



Embroidered Thaumatrope

Products Used

Birdcage Thaumatrope (In the Hoop) (Sku: EMP16762-1)

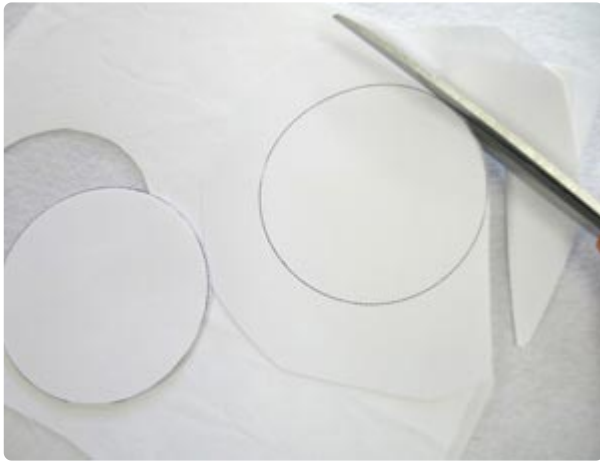
Steps To Complete



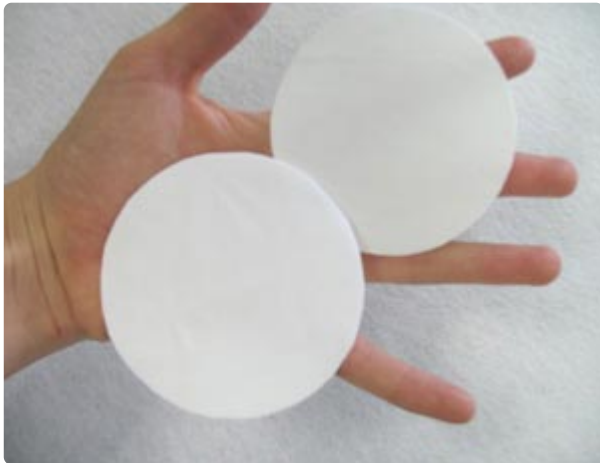
A [thaumatrope](#) was a hugely popular toy in Victorian times, a kind of old-school stop motion trick, or an old-school show with only one channel. With the wonder of persistence of vision, a bird magically transported into a cage with just a twirl of a string. Strangely enough, with all our modern technology, thaumatropes are still pretty darn fascinating.

To indulge that fascination yourself, you can create some optical magic with a little embroidery and a few simple steps. Follow along and I'll show you how to make your magic toy.

This [thaumatrope design](#) is available in [hand embroidery](#) and [digital stock art](#) versions as well as the [machine embroidery](#) design described here. You can hand-stitch or print the images and follow along with how to construct the thing. You'll get the idea.



To make our thaumatrope, we first need to cut out our circle templates. Print your dieline files, grab some fabric (something light and un-patterned, so you can see your birdie clearly) back it with some cutaway stabilizer using a temporary spray adhesive, and cut out two circles for your thaumatrope. If you don't have the embroidery software needed to print the files, you can always stitch them onto your stabilizer-backed fabric and then cut out along the stitching line.

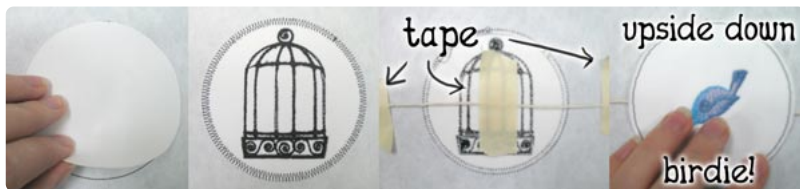


Now we have our fabric. The only other things you need to stitch this out for machine embroidery are some tearaway stabilizer, masking tape, and about a foot of string.



So, to start we're going to stitch our birdie side of the thaumatrope. Hoop up a piece of tearaway stabilizer, and set your machine to sewing. First it's going to stitch a dieline. Grab one of your circles, spray the stabilizer side with temporary spray adhesive, and place the circle carefully inside the dieline. When you machine starts sewing again, it's going to sew a tack down stitch, and then an upside down birdie. Why on earth is your birdie upside down? Your birdie is currently orientationally challenged as a reminder that when you stick this stitched birdie on the back of your thaumatrope, he needs to be upside down in order for him to appear correctly in his cage. Once your birdie is done, tear him free from his stabilizer and set him aside.

Hoop up another piece of tearaway stabilizer, stitch your dieline, and place your second circle carefully inside after spraying the back with adhesive. A zigzag tack down will stitch, followed by the bird's cage. After that step has sewn, take your design off the machine (but not out of the hoop!) and flip it over to the back. Take a piece of string, at least a foot long, and lay it across the middle of your circle. Tape it town in the middle of the circle, and then tape the excess down outside of the design, so the string doesn't wander back underneath the design as it's stitching. Also, make sure your string is coming out straight and even on either side. Finally, grab your birdie piece, spray the back of him, and place him **upside down** directly behind the cage.





Before we sew our last step, you're going to need to wind a bobbin that matches the color of your final border, and stick it in your machine, so the thread on the back and the front of your circle matches.

Once your birdie and string is secure on the back, flip your design back over again, set it back under your machine. With your matching bobbin in place, sew the final tack down and satin stitch border to finish your thaumatrope. Keep an eye on the string in the back, making sure it doesn't move around.



Once your design is done stitching, remove it from the hoop and tear it free from your stabilizer. Your thaumatrope is done!

For those of you printing or hand sewing it, stitch or print your design, and then glue the two designs back to back with the string in the middle, making sure your birdie is upside down. If you're hand stitching, you could also stitch a cute decorative edge around the circle!



To see the magic of your thaumatrope work, take one end of the string in either hand, and twirl it back and forth between your fingers until your circle starts spinning back and forth. Get it going fast enough, and magically your birdie will appear in his cage!

This is an image of what it should sorta look like. You can't actually capture this on camera very well, but photoshop is darn good at it.



Have fun with your new little magic trick – it's easy to make and fun to use. They may be a vintage toy, but there's still something really cool about thaumatropes. Besides, vintage is in, isn't it? This thing could be hotter than the iPhone. [Enjoy your new state-of-the-art optical toy!](https://urbanthreads.com)