

Couching

RIGHT-HANDED



1 Couching is used to attach various fibres or even a loop of threaded beads to the fabric surface. With matching thread, bring the needle up near the start of the line.



2 Take the thread over the line to be couched and go back down in the same hole or very close to it, making a loop. The stitch positions also determine the shape of the line.



3 Before the thread is pulled firmly to the back, you can tweak it so that the thread goes between beads or in a hidden part of a fibre. Ideally, couching is nearly invisible.



4 Come up again a little way along the line and repeat the couching stitch. Depending on what you are couching, the stitches could be very close together or spaced apart.



5 When you've couched the line down in several places to form the desired shape, finish off the thread at the back. The thread holding the beads is also finished at the back.



6 Some 3D stitches, such as raised stem band, are built on a thick couched base of soft cotton thread. For a straight line, work several long straight stitches.



7 Use matching thread to couch over the group of threads. This time, go down at each side of the group and don't pull the thread tight enough to make indents.



8 If the next layer of stitches is worked on the couching stitches, you would need to space them accordingly and use thread to match the top layer of stitches, not the base.



9 Very fragile threads or textured fibres can't be stitched through the fabric. After taking the starting tail to the back with a large-eyed needle, couch the fibre to the surface.



10 When it's couched down, finish off by taking the tail through to the back and stitching over it neatly. Couching allows you to incorporate very unusual fibres.



11 This shows the back of the work. There are about nine stitches couching the circle of yarn in place and the ends are couched to just the stabiliser layer.