

Fancy Fabric Frame

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These instructions present another way to construct a fabric frame for an embroidery design. Instead of tucking the embroidered fabric into the right-side-out frame, you will stitch the two together, wrong sides out (leaving a gap in the seam for turning, of course). I think you will be happy with the results. I provide templates for three frame widths, 1/2", 5/8", and 3/4". The formulas in the Measurement chart will help you adapt the method for wider frames, too.

You can use this technique for making horizontal items, such as table toppers, hot pads, and board games. If you would like to hang your design on the wall or on a hook, you can add a loop in the center of one side or on a corner. I include instructions for both additions. Please read through these instructions before beginning your project. In addition, you may also add a rod sleeve, as shown in my original [Fancy Name Plaque](#) instructions. Also see these instructions for illustrations regarding embroidering and trimming your fabric.

Determine Dimensions for Materials:

1. Arrange or choose your design as desired. I recommend maximum embroidery size be, in each dimension, at least 10 mm less than the maximum for your hoop. This will give you room to scoot the design as needed. Record the dimensions in inches here: **Design Width:** _____. **Design Height:** _____. (My design is 5-5/8" wide x 5-1/2" high.)
2. Determine margins for your plaque. How much empty space do you want to the left and right of your design? How about above and below your designs? Horizontal and vertical margins can be different, and the top margin can be different from the bottom margin. Add the margins in each dimension and record the totals here. **Horizontal Margins:** _____. **Vertical Margins:** _____. (My horizontal margins are 7/8" each for a total of 1-3/4". My top vertical margin is 7/8" and my bottom vertical margin is 1", for a total of 1-7/8".)
3. Choose the **frame width**. This is the amount of the frame fabric that will show on the FRONT of your project. **Frame Width:** _____. (My design will have a 5/8" wide frame.)
4. **Full dimensions** for your plaque. **Full width** = design width + horizontal margins + twice the **frame width**. **Full height** = design height + vertical margins + twice the **frame height**. Record the dimensions here: **Full Width:** _____. **Full Height:** _____. (My plaque will be 5-5/8" + 1-3/4" for horizontal margins + 1-1/4" for the fabric frame = 8-5/8" wide x 5-1/2" + 1-7/8" for vertical margins + 1-1/4" for the fabric frame = 8-5/8" high.)
5. **Embroidery fabric and fusible fleece**. Add 1/2" or more to each dimension from Step 4. (You will trim the fabric later.) **Fabric Width:** _____. **Fabric Height:** _____. (My fabric and fleece will be 8-5/8" + 5/8" = 9-1/4" wide x by 8-5/8" + 5/8" = 9-1/4" high.)
6. **Insulated batting** (optional, for making hot pad or pot holder). Dimensions from Step 4, minus 1/4" in each dimension. NOTE: Finished embroidery will be trimmed to this size, too. (My batting will be 8-3/8" in width and height.)
7. **Fabric frame**. Refer to the Measurement chart below. To each dimension from Step 4, add the amount in the second column of the row that corresponds to your chosen frame width. **Fabric Frame Width:** _____. **Fabric Frame Height:** _____. (With a 5/8" wide frame, my fabric frame will be 8-5/8" + 2-1/4" = 10-7/8" in width and height.)
8. **Rod sleeve** (option 1). Subtract 2 1/2" from Step 4's **final width dimension:** _____. (My sleeve would be 6-1/8" wide, 2 1/2" less than 8-5/8". Height = 5". See *Fancy Name Plaque* instructions for more information.)
9. **Ribbon and button** (option 2). About 9" of 1/8" wide satin ribbon. One 2-hole button, small enough to fit within the width of the frame but with holes large enough to accept the ribbon. Also seam sealant for cut edges of ribbon.
10. **Fabric for loop** (option 3). 8" long. Cut fabric 1-1/2" wide if you will stitch seam and turn right side out, or 2" wide if you will fold like double fold bias tape. Finished width = 1/2".

Measurements for Sizing and Marking Fabric Frame

Width of Frame	Add to Width and Height of Embroidery	Inner Fold Mark	Outer Fold Mark
Desired width (W)	$(W \times 4) - 1/4"$ aka $(W + (W - 1/8")) \times 2$	Same as previous	$(W - 1/8") \times 2$
1/2"	1-3/4"	1-3/4"	3/4"
5/8"	2-1/4"	2-1/4"	1"
3/4"	2-3/4"	2-3/4"	1-1/4"
7/8"	3-1/4"	3-1/4"	1-1/2"
1"	3-3/4"	3-3/4"	1-3/4"

Materials:

1. Fabric for embroidery: Solid or nearly solid quilting cotton, poplin, or polyester suede fabric. Use **Fabric Width** and **Fabric Height** measurements from Step 5 above.
2. Fusible fleece: Use **Fabric Width** and **Fabric Height** measurements from Step 5 above.
3. Optional insulated batting: Use dimensions from Step 6 above.
4. Cotton print fabric for **fabric frame**: Use **Fabric Frame Width** and **Fabric Frame Height** measurements from Step 7.
5. Optional **rod sleeve** for hanging the plaque: same or coordinating cotton print fabric. Height is 5"; use width from Step 8 above.
6. Optional 1/8" wide satin ribbon: 9". See Step 9 above.
7. Optional button: See Step 9 above.
8. Optional fabric loop: (3" or 4") x 8". See Step 10 above.
9. Embroidery design.
10. Embroidery thread.
11. Medium weight cutaway stabilizer: at least the size of the **full dimensions** in Step 4 and large enough for chosen hoop.
12. Thread for sewing, to match or coordinate with fabric frame.
13. Removable marking tool (chalk or fading pen).
14. Optional: 5/8" to 3/4" wide wooden dowel or decorative rod for hanging plaque: Slightly narrower than the plaque if you don't want it to show from the front. If you find a decorative rod you might want it wider than the plaque.

Prepare and Embroider Fabric:

1. Transfer your embroidery design to your embroidery machine. Open the design so that it appears on screen. Note which side of the hoop area will be the top of your design. (In other words, does your design have a portrait or landscape orientation?)
2. Press fabric for embroidery. Turn wrong side up on ironing board.
3. Place fusible fleece on top, fusible side down. Steam fleece to preshrink and then fuse in place, following manufacturer's instructions.
4. On the right side of the fabric, mark horizontal and vertical centering lines with a removable marker. If desired, mark a small line 1/8" above the horizontal center as explained in *Fancy Name Plaque* instructions.
5. Steam press stabilizer.
6. Hoop stabilizer. Mark centering lines on the stabilizer, using marks on your inner hoop as a guide.
7. Spray the back of the embroidery fabric with temporary basting spray and position in hoop. Match the horizontal and vertical centering lines on fabric and hoop.
8. Pin fabric to the stabilizer outside the hoop.
9. Attach the hoop to your embroidery unit.
10. Scoot the design as needed to center it on the fabric.
11. Embroider your design.
12. Remove your fabric from the hoop. Do not trim stabilizer.

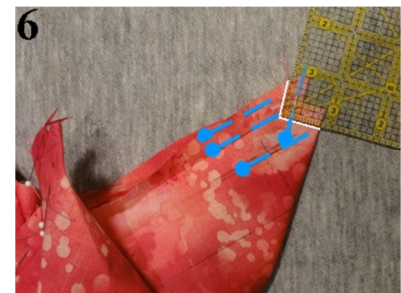
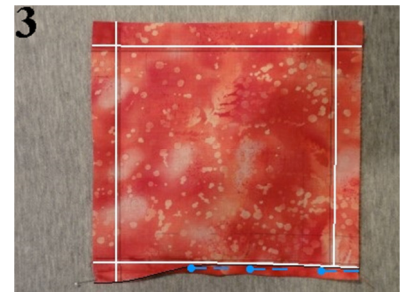
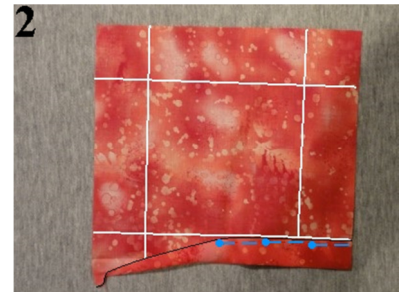
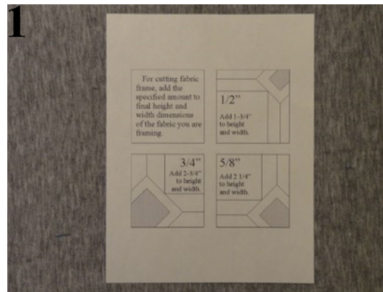
Trim Embroidered Fabric:

1. For illustrations of embroidering and trimming fabric, see my *Fancy Name Plaque* instructions. The link to the blog is in the introduction above. You may want to use the tip of adding a small line above the horizontal center of your fabric.
2. We allowed a little extra fabric in case you needed to scoot your design. Now it is time to trim the excess. The embroidered fabric will fit more easily if it is slightly smaller than the **full dimensions**. Copy your **full dimensions** from Step 4 here: **Full Width:** _____. **Full Height:** _____. (*My plaque will be 8-5/8" wide x 8-5/8" high.*)
3. Divide the **full width** by two and subtract 1/8". Record the result here. **Trim width:** _____. (*My trim width will be $4-5/16" - 2/16" = 4-3/16"$. This is halfway between 4-1/8" and 4-1/4".*)
4. Align a rotary cutting ruler parallel to the vertical center of your fabric. Your ruler should extend beside the vertical center the distance of the **trim width** you just calculated.
5. Position the ruler to trim the excess from the opposite side of the fabric. Use the same trim width.

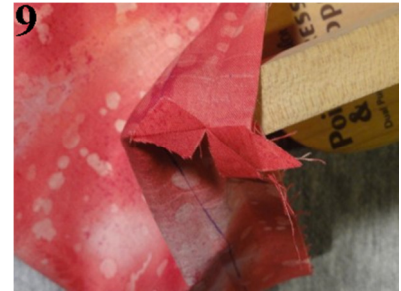
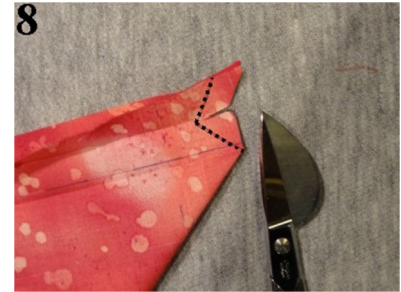
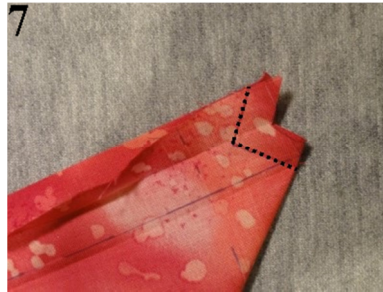
6. Divide the **full height** by two and subtract 1/8". Record the results here. **Top Trim height:** _____. **Bottom Trim height:** _____. (My trim height will be $4-5/16" - 2/16" = 4-3/16"$. This is halfway between $4-1/8"$ and $4-1/4"$, however, I decided I wanted a slightly larger bottom margin. I will use $4-1/8"$ for my **top trim height** and $4-1/4"$ for my **bottom trim height**.)
7. Align a rotary cutting ruler parallel to the horizontal center of your fabric. Your ruler should extend above the horizontal center the distance of the **top trim height** you just calculated.
8. Trim off the excess fabric.
9. Position the ruler to trim the excess from the bottom of the fabric. Use the **bottom trim height**.
10. Remove basting.
11. Remove marked lines. You may press out chalk markings or dab water on fading or soluble marker lines.
12. If you are adding additional batting or insulation, pin it to the wrong side of the embroidered fabric. Zigzag in place near the edges.

Prepare the backing:

1. Print the Corner Templates from the last page of these instructions. (Fig. 1)
2. Turn frame fabric wrong side up. Refer to the **Inner Fold Mark** number for your frame width in the **Measurement** chart provided above. On each edge of your fabric, mark a line parallel to and that distance from the edge. (I marked my inner fold lines 2-1/4" from the edges.)
3. On two edges opposite to each other, fold the raw edges up to meet the marked lines. (Fig. 2)
4. Press creases. Remove pins and let folds fall open.
5. Pin and press the remaining two edges, being careful not to remove the previous creases.
6. Refer to the **Outer Fold Mark** number for your frame width in the **Measurement** chart provided above. On each edge of your fabric, mark a line parallel to and that distance from the edge. (I marked my outer fold lines 1" from the edges.)
7. On two edges opposite to each other, fold the raw edges up to meet the marked lines. (Fig. 3)
8. Press creases, being careful not to remove the previous creases.
9. Remove pins and let folds fall open.
10. Pin and press the remaining two edges, being careful not to remove the previous creases. You will see that the raw edges are 1/8" shy of the outer creases.
11. Remove the pins. Fold the edge on both creases and press again.
12. Cut out the corner templates with the desired **frame width**. Cut out the shaded area as well.
13. Pin it to a corner, making sure that the creases in the fabric line up with the lines on the template. Mark along the edges that face the corner. (Fig. 4)
14. Remove the template and cut out the corner on the marked line. Repeat for the remaining three corners. (Fig. 4)
15. Fold one corner wrong sides out so that the raw edges of the corner cut-out are even. Position the corner so that you can sew from the outer edge to the fold. Pin, matching crease lines on both layers of the fabric. (Fig. 5)
16. If desired, you may mark a 3/8" seam line. (Fig. 6)



17. Reduce stitch length to 1.5 mm.
18. Stitch a 3/8" seam beginning at the raw edge. Pivot when you come to the outer crease and sew off the fold when you come to it. Because the stitch length is so small, there is no need to backstitch. (Fig. 7)
19. Trim the excess fabric as shown in Figure 8. Clip almost to the stitching on the crease line.
20. Repeat for the remaining corners. You may also do each step for all corners at once if you prefer.
21. Press open the corner seams. A point presser will help you get into the tight corners of the miters. (Fig. 9)
22. Optional: If you plan to add a **rod sleeve**, turn the frame right side out. Follow instructions in *Fancy Name Plaque* for creating and positioning the rod sleeve on your fabric frame. Turn the frame wrong side out again when done.

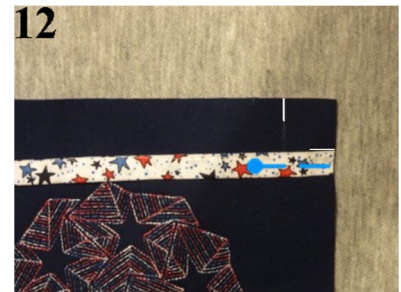
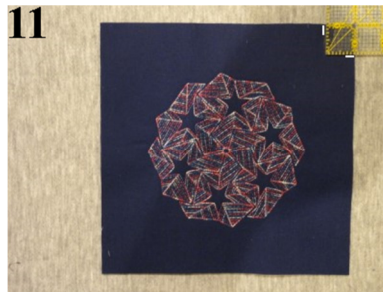


Optional: Create and Attach Corner Loop

1. Create a fabric loop that is 1/2" wide by 8" long. Choose one of the methods shown here: (Fig. 10)
 - a. Use purchased extra wide double fold bias tape. Cut an 8" length. Top stitch near the center fold and also where the outer folds come together.
 - b. Create your own extra wide double fold tape, on bias or straight of grain. Cut a piece of fabric 2" x 8". Fold in half lengthwise and then fold each raw edge to meet the center fold. Top stitch near the center fold and also where the outer folds come together.
 - c. Create a fabric tube. Cut a piece of fabric 1-1/2" x 8". Fold in half lengthwise, right sides together. Pin the long raw edges together. Stitch a 1/4" seam. Slide the tube onto a FasTurn tube or other narrow rod. Press the seam open. Turn the tube right side out. Center the seam on one surface of the tube and press flat. Top stitch near both folds.



2. Add 1/4" to the width of your fabric frame. On one corner of your embroidered and trimmed fabric, mark this distance from the corner on both adjoining edges. (For this sample, I used a 3/4" wide frame; I marked 1" from the corner.) (Fig. 11)



3. Right side down, place the fabric loop on the embroidered fabric. Place it so that the top edge is at the mark on the right edge of the embroidered fabric. Pin in place. (Fig. 12)



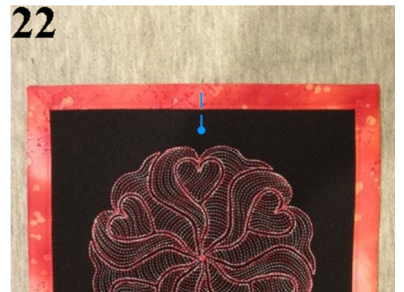
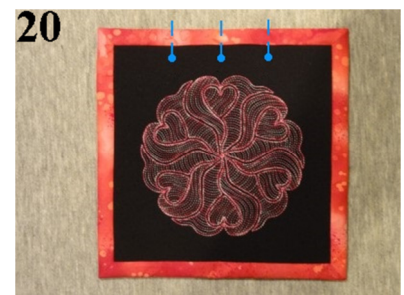
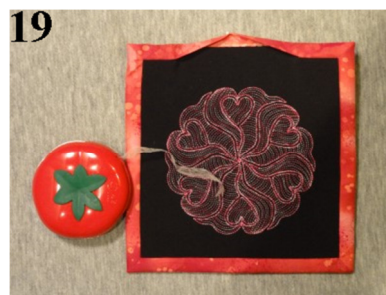
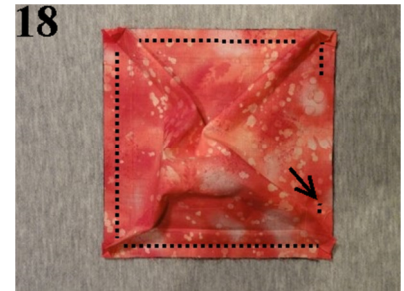
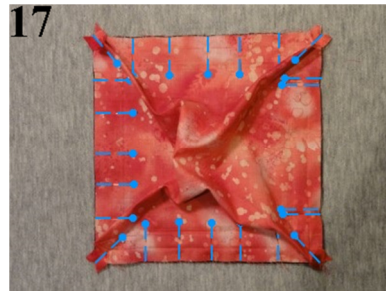
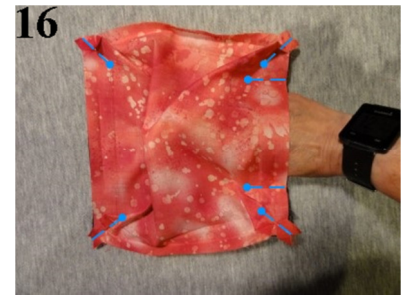
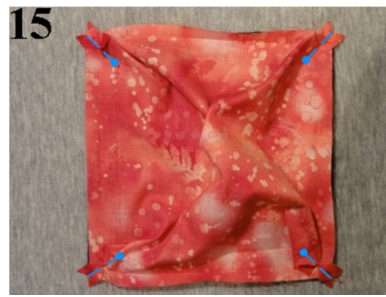
4. Fold the free end of the fabric loop down and then up. Meet the raw edge with the mark on the top of the embroidered fabric. Make sure there are no twists in the fabric loop. Pin in place. (Fig. 13)



5. Figure 14 shows how the fabric loop will appear if you slide the underlapped layer out from under the overlap. The red line marks the edge of the fabric loop that begins and ends closest to the corner. Stitch the fabric loop in place within the area that will be covered by the fabric frame. (Fig. 14)

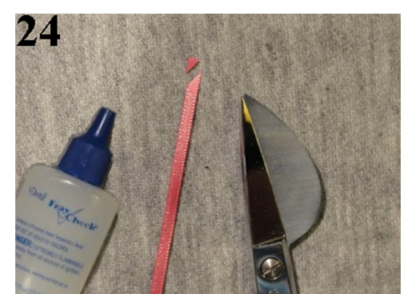
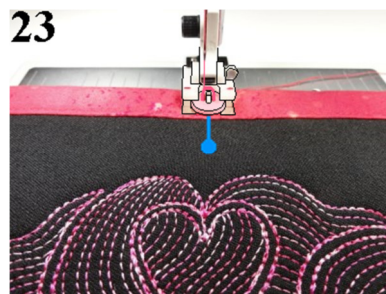
Attach the Frame:

1. Place the embroidered fabric right side up in front of you, with the bottom of the design toward you.
2. Place the wrong side out fabric frame on top. If the fabric has a directional print and/or an attached rod sleeve, make sure the top is positioned at the top of the embroidered fabric.
3. Align the raw edges of the fabric frame and embroidered fabric. Pin together diagonally at the corners. (Fig. 15)
4. On one side, place pins spaced so that you can fit your hand between them. You may make this space wider for very large projects. (Fig. 16)
5. Pin the remaining sides of the fabric frame to the embroidered fabric. HINT: Two pins close together serve as a “gate” reminder of where to start and end stitching. (Fig. 17)
6. Position your project at your sewing machine so that stitching will begin at the bottom of the large opening. The seam line should be outside of the outer fold line, not directly on the fold line. Backstitch to secure, and then stitch to the corner seam. Lift the presser foot and shift the bulk of the fabric frame out of the way. Lower the presser foot and stitch to the next corner. Continue in this manner until you reach the top of the large opening. Top stitch to secure. (Fig. 18)
7. Turn your project right side out. If necessary, use a pointy tool to spread the seam allowances at the corners. (Fig. 19)
8. You may slip a piece of fusible web inside the opening and fuse in place. (Fig. 20)
9. If you prefer, just pin the layers together. (Fig. 21)
10. Top stitch near the inner perimeter of the frame. (Fig. 22)

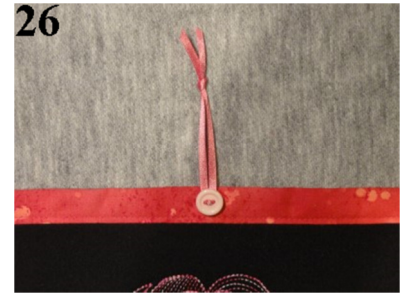
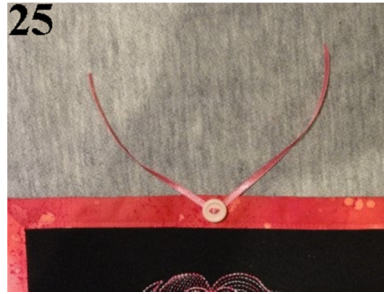


Add Optional Ribbon Loop:

1. Mark the center of the top edge of your framed embroidery. (Fig. 23)
2. Stitch the button in place at the center mark, creating a loose shank. Make sure the button's holes are positioned horizontally. (Fig. 23)
3. Cut a 9" piece of 1/4" wide satin ribbon. Cut the edges at a 45 degree angle and seal with seam sealant. (Fig. 24)

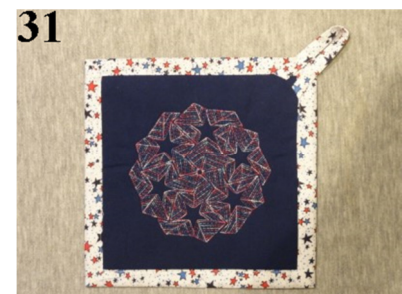
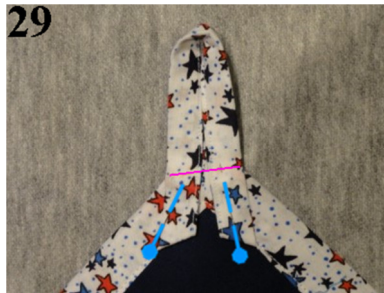


4. Bring one end of the ribbon up through one hole of the button and down through the other. Center the button along the length of the ribbon. **HINT:** Use tweezers or attach a needle and thread to the ribbon in order to pull it through the button's holes. (Fig. 25)
5. Tie the ends together in a knot. (Fig. 26)
6. Figure 27 shows the complete project.



Finish Corner Loop:

1. In Figure 28 we see that the fabric frame has been added to the embroidery with the corner loop.
2. Fold the loop to cover the corner, keeping the angles of the folds symmetrical. Pin in place. With a removable marker, mark a diagonal where the loop edges meet the edge of the fabric frame. (Fig. 29)
3. Stitch a triangle that includes this marked line and the inner corner of the fabric frame. (Fig. 30)
4. Figure 31 shows the complete project. With insulated batting inside, it would make a great pot holder.



Corner Templates: Cut out the template for the desired frame width. Cut away shaded areas. Pin to **fabric frame** fabric as directed.

For cutting fabric frame, add the specified amount to final height and width dimensions of the fabric you are framing.

