

## Faux Tattoos: Embroidery on Hosiery

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### Choosing a design

- Keep the hoop area in mind. For best results, especially on your first efforts, choose small designs (2" x 2" or so). It's best to stay within the size range of a 4" x 4" hoop.
- Designs can be open or filled. There are lots of designs available that mimic the appearance of tattoo art, but other designs may give you the look you want. Designs with light fill stitch quickly and look great.
- The motifs shown on set are from Urban Threads ([www.urbanthreads.com](http://www.urbanthreads.com)), A Bit of Stitch ([www.abitofstitch.com](http://www.abitofstitch.com)), and Brother ([www.brothersews.com](http://www.brothersews.com)).

### Needles and Threads

- Use a size 75/11 Embroidery or Stretch needle.
- Polyester and rayon embroidery threads are both suitable. Use an embroidery bobbin thread on the wrong side of the design.

### Design Placement

Figuring out design placement on an unstretched pair of tights or panty hose may be the most difficult part of the process.

- The surest method is to slip the tights on your leg and mark the placement with a disappearing marker.
- These guidelines may also help:
  - For a calf design, place the center of the design about 6" (unstretched) above the toe.
  - For an ankle design, mark the center about 2" (unstretched) above the toe.

### Instructions

- Decide where to place the embroidery: right or left leg (or both); calf or ankle. Turn the leg you'll be embroidering wrong side out.
- Roll the pantyhose down from the waist, creating a "doughnut" inside which you'll embroider.
- Slip a 7" x 9" piece of cardboard with rounded corners into the leg to stretch it as you position the embroidery hoop.
- Insert the inner hoop, upside down, into the leg of the pantyhose.
- Stabilize the hosiery with adhesive water-soluble stabilizer. If your design is completely filled with stitched, you may choose an adhesive tear-away instead, or slide a layer of tear-away under the hoop once it's in position on the machine.
- Place the outer hoop over the inner hoop and stabilized fabric; press down gently and tighten the hoop.
- Place the hoop on the machine, centering the needle bar inside the rolled fabric doughnut. Reposition the design if necessary using the machine's controls. The closer the design is to the hoop, the harder it will be to keep the fabric roll out of the way, so try to hoop with the design placement centered.
- Stitch the design. Use your hands to hold the fabric doughnut out of the way, but be careful not to nudge the hoop out of position. Keep your fingers away from the needle!

- When the embroidery is complete, trim the loose threads from the wrong side while the fabric is still in the hoop. Loosen and carefully remove the hoop.
- Rinse the tights to remove the remaining water-soluble stabilizer. Turn the tights right side out and slip on your tattoo.

#### Tips

- Use lotion on your hands before you begin to avoid snagging the fabric. You may also want to moisturize while you're working, especially if you're using sheer pantyhose.
- Regular pantyhose are much easier to position for embroidery than those with "control" elastic in the legs or panty. Even inexpensive hosiery can be successfully embroidered, so don't choose fancy styles for your first efforts.
- Be sure the edges of the cardboard are smooth.
- Remember that the toe seam of the tights will need to be perpendicular to the embroidery hoop for designs placed on the outer surface of the leg.
- Stay with the machine as you embroider. Use your hands to hold the fabric doughnut away from the needle, but don't rest your hands on the hoop, which can drag the hoop out of position.
- Use the automatic needle threader with caution to avoid snagging the tights.