

Supplies
Thread
Fabric

Tools
Needle

You have cut out your fabric, have learnt to thread your needle, and you are ready to sew, but how do you start sewing or stitching with your thread?

Sometimes when you stitch or sew, you need to start with a knot. It is good to start with a knot when you are sewing on buttons, sequins and other bulky items, as this stops them being pulled off more easily. When you are sewing bulky or puffy items, like a cushion, or softies or plushies (stuffed 'toys') you can usually use a knot.

Other times it is better to start with a tail - a piece of thread with no knot. If you are stitching flat items, especially pictures that will be framed, and things like cross-stitch, long stitch and tapestry, it is better to use a tail to start, as a knot will not sit flat, and can make a bump on your finished work.

Here we show you two different ways to start a thread - how to start with a knot, and how to start with a tail.

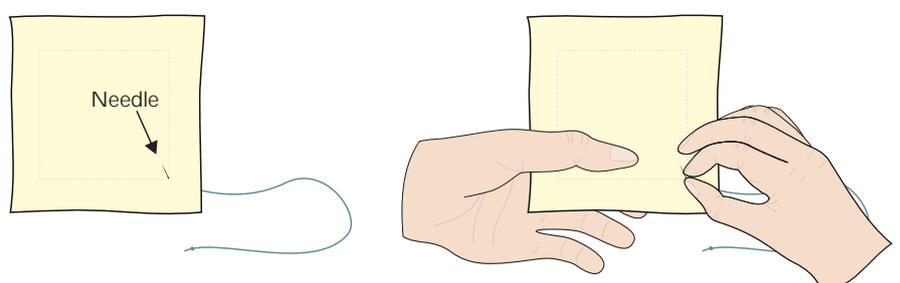
Before You Start

- Your fabric will need to be cut to shape and size ready for stitching with the pattern traced on.
- You will need a needle that has already been threaded. Instructions for [threading a needle](http://www.imaginemakebelieve.com) can be found at [imaginemakebelieve.com](http://www.imaginemakebelieve.com).
- If you are using more than one thread, use them all at the same time using the instructions below. Make sure all the ends are lined up before stitching.
- When stitching or sewing, have the needle in the hand that you normally write or draw with and hold the fabric with your other hand.
- Choose a place on the design to start stitching. A corner is sometimes a good place to start. You could also choose to start in an area up the top and work down through the design, or start in the middle and work out from there.

How to Start with a Knot Instructions

- Start with a [knot in the end of your thread](http://www.imaginemakebelieve.com) - instructions can be found at [imaginemakebelieve.com](http://www.imaginemakebelieve.com).

1. With the knotted end and threaded needle, come up with the needle through the back of the fabric in the place you have decided to start.

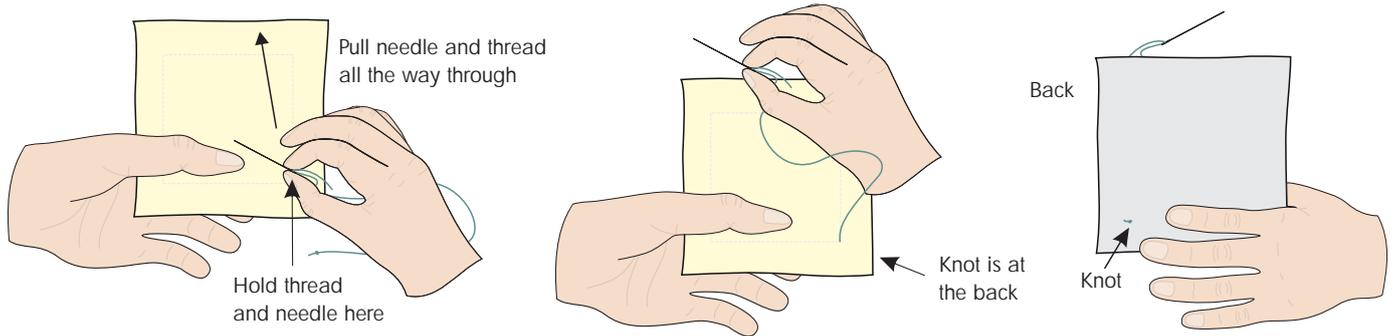


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2. Pull the needle through the fabric, making sure you hold the needle and the thread at the eye (the hole in the needle), and keep pulling until the thread is all the way through and the knot stops it from going further.

If you don't hold the needle and thread at the eye, the thread may pull out from the needle.

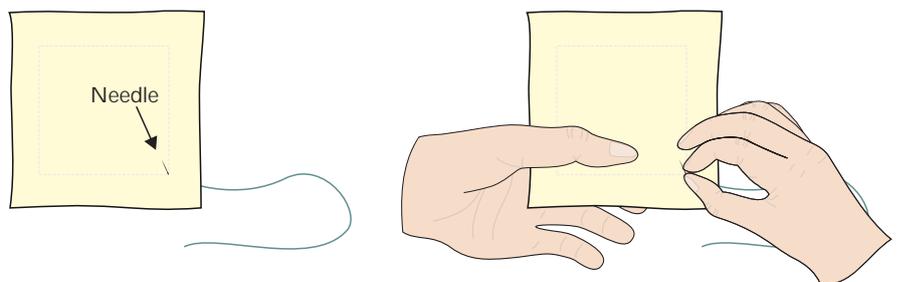


Now you are ready to do your first stitch!

How to Start with a Tail Instructions

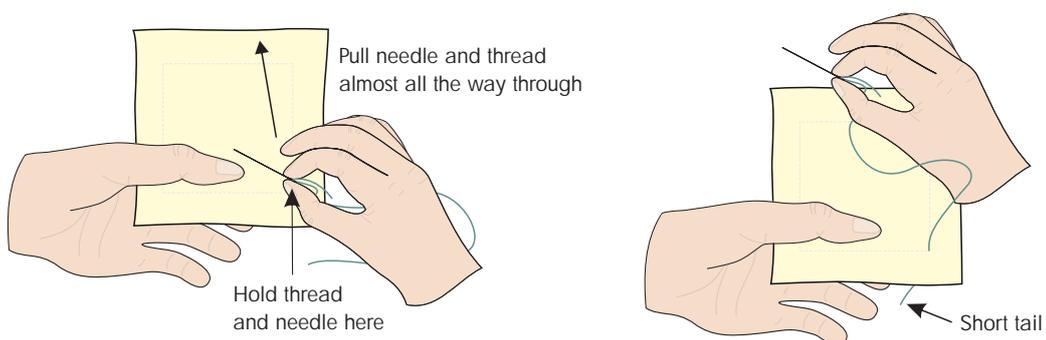
- There should be no knot in the thread.

1. With the threaded needle, come up with the needle through the back of the fabric in the place you have decided to start.



2. Pull the needle through the fabric, making sure you hold the needle and the thread at the eye (the hole in the needle), and keep pulling until the thread is almost all the way through, leaving a short tail 2 to 3 cm ($\frac{3}{4}$ to $1\frac{1}{4}$ inch) long.

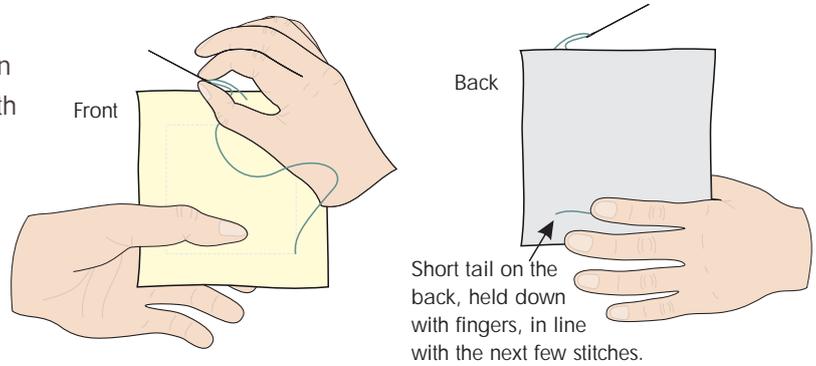
If you don't hold the needle and thread at the eye, the thread may pull out from the needle.



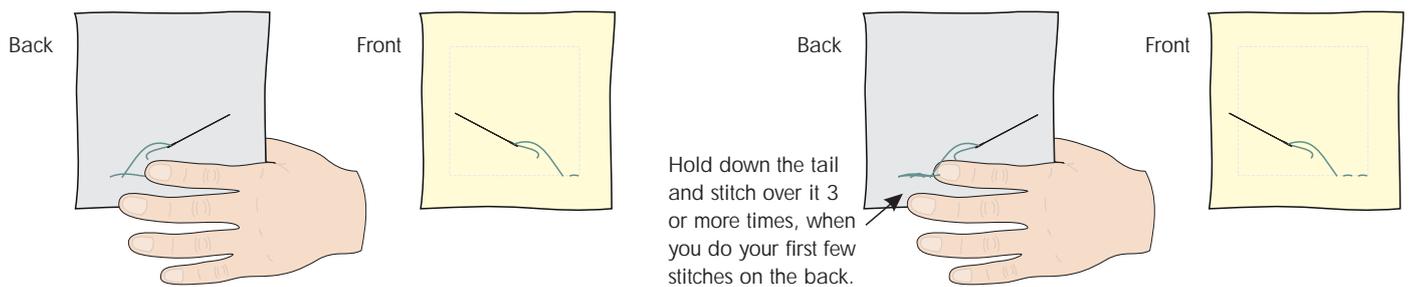
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3. Hold the short tail on the back of the fabric in line with the next few stitches you will do, with the hand you do not write with.



4. Do your first few stitches following the design or pattern on the front, making sure that the stitches on the back cover the tail. This will hold the tail down and stop the stitches coming undone.



5. Once you have covered the tail with some stitches to hold it down, you can then stitch the rest of your design.

