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# Dancing Ballerina Hoop

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Sometimes the simplest ideas can turn out to be surprisingly effective. A single back stitched line and a fluff of delicate pink tulle add up to a ballerina hoop that's easy enough for even a total beginner to try.

I've mounted my ballerina in a large (10") hoop to increase the feeling of space and elegance - she was stitched on felt rather than linen as I like the contrast of the slightly fuzzy felt with the crisp tulle and the slight sheen of the stitched line.



## Materials

- 14" square white or natural coloured wool blend felt or linen/cotton or other fabric suitable for hand embroidery
- Small piece of pink tulle or net about 6" x 4" though the dimensions don't need to be exact.
- DMC stranded cotton floss in shade 310 black
- Pale pink or white sewing thread for gathering tulle

## Method

*Use two strands of floss throughout*

- Iron your background fabric well before beginning.
- Position the design within your hoop using the photograph as a guide.
- Design is stitched in back stitch.
- When finished press lightly on the reverse. Fold your tulle into 3 horizontally and gather along the top edge. Stitch to ballerina waist and trim into a semi-circular skirt shape.

# A Little Look at Back Stitch

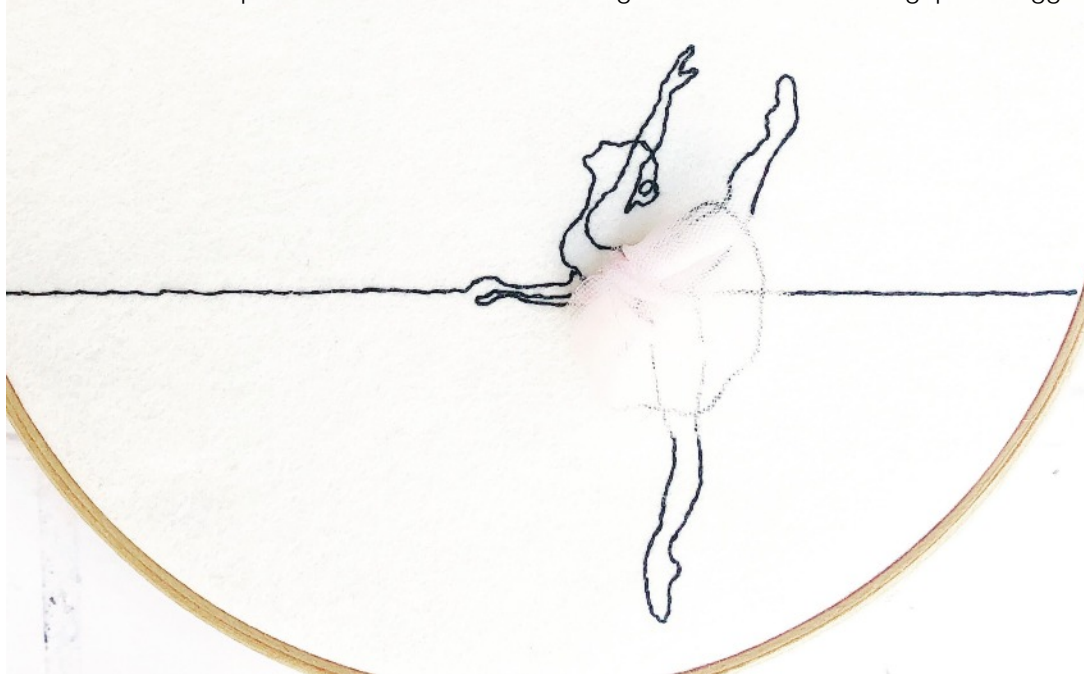
This is an outline stitch and is the best stitch to choose for making long straight lines, but can also be used for curves, though it's not as smooth as stem stitch when curving.



Back stitch is worked from right to left. Bring your needle out a short distance from the beginning of the line you want to stitch (see the arrow in the diagram above). Then insert it back through the fabric at the beginning of your line - effectively taking a step "back" - and bring it forward again an equal distance forward from where you first started. You are actually taking along stitch forward beneath your fabric, then a short backward stitch on the right side - joining with the previous stitch.

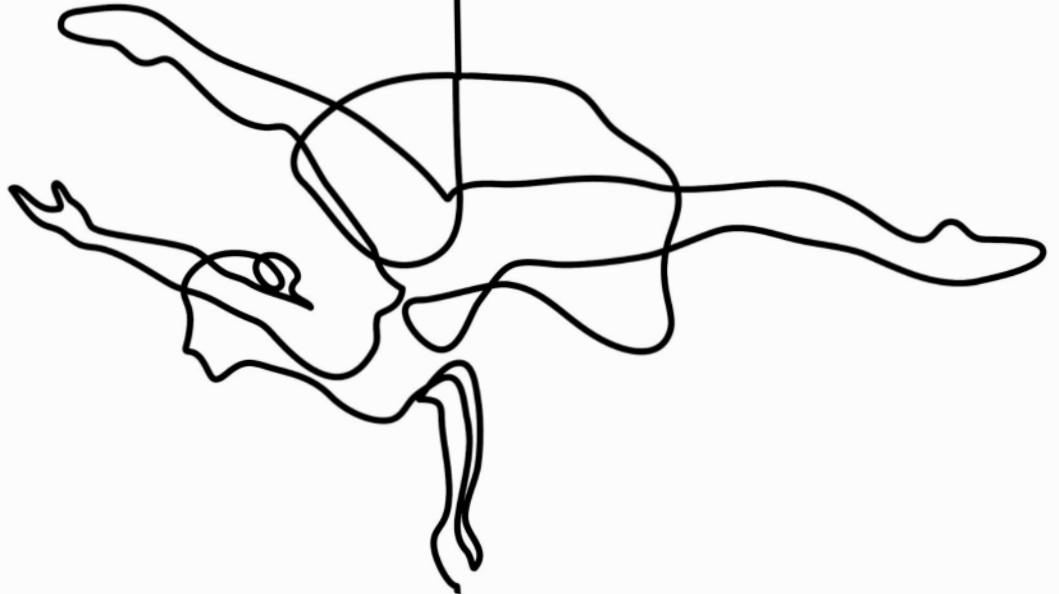
This is a very easy stitch to learn, and so is perfect for beginners, but it does take a little practice to achieve perfectly even, smooth stitches.

The method of stitching I've described above is perfect for working back stitch in the hoop where straight even stitches are required. It's very important that you bring your needle in and out of the fabric in the same place in order to achieve a straight smooth line with no gaps or wiggles.



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Design is the right size and also reversed to suit your preferred method of transfer.



Why do we love to stitch? After all you can purchase mass-produced textile items at many high streets stores for very little cost. These days handmade means something special - a unique item created with love, a gift from the heart, not one that can be bought. Hand stitching is also a great way to personalise an item, or perhaps to breathe new life into an old favourite that has seen better days.

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*Helen xx*



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