



*A tutorial on how to create decorative crazy quilt seams*

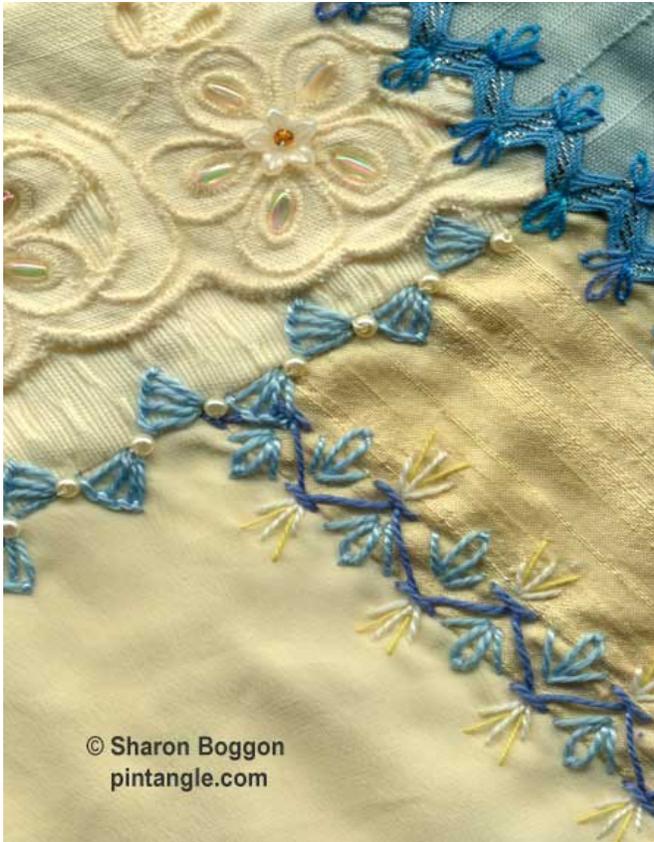


by Sharon Boggon of [Pintangle.com](http://Pintangle.com)

## A tutorial on how to create decorative crazy quilt seams

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Many new hands to crazy quilting get stumped when they start to embellish seams. People think you have to be an expert stitcher and I want to say you do not. What you do need to develop is a skill in adapting stitches and shaping them to your needs. Today I am going to concentrate on how to use some basic stitches to create seam decorations in Crazy quilting. I have put together a few ideas for basic seam embellishments that new hands should find easy to follow.



This is not a tutorial on how to work the stitches.

If you need tuition I have provided free, 12 Surface Stitches for Beginners on my website. Pintangle also houses free modules of my stitchers worksheets. For more stitches can also visit my stitch dictionary.

Most seam embellishments used in crazy quilting consist of basic stitches combined and built row upon row on top of each other. These are the basic stitches of crazy quilting I recommend all new hands learn.

The basic list is: buttonhole stitch, Chain stitch and Detached chain stitch, Cretan, Herringbone, Chevron, Stem stitch, Feather stitch, Fly stitch,

French knot and Couching. Other people may add a few stitches but if you have these you will go long way on a crazy quilt before anyone notices you are just using the basics.

### Change your stitch direction, size and spacing

As you build your seams think in terms of adding variety by changing your stitches. You can do this by shifting stitch direction, and changing the size of your stitches such as going from big to small and change the spacing of your stitches from close together to wide apart. You can also work on both side of the seam or flip the stitches working alternately from side to side. All these little tricks add interest to a line of embroidery.

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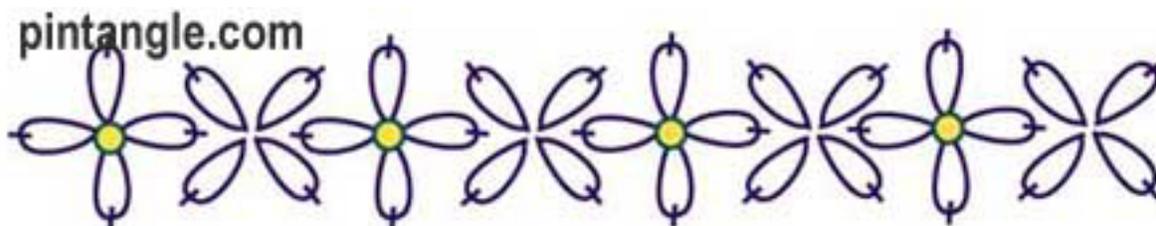
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### Think about your thread choice

Another tip is don't forget to change the colour, thickness and type of thread. I see lots of people simply use stranded cotton floss. This thread is fine for cross stitch work but get some cotton perle thread in sizes #8 and #5 as so many of the surface stitches look much better when worked with a thread that has a firm twist to it. There are no rules in crazy quilting so I am not being dictatorial about it but it is my tip towards creating interesting seam work on crazy quilting. Also many stitches can be threaded and laced so don't forget that you have option too!



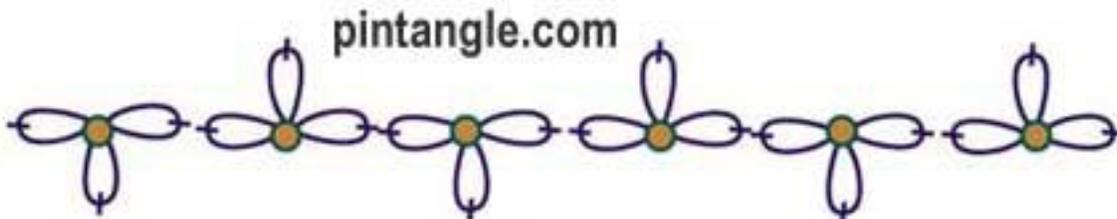
Detached Chain Stitch (or lazy daisy stitch) is quick, easy stitch that is very versatile. You can work it in all sorts of formations along a seam, along side a piece of lace or a piece of braid. A simple satisfying embellishment is to add straight stitches and a bead. You can add it to other stitches such as herringbone, or chevron stitch too.



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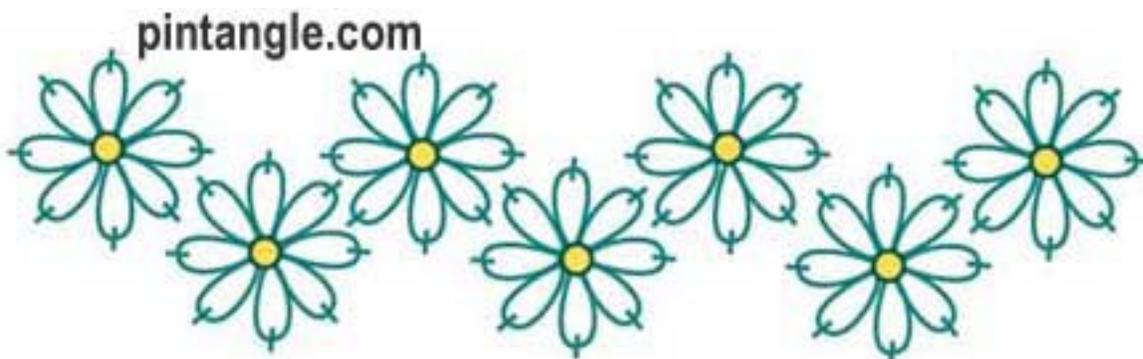
Here is an example of working a line of stitching and adding a few beads in the middle of the motifs to add a bit of zest.



You can work either side of the seam, flipping stitches from side to side.



Or you can zigzag the motifs along the seam like these:



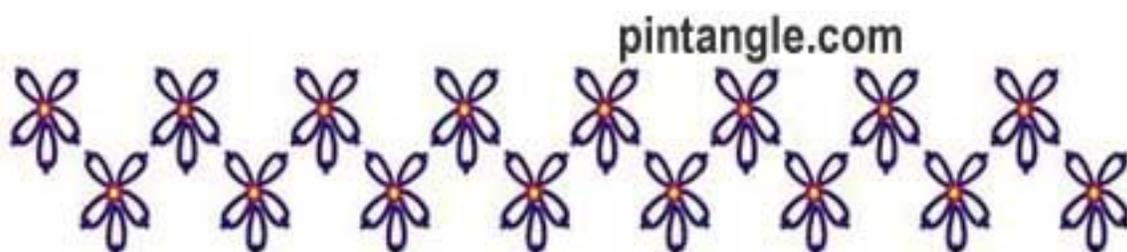
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Or zig zag them either side of lace braid or ribbon.



You can build little motifs up in zig zag bands.



Once you have tried these techniques ie working a stitch along a line, flipping a stitch from side to side or placing it in a zig zag manner along the line, try building up more complex motifs by increasing the variety of your stitches and adding more rows of stitches.

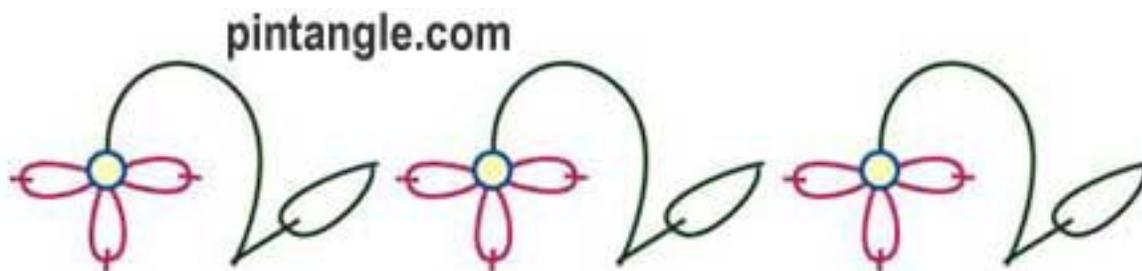
They can be as complex or as simple as you wish.

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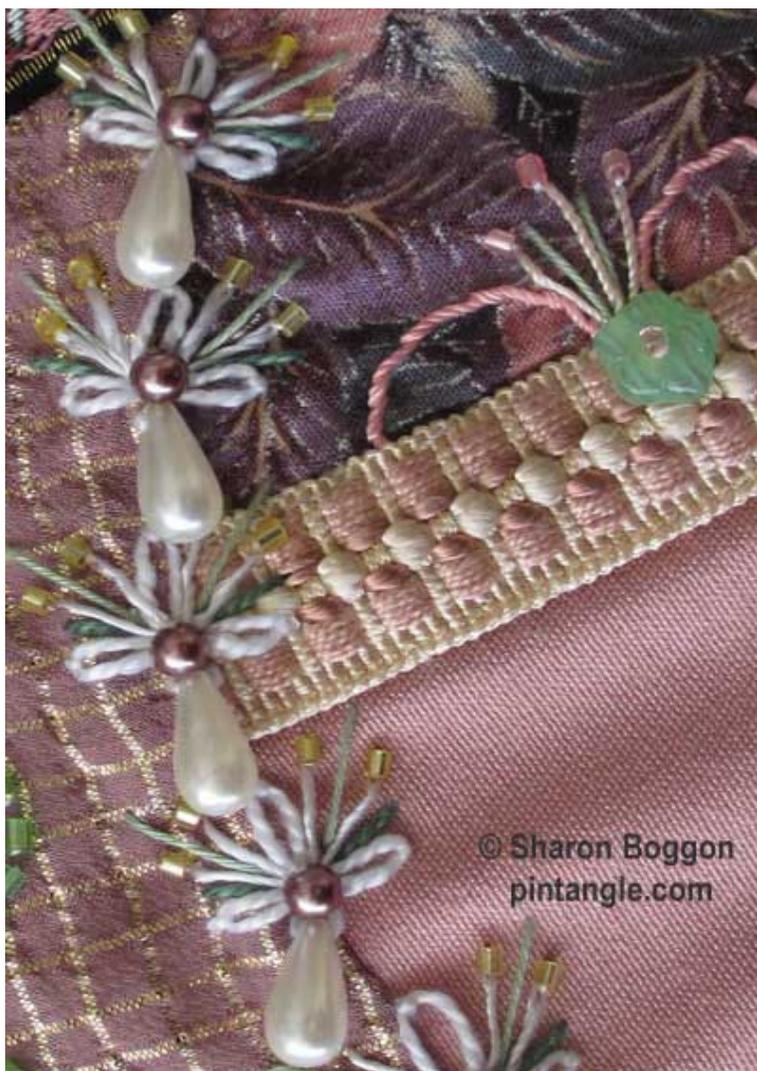
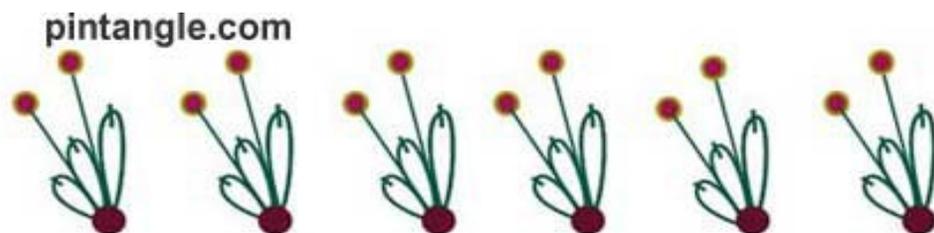


These could be worked in stem stitch for the stem, detached chain for the flower and leaf and the middle could be a bead or a French knot.



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This seam pattern consists of a motif made of three detached chain stitches and two straight stitches.

People who read my blog will have noticed that I use this combination of stitches all the time. You can finish them off with either a bead or a French knot.

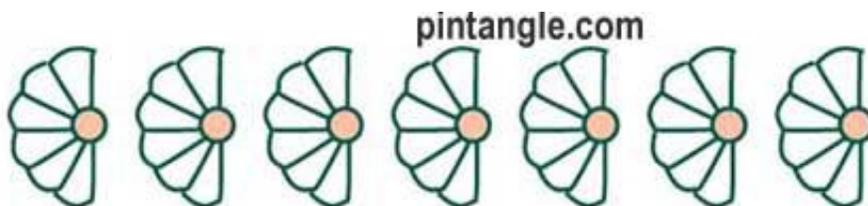
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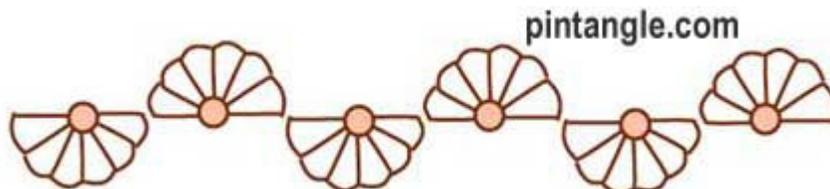
Stitches like buttonhole wheels can be worked as halves or quarters and arranged along a seam.



Half buttonhole wheels You can work them in line or turn them on their side.



Or flip each half wheel from side to side,



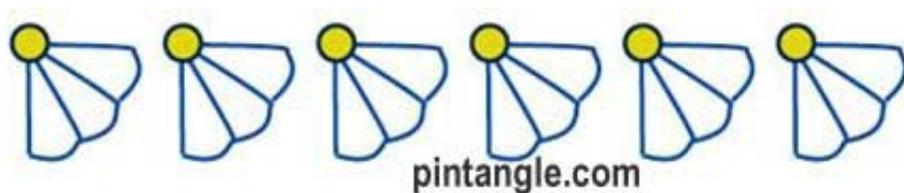
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Here is another way to arrange them and what they look like stitched up



Or you can quarter the wheels and arrange them in patterns.



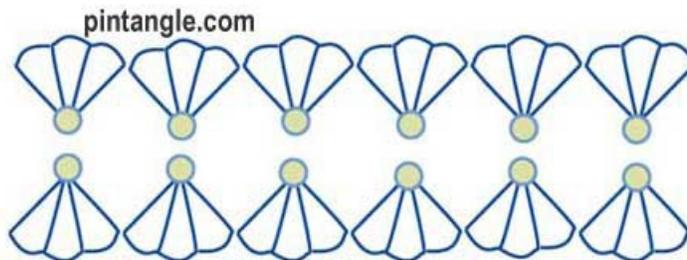
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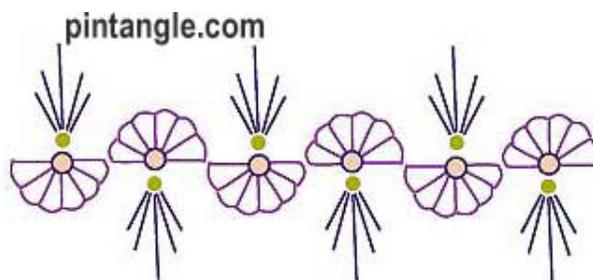


For instance you can flip them from side to side too!

It is simple and effective. You can work two lines face to face.

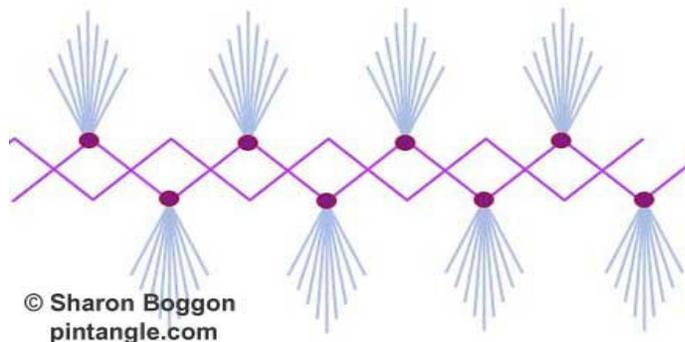


Here is another way to use buttonhole wheels which can be arranged in a different ways. These are interspersed with straight stitch arranged in a ray. French knots, sequins or beads can be placed in the middle.



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Often, the trick is to take a very basic stitch, work a row, and then add another basic stitch as a second row.

For instance, you can work two rows of straight stitches in a zig zag formation, with the second row offset to form a line of diamonds. At the peaks you can work a fan of straight stitches, add a bead and you have an attractive seam. All from one type of simple stitch!

Or you could work the foundation row of zig zag stitches using stem stitch or chain stitch. If you did this it would create a more solid line.

This type of seam embellishment where you start with a line to follow

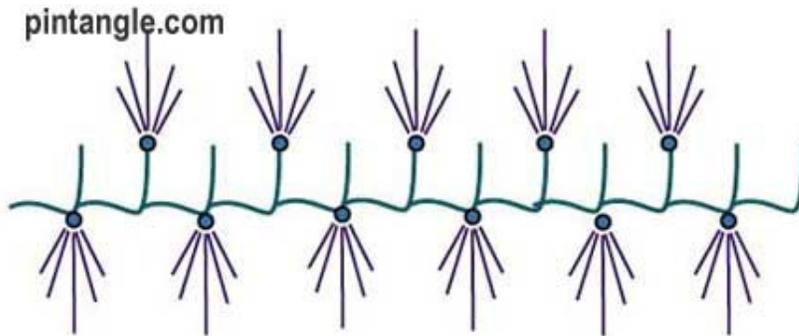
(the first zig zag line) is an instance of where Crazy Quilt templates are a very handy addition to your sewing box as you can use them to produce very even lines!

Above is another example of how to build a seam layer upon layer

This foundation row is buttonhole stitch, which is then decorated with straight stitches and a seed bead. It is quite simple, quick to work and made up of basic stitches.

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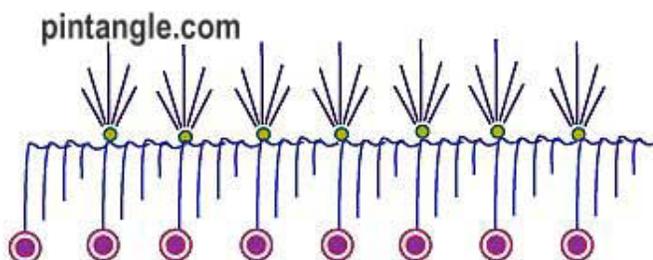
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Buttonhole stitch is an extremely versatile foundation row because you can change the height of the arms to form a pattern and Buttonhole stitch will follow a curve well.



For instance here we can add a fan of straight stitches to the top of the row and sequins at intervals along the bottom.

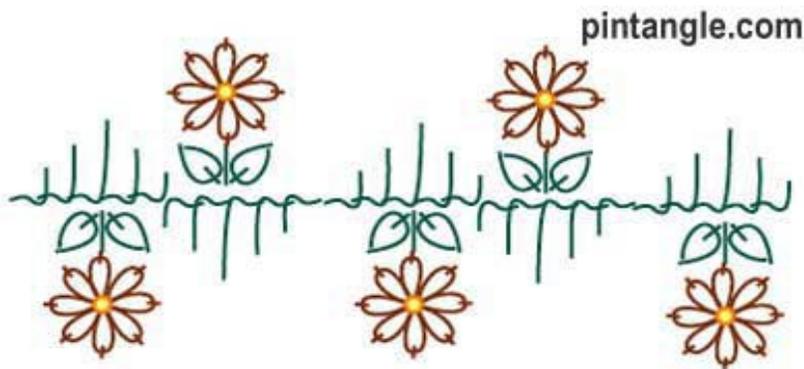
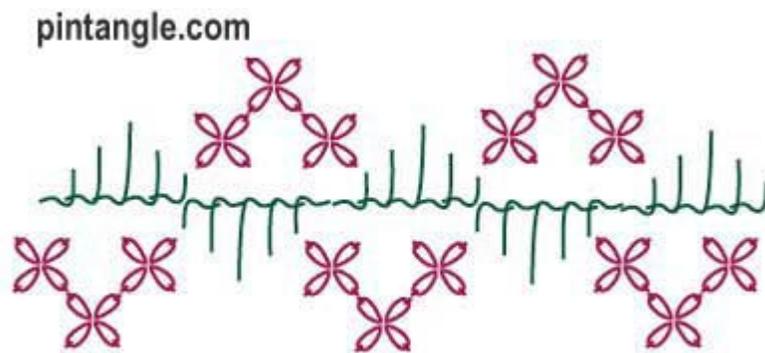


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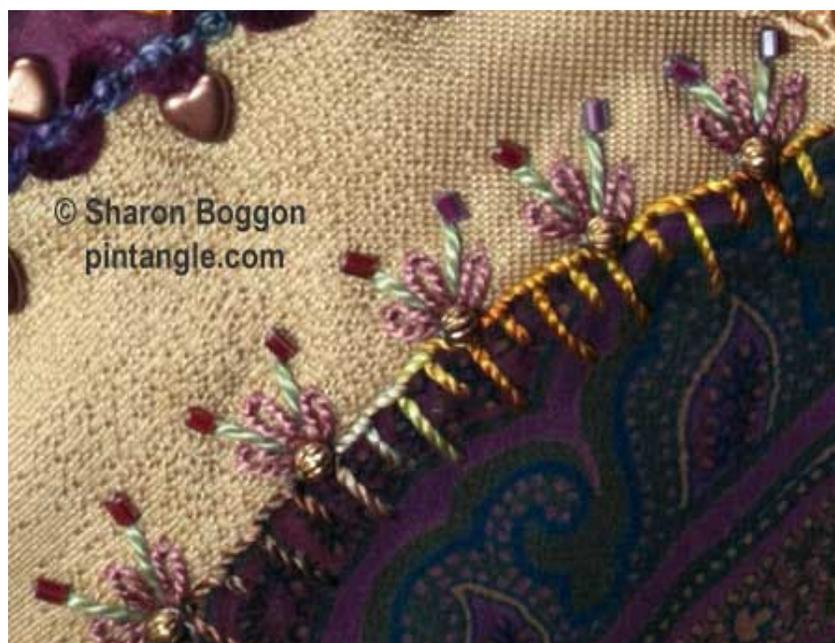
If you flip units of button-hole stitch from side to side it leads to more interesting ways to combine stitches.

Here is an arrangement of detached chain stitches and buttonhole stitch.



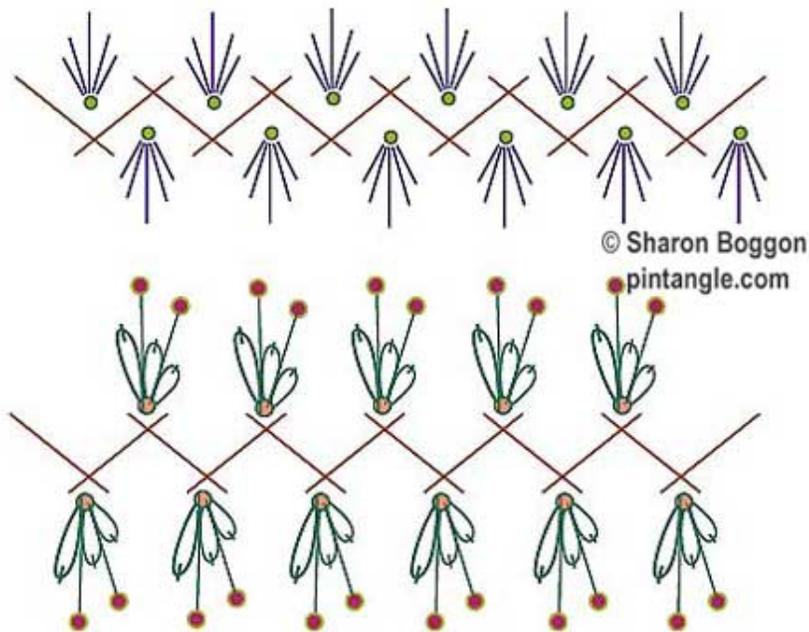
This pattern builds on the same idea and notice it is the same basic stitches which I have used.

They are arranged differently to create daisy motifs but they are the same basic stitch.



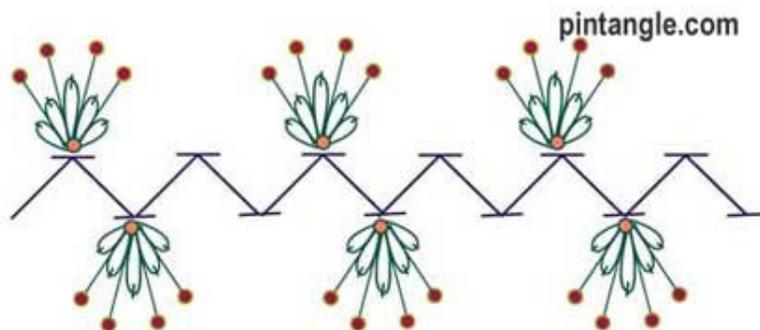
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Herringbone Stitches have a zigzag like, crossed structure which means you can make all sorts of additions to a line of Herringbone stitches.

On the top row straight stitches worked in a fan and beads have been added to the spaces between the herringbone stitches. On the second line detached chain, straight stitches and beads have been tucked into the base of the cross.

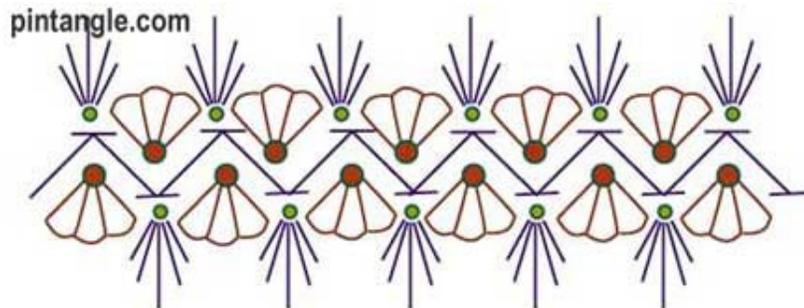


Chevron stitch is also a good foundation stitch for crazy quilters as you can add other stitches to the valleys and peaks. Straight stitches, detached chain stitches and beads have been added to the peaks of Chevron Stitch.

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Or you can tuck extra stitches into the valleys. In this case I have added quarter buttonhole wheels.

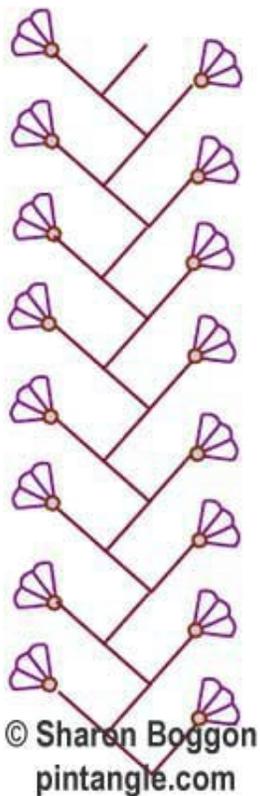


Here are some of my chevron stitch seam samples taken from my crazy quilts.



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Finally, one of the all time favourites for crazy quilters is Feather Stitch because you can add stitches to the end of each arm or tuck stitches between the arms to create lovely complex patterns.

Since feather stitch follows curves well you can create a lovely organic movement to a block using feather stitch. It is certainly one of my favourite stitches.

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As you can see it is possible to build up quite complex patterns using these methods.

I hope this article will give people a few ideas, and that you enjoy working and experimenting with some of them.

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With my Stitches' Templates you can create hundreds of different patterns to embroider on your crazy quilting or hand embroidery projects.

They are easy to use and totally clear so you can position them easily. And they are compact to fit in your sewing box.

Using the templates is easy. Just position the template in place and, holding it firmly with one hand so that it does not shift, use a quilter's pencil to trace along the edge of the template to create the pattern. You then have a line to stitch along.



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As a stitcher who loves crazy quilting I designed these templates with other stitchers in mind. My aim was to create a set of templates that are versatile and you can use them in a number of ways to stimulate your creativity. They are easy to use, make non-designers into designers, and they are small enough to carry in your workbox to workshops or stitching groups, and of course they are easy to store.

Two sets are available and each comes with a free ebook of instructions and patterns

## Sharon B's CQ Stencils



Some ideas on how you can use stencil 2

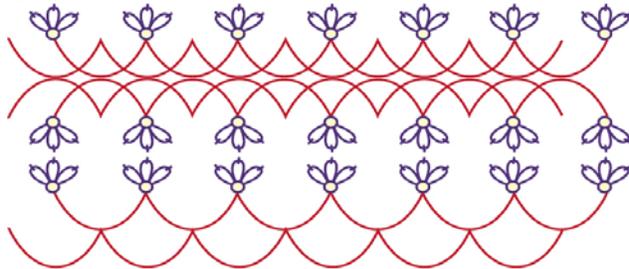
The heart shape works well as a single motif or, if you have a long seam to embroider or a larger area on a patch to fill. The hearts combined with the shapes on the edge of the stencils produce patterns for a wide decorative seam. You can see a photograph of the pattern stitched on page 1.



You can build up patterns for wider embroidered seams by repeating lines, overlapping them or working lines back to back. Add extra decorative elements such as detached chain stitches and straight stitches.



This embroidered seam pattern is made up of the scallop edge which is repeated offset. Below I flipped the pattern to create a wider seam design



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My Crazy Quilt Templates are made in Australia from a clear recyclable plastic, so that you can position the stencil correctly on the block before marking the line using a quilter's pencil.

Two sets are available:

Stitchers Templates set 1 you will find at

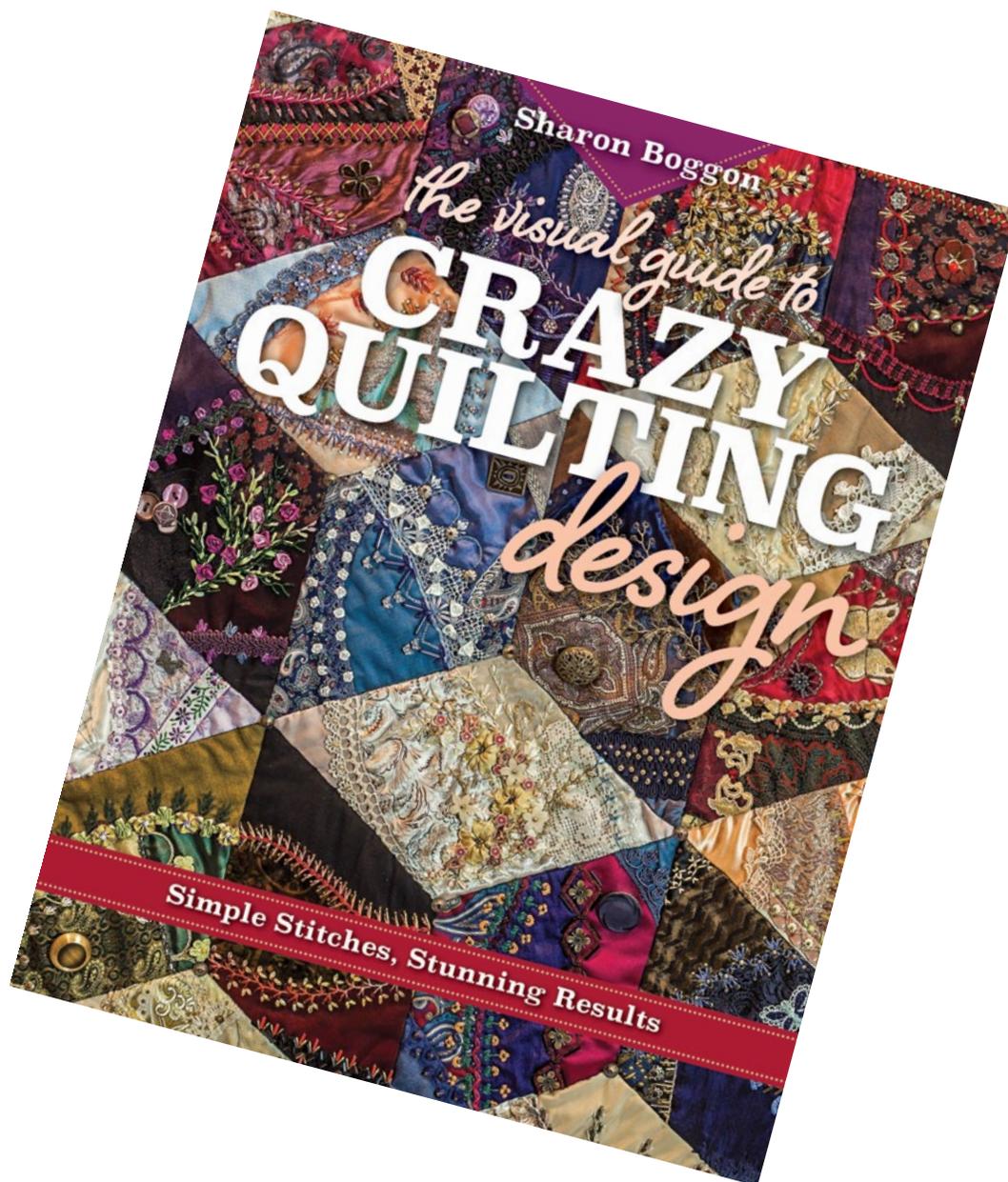
<http://pintangle.com/cq-stencils/crazy-quilt-templates-set-1/>

Stitchers Templates set 2 you will find at

<http://pintangle.com/cq-stencils/crazy-quilt-templates-set-2/>

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Have You seen my book?

The Visual Guide to Crazy Quilting Design is available on Amazon and all good book-stores

Enjoy!