



MINI CHALLENGE 2026
by Penny Dowdell

RAIN

It's been a long hot summer for a lot of people, so an embroidery of a cosy rainy day feels very welcome! Surely, reading inside while it rains outside is a top-tier human experience!



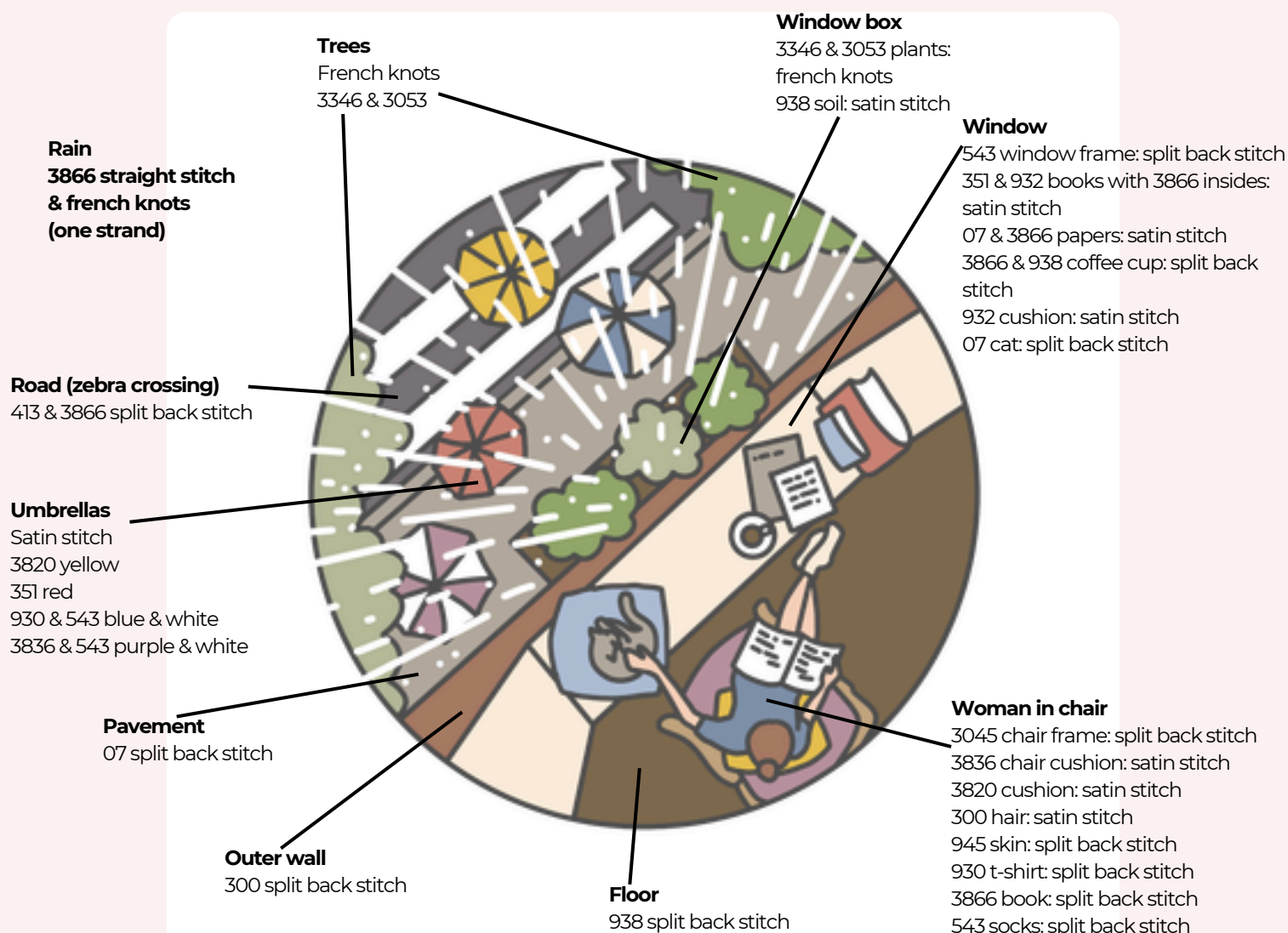
THE PATTERN

This pattern, when printed onto A4 paper, will fit a 3" hoop.

Stitch the black lines in black perle thread, size 12.



STITCH GUIDE



DMC Colour Codes:

- DMC 413 (blue grey)
- DMC 07 (beige)
- DMC 300 (red brown)
- DMC 938 (dark brown)
- DMC 3045 (brown)
- DMC 543 (cream)
- DMC 3866 (white)
- DMC 3346 (green)
- DMC 3053 (soft green)
- DMC 930 (dark blue)
- DMC 932 (blue)
- DMC 3836 (purple)
- DMC 351 (red)
- DMC 3820 (yellow)
- DMC 945 (peach)

Unless otherwise stated, stitch with THREE strands of thread.

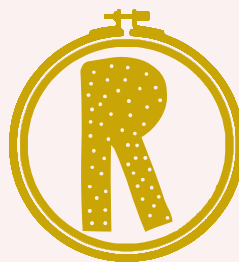
STITCH TIPS



For the writing on the papers/books, first stitch the base colours, then add tiny straight stitch dashes in the outline thread to look like writing!



Similarly, complete all the stitching, then add the rain stitches. Use one strand of the white thread (or sewing thread could also work). Follow the colour guide, using a mix of longer and shorter stitches, and some french knots, spreading out from the centre.



RAIN

I hope you enjoyed stitching this pattern!

I'd love to see your projects! Tag me @pennydowdell on Instagram, or use the hashtag #pennysabcchallenge!



My husband is a great fan of late night noodles. There's something very comforting about eating a hot bowl of salty noodles when everyone else is asleep, as if you were a student again! In this design, the use of orange, yellow and blue creates a retro, nostalgic vibe.



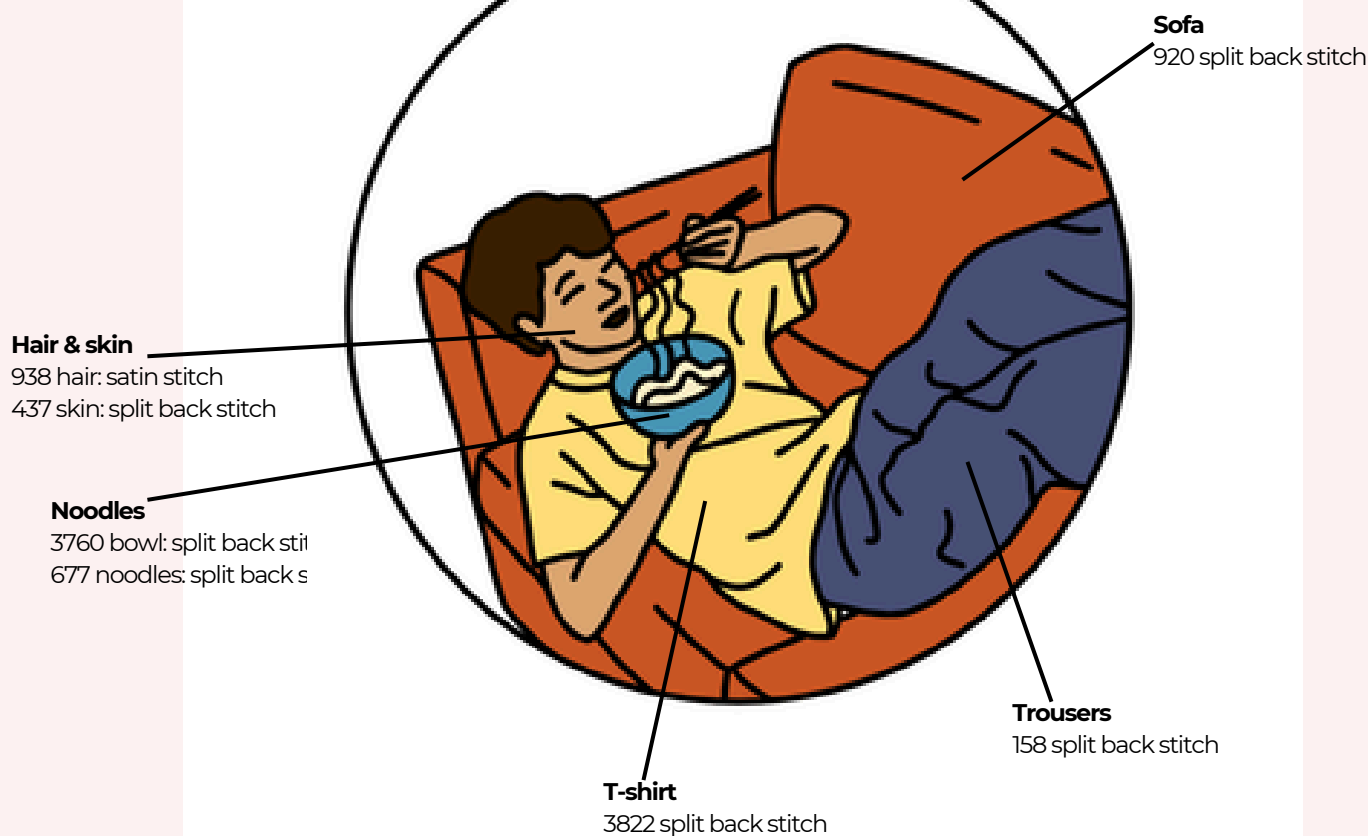
Stitch the black lines in black perle thread, size 12.



STITCH GUIDE

Background

In my embroidery, I've not stitched the background, but you might want to with a wallpaper colour or a bookcase, or anything you like!

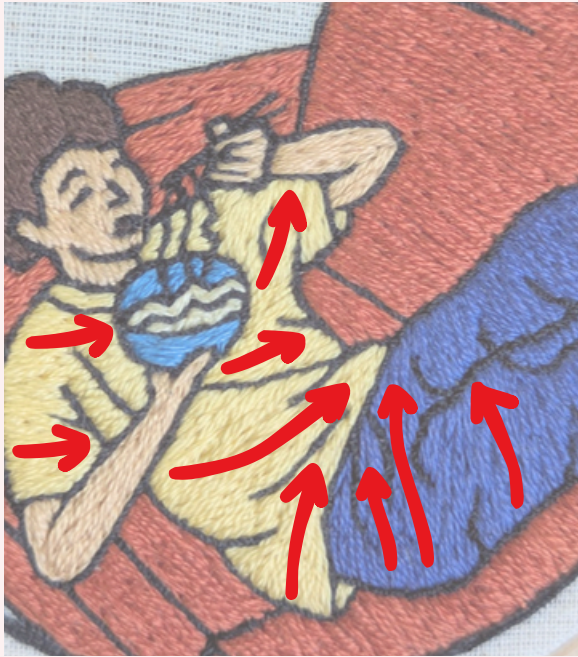


DMC Colour Codes:

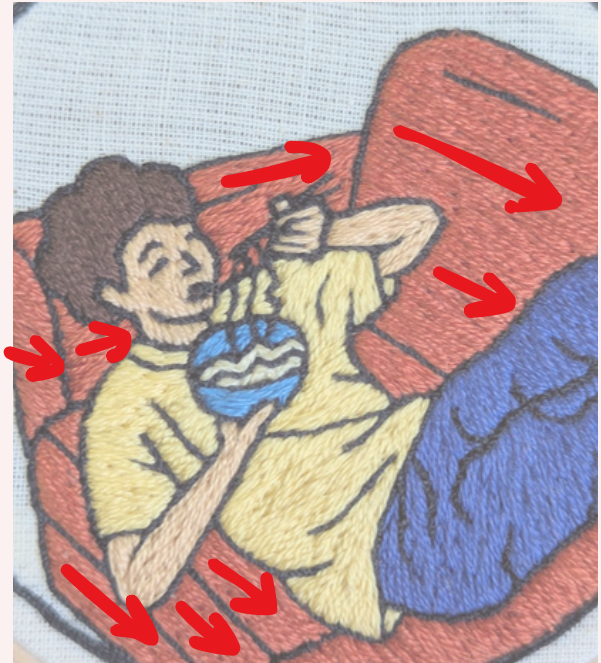
- DMC 158 (dark blue)
- DMC 3760 (blue)
- DMC 920 (dark orange)
- DMC 938 (dark brown)
- DMC 437 (pale brown)
- DMC 3822 (yellow)
- DMC 677 (pale yellow)

Unless otherwise stated, stitch with THREE strands of thread.

STITCH TIPS



To create the effect of draping for the clothes, split back stitch in the direction of the drape lines.



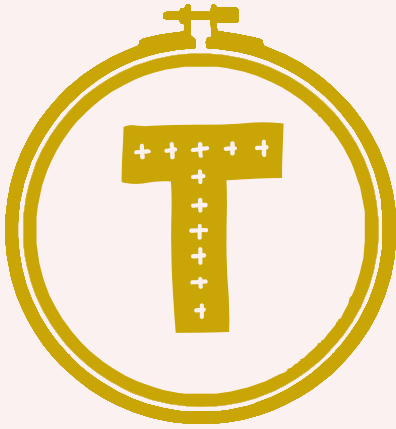
Likewise, angle the direction of stitching on the sofa so it creates a more dimensional shape.



LATE NIGHT NOODLES

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I'd love to see your projects! Tag me @pennydowdell on Instagram, or use the hashtag #pennysabcchallenge!



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OCEAN

There were so many angles to choose from with this week's subject! I debated coral reefs, sailing ships, and lots of other ideas. But with the summer here and my holidays coming soon, I felt most in the mood to create a chill surfing scene! Nothing better than salty hair and sunshiney beach days!



THE PATTERN

This pattern, when printed onto A4 paper, will fit a 3" hoop.

Stitch the black lines in black perle thread, size 12.



STITCH GUIDE

Sun

744 satin stitch sun, with straight stitch ray details

Palm tree

320 split back stitch



Ocean

3755 & BLANC split back stitch

Surfer

744 surfboard: split back stitch
948 skin: split back stitch
780 hair: split back stitch
3830 swimsuit: satin stitch

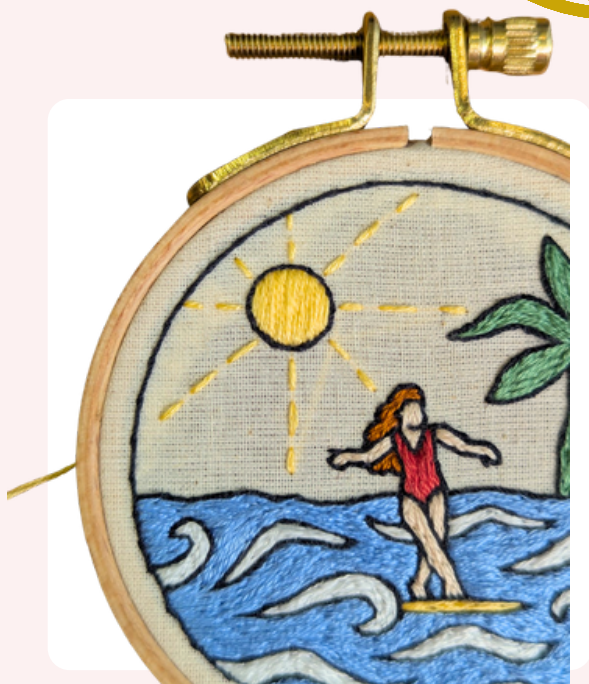
DMC Colour Codes:

- DMC 3830 (red)
- DMC 3755 (blue)
- DMC 780 (orange-brown)
- DMC 744 (yellow)
- DMC 948 (pale peach)
- DMC 320 (green)
- DMC BLANC (white)

Feel free to change the skin and hair colours (780 & 948) in order to create your own surfer chick!

Unless otherwise stated, stitch with THREE strands of thread.

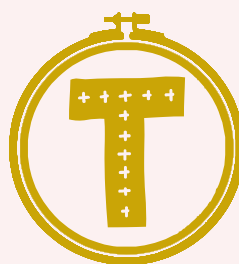
STITCH TIPS



Add the sun rays on with some freehand straight stitches. First, add eight 'spokes' going vertical, horizontal, and diagonal, of three stitches.



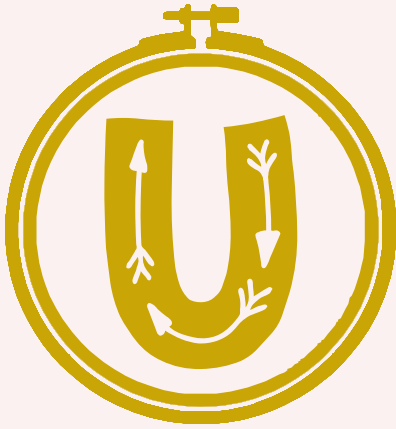
Then in between the three stitch spokes, add shorter two stitch spokes. It doesn't have to be perfect, it will still look cool!



OCEAN

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MINI CHALLENGE 2026
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PAINTING

I love combining paint with embroidery to create imaginative and unusual mixed media pieces! This week's design is inspired by long summer days and peaceful creativity!



THE PATTERN

This pattern, when printed onto A4 paper, will fit a 3" hoop.

Stitch the black lines in black perle thread, size 12.

This week I've not stitched the outer circle, but you can if you prefer to!



STITCH GUIDE

Easel

433: split back stitch
ECRU fastening: satin stitch

Palette

ECRU base: satin stitch
Paint blobs: french knots

Artist

All split back stitch
437 hair
951 skin
ECRU shirt
3051 trousers
433 & 437 sandals



Background

In my embroidery, I've not stitched the background, but you might want to with a scene that reflects the art you've painted, or anything you like!

DMC Colour Codes:

- DMC 433 (dark brown)
- DMC 437 (pale brown)
- DMC ECRU (pale beige)
- DMC 3051 (dark green)
- DMC 951 (pale peach)

Feel free to change the skin and hair colours! (951 & 437)

For the paint blobs on the palette, use scraps of spare thread which reflect the colours of the artwork you've painted!

Stitch with THREE strands of thread.

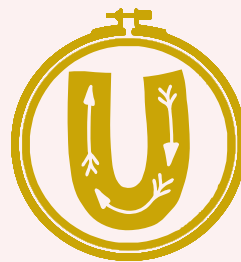
STITCH TIPS



VERY IMPORTANT: Paint the artwork FIRST, so that if anything goes wrong you haven't stitched anything yet! You can use watercolour, acrylic, or gouche. Here, I've used undiluted watercolours.



Stitch the palette base, then add french knot 'paint blobs' which reflect the colours of the artwork you've painted! It's a good opportunity to use up some scraps of thread!



PAINTING

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I'd love to see your projects! Tag me @pennydowdell on Instagram, or use the hashtag #pennysabcchallenge!



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QUILT

Goodness me, if I had the time to take up another craft, it would definitely be quilting! I think they are so cool! This week, it was a lot of fun to combine quilting with embroidery, designing a pattern with delight in each square! Feel free to change the patterns in each square if you think of other things you'd like to stitch!!



THE PATTERN

This pattern, when printed onto A4 paper, will fit a 3" hoop.

Stitch the black lines in black perle thread, size 12.





DMC Colour Codes:

- DMC 803 (dark blue)
- DMC 394 (blue)
- DMC 937 (green)
- DMC 801 (brown)
- DMC 351 (red)
- DMC 760 (red)

- DMC 3822 (yellow)
- DMC 746 (very pale yellow)

Stitch with THREE strands of thread. All parts are stitched in satin stitch, but you can choose any stitch you prefer!

STITCH TIPS



For the two squares with hatching, first stitch the base colour, then add horizontal and vertical straight stitches across the squares.



To secure them, stitch a tiny couching stitch at each intersection.



QUILT

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