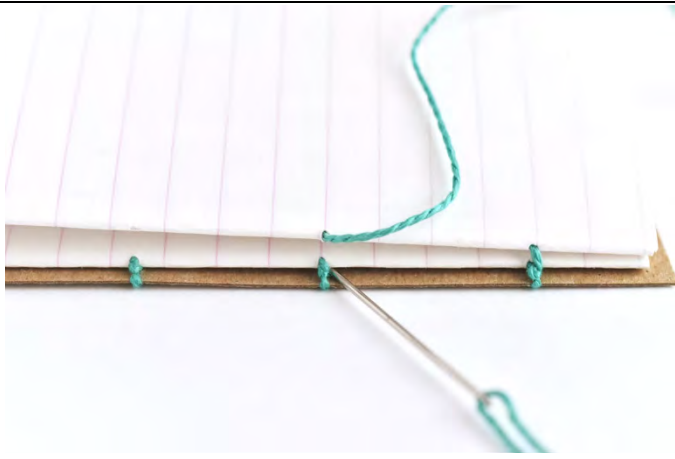
Continue Stitching the Binding

When you get to the last hole, instead of bringing the needle through the same hole in the signature, insert the needle in the next signature.

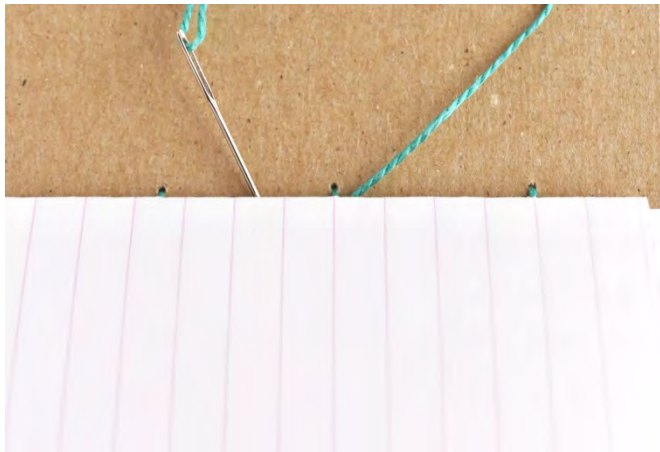


Bring the needle out through the next hole, then go around the previous stitch.

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If you have a curved needle, you can usually go around the stitch in one motion. However, for a regular needle, you will probably need to flip the signatures back so you can get the thread wrapped around behind that stitch.



Finish the stitch by inserting the needle in the same hole the thread came out of.

Repeat this process for each stitch on the binding. At the end, just like at the beginning of this step, insert the needle in the next signature.

As the stitches wrap around the previous stitches, they form a traditional chain like in embroidery. The difference is that these also hold the book together!



Continue Stitching Through Each Layer

When you have one signature left, instead of bringing the needle through the hole on the new signature, go down through the front cover.



Next, bring the needle through the previous stitch and pull the binding tight (but not so tight that you tear the cover!).



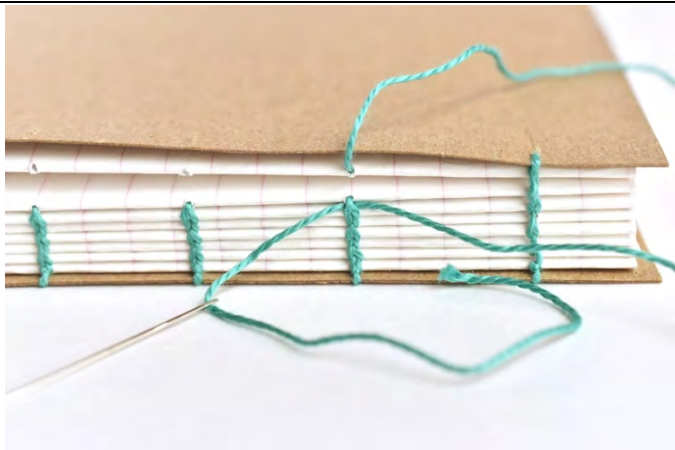
Pass the needle and thread in front of the new stitch you just created, then insert the needle in the last signature.



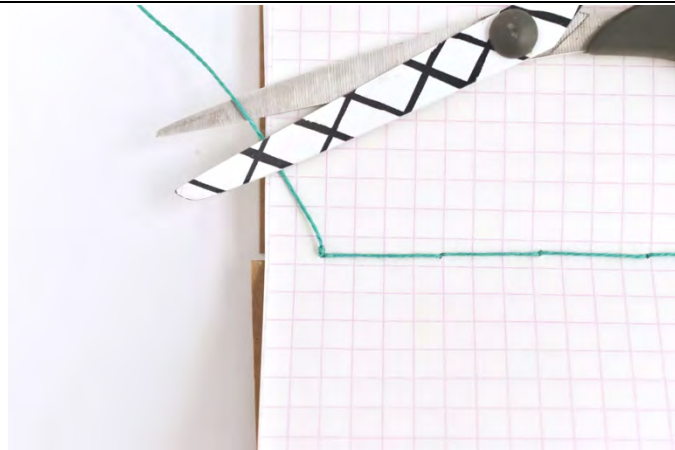
Continue Binding up Through the Pages

Bring the needle out through the next hole, then through the previous stitch.

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Go down through the cover and then through the newest stitch.



Handmade books made wonderful gifts, and they're also fun to use for yourself. Because you can customize them, you can use different types of paper, making them perfect for making your own bullet journal.

You can also add some flair to the outside! One fun way to add decoration is with embroidery on the cardboard covers. You can use your favorite stitches and add all kinds of fun designs!

Make a small book to learn the steps, then start making bigger books and trying more techniques!



Pass the needle and thread in front of the stitches and then insert the needle in the signature.

Repeat all of step five along the binding for the last signature and cover.



Trim the End of the Thread

When you reach the end, tie a large knot on the inside of the signature and then trim the thread.

If you run out of thread at any point, you can do this as well. Simply bring the thread into the signature and end it off. Then start a new length of thread with a knot and come out through the next hole.

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