

Transferring your Embroidery Design onto Fabric

There are many different ways to transfer your designs. These are just a few suggestions. You may wish to play around with a photocopier to ensure your design is the required size before you start.

Using a Light Pad

This is usually slightly larger than A4 and works for a design up to A4 in size. It has cushioned pads on the back so it doesn't mark your worktop and stays still when you're tracing. The pad comes with a USB charger, so you can plug it into a socket or portable charger quite easily. When you touch the button in the corner of the pad the light comes on, brighter with each touch so you choose how bright you need the light. If you are tracing from card which is thick and cannot see the design clearly, turn off the top light or shut the curtain and it will suddenly appear. If you want to trace your design onto a dark fabric just use a white gel pen or pencil, your design will still show through. If tracing onto fabric, you can use a fine pencil, fineliner, water soluble transfer pen or a frixion pen.

Using the Window

Using masking tape, tape your design onto a window and tape your fabric over it. Make sure it is secured on all edges to reduce movement. Trace with a pencil, fine liner, frixion pen or water erasable fabric marking pen. This works well with simple designs, your arm will ache if it is an intricate design!

Carbon Paper

Be sure to use proper dressmaking carbon paper, not drawing carbon paper or the lines transferred will not wash out. Iron your fabric well and place fabric onto the table- secure with masking tape. Place the carbon paper face down onto the fabric and secure. Then place your template on the top and tape. you can do this once your fabric has been placed inside your hoop but its much easier if everything is flat. When you order the dressmakers carbon paper it often comes in a pack with several colours, both light and dark, so it then becomes easy to trace a design onto dark fabric, using a pale carbon paper.

Iron on transfer pen by Sulky

This is a great product. All you do is trace over the printed or drawn design with the pen, then turn the image over and iron onto the flat fabric. If you leave the iron on too long, the pen line gets thicker and you may not be able to hide it with embroidery stitches, so experiment first on a piece of scrap materials to test the strength of the ironed on line. If you press lightly and keep pulling up one edge as you iron, you can see how strong the transferred line is. This same piece of paper can be used for a few other pieces of fabric and will continue to transfer but will get lighter each time.

Iron on Transfer pencil by Clover

Trace your chosen design onto tracing paper using the pencil. Then setting your iron to non steam, place the right side of the tracing onto the right side of the fabric and iron over. It takes a little bit of practise to work out how hard to press with the pencil, and how much to iron, so do practise on scrap fabric first. But gives a reasonably good drawing on the fabric. If it is too faint, just go over some of the faint parts with a pencil or fineliner. I would much rather transfer a faint design than one which is too heavy and will prove difficult to stitch over.

Clover transfer mesh

This is a roll of thin white plastic which has is full of tiny punched holes. Place it over your design and trace with a pencil. It's a bit hard to see on the mesh but you will see the design clearly when you place the mesh over a piece of white paper. Place it onto your pale fabric and either hold firmly or use masking tape to secure. With a frixion pen, trace over again and you will transfer a dotted design onto your fabric which you can either stitch straight onto or draw over again first. This works brilliantly with large outlines but isn't great if the design is small and complicated. To get the pencil marks off the transfer mesh, just place in the palm of your hand and rub gently with a baby wipe. For some reason it comes off easier in the heat of your hand than flat on the table. Dry and reuse over and over. Simple!

And there we have it, 6 different methods for you to experiment with.

Have fun,

Julie x