

Fabric Coloring Book

In many ways, we don't often think of making machine embroidery designs as a thing that young kids can take part in. I mean, there are all kinds of great projects you can stitch FOR little ones ... bibs, onesies, toys, tees. But it's not like they can sit and help you with your color changes and needle threading. However, there is actually a totally fun way they can help make a design their own. By coloring it themselves! Nope, not with thread choices. On designs with heavy black outlines (like [most of the designs in this category](#)) you can skip the fills and just stitch a nice clean outline onto fabric. Grab some fabric markers and you have a coloring page!

Supplies

Yup, with a few simple stitch changes you can let your little ones go wild on making their favorite designs extra special and there

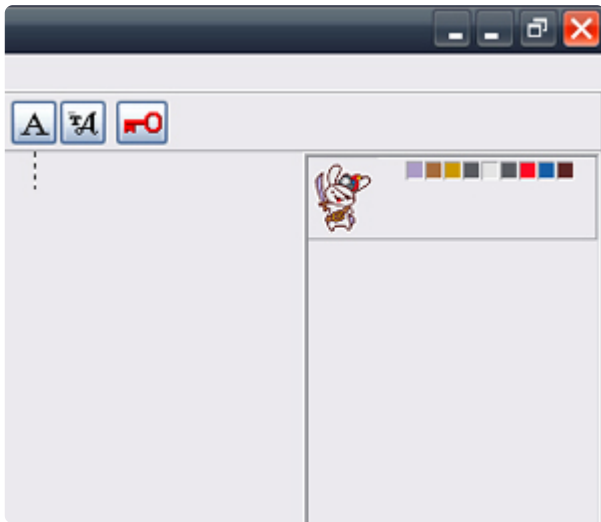


Steps To Complete

So, let's talk for a moment about different ways of skipping colors on a design. It's a handy trick to know how to do, but it can vary depending on how you work with your designs.

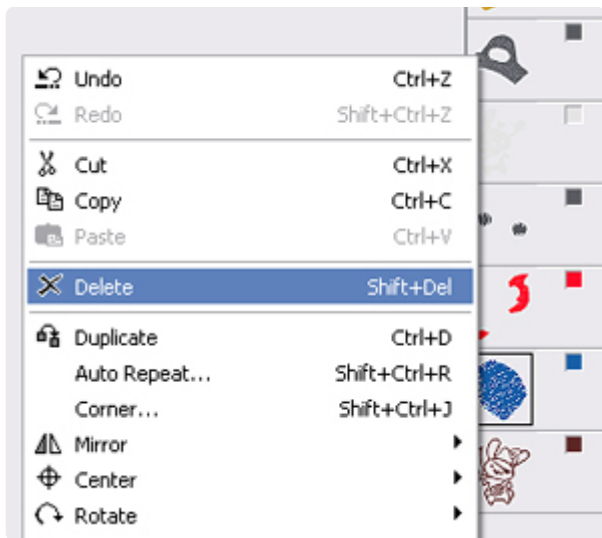
Many machines will let you do this trick on their on-board computer. Often you can go into your settings (once you've loaded your design) and look at the different color stops. On my machine, it let me skip past each color with a little arrow until I was just on the black stop, usually at the very end. Look at each design carefully to figure out which is your "outline" stop! The thread list provided with each machine embroidery design on the site will help. On other machines, you may need to move through the stitch count until you find the exact beginning of the part you want to stitch.





If you've got embroidery software, you may be able to edit out the parts of the design you don't want to stitch.

Here's how I did it in Embird: Open the design and go into Editor mode. See this thumbnail in the upper right corner of the screen? Right-click on one of the color squares and select "Separate All Colors."



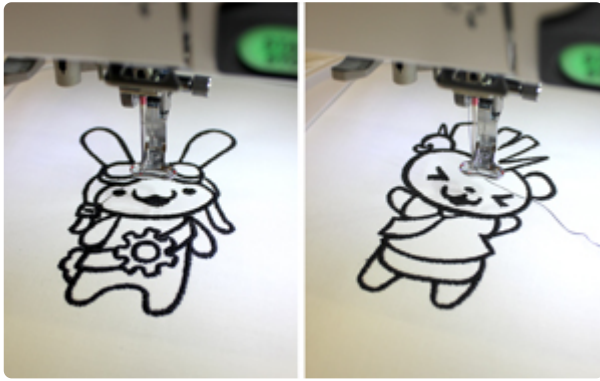
Then right-click on each part that you want to take out of the design, and select "Delete." In this case, I'm deleting everything except the bunny outline at the bottom of the list. Save the newly edited design, transfer it to your machine, and you're good to go!

However you do it, it's usually pretty straightforward, and lets you transform any outline design into a nice simple black and white line drawing! Just perfect for adding a bit of color...



So, hoop up a piece of plain white or light fabric with some cutaway stabilizer underneath. Make sure you leave enough excess fabric around the edges for you to turn it into a "coloring" page.

Stitch just that last black outline stop on your design!



Stitch up a couple characters! After the little [pirate bunny](#) I stitched a few more of his little [adventure friends](#). It's funny, without the rest of his colors, little [punk panda](#) turns into a little punk bear! No matter, they'll get their own personalities soon enough...

Let your little one choose which designs they would like to color most!



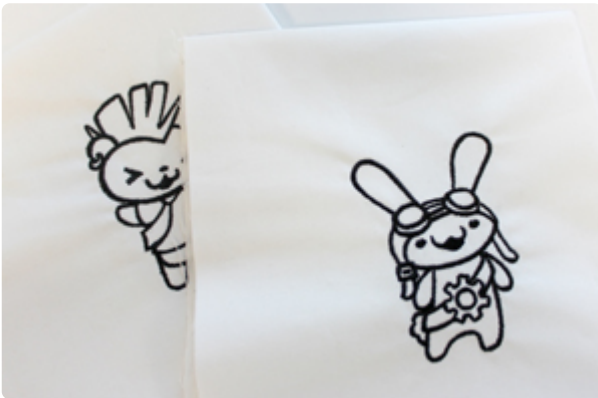
Once all your designs are stitched up and unhooped, you'll want to cut them to a uniform size to make them into a little "book." I used a small piece of scrap paper to get clean right angle edges, and to keep the templates the same on each stitchout. Remember to leave a little seam allowance for when we stitch them into pages.



Here are a few of my pages cut out and ready to go! Now just cut a matching backing piece for each page so we can stitch them into "pages".



For each page, place the design and its backing piece right sides together, and pin the edges. Sew a seam around three sides, leaving the left side of the “page” open. We’ll finish that edge off into a binding later.



Once you’ve finished each page, clip the corners, turn the fabric right side out again, and press them flat with an iron! If you like, you can also sew another seam around the page edges to make them extra flat, but as we’ll discuss later, it can be kinda fun to leave them easily able to turn into other things later...



Once all your pages are done, stack them on top of each other into a “book,” and trim the left side a bit so they’re all mostly even.

If you want to make a “cover” for your coloring book, feel free! You can use the fonts in that often come with machines, or grab one of our fun [alphabets](#) (like the [Cirque Alphabet](#)) to make a “title” page. Add your child’s name or just label it as a coloring book!



Once all your pages are ready, cut a piece of felt that's as tall as your book, and about 6 inches wide. Wrap it around the raw edge of your pages. We're going to use this as a binding. I would recommend wrapping the front to exactly where you want it, but leaving a lot of excess at the back, to make sewing easier.



Pin your pages and your binding in place, and carefully sew a seam down the edge of your felt binding. I say carefully because your book is probably pretty thick at this point, so going slowly and using nice wide stitches is best. If you've added a ton of pages, you may need to do this part by hand!



Once you've stitched the binding on, flip it over to the back and cut away the excess felt about a 1/4 inch away from your seam.



And done! Your coloring book is ready to go.



Inside you've got fun blank pages with simple black and white characters just waiting to come to life! What's extra fun for using embroidery as a coloring "outline" is the raised stitches help guide little ones to shapes, and your black stitches won't take any color. It's a fun, tactile way for kids to try coloring!



So what are you waiting for? There are tons of different fabric markers out there. Grab a pack of colors...



And let the little ones go! Big white pages leave lots of room for their own creations as well as the chipper characters.



Each piece becomes its own unique creation! Better yet, once your little one is done coloring, these pages could be easily removed and turned into everything from quilt blocks to appliques, all custom decorated by the young artists.



If you like, you can skip the “book” part all together! Use the tips above to stitch a blank outline on a toddler's tee and let them decorate it themselves! Just follow your marker's directions to set the color (usually ironing will do it) and you have a stitched and permanent piece of art created by you and a young Picasso. Kids will love making their favorite designs just the way they like them.