

Guide to Contour Print

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Introduction

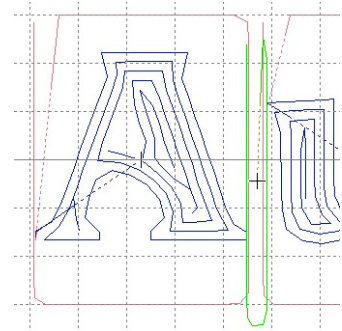
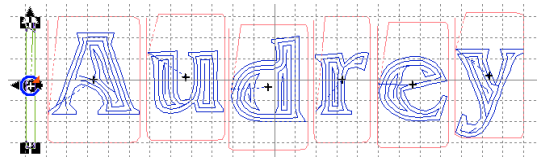
When I wanted simple print letters, I turned once again to the contour fill option provided in my digitizing software. Contour Print letters have the bold look of a traditional fill pattern, but are quicker to stitch. They also leave the fabric flexible rather than board-like, and don't require as much stabilization.

The letters, numbers and punctuation marks in the Contour Print embroidery alphabet have "boxes" around them, set to the same size. These boxes ensure that all characters within a size are sized in correct proportion to each other. The upper case letters are about 65% as high as the boxes surrounding them. The alphabet is available in five sizes, available separately and as a complete set: cp_20 (13 mm), cp_30 (20 mm), cp_40 (26 mm), cp_60 (39 mm), and cp_90 (59 mm). Each alphabet includes upper and lower case letters, digits, basic pronunciation marks (comma, exclamation point, hyphen, period, question mark, open and closed single quotation marks, and three empty boxes for spacing. There are two "gaps" for spacing letters within a word and one for spacing words.

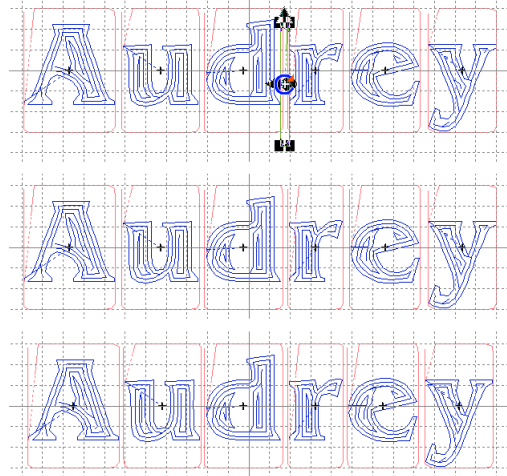
For best use of Contour Print alphabets, you need embroidery software that will allow you to delete portions of a design. An Edit tab in a customizing program or a Stitch Editor program will provide this ability. If you would like to use a single letter for a project, or two or three initials arranged vertically, it will be easiest to remove the boxes first. Open the design in the program you will use, then "hide" the letter from view. (In my 4D Embroidery software, I remove the checkmark from the thread color for the letter.) You can then select the design element that is visible and delete it from the design. Do this for each letter and then arrange the letters as you normally would. If you would like to arrange words, follow the instructions provided below. You will see how to delete the rectangles in the instructions, too.

Instructions

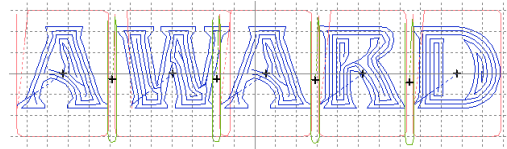
1. Open your embroidery customizing program.
2. Add the letters you need in left to right order. In this example: **A, u, d, r, e,** and **y.**
3. Arrange the letters along one line of the grid on your screen, near the center of the hoop area. If you use a letter more than once (as in **Betty** or **Sara**), be sure to position the letters in the order in which you added them to the screen.
4. For maintaining consistent gaps between the letters, you may also open one of the gap boxes from the Punctuation folder. Notice that gap1 is a little narrower than gap2. The actual gap between letters typed in this font is equivalent to gap2. The narrower gap looks better to me, but I wanted to offer both gaps to embroiderers. The boxes are green rather than pink so that you can see them clearly. If you prefer, you can judge spacing by eye.
5. Zoom in so that you can see the grid lines, the boxes and the lower part of the letters clearly. Turn off the 3D view feature for easier viewing.
6. Move each letter so that the bottom of the box is resting exactly on a grid line. Make sure that all letters will fit across the width of the hoop. If necessary, choose a wider hoop.
7. Place the gap after the first letter. If you position it so that the bottom is lower than the designated base line, you will be able to select and move it easily. Scoot the gap left or right until the left side of the gap meets the right edge of the first letter. Ignore the pink box and look at the letter itself.



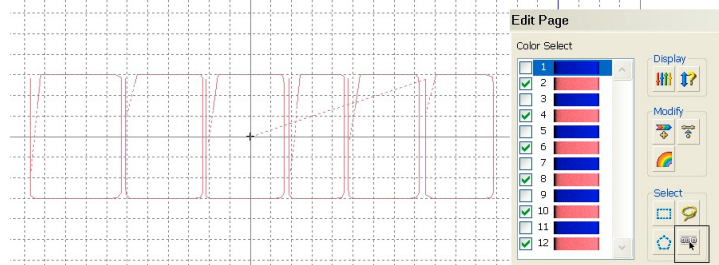
8. Move the second letter left and/or right until the left edge of that letter meets the right side of the gap.
9. Continue spacing letters with the gap or by eye. You may find that some gaps will look wider than others, even when you know they are the same. The shapes of the letters cause the difference in appearance, depending on where you measure.
10. Your software may permit you to use the arrow keys to move a selected element of a design. If so, you can count clicks as you move letters closer together or farther apart. Keep in mind that if you move one letter 3 clicks to the left, you would need to move the next letter at its right 3 clicks as well, to maintain the set spacing. You would then need to move it another 3 clicks to the left for the new, narrower, spacing. The letter at the right of that one would need to move 9 clicks to the left, and so on. In the example at right, I saw that the **d** and **r** appeared closer together than the other letters. I moved the **u** 5 clicks closer to the **d** and the **e** 5 clicks closer to the **r**. I then moved the **A** and the **y** 10 clicks closer to the center.



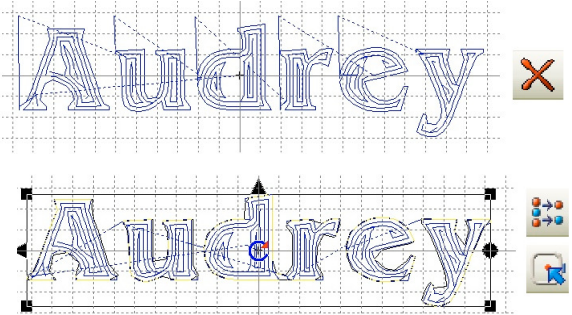
11. If you prefer, place the gap between letters where they are closest to each other instead of where the letters themselves start and stop. Consider the word “**AWARD.**” The sides of the **A**'s and the **W** are parallel, so the letters look more widely spaced. The boxes around the letters may need to overlap quite a bit for the spacing to look normal. (In printing, such overlap is known as *Kerning*.) In this arrangement, look at the gaps before and after the **W**. You can see that the second one maintains the same gap as between the remaining letters in the word. I placed it between the bottom right of the **W** and the bottom left of the **A**. The first **A** is too far away but can be moved right with its gap in the same way.
12. When you are satisfied with your arrangement, delete the gap. Combine stitches as directed for your software. Do not worry that the design is not centered in the hoop.
13. Cut or Copy the design and Paste it into a stitch editing program, or click the Edit tab of your customizing program.



14. The color list shown here is provided in the Viking/Pfaff software. Yours may differ. Click on all the blue threads in the list to deselect them. You will see only the pink boxes.



15. Drag a box to select everything that is visible on the screen, or click a tool that will do that for you.
16. Click the Delete tool. The screen will appear empty. Click the Draw All Stitches tool and your text will appear on the screen once again.
17. Sort colors to reduce the design to a single color unless you wish to stitch each letter in a different color thread. (The design will stitch from left to right if you were careful in adding letters in the proper sequence.)
18. Center the design in the hoop.
19. Choose a color and save in the format needed by your embroidery machine. (The full color picture is a 3D simulation of the design with a 1” interval variegated thread. These are available from Superior Threads.)



20. If you are arranging more than one word on a line, it may be easiest to combine letters for each word, but then strip away the boxes after



you have arranged all words on your line. Save each word as you arrange it so that you can clear the hoop for the next. For spacing between words, append the space character from the Punctuation folder to the end of one word, position the next word to follow (maintaining vertical alignment), and then delete the space.

21. If you need multiple lines of text, save each line on its own and then arrange the lines of text. Without the boxes, descending letters (**g**, **j**, **p**, **q**, and **y**) will make lines containing them bigger. Spacing between lines needs to consider the base lines of the letters, not the descenders. I arranged Happy Birthday Mom on three lines of text. With the boxes in place you can see that the spacing between lines is the same. I then stripped the boxes away for embroidery.
22. In the second version of this design you can see that I changed the thread colors for each line. Even when I intend to use the same thread for an entire design, I would rather restart my embroidery machine than stitch over a long jump thread. Color sorting each line is not a problem because a jump ends at the left edge of the following letter.

