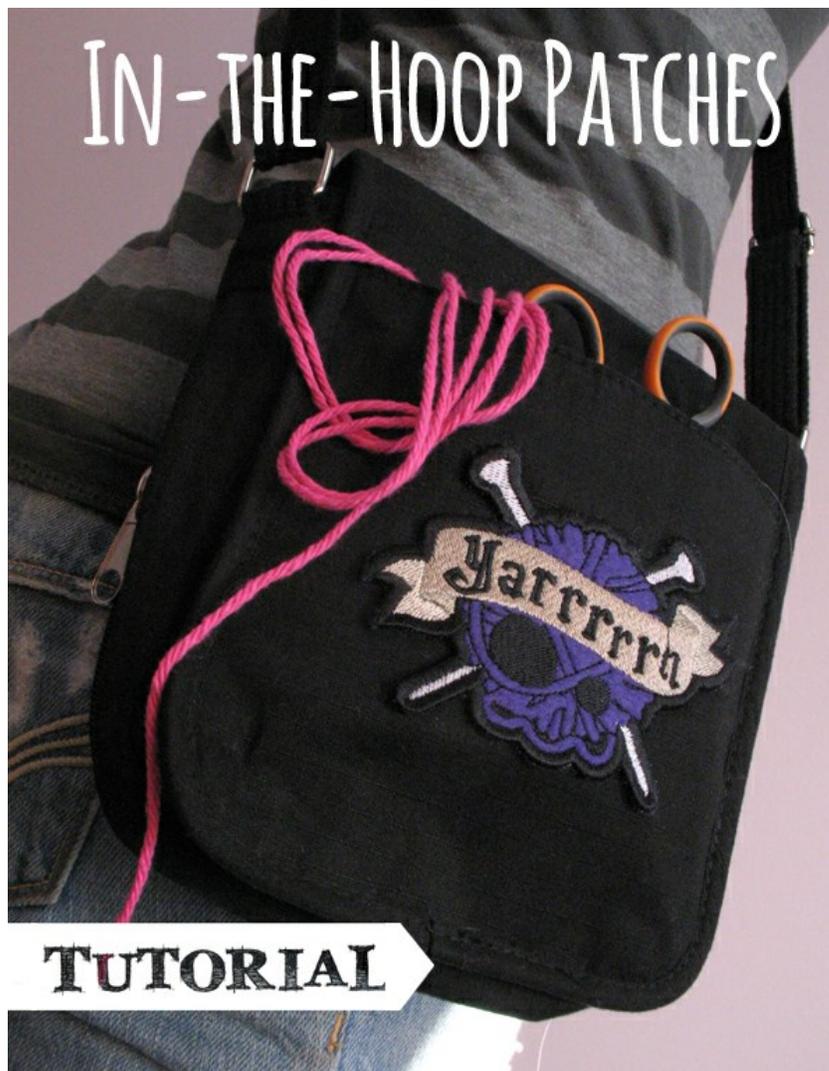


In-the-Hoop Patches

By Niamh 



It's time to patch things up! Embroidered patches are a time-honored classic ... they're a nice little way to share your embroidery with others, and a great way to "stitch" on things you can't actually hoop. [Embroidery designs specially digitized to be patches](#) stitch up completely in-the-hoop, leaving you with a nice, finished, polished patch, personalized with your choice of fabrics and threads. We'll show you step-by-step how to put your patches together! (Plus, read to the end to see how to give your patch a magnetic alter ego!)

Tell me if this sounds familiar...

You're out at the store, wandering

around, when you see a really cute purse, or bag, or whatever, that you just KNOW would look fantastic with that new embroidery design you got. You grab it, buy it, and run home in anticipation. You set your machine up, and grab your hoop and some stabilizer and...

Oh fudge.

In your haste you realize you've bought something that would indeed look super cute with that new embroidery design, but offers you no conceivable way of hooping it. Double fudge.



That's exactly what I did. Contrary to my glossy, polished, professional demeanor, I do make mistakes like this sometimes. More than sometimes. Hey, I am blonde.

I bought such a purse in hopes of sticking a cute design on it, only to discover when I got back that it was a hooping impossibility. Cue the sad puppy eyes.



Well, now for all of you out there who want to or have tried sticking embroidery on something un-embroiderable, we have a solution. Patches! It's how most of the non-embroidery world does it (poor people), and now there's a way you can do it too, but with your own **specialized patch design** that you stitch and customize with your choice of thread and fabric. I'll show you how...

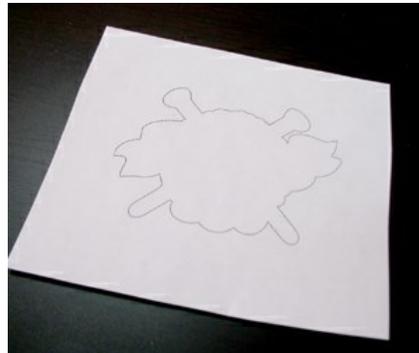
To make your in-the-hoop patch, you'll need:

- Fabric to form the base of the patch (felt can be a good choice, or a sturdy cotton canvas or duck)
- Temporary spray adhesive

- Heavy duty water-soluble stabilizer (we suggest using Vilene or Sulky Ultra Solvy)
- Medium weight cutaway stabilizer
- Patch glue (available at most craft stores)
- Your favorite un-hoopable item, like a purse or backpack or whatever
- Clear vinyl if your patch has vinyl applique



You will also, of course, need **an embroidery design digitized specifically to be a patch**. Here we're using **Yarrrrrrn - Knitting** and **Clean Dish Dirty Dish** as examples.



When you download your patch design, it will come with two or three files -- the regular embroidery design (in this case, UTZ1070), plus a dieline file to give you the fabric shape. These extra files will be labeled with "DL," "DLa," or "DLb". You can either print your dieline files at full size using embroidery software (shown here), or just stitch it onto your fabric.

Find more information on printing and stitching dielines [here](#).

First, spray a piece of cutaway stabilizer with temporary spray adhesive, and smooth it onto the back of your fabric. This will make your finished patch a bit sturdier.

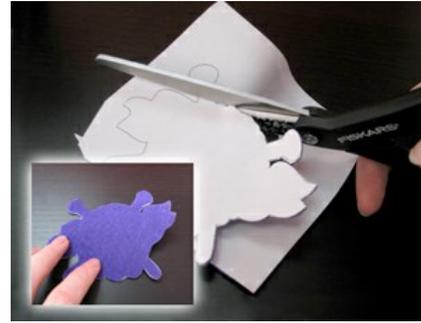
If you're sewing the dieline, you'll need your fabric and stabilizer large enough to hoop. If you're just cutting it out (like me) you just need it larger than the dieline.



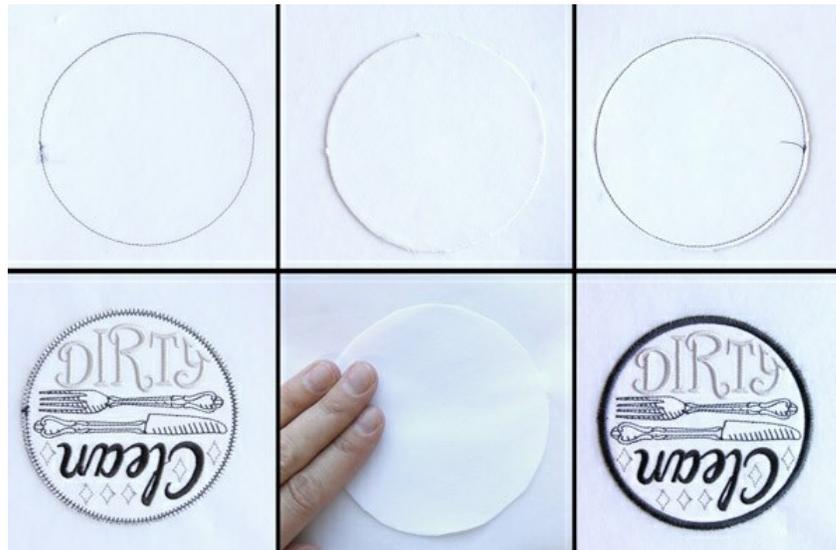
If you have printouts, spray the back of them lightly with adhesive and stick it on top of your fabric.

If you're sewing it, hoop up your applique fabric and stabilizer, and load up the dieline file on your embroidery machine. Stitch it out.

Cut out around the dieline(s), very carefully. Then gently peel off your paper, if you're using it. When you're done you should have a nice funny lumpy shape with fabric on one side and cutaway stabilizer on the other.



Now we're ready to make our patch! Hoop up a piece of your heavy water-soluble stabilizer, and load the patch design into your embroidery machine. I'll show you the steps the patch will go through...



If you are stitching a patch design with a backside (such as the [Clean Dish](#), [Dirty Dish](#) or [Merit Badges](#) designs):

First, a dieline will stitch onto your water soluble stabilizer to show you where to place your fabric. Spray the back of your fabric piece generously with temporary spray adhesive, and stick it carefully inside the stitched dieline.

Once your fabric is set, your machine will stitch a tackdown stitch all the way around your patch, to hold the fabric in place. After that, all of the inside elements will sew.

Finally, you will need to turn over your hoop and carefully place the back patch fabric with temporary spray adhesive. This will be followed by a second tackdown and satin stitch border all the way around your design. Your patch is done!



If you have a patch design that does not have a back piece, the satin stitch border will immediately follow your inside details, and your patch is done!

If your patch has vinyl applique, like our [Sass Tablets](#) design, check out our [Vinyl Applique](#) tutorial for more information on including it in your patch.



Patches are a great way of adding your designs to anything. You can actually **turn any design into a patch** simply by stitching it onto a larger applique piece with a satin border, but that limits you to always having them in certain shapes.



I like “shaped” patches like these because they’re just the design on its own, simple and clean, like the patches you’d buy in a store -- except these you can make and customize on your own!

Carefully tear the patch out of the stabilizer, removing any little excess bits at corners or edges, and use a scissors to remove any excess stabilizer from the back.

Ta daa! Your very own yarrrrn patch, ready to apply anywhere! It should be said that this design **can also be stitched like normal onto whatever you CAN hoop as well**. It just can also be a patch. It’s whatever you need it to be, depending on the project. What a useful little patch.



Now it's time to apply it. Grab your patch glue and give a generous coating of goop to the back of it. Be sure to get near the edges and cover all the "sticky out" bits (technical term) carefully. This patch has a lot of those bits, and you want to make sure they're all glued down properly.



Your glue has to dry before it can be ironed. Mine said to let it sit for 10 minutes. Be sure to read your bottle's instructions.

Patch glue is just one of the many ways you can attach your patch. If your un-hoopable thing can fit under a sewing machine, you can also stitch it on, using a clear nylon or matching thread around the edges. Hot glue also works rather well, and is especially good for edges that don't want to stick down.

Carefully place your patch onto your item of choice. You may want to use a ruler if you're looking for exact placement. You'll want to find a thin piece of fabric as an pressing cloth, so if your iron is icky it doesn't do anything to your new patch.



Place your pressing cloth over your patch and press with a hot, dry iron (cotton setting) for about 60 seconds...

Or at least that's what the instructions said. I had to press a good deal longer before the glue started to melt. Follow the instructions on your bottle, and adjust accordingly. Make sure your pressing cloth isn't too thick either, which may prevent the heat from getting through.



When testing the bond, don't pick at the glue too much when it's hot, because it can still come up easily.

You might want to let it cool a bit before you decide you need to attack it again.

Your patch is finished! You've now added swank embroidery to something that was previously un-embroiderable. With patches the embroidery possibilities just got a little bit broader. You can attach this patch to anything you can stick under an iron, or sew, or hot glue. Which is pretty much everything, I guess.



You can finally stick some embroidery on that cute crafting bag you never could manage to hoop!

The shaped applique border will mean you don't have to stitch it into another square or shape in order to patch it or give it away to a poor unfortunate embroidery-deprived soul. It's perfect for anyone who fancies crafting, yarn, or pirates.

Or crafty yarn pirates. It's a specialized market.

Enjoy your new patched booty, and have fun playing with your yarrrrrrn!





Bonus: Any patch can be turned into a magnet! Instead of adding patch glue to the back, just add a dab of hot glue to a magnet (available at craft and hardware stores)...

...and stick your magnet on the back of your patch. Easy peasy! (Adhesive magnet tape will work great for this, too.)



Display your finished magnet wherever you like ... even more possibilities for your favorite patch design!

Gather your gold stars and take your patches a step further by adding ribbons!

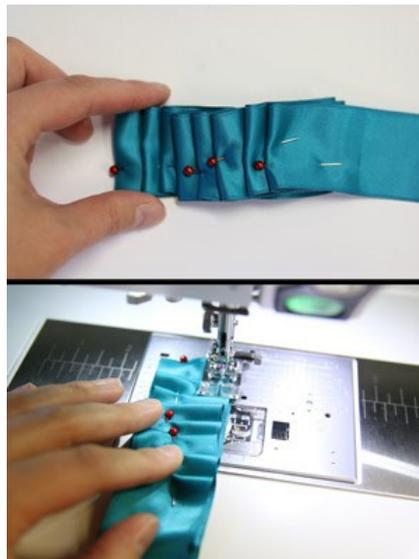




To add that bit of extra flair, you will need:

- Your **patch design** (we used the **Achievement in Adulting** design)
- Hot glue gun & glue
- Scissors & pins
- Access to a sewing machine
- 1-2 yards of various sizes of ribbon

To begin, take just over a yard of 1.5 inch ribbon (or whatever ribbon you are using to go around the badge) and begin folding it over.

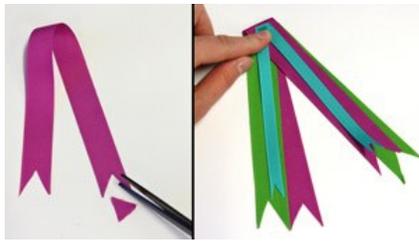


Use pins to keep your loops and folds in even place and stitch 0.25 inches up from the bottom all the way to the end.

Once your ribbon is stitched, use hot glue to work your way around the back side of your embroidered patch.

NOTE: If you have a raw edge on one side of your ribbon, make sure to tuck it behind the finished edge, so it doesn't show on the front side.





Next, grab varying sizes of ribbon and cut into 8 inch pieces. Fold each ribbon in half, then finish off the tips by cutting a small triangle into the edges.

Use your hot glue to adhere each of the ribbon layers together and then to the back of the patch.

Finish the piece out by attaching a pin or clasp so the patch can be worn!



Show off your embroidered patch award!
