

## NUTCRACKER APPLIQUÉ WALLHANGING

BY LINDEE GOODALL

**T**his stunning design artfully combines appliqués with embroidery to achieve a work of art.

With fabric we can get textures, sheens, and pattern that we can't get with thread alone. I've combined faux suede, satins, velvets, vinyl, metallics, and faux fur along with "normal" quilt-weight cottons to bring this design to life. The stitching uses mostly polyester embroidery thread with the some gold and silver metallic thread highlights.

**This is a large project specifically designed for multii-hooping with a large hoop (240x360mm or minimum 225 x 350mm sewing field).**

The sections are carefully designed to overlap slightly and each hooping only needs to align with one previously stitched section.

While all the appliqués work together to keep the overall stitch count down, you will need extra prep time before you begin stitching to select and prepare all your appliqués. Also, this is not the kind of design you can just press the start button on your machine and come back later when it is completed.

**Resizing is not recommended!**



Finished Design Size: 8.25" x 30"

Finished Project Size: 18.5" x 42"

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## WATCH THE VIDEO

There is a full video on how to do machine embroidered appliqué here: [How to do Machine Embroidered Applique](#).

A video is also in progress for this project and will be completed soon. Just check [LindeeGVideos on YouTube](#).

## SKILL LEVEL

This is not a beginner project.

If you know how to do machine embroidered appliqué using precut appliqué patterns, are comfortable with accurate hooping when using a floating technique, and have basic skills to add borders and binding, you will find you can easily complete this project. The biggest prerequisite is patience!

Appliqué basics are not covered here. Please see either:

- Video: [How to do Machine Embroidered Applique](#)
- PDF book: [Applique Basics](#)

This project does require finishing with a sewing machine to add borders and binding. Detailed instructions for finishing are not included.



*Please read through all instructions before starting your project! This project, while complex, is not really difficult because the embroidery takes care of all the construction. Cut and place carefully and you'll have a successful result!*



*Resizing is not recommended! If you choose to modify the design, you are on your own.*

## GETTING STARTED

This project is not hard but it is not a single afternoon project. Take your time selecting and preparing your fabrics. Accuracy is key to successful result!

- Precise cutting
- Precise placement of appliqués

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# Nutcracker Appliqué Wallhanging

- Precise hooping

You'll be spending a lot of time at your machine. If you prepare well before loading the first design, the project will go much smoother. I like to listen to an audio book while I watch the machine.

## WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- **Fabrics:**
  - **Background fabric:** 1.5 yds x 22" prequilted cotton for a sturdy base (you can get 2 panels from this yardage). This is a generous amount that gives you plenty of extra to square up your project and add your borders on top.
  - **Backing fabric:** quilt-weight cotton
  - **Borders:** I cut my borders to 3.5" wide; your yardage will depend on whether you cut across the width or along the length
  - **Binding fabric**
  - **Fabrics for appliqués** - fat quarter sizes should work well



- **Embroidery Supplies:**
    - **Stabilizer:** HydroStick or Floriani Wet N Stick worked well with the quilted fabric
- TIP:** Don't use a water soluble unless all of your included fabrics can be washed and pressed.
- Fusible product for printing appliqué patterns if hand cutting: I used Sulky Totally Stable
  - Embroidery threads
  - Fusible web for appliqué; I used Steam-a-Seam 2

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- Temporary embroidery spray adhesive (TESA): I used KK2000
- Glue stick - to attach templates to vinyl
- **Scissors used:**
  - [For trimming batting](#)
  - [Thread snips](#)
  - [Heavy scissors](#) for final trim

## WHAT IF YOU HAVE A SMALLER HOOP?

At this point, I don't plan on making smaller sizes of this design since the detail is scaled for this size.

Of course, you are free to resize it and use other software to split the design for other hoop sizes. Just be aware that when you change the design in any way from it's original, there are no guarantees on the result. The hoopings have been carefully planned to work with a hoop that can accommodate the original file sizes.

**NOTE:** At the original size, this design has stitches that approach the maximum length for many machines. It also has includes stitches at the very short end. These stitch lengths restrict scalability. Also, keep in mind that as you shrink appliqué designs, you will need to be more precise with cutting and placing your appliqués because the tackdown and cover satins will become more narrow. Any resizing will require recreating the appliqué templates.

If you have software that can open a native EMB file, you'll have a more successful chance of adapting the design for other hoop sizes. Especially if you have multi-hooping capabilities, you can use those tools to split the design for other hoop sizes.

**WARNING:** For best results do not split any appliqués across different hoopings.

## EXPERT TIP:

This is complex design with a lot of color changes. Before stitching a design like this, I like to open it in my embroidery software and watch it run in the Stitch Player. If you have your work-sheet printed out before hand, you can make notes about what areas are stitched at the color changed.

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## ABOUT ALL THOSE COLOR CHANGES:

Don't freak out about the high number of color changes! Each appliqué is going to have 3 colors:

1. Placement
2. Tackdown
3. Cover

In most cases, you can sew each of these in the same color as the cover color. We just need the color change to force the machine to stop so we can place the fabric.

Also, keep in mind the colors listed in the included worksheets are the colors I used based on my fabric choices. Choose your colors based on your fabrics.

In some cases, the color is there for variety. For example, on the stripes on the pants and the horn, you may choose to sew them in the same color as the previous one.

The 2 shades of gold are to allow you to use both a poly thread and a metallic thread. Don't go too crazy with the metallic thread—it can overwhelm your project.

**NOTE:** Pay close attention to the color sequence guide. Several appliqués may be placed before the cover stitch is sewn. There are no combined placements in this project. For example, in hooping 1, the first 9 stops can all be sewn in the same color as color #9.



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## REGISTRATION MARKS:

Registration marks also add 2 extra colors. Each hooping has some registration marks that are vital to aligning your design properly. These can be removed once the design is fully stitched:

- **Hooping 1** has registration marks at the end of the design. Make sure these stitch completely. You will need them for matching up the next hooping. Take care when removing the stabilizer that they are not torn out.
- **Hooping 2** has registration marks at the beginning and again at the end.
- **Hooping 3** has registration marks only at the beginning of the design

Ending registration marks are red; beginning ones are green. It is not necessary to stitch them in these colors.

**NOTE:** Registration marks enable you to match up hoopings no matter what kind of embroidery machine you have. If you have a camera-enabled machine, feel free to use any advanced features you may have to align each hooping.

## CUTTING & PREPARING THE APPLIQUÉS:

**This project is designed for precut appliqués.**

Because of the fabric I used for the hat plume, I used the trim-in-place method for this piece only. If you choose to use this method, you'll need to back up one color change to re-stitch the placement line to attach the fabric and have a good edge for trimming.

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I cut all my appliqués by hand for this project mainly because I was using a wide range of different fabrics and most of them could not be heat-fused to an appliqué web to make them stable enough for cutting in my Scan N Cut. It doesn't matter how you cut them as long as they are accurately cut.

Apply the applique web to the back of your fabric and your printed template to the front of your fabric for cutting by hand.

**IMPORTANT:** You must make sure the template does not shift during cutting. I used KK2000 and sprayed the back of my paper template when I was ready to cut. Don't use these sprays on a vinyl because they won't dissipate. I used a glue stick for these fabrics.

**WARNING!** I initially tried a sticky-type fusible template paper but this was horrible. It was nearly impossible to peel off the fabric after cutting, it left adhesive behind, and it distorted the fabric.

## STITCHING APPLIQUÉS:

Color 1 in the appliqué area is a placement line. This placement stitch outlines the area where your prepared fabric will be placed. This outline is the exact same size and shape as the appliqué pattern piece. If your appliqué does not exactly match up when you place it, the most common reasons are:

- the appliqué is not the right one
- the appliqué was not printed accurately
- the appliqué was not cut accurately
- you resized the design but not the template

Color 2 is a zigzag tackdown; color 3 is the cover stitch. The cover stitch may not directly follow the tack stitch and may not completely surround the appliqué depending on what other objects may overlap it. All 3 steps can be stitched in the same color.

**NOTE:** Each appliqué is placed individually. This is to maximize registration and to permit using the trim in place method if needed.

## GETTING STARTED:

There is quite a bit of prep to complete before you load the designs and start stitching. I spent 2 days just picking fabrics!

I recommend printing out each worksheet at actual size so that you can tape together a full-size template. This will help you with placement and choosing your fabrics because you can see the scale of the space.

1. Print your worksheets and appliqué templates at actual size. You will need to tape your placement pieces together using the reference guides on the worksheets:

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2. Choose all your fabrics. I used a wide variety for the appliqués and chose a pre-quilted cotton fabric for the background. I sized my background fabric to 1.5 yds x 22". This is very generous and allows for plenty of fabric for squaring up and adding borders. Because this fabric is quilted, I added borders on top of the background fabric instead of trimming to size first and stitching to the edge.
3. Prepare and cut out all your appliqués.



4. Choose all your threads based on your fabric choices.
5. **Recommended:** Mark up your worksheet so you know where you actually need to change thread colors. Placement and tackdown stitches do not need a separate color. The color is only to force the machine to stop

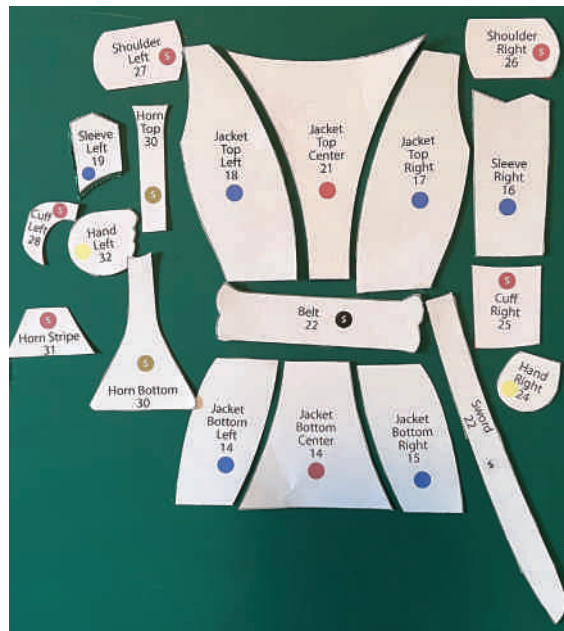


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**TIP:** Watching the design “sew” in embroidery software can help you with this step.

6. Organize your cut out pieces for easy placement during each hooping. I leave the pattern pieces attached until I’m ready to place it.



These are all the appliqués arranged for hooping #2.

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## PLANNING PLACEMENT:

The nutcracker is stitched in 3 hoopings from the bottom up. Therefore you need to figure out where to place the first hooping:

1. Mark the center of your background fabric.
2. Center the middle design (hooping 2) on your fabric.
3. Use the registration marks on each hooping to align the first hooping (bottom of the design) and mark the center for hooping.

## HOOPING:

Multi-hooping can be easier when floating and using a fusible stabilizer. I used a water-activated adhesive tearaway. I find this type of stabilizer is less likely to gum up my needle than a pressure sensitive sticky

For the first hooping, make sure you hoop straight and near the placement you determined. Stitch the first hooping. Remove from hoop, remove excess stabilizer without tearing out your registration stitches.

For each successive hooping:

1. Hoop just the stabilizer.
2. Stitch the registration marks on directly on the stabilizer.
3. Match the ending registration marks from the previous hooping to the new marks on the stabilizer.



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4. Smooth the fabric into place.
5. Sew the design.

**NOTE:** If you are using a water-activated adhesive stabilizer, do not activate before stitching the registration marks.

**Take your time when positioning the hoopings.** Carefully line up the ending registration marks from the previous hooping with the new ones you just stitched on the stabilizer. Running a pin through the center of the ending registration mark and matching it with the center of the one on the stabilizer is a good way to do this.



**IMPORTANT:** Take your time! Precise placement is critical for a successful result.

**NOTE:** There is a small amount of “fudge factor” digitized into these designs in case you are not perfectly accurate.

## PRO TIP #1:

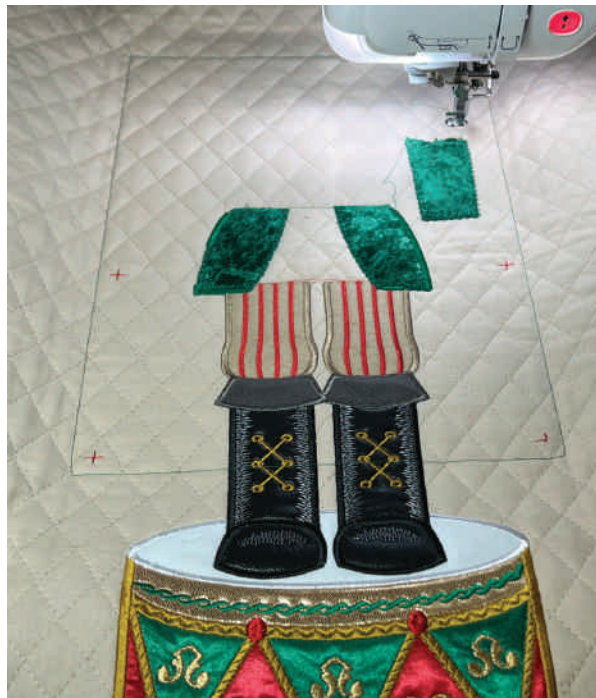
Adding a basting stitch can add additional stabilizing power to your project. You can do this in software or at your machine. If you do it in software, you can customize the stitch for a closer outline and position it to sew *after* the registration marks.

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When adding the basting stitch at the machine for hoopings 2 and 3, you'll need to change your sewing order:

- Advance to color #2 to sew the registration marks on your hooped stabilizer
- After positioning your fabric, go back to color 1 to sew the basting stitch
- Skip to color #3 to begin stitching your design

**NOTE:** If the basting stitches will go over fabrics that will leave puncture marks, stop your machine and advance over those areas without stitching. I used vinyl on the boots so there are no needle penetrations in that area:



## PRO TIP #2:

After hooping for the 2nd and 3rd design, you can check your placement by stepping through the registration marks at your machine to see if they line up. If not, rehoop!

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## PLUME TIP:

I used fluffy, textured, somewhat furry fabric for my plume that wasn't suitable for precutting so I used the trim-in-place method, or what I call the "blob method."

1. Sew the placement line.
2. Position a piece of fabric somewhat larger than the applique (it's easier to trim a more generous cut than a frugal one).
3. I added a piece of WST to tame the texture while stitching and make it easier to trim off excess fabric.



4. Back up 1 color and re-sew the placement line.
5. Remove the hoop from the machine and trim back the excess fabric to the cutting line. It needs to be very close.
6. Return the hoop to the machine and continue stitching.



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## FINISHING:

Remove excess stabilizer, basting stitches, and registration marks.

Decide on how you want to finish your project:

- Do you want a border? How wide? I cut mine to 3.5" wide and stitched it over the quilted qufabric.
- Do you want a backing? I used a printed fabric; it is only attached along the edges (not quilted).
- For a simple finish, trim to the desired size and either bind the edges or hem.

I marked a line on the quilted base fabric to use as guide for stitching the borders so the the quilted fabric would extend to the edge of the project.

Be sure to make a label for your project:



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