Hi Stitch Cutie, we are Julie and Brittany, the Mother-Daughter Duo of Stitches of Love Quilting! We create fun and easy-to-follow applique quilt and quilt-based project clubs for both beginners and experts alike. We absolutely love bringing the joy of quilting straight to your front door.

Stitches of Love combines the modern convenience of laser cut applique pieces with the forever-adorable handmade qualities of traditional quilting. We offer several clubs with different products; why not try a few? Our products and projects change with the season, and we promise to bring you a new and exciting craft experience. Happy stitching,

Julie & Brittany
SELECT YOUR FAVORITE STITCH

Before you get started stitching, you will want to pick your favorite buttonhole stitch. Traditionally, the buttonhole stitch went forward and back, then took a bite to the left, a bite back out to the right, and then repeated the process. The stitch on the side (forward and back) and the bite (in and out) were typically the same length/width.

Most every machine has this traditional buttonhole stitch and it is usually signified with heavier lines on the stitch selection guide. This stitch looks great, but it is difficult to master. Why? Because it is difficult to control the location where that backward stitch will happen. For example, around a curve it could take that backwards stitch and cause a random stitch to poke out onto the background of your project (see image A below). This stitch is usually depicted by a thin line diagram on the stitch selection guide of your machine.

JULIE’S PREFERRED BUTTONHOLE STITCH

My preferred buttonhole stitch takes two or three stitches on the side and then bites in and out before moving forward again. This stitch does not take a stitch backwards at anytime. The advantage to this stitch is that you are in better control as the feed dogs are always moving forward on your project. See image B below to see an example of how a circle might look with this stitch.

![Diagram A](imageA.png)

![Diagram B](imageB.png)
SELECT YOUR THREADS

Another very important part of stitching is your thread. Different threads make machine applique feel just like playing and can definitely change the look of your project.

My favorite thread combination for a buttonhole stitch is a 30 wt Sulky in the needle and a 50 wt Sulky in the bobbin. I use this combination of thread on several of my machines and I never have to adjust the tension ... it works great every time! Why is this my favorite thread combo? Because the upper thread is heavier, so it gives the outer edge of the applique a more dimensional look.

The same buttonhole stitch with a lighter thread in the needle leaves the piece with a flatter, less dimensional look. If your machine only does the more traditional buttonhole stitch with the backwards stitch, using a lighter thread in the needle is good. Why? Because that backwards stitch will end up doubling the thread and therefore will give you the same dimensional look.

TIP: Use a 30 wt Cotton Thread in your needle and a matching 50 wt Cotton Thread in your bobbin with your favorite buttonhole stitch. This thread combo works well with a size 90/14 needle. There is no need to adjust tension to use this thread combo.

SELECT YOUR STABILIZER

Stabilizer is a very important part of machine applique because it makes your stitches look so much nicer. A stabilizer supports the applique stitch while you are stitching, but remains in the project only temporarily. You will want a stabilizer that is easy to remove. I like to use a tear away stabilizer as it is completely removed from the stitches and the project.

TIP: Sulky Tear-Easy Stabilizer is my favorite choice and it doesn’t distort your stitches when you remove it from your project!
BUTTONHOLE STITCH TECHNIQUE

Now that you have your buttonhole stitch, your threads and your stabilizer picked out, it is time to talk technique. You always want to keep your needle to the right edge of the applique piece. You want the needle to pierce just at the very outer edge of the applique piece. If the needle pierces on the edge of your fabric, and not to the outer edge of it, your piece will likely look frayed.

A correct stitch bites into the fabric at a right angle from the needle position. Take a look at circle C. The needle was not at a right angle from the edge of the fabric. See how the stitches slant? That means the needle wasn’t at a right angle from the center point of the circle. Now look at circle D. Each stitch points directly to the center point of the circle. Another way to think about this … the proper stitch on any shape is perpendicular to the outer edge of the shape.

The easiest way to make proper stitches is to be able to see where the position of the needle is at all times. For this reason, an open toe presser foot is recommended. Bottom line, you can make really pretty stitches if you can see where your needle is!

You will need to stop and pivot a lot while you are buttonhole stitching. Having a knee lift makes this so much easier. You always want to pivot with your needle down in the outside of the shape. This ensures your bite stitch will always be together. (If it isn’t, the bite in and out will form a “v” shape. See image E.) To see a detailed example of the correct way to stitch, head to our Youtube Channel (youtube.com/stitchesoflove) and navigate to any buttonhole stitch video.
Now that you made a beautiful stitch, you want to be certain it will stay secure. The most fail proof method is to leave a tail of thread and pull the top thread to the back. I keep a large eye needle handy and thread the top thread through it, take a stitch to the back and knot it off with the bobbin thread. Snip the tail close and viola! Stitch security! On quick projects that I know will not get repeated washings, I will use a tack stitch or locking stitch with the auto-cutter and skip this step of securing my stitches.

Happy stitching!  Julie Love

Let’s get social!

We invite you to join the fun on social media! Connect with us and other stitchers on Facebook and Instagram where we post images and live videos with stitch tips and tutorials several times a week. If you’re a club member, we’d love for you to share your progress as you make your blocks each month so we can see! Our YouTube Channel is full of fun demos, chit chats, and stitching fun. Can’t wait to see you there!
Extra Notions to Love

We carry a range of companion products to enhance your quilting experience. Visit StitchesofLoveQuilting.com to learn more and purchase!

**12” by 18” Precision Fusing Mat Set**

This set of two applique mats is an all-in-one no mess applique system. Use the non-slip mat to easily build your applique units and the Teflon coated mat to protect your iron when pressing appliques into position on your fabrics.

**CutterPillar Glass Mat for Applique and Crafting**

This is absolutely game changing for the world of applique! No need to carefully move your applique units from your light pad to your pressing surface. You can safely iron your applique units directly on the Glass Mat which sits upon your light pad.

**CutterPillar Glow Premium Cordless Light Pad**

This light pad illuminates your applique placement guide with three different light levels and works great with the Glass Mat and Fusing Mat Set for accurate applique. Plus, this light pad includes a non-slip, self-healing cutting mat so you can easily trim your blocks without moving to a larger cutting surface.

**SteamFast Travel Iron**

This iron heats quickly and is great to use when building applique units without burning your fingers! It’s a must-have for machine embroidery as well because you can easily iron your applique pieces within your hoop.
12” by 16” Steady Betty
You will be delighted with your pieced blocks when you press them on your Steady Betty as there is no stretching or distortion of your blocks!

Sulky Tear-Easy Stabilizer
This stabilizer is soft, lightweight and tears away without distorting the stitches you worked so hard to make perfect!

Organ Needles Size 75/11
Your embroidery machine will sing the perfect tune with this needle and the Sulky 40 wt Rayon Thread. Pop in a pre-wound bobbin and you are good to go!

Organ Needles Size 90/14
This needle size is great for use with a Sulky 30 wt Cotton Thread for your needle and a Sulky 50 wt Cotton Thread in your bobbin. This combination creates the perfect buttonhole or applique stitch!

Perfect Scissors by Karen Kay Buckley
These will be the scissors you guard from everyone else in your house! They are sharp to the tip of the blade, their soft handles are comfortable on your hands and the serrated blade cuts like a dream.

Sulky 40 wt Rayon Thread Kits
These sets include thread colors for your regular embroidery machine. These are the thread sets for the Block of the Month Plus Embroidery Files Programs.

Sulky 30 wt & 50 wt Cotton Thread Kits
These sets include thread colors for both your needle and bobbin to compliment the stitching on your regular sewing machine with your favorite buttonhole or applique stitch. We recommend you use the 30 wt Cotton Thread in the needle of your sewing machine with the coordinating 50 wt Cotton Thread in your bobbin.