



This how-to blog post was used on a crafting site intended for beginner crafters. It was written in response to a specific question from a reader.

HOW TO TURN PICTURES INTO CROSS STITCH PATTERNS

DIFFICULTY

- **Easy:** Anyone can do it.

Cross stitching has been a favorite decorative art among women for centuries. According to Jean Breidenbach, the earliest example of cross stitch in the United States is a small sampler that dates back to the mid-1600s. Simply Samplers says these scraps of fabric with letters, numbers and designs sewn onto them were intended as a means of recording different patterns and designs they found interesting. Today, cross stitch has enormous room for enrichment thanks to the availability of thousands of thread colors, fabrics, and the ability to create highly detailed, custom patterns from personal pictures.

THINGS YOU'LL NEED

Picture in digital format
Photo editing software
Floss color chart

STEP 1

Select the image you want to stitch. Some tips in making your selection offered by Grzegorz Zochowski with My Cross Stitch include choosing images that have bold, strong details, that have high color contrast, and that can be made large enough across the canvas squares to preserve important details.

STEP 2

In the photo editing software, click on “File”, “Open” and navigate to the picture you’ve selected. The picture should be sized to 640 pixels by 480 pixels or larger. Make any color adjustments you feel are necessary – keep in mind the pattern-making process tends to darken the original picture. Crop the picture or zoom to one area if needed in order to capture the detail desired.

STEP 3

Save the picture as a new file. This will ensure the original file does not become damaged.

STEP 4

Add a mosaic filter to the picture by clicking on “Filters”, “Mosaic”. The terms used or locations of these tools may be slightly different depending on your software package. On the mosaic menu,

set the style to “pixelate” and the cell size to 5. Increase detail by selecting a smaller number, but keep in mind that this will make the stitches smaller to achieve the same size pattern.

STEP 5

Apply the posterize effect to the image by clicking “Image”, “Mode”, “Posterize”. Again, the specific terms and locations may be somewhat different on your system. The number you set in the posterize menu determines how many colors will be included in the image and how many floss shades you’ll need. Zochowski recommends a setting anywhere between 10 and 50 for most images and going up to 150 for larger pieces or pictures with a great deal of color.

STEP 6

Click on “File” then “New” to create a new image. Set the background as transparent and the pixel size of the image to be the same size as the mosaic cell – i.e., 5 pixels by 5 pixels. Select a 1-pixel hard brush and set the foreground color to black. Paint a line along the left edge of the image and along the top edge. Save this image as a pattern.

STEP 7

On the cross-stitch picture, create a new layer and fill the image space with the pattern you just made. Set the layer opacity to 50 percent and the blending style to darken. Both of these options can be found on the layer pull-down menu.

STEP 8

Assign floss colors to the colors used in your picture. Most major floss manufacturers provide palette color charts online that can help. If using DMC floss, XStitchTreasures offers a chart to convert RGB values to actual DMC colors.

TIPS

If you don’t own image editing software strong enough to carry out these functions, you can opt to download one of numerous free programs available on the internet.

WARNINGS

Be sure you don’t skip Step 2, making a copy of your image. This will ensure your original image is still preserved as a photo while giving you the flexibility to work with it to create the pattern. Depending on the numbers you selected in the pixelate and posterize stages, your image is likely to lose much of its finer details.

Sources used in this article:

Cross Stitch: Interesting Facts on Cross Stitch Embroidery

<http://jeanscrossstitch.blogspot.com/2008/10/interesting-facts-on-cross-stitch.html>

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<http://www.simplysamplers.org/content/pages/a-history-of-samplers.php>

My Cross Stitch: How to Prepare a Good Cross Stitch Pattern http://www.my-cross-stitch-software.com/faq_en/004/cross_stitch_004.shtml

XStitchTreasures: DMC Floss Converted into RGB Values
<http://www.xstichtreasures.com/DMCFloss-RGBvalues.html>