



PUNCH NEEDLE

The "punch needle" technique was originally developed in the USA from the "rug hooking" technique.

The punch needle is a hollow decorative stitching needle with which the thread is embroidered onto the fabric from the top. This creates loops on the back side, in which the height of the loop is determined by the height of the needle.

The terms "front side" and "back side" are not used with this technique, since both sides can be used as the front side and combined with one another. With the punch needle, one works on the "flat side," while the "loop side" forms on the back side.

The flat side is much clearer and more detailed in image. The loop side, on the other hand, is softer yet also more robust.

THE MATERIALS

- Straight-grain fabric with holes:
ZWEIGART® Monks Cloth (3528 / 53)
ZWEIGART® Klostern (3882 / 99, 334)
ZWEIGART® Tula (3991 / 99, 100, 334)
ZWEIGART® Floba (1198 / 53)
- (Pure virgin) wool*
- Oxford needle*
- "No-slip hoop" embroidery frame
or gripper frame*

*available from www.dkw-construction.de

THE NEEDLE

The original Oxford needle is best for punching. It is more expensive than other punch needles on the market, but it is much more comfortable to hold than other needles and the quality of the workmanship is higher.

The Oxford needle comes in two gauges and five lengths, in which needle 8 has the longest and needle 14 the smallest needle shaft: Oxford needles 8, 9 and 10 are available in thick and thin, while Oxford needles 13 and 14 only come in thin. The needle used depends on the thickness of the wool. The following generally holds true: The smaller the number of the needle, the longer the loops will be.

THE FABRIC

Patches, bags, belts and small pictures can be punched with a fine needle on Item 3882 Klostern (well-suited to beginners) or Item 3991 Tula. The current Punch Needle Rug Hooking books, presenting wall hangings, cushions, chair and bench covers, footstools, carpets and bags, usually require larger needles (such as an Oxford punch needle), carpet wool and a soft underlying fabric. Monk's Cloth Item 3528 or 1198 Floba are best used for this purpose.

THE WOOL

It is best to use pure virgin wool. This becomes matted over time, making the model highly robust and durable and eliminating the need for adhesive on the back side. Other materials can also be used, but this may make the model less robust and may cause the fibres to become matted.

THE FRAME

The fabric must be stretched taut across the frame. For that reason, only a good, round embroidery frame with spring-and-groove connection is needed. A gripper frame can be used as an alternative.

The base frame for the gripper frame will have to be built on your own. The instructions are available free of charge from dkw-construction; the gripper strips as well as the embroidery frame can also be had there.



THE TECHNIQUE

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Tighten the fabric in the frame

The fabric should be tightened so that it is quite taut – almost like a drum – so that it does not slip while being worked on and so that as much wool as possible can be pressed into the in-between spaces. This way, the wool will be seated in the mesh quite firmly. The threads of the fabric should be at a 90-degree angle to one another.

Draw on pattern

The patterns should be drawn on with a black marker while the fabric is under tension. This should not be done before the fabric is tightened in the frame, because the fabric will shift slightly when put under tension, and cannot be corrected afterwards.

Thin markers do not make much sense here, since the lines are too fine and therefore cannot be punched in great detail. The thickness of a felt-tip marker approximately reflects the punched wool width.

Punching

Thread the thread into the needle. The wool should be very loose in the process. From the top, pierce through the fabric with the needle until it stops. Then pull the needle upwards and, just above the fabric, pierce it into the next hole after a short distance, and so forth. Loops will form on the back side of the fabric.

The shaft height of the needle determines the length of the loop.

Stitch gauge:

6 stitches per inch:

An edge of 6 stitches per inch should be punched for borders and any place where two colours come together.

4 stitches per inch:

All areas which are filled are punched with 4 stitches per inch.

Change in colour:

Cut off the thread just above the last stitch punched and push it through on the loop side. Start with the new colour in the same hole.

Processing

Embroider all thread ends on the loop side and cut them off short.

Forcefully go over the loop side with a scissors handle to get out all of the hidden thread ends and then cut them off.

For sharp contours between changes in colour, “part” the punched colour areas with a knitting needle or a modelling stick. Any missing loops can now be punched afterwards.

Then lay a wet bath towel onto the loop side and iron it thoroughly with steel so that the fabric loosens up and the loops can unfurl nicely.

Sewing

The model can then be sewn in normally. In the process, the edges can be sewn in directly along the first loop line.

Cleaning & upkeep

The finished model can be washed in the washing machine or by hand without trouble.

This is because the fibres of the pure virgin wool mat together through the washing process and the stress they put on one another, making them robust and durable.

For that reason, no adhesive is needed on the back side of the model.

If other types of wool are used, then the model should be cleaned more carefully, since the wool fibres do not mat together as much (or at all), and the loops might fall apart.