



How to Care for and Keep Embroidery

You've created your embroidered masterpiece. Now how do you keep it looking beautiful for years to come?

The care and keeping of embroidery starts before you ever take a stitch. In order to make a finished product that will hold up over time, you need to start with the right materials. Let's begin at the beginning:

Steps To Complete

BEFORE EMBROIDERING

Choose fabric that's substantial enough to support your designs, and match it with an appropriate stabilizer. [This guide](#) will help you choose the right stabilizer for a variety of different fabrics, and [Kenny's Korner](#) contains many Fabrics 101 articles that discuss in detail how to embroider on various fabrics.

Over the long run (and while embroidering) cutaway stabilizer provides more stability than tearaway. The fibers in tearaway stabilizer are made to come apart from each other easily, so that you can tear the stabilizer after a design has stitched. As the item is washed and used, the fibers will disintegrate further. Cutaway stabilizer, on the other hand, is specifically made to keep its strength, so it will help keep an embroidered design looking like new through repeated washing and wearing. Attaching the stabilizer to the back of your fabric with temporary spray adhesive can help get your project off to a good start as well.

Pre-shrink your fabric or garment thoroughly before embroidering. If the fabric shrinks afterward, it will appear puckered around the embroidery. To pre-shrink, wash and dry the fabric the way you will after the item is completed. It's not a bad idea to use the warmest water and dryer settings recommended for the fabric -- you want to get all the shrinkage out of the way now.

AFTER EMBROIDERING

Hand-washing and air-drying are your gentlest options.

When machine washing embroidered clothing, turn the garments inside out to protect the embroidery from abrasion. When possible, avoid washing embroidered items with items that have metal hardware such as zippers.

To avoid shrinkage, wash the fabric as gently as possible, and air-dry if you can. Make sure to follow the fabric's care instructions.

If you're concerned about the thread color bleeding onto the fabric (or vice versa), wash gently in cold water. If you notice any bleeding when washing the fabric, rinse the item in cool water until the color is removed. Some say rayon thread is less colorfast than polyester thread, and deep red colors are most likely to bleed.