

“Big Stitch”

Smoky Mountain Quilters October 2009 – Melissa Carter

The term Big Stitch was coined by Jo Walters, but the utility or international stitch as it is also known, has been around for as long as quilting itself.

Utility quilts have been made by quilters throughout American history as a way to make quilts more quickly. In the past, ordinary string was sometimes used with just enough stitches to hold backing, batting and quilt top together securely.

Using a combination of sashiko and regular quilting, the stitch is larger on top than on the bottom. The stitch is designed to be seen, not hidden, showing off the quilting with a thick thread of contrasting color and a large stitch.

Thread: I like to use #8 pearl cotton because it is strong and has a lovely sheen. This technique is great for old-fashioned-looking scrap quilts and folk art projects. It's also great for flannel quilts. Some of my favorite colors to use to give that antique look are: gold, black, taupe and natural.

Needle: Size 5 or 6 Betweens with eyes big enough to carry a thick thread.

Start with a single knot hidden an inch away from where you want to start. The knot can be buried by poking your needle on both sides of the knot to break the tension. I have good results with scratching the knot.

Now make your stitches longer than usual, approximately 4 to the inch with only a small stitch in the back. I can only do this one to two stitches at a time – no filling up your needle with these stitches.

Have fun with this. It doesn't take near as long as regular quilting, and will give your quilt a kind of “folksy” look to it. Consider it next time you want to do more than tying, but don't want to do a regular quilt stitch.

Applique – Bridget Matlock

Supplies:

Freeze Paper by C. Jenkins Necktie Company

Best Press (starch/sizing)

Fusible Thread by YLI

Fusible Batting by Hobbs

Invisible Thread by YLI (machine appliqué top thread)

Invisifil by Wonderfil (machine appliqué bobbin thread)

Size #8 Microtex Machine Needles by Schmetz

Parchment Paper by Reynolds

Very important to carefully cut out appliqué shape on freezer paper as any inaccuracy will produce a less than perfect pressed edge. Iron freezer paper appliqué shape to wrong side of fabric. Free hand cut around appliqué shape adding 1/4" seam allowance. Spray fabric with "Best Press". Turn edges using iron of choice. Apply fusible thread using parchment paper and iron (to avoid pins/distortion). Stitch on appliqué using method of choice. Cut away back and use orange stick to assist with freezer paper removal. For trapunto look, apply fusible batting using parchment paper to protect iron. Beginners might want to consider using prints as they are more forgiving if your appliqué lines are not perfectly executed.

Peeled Back Patchwork – Judy Gearhardt

Judy used the book "Peeled Back Patchwork Curves Without Piecing" by Annette Ornelas. Ms. Ornelas website is: <http://www.southwindquilts.com/>