

Unique & Offbeat Monogramming

By Karline 

TUTORIAL



If you're an embroiderer, sooner or later you're going to be monogramming and personalizing things. People have been using monograms and symbols to represent themselves for just about as long as we know anything about humanity: ancient Greek and Roman rulers had their initials stamped on coins, medieval artisans identified their work with a unique mark, and the Victorians turned those intertwined trios of letters into a fashionable status symbol. Monogramming has been having a moment again recently, but truth is it's a practice that's truly timeless -- and not just for the aristocracy, but for anyone who wants to make it their own.

Google "monogramming rules" and you'll find endless guides detailing the guidelines for arranging initials and selecting typefaces to create monograms for individuals and couples. We'll cover the basics here, but please keep in mind: the so-called "traditions" often vary from source to source, and there are no monogramming police. The only authority is you. So if you like any given "rules," use 'em. If not, throw 'em out

and do what you like.

This tutorial contains guidelines and suggestions for designing your own unique and offbeat monograms. Check out the [Embroidering with Alphabets](#) tutorial for tips on how to combine your letters, in software or by hand -- and of course, check out all of Urban Threads' [alphabet embroidery designs](#) to discover some new monogramming favorites!

Monograms for Individuals

For an individual with a first, middle, and last name, a three-letter monogram traditionally works one of two ways.

If the letter in the middle is largest, the order is:

FIRST LAST MIDDLE

If the person you're monogramming for has a name that doesn't fit into the first-middle-last model: do what you like! For an individual with a hyphenated last name or two last names, for example, two big initials in the center, framed by smaller first and middle initials, can work nicely.



If the letters are all the same size, the traditional order is:

FIRST MIDDLE LAST

This type of monogram tends to be more common for men than the previous kind -- but it works for anyone!

Not into middle names? Just the first and last initials can make a great monogram too!





Of course, a single letter is always a classic! First or last initial? Let the context and your preference decide!

It's not a monogram, but it bears mentioning here: a first name is another great way to personalize your projects!



Monograms for Couples

From fancy wedding gifts to initials carved on a tree, couples rock monograms, too!

A "traditional" monogram for a couple goes something like this: wife's first initial on the left, husband's first initial on the right, husband's/shared last initial in the middle.

Or vice versa. Sources disagree.

We say, whichever order the monogram-owning couple (opposite-sex or same-sex) finds most aesthetically pleasing is the right one!

Both people keeping their last name? As with the monogram for an individual with multiple/hyphenated last names, you can put both last initials in the middle position, with the corresponding first initials on either side, like so:

aBDC

Or just use two last initials, if you prefer.



Or two first initials! It's cute and casual, echoing schoolyard doodles.

Add an ampersand for even more typographic flair!

Again, not a monogram, but worth mentioning: is a couple shares a last name, use that as a decorative element!





Get Creative

Technically a monogram is multiple letters combined into one symbol. If you see a nifty way for your monogram letters to interlock, go for it! Try mirroring letters to let them share lines, or placing letters inside other letters.

Try alternative arrangements of your letters, too! A larger last initial is common (but not mandatory if something else strikes your fancy).



Fitzstitch used the [Typewriter Alphabet](#) to create this cozy mug rug.



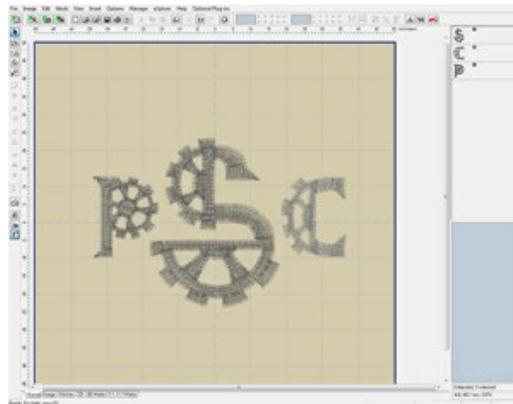
Nichole framed her monogram in this romantic [woodgrain design](#).

Wrap your monogram in some sort of frame to pull it all together! This can be a great opportunity to reflect the personality of the person/couple using the monogram.

You can even start with a design you love, then find space to tuck a monogram inside. The combination of imagery and initials makes for a uniquely expressive embroidered piece!



Stitchfork incorporated a monogram into this sweet bunny design.



Each letter in [Urban Threads' alphabets](#) is a separate design, so you'll need to combine them to create a monogram.

It's possible to do this without embroidery software -- just stitch the letters next to each other -- but using software can make things easier by allowing you to work out the placement of your letters precisely, before you start stitching.

Check out the [Embroidering with Alphabets](#) tutorial to learn how to combine your letters into one amazing monogram!

What can you monogram? Pretty much anything you can hoop and embroider! Here are a few ideas to get you started:

- Left chest, sleeves, or upper-center back on sweatshirts, tees, or fleece zip-ups
- Dress shirt cuffs or left chest
- Purses and totes
- Wallets
- Journal covers
- Throw pillows
- Wedding guestbooks
- Bath towel sets
- Napkins, placemats, table linens
- Scarves, hats, mittens, and other accessories
- Anything else your heart desires!





Choose your favorite [alphabet embroidery designs](#) to personalize your projects with style. Friends and family will love 'em ... and pretty soon you'll be monogramming everything in sight!

Janice stitched this monogrammed puse using the [Letter Perfect "M."](#)
