



### Blocking Finished Needlework by Janet M. McDonald -Davies

With some of my needlework I draw first the design onto the fabric with a blue water soluble pen. So I have to wash out that blue pen marking once stitching is finished. With slightly Raised/Padded Needlework it is not easy to get your iron in close enough around shapes to get all the natural creases out left behind while the fabric dried.

I do not mean wrinkles that may happen because your tension was too tight or you did not use a hoop while stitching; but the natural wrinkling of linen and cotton fabric after washing/drying.

Below the Whitework owl the stitching is stitched with a thick thread. Just flat ironing would squash the French Knots and other Knotted stitches. The blue flower design has areas of Padded Needlelace, so a flat iron even on a padded surface would not help remove the fabrics natural wrinkles

So I 'block' the fabric while it is drying to produce a wrinkle free background. Also it allows the fabric to dry so the weave of the fabric is straight, which is needed if putting the needlework in a picture frame.

#### Method for Blocking

1. Hand wash/rinse your Needlework and roll in a spongy towel to remove excess water.
2. Use a piece of flat polystyrene more than 3 inches larger than your design area. Visit you local appliance shop for bit of polystyrene left over from box packing.
3. Lay your fabric on the polystyrene and pin every 1/4 inch in a square/rectangle with a sewing pins. Making sure that your fabric grain is straight. Use a square ruler or the corner of a square piece of paper to make sure your design is sitting square. Keep stretching the fabric edge by edge until all creases have gone.
4. Allow your stitching/fabric to sit somewhere safe to dry. If the stitching is very padded this could take a few days to dry completely.
5. I quite often photograph the Needlework once it is dry but still stretched.



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