

---

## Hand-Stitched Applique Quilts with Carolyn Friedlander

---

### Chapter 1 - Hand-Stitched Applique

#### Introduction

##### Overview

- [Carolyn] Hi, I'm Carolyn Friedlander, author of Savor Each Stitch. I'm a pattern designer, fabric designer, quilter and teacher. We'll be putting together a needle-turn applique quilt top. In this class, we will fold, cut and position our motif, Hawaiian style, then we'll baste our project and learn how to applique it to our background. (upbeat music)

##### Materials

##### Materials

- The materials for this class are an iron and an ironing surface. We'll need an applique fabric. So the design motif for the top, at least a 12-inch square. For your background piece, cut an 18-inch square. We're gonna need the project template which is a PDF. Thread conditioner which is optional. Measuring gauge. Need some applique needles. We'll need 50-weight cotton thread in both contrasting color as well as a color that matches your applique or top fabric. You'll need some applique pins as well as some marking tool. Always test your marking tool on the fabric that you'll be using before you're working on the actual piece. We'll also need a small pair of sharp scissors and then a large pair of very sharp scissors. Supplies when you're doing needleturn applique or any kind of hand work are really important because your hands are, I mean, you're literally in the project so it makes a big difference. First of all, it's fabrics. You can applique with any kinds of fabric. In fact, that's something I really love to do because you are touching it so much. It's fun to explore different types of fabric. Something to keep in mind though is kind of the differences in fabric. I always like to think of it as a spectrum. Kind of thinking about linen on one side which is one of your heavier options and then a cotton line is kind of on the opposite end of the spectrum. It's one of your thinner options. Quilting cotton's right in the middle. It's not too thick, it's not too thin. It's a great place to start. Quilting cotton is what I'll be working with today. Something else to consider are your needles that you're working with. All of our hands have a different shape. I always recommend anyone who's wanting to get into handwork to go out and buy a few different types of needles. They're not very expensive and just getting a feel for the different types, you'll know which ones you kind of prefer. I really like a very thin needle. I find that that glides through fabric really well. It works really well for me. Other people like a longer needle or maybe a shorter needle so that they can get smaller stitches. So just go out and explore your options. Another thing are applique pins. These are usually really short, about 3/4 of an inch. These are great because when you pin into your project, you don't wanna be stuck with pins all the time. So it's kind of they hold everything in place but stay out of your way. Also important are your scissors. Specially with this project because we're gonna be cutting multiple layers at one time so you want a really sharp pair. Then as far as thread, I like appliqueing with cotton thread. Usually a thin thread, so like, 50 weight cotton is what I like to use.

## Applique Design and Technique

### Applique cutting and basting

- To start I've already prepared my applique and background fabric and I'm looking at them both. If you're working with a directional fabric and want everything to go the same direction, just make sure to folding everything so that those correspond to each other. The first thing that we're gonna do is fold our applique piece in half diagonally. You're gonna actually press it. It doesn't matter if it's right sides together or wrong sides together, just make sure that you're treating your applique fabric the same as you are your background fabric. So since I'm doing right sides together, I'm gonna do right sides together for my background piece. You're gonna fold it in half again diagonally. Fold your background piece the same way that you folded your applique. So we're gonna fold it in half diagonally. This is when if you have two very directionally fabrics, make sure you're just going in the same order. I fold diagonally one more time. Gonna set our background fabric to the side, bring back the applique which is folded like this. Grab your template and now I just printed my template out on to regular office paper. If you want a more durable template you can copy it onto something like template plastic. It's a great plastic that'll make it more durable and sturdy and you can just cut it out with regular scissors. Position your template so that these sides of the design are aligned with your folds. Your raw edges are on this side, not touching any part of the template. Now you're gonna trace around the template. Remove your template and now we're going to cut it out. Now this block is small enough that I can get a pretty good grip on it with my hands. But if you're working with something larger or you're finding that our layers are slipping around, you can totally pin it together or use little clips to hold it in place while you cut. 'Cause what we're actually doing at this stage is cutting through all the layers of the fold which will give us a much more efficient cut and help with our symmetry. Grab your sharp scissors. I always like to do this on a table so that I can keep it as flat as possible. You're just gonna start by cutting out your shape. You can see how I'm holding all of the layers together so that they don't shift. Be careful not to cut into your points with your scissors. I like to save these inner cutouts last. They have the tendency to separate. So leaving then until last will give your block more stability while you're cutting the outside. After you've got your applique cut out, you can unfold your background piece. So you can see we've got our creases here and how we're gonna unfold the applique piece as well. Because we folded them the same way, our folds will correspond nicely. I've just located the fold that'll go all the way through. Everything should match up nicely. So get everything positioned in the proper fold. Now since it's pressed, if you've got a little bubble in the center or something like that, it doesn't mean that it's not flat. If you've aligned all of your creases properly, then everything should be centered and flattened. Don't worry about that. Now we're gonna pin it in place. I like to start in the center and work out. I'll work evenly on both sides. Everything's pinned and the next step is to baste. So I've got my needle threaded with the contrasting thread. This step you don't need to knot your basting thread. Also grab you seam gauge. What we're going to do is baste our entire piece to the background a quarter of an inch from the raw edge. So I'll start over here, see I'm a quarter of an inch from the raw edge. This is something that you want to be an accurate quarter of an inch. I've done so much that I usually just eyeball it, but for the longest time when I was just getting the hang of it, I would just periodically check in. So let's say I do a few stitches and then I would just grab the seam gauge and double check that I'm right at a quarter of an inch. This is a really handy one because it fits in the palm of your hand. You're gonna continue around. You can

see I'm just doing a few stitches, large, kind of running stitches. Make sure not to pull your thread too tight. If you're noticing that your fabric is puckering, then that means you're pulling just a little bit tight. All you need to do is massage your thread back out. Remove your pins as you come to them so that they don't get in your way. At this corner, see I'm coming to a point here, I'm gonna drop a stitch, I like to do a stitch in that corner using your fold to know where that corner is. Then continuing onward in the next direction. Here we're approaching a corner, as I approach it I'm just going to keep going down. What you wanna keep in mind at these points is that you're not measuring a quarter of an inch from the point, you're measuring a quarter inch of this shape how it would continue onward, and a quarter inch from this side continuing onward. So you're kind of imaging how those shapes would come together. It's the point at which they meet which is where you're going to turn. If you need to mark that at first, you can go for that. I just kind of eyeball it. And turn it. Continue basting the rest of your outside edges and then baste your inside shapes as well.

#### Applique technique for outside shapes

- Now we're going to applique. So go ahead and thread your needle. If you're using a thread conditioner it's pretty easy. You just kind of lay the thread over the conditioner using one finger to hold it in place. Slide it across. I usually do it just a couple of times. One direction and then the other. Like that. Alright, grab my needle and then you're gonna knot the end that you cut from the spool. And then let's take a look at our piece to see what kind of shapes we will be tackling. Looking at this block there are a lot of different shapes, so you'll get some really great experience on how to handle each of these kind of occurrences. First, we have some kind of gentle outside curves along these sides. We have some interior points at these places. We also have some straight sides here. We've got some pretty acute outside corners. There's a more subtle outside corner. We also have some inside shapes. And this is all reverse applique which is just basically where the design is created from the missing chunk of the applique fabric. And at these point we have some interior curves with some points. We have a continuous interior curve. We have some compound interior curves as well as some outside points. So we will take a look at how to handle all of those different shapes. When we have a design that has a lot of different things happening I always like to start where things are not changing too much. So for example I would not want to start on an interior point. I wouldn't want to start on an exterior corner, anything crazy like that. I'm gonna start somewhere like right here in the middle of this nice gradual curve. This is also something to keep in mind if you're about to run out of thread. So let's say you're approaching an inside corner here, you're about to run out of thread, I always try to pace it so if I have enough thread to like fully make that turn I'll go ahead and do it, but if I don't have enough then I'm just gonna stop and knot right here before the corner re-thread and then continue on. So like I said we're gonna get started right here. To do the actual applique we're gonna bring the raw edge in to meet the basting stitch. This is why your basting stitch is so important. If that is accurate then that means that you will be turning things accurately. So really the basting step is really the hardest part. Okay, you're gonna bring your needle up through the center of what you've folded under. So it's nicely folded under. Fold under a little bit ahead. And now you're gonna go back down right next to where you came up, but only thought he background and then up again through the fold of the fabric. So I like to make my stitches about  $\frac{3}{16}$  of an inch. Less than a quarter of an inch, but more than an eighth of an inch. Somewhere in there is the length that I like. And the trick to getting kind of a smoother edge is to be constantly folding and stitching in tandem. So rather than folding under half of your shape and then stitching

to catch up, you are folding your edge under, stitching, folding under and stitching kind of continuously. So part of this is just getting used to how far ahead you need to fold and what you wanna hold. Because you want to fold far enough ahead that it is fully turned under when you're stitching, but not too far that it's coming unfolded as you're working towards it. If you notice that you're fabric is starting to pucker a little bit that just means your tension is a little bit too tight. So you can loosen up on how tightly you're pulling your thread through and then if it just started to happen just kind of smooth out that thread along that area. So you see we're at our first slight corner. I'm going to stitch until I am right in line with my basting stitch for the next side. So I've got one more stitch and you can see I've lined it up. Now I will turn it a little bit. And see I folded that side under all the way to that edge, so with that fully folded under I'm just gonna do a nice little fold like that. If you have any threads coming out from the back, just use your needle to pull those under. I'm gonna do another stitch and I like to stitch right to the corner. And if you can get-- I mean ideally I like to do a stitch on either side to kind of sharpen that point. Like that. And then you just continue onward. Alright so we're approaching our first interior point. And heads up, these can be a little bit tricky, but I promise by the time you get to the last one you will see some serious improvement. Alright, so here's your point, and I like to clip these as I come to them. So when I'm to the stage where I'm at right here, this is when I would do it. Because it's the point, you're gonna need to clip a little bit into your seam allowance so that everything will roll under nicely. So clip directly into that point. Clip a little less than a sixteenth of an inch. Not very much. You can see that. Now we're gonna work our way over. Turning it under. Like that. Do one more stitch. Now I'm going to flip to the other side and fold it under which gives me a little bit of leverage and this is when I like to use my needle. So you've got that side under, and you see you kind of create this little nook where you get some leverage with your needle to swoop everything else under. And you'll notice if you missed a couple threads, you see one was still hanging up, you can just swoop again to get everything under. And you'll notice as I did it I'm using my thumb to hold everything in place. You don't want it to come loose. Swoop, and then you go back to where you ended and continue. At these points it is a great idea to use some extra stitches to secure in place. Those extra stitches can also help pull that point in and just give it really good shape. Oh thread. Alright, so now we're gonna continue on with the rest of this curve. Okay, so we're approaching our next corner. You're basically handling it very similarly to how you handled this first corner, except for the difference here is you have this curve shape coming this way and you have a straight shape-- straight edge coming that way. So you just wanna fold under this curve similarly to how it's already going. So you're continuing that curve with the fold. And I'm stitching that fold in place. And just like before I'm going to stop when I am perpendicular to this next row of stitches, basting stitches. So I pull my needle up there. Turn, and you'll notice there's a little bit of extra fabric there from turning it under. I'm just gonna trim that away. Like that. Okay, so we're gonna keep that side straight. Fold it under kind of a little bit diagonally at first just to get your raw edges in and do one stitch to get a nice point. Like that. And then fold under the rest of that side. And if you have anything hanging out you can use your needle to fine tune the shape of that point. And then we're approaching another point here. You're gonna snip it just like you did this one. Flip to the other side, fold it under, swoop everything under just as before. Continue along the outside of your project and then next we'll tackle all of those inside shapes.

Applique techniques for inside shapes, removing basting, and variations

- All right, so let's talk about some inside shapes. I've already tackled some of them, but I've saved a

little bit of all of them for you to see. Like I'd mentioned before, what I have here is some very continuous inside circles. This is also an inside curve, but it's an elongated shape with two points on the ends. And then here, we have some inside curves that are a few different compound curves, as well as some outside points. So let's first start with this inside curve, which is nice and smooth. The trick with inside curves is that you'll need to clip into your seam allowance in order to turn that edge under more smoothly. Keep in mind that we only have a 1/8 of an inch seam allowance. So I really only like to snip shy of like a 1/16 of an inch, which is a little less than halfway into your seam, the part that you've basted. Now this is a continuous, even, inside curve, so the trick here is you just clip evenly. You've got an even curve, clip evenly. I can kind of see the folds here, so I like to use those as a reference for where I've clipped so you don't lose track of where you were. Go ahead and just start snipping. One trick is kind of the tighter the curve, the more clips you'll need. And the more gradual the curve, the fewer clips you'll need. You'll kind of get a feel for this as you start doing it. If you find that your fabric isn't willing to turn under, then that just means you may need to clip a little bit more. Or if you find that it's turning under a little too easily, and you're hitting those basting stitches too easily, then that just means maybe you should clip a little bit less. So now we can see how I've made clips into this curve. Thread your needle, and knot the end that you cut, and we're ready to start. Just like before, bring your raw edge to meet your basting stitch. You'll notice that those clips that you made, making it a lot easier to bring it in. A lot of people ask about... The technique is called needle turn appliqué, so why don't you use the needle as much? I really only use my needle at points and sometimes like a sharp interior curve. I find that I can get a pretty good turn under with my fingers. But if you're having a problem with that, certainly go ahead and use your needle to see if that will help you. Just make sure not to puncture your fabric or make it fray too much. So I've made my way all the way around this circle. To end it, drop your needle back down, like you've been doing, and I just knot it to the back by grabbing a couple threads from my background fabric, making sure not to catch any of those basting stitches. Make a knot, and I'll do that about three times. Trim your thread. Finished with the circle, now I'm gonna move on to this guy. To take care of this one, we've got kind of a gradual curve here. You'll notice it's a little bit straight here and then we had these points. It's even on both sides, so you're gonna handle this side, the same as you've handled this side. I'm going to clip into a point, each of these points. Then I'm gonna do a few clips here, closer clips here cause it's a little tighter, and then loosen back up again. This is a symmetrical shape. So, again, you just wanna clip symmetrically on each half. Treat them kind of the same or as closely as you can. Okay, now I've got my needle threaded and it's knotted. For this one, like I mentioned, I'm not gonna start on a point. I don't like to start there. I'll start right here in the middle of this curve, bringing the raw edge in to meet the basting stitch, bring my needle up through that curve, that fold, and then folding and stitching in place. Okay, so I've approached this corner. I am going to continue until I get a little bit closer. I'm still holding it under. Then when I get just a few stitches away, so I'll do that one, I'm gonna kinda turn it around. Similarly to how I did these, see these are more exaggerated interior point than this one, I'm gonna do it kind of similar though to where I stop here. Flip to the other side, turn it under, and then use my needle to swoop it, just in there, like that. Stitch it to catch up. You can use your stitches in the center to really pull that point in nice and tight. Finish the rest of the shape, and then we're gonna move on to this final center shape. You can see I've already stitched half of it, but I'm gonna finish this other half. This is typically how I like to clip this one. When I have a larger shape like this, I'll kinda break it down into sections, then I'll clip. So this curve is kind of changing a little bit. We've got some real tightness here. This is pretty gradual, and this is also gradual, but a little bit tighter than this side so



I'm gonna clip kind of pretty sparsely over here and then start clipping more here. And here, since I don't want a point, I don't wanna clip just once so I'm gonna do quite a few clips in this little area and then I'll start to space out my clips even more until I get to here where it straightens out. Full spaced out clips, then I will get them closer together. When I get here, I'm gonna have quite a few. Pretty close together cause I really want an even curve in there. I don't want to have a point. I keep track of where I stopped, just like right here, yeah, and I'm gonna start to space back out my clips as the curve opens up. And then I'm just gonna put one here cause it's straight there. To handle this corner, it'll be just like the other ones, but this one's a little bit more of a right angle so it's a little bit easier. Don't want to do that. Okay, I'm gonna pick up where I left off. This is kind of a right angle so it's actually a little bit easier than the other angles that you handled on the outside. I'm gonna stitch along. Hold under the rest of that side, stopping when I'm perpendicular to my next row of basting stitches. Turn the piece and I'm gonna turn this side under. You should get a nice corner with that little bit flipping up there, so I'm gonna use my needle to tuck it in. Hold everything in place with a couple stitches and I'm gonna continue into my curve. Here we go. This gradual part of the curve should turn under pretty easily so you can just do that with your fingers as you go. All right, so we're approaching this corner, which is a little bit tighter, so I'm actually gonna use the needle a little bit just as I kind of did before. You don't have to worry about it being a tight point, but the needle will help you get a little bit of leverage to turn under those inner pieces. So you see I flip to the other side and I've turned all of that under. When I'm turning under with my needle, I'm just using the side of the needle. I'm not using the point. So you're just gonna continue on. We're approaching a right angle, so we'll do that the same as you've done before, and then I'm gonna clip this curve the same as I did this one. Once you're finished with all of your edges, you've appliqued everything in place, it looks great, it's time to take out the basting stitches. Also at this time, if you've had a problem with your background piece kinda fraying or getting handled a little too much, you could always start with a larger background piece and trim it down at this point. To remove your basting stitches, grab your scissors. I mean it's pretty simple. You've got a big stitch so it's not gonna come out too hard. But I like to do that, then you can just go back through and, whoop. Whoopsie Daisy. Your stitches should just come out really easily. This part can be really satisfying and it's like everything just looks so much better without the basting stitches. You get these nice smooth edges. Just be careful not to stab any part of your project if your scissors are really sharp. A good tip for removing your basting stitches, you'll notice I am clipping kind of at these points. Cause if I clip at this point and this point, I can pull from here. Basically, your basting stitches are gonna get hung up on a corner, so you wanna try to maximize that. I'm gonna click here, here, and here. And then I can go... Now that my basting stitches are gone, I'm gonna give my block a good press. What I like to do first is press from the back. Now I can flip to the other side. Just be careful not to press this when you compress your edges but you don't wanna snag the iron on an edge to distort it. I have a couple more examples here. You can do a lot with just one block. You can quilt it up and bind it and make a great little wall hanging. You can play with your different fabric options. This one I used linen on top, which was really fun. You can play with prints. And you can also just turn one block, this is a different design, but I've turned it into a pillow sham. I really love applique and I hope that you enjoyed this block as well. As you applique more and feel more comfortable with it, you'll notice how often you can applique. It's super portable which is so great. You don't have to worry about having electricity or a sewing machine. You can take it with you. And if you've got a little bit of time that you're sitting around, you can applique away. Or if you just want to hang out with friends and not have to worry about the sound of a sewing machine or anything else competing

with your experience with them, you can just stitch away.