

Starched Fabric Lantern

Starch is an amazing and wonderful tool in a crafter's arsenal. You may have used it when quilting to get nice crisp fabric pieces or like me, when you were 5, to make Halloween ghosties out of cheesecloth. Well, with enough starch, you can make a veritable fabric sculpture, and since fabric can be embroidered... we've got an awesome embroidered sculpture! This technique can be used to make all sorts of fun things, but I thought it would be fun to make a decorative and festive fall candle holder.

Supplies

Now, before you freak out, don't worry, I'm not talking about a flame candle. Since this is fabric after all, you'll want to use an LED candle. To make your cool sculpted candle holder, you'll need:

- Cotton, linen, or other light fabric
- Liquid or spray starch
- Awesome light and



Steps To Complete



Let's start with the embroidery. The amount of fabric you need depends on the size of your holder, but you'll want the embroidery to be near the middle top edge of your fabric, about 2-3 inches from the top. This is so there is enough excess to wrap around the form. Choose a light, open design, otherwise your fabric will get stiffened by the stitches and not form nicely. Light, open [scribbles](#) or other running stitch designs work best. Hoop up your design with a piece of tearaway stabilizer, and stitch it out!



When your design is done stitching, unhoop it and carefully tear away the excess stabilizer from around the edges of the design. We use tearaway so we're not trying to also stiffen a layer of stabilizer, and so you don't see a rectangle of stabilizer inside your pretty sculpture.

Now we need to form our fabric. You can pick a lot of different shapes for this, but make sure it's a shape that you can remove your stiff fabric from once it's hardened. If you're working on a non-stick surface, like glass, it's OK to put it directly on. If you're worried your fabric will stick to your form, try covering it with a plastic bag first.



Fold your shape onto your form, and secure it with string or a rubber band. You'll notice my design is on the form upside down. This is because the open end will become the top of my candle holder later.



Once you've got your fabric folded down how you'd like, you can trim off the excess fabric around the bottom.



Now, it's time to starch! And starch, and starch. No, I didn't do this on my desk. The lighting back in the messy area is icky. Move somewhere you can make a mess, and I'd recommend putting some plastic covering over where you're starching.

Whatever kind of starch you're using, spray or liquid, the important part to remember is that you want your fabric completely saturated.



Once your fabric is totally wet with starch, leave it to dry on a piece of plastic, so the fabric doesn't stick. With a heavily folded sculpture such as this, you may need to starch it a few times in order to achieve the stiffness you're looking for. I gave mine about three good layers (letting it dry in between each one) and then left it alone for a good long while. I'd recommend overnight, since if you try to remove it too soon you'll lose your form!



When you're done, carefully remove your fabric candle holder from the form, and remove the string or elastic. If it's still not stiff enough, starch again!



Once your fabric has finally hardened, you can put your LED candle inside and light up your fabric sculpture!



You now have a cool, flowy embroidered piece of art, that glows warmly with the colors and designs of autumn! Make a whole bunch of embroidered fabric luminaries to light up your fall nights!