

Embroidery Basics: How to Embroider a Terry Cloth Towel

By Janome Maker Milinda Stephenson

Despite all of the fancy designs you might comb through on embroidery websites, books or magazines, the most common embroidery created on home embroidery machines are monogrammed towels. Why? Because they are quick, easy and inexpensive. Monogrammed towels are practical and perfect for almost every occasion - weddings, starting college, housewarmings, birthdays, new baby, going-away, etc.

If you're new to machine embroidery or if you've embroidered for a dozen years, you will certainly be embroidering towels.

In this lesson, Janome Maker Milinda Stephenson will give you a step-by-step guide to what the industry experts suggest as the best ways to machine-embroider monograms on towels.

There are a few basic methods. Before determining your method, answer the following questions:

Question 1: Is my terry cloth towel thick or thin?

- If your towel is thin, your best choice is to hoop the towel.
- If your towel is thick, your best choice is to "float" the towel. Often, thick towels will not fit into your embroidery hoop.

Question 2: Is my embroidery design simple or intricate?

- If your embroidery design is a one to three letter monogram, a tear-away stabilizer will work.
- If your embroidery design is more complicated, for example several flowers are over a large area, a cut-away stabilizer might be your best bet. Why? Because intricate stitches can make your fabric shift. Cut-away stabilizer is a bit better at keeping fabric from shifting.

Here are instructions for each possibility:

*For all methods, please pre-wash your towel. Otherwise, the fabric might shrink, distorting your embroidery stitches.

Method 1: Thin towel, Simple Design (one to three letter monograms)

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Supplies:

- Thin terry cloth towel
- Medium weight, tear-away stabilizer
- Lightweight, clear wash-away stabilizer
- Embroidery thread
- Size 11 or 14 embroidery needle
- Full bobbin with embroidery bobbin thread
- Monogram (either built into your machine or downloaded to your machine)
- Scrap fabric (for pre-sewing design for perfect placement)

Step 1: For Perfect Placement

- Hoop your scrap fabric. (You may use interfacing or cut-away stabilizer.)
- Choose your monogram design.
- Embroider on scrap fabric.
- After embroidering:
 - While the sample is still in the hoop, trace all the way around the inside of the hoop.
 - Draw a centered line from the top to the bottom of the hoop.
 - Draw a second centered line from the left to the right side of the hoop.
- Remove from the hoop:
 - Cut around the outside of the hoop line.
 - Find the center of the towel.
 - Center the template on the towel and pin.

Step 2: Hoop Your Towel and Stabilizers

- Place the tear-away stabilizer beneath your towel.
- Center your template to the inside of the hoop. (The sample you pinned to your towel.)
- Using your palms, press the inner hoop into the outer hoop, effectively hooping your fabric. (You may need to loosen the screws on your hoop for the fabric to fit properly.)
- Remove the template.
- Secure the hoop in the machine.
- Float a piece of lightweight clear water soluble stabilizer on top of the towel.

Step 3: Embroider Your Monogram

- Press the start button and monogram your towel.

Step 4: Finishing

- Remove your towel from the hoop.
- Using your fingers to stabilize embroidery stitches, gently tear-away the upper wash-away and the lower tear-away.

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- To remove stray bits of wash-away, use a wet cloth and dab away the excess. The rest will wash away during a normal washing.

Method 2: Thin Towel, Intricate Design (design that stretches beyond three letters)

Supplies:

- Thin terry cloth towel
- Medium weight cut-away
- Lightweight, clear wash-away stabilizer
- Embroidery thread
- Size 11 or 14 embroidery needle
- Full bobbin with embroidery bobbin thread
- Monogram (either built into your machine or downloaded to your machine)
- Scrap fabric (for pre-sewing design for perfect placement)

Step 1: For Perfect Placement

- Hoop your scrap fabric. (You may use interfacing or cut-away stabilizer.)
- Choose your monogram design.
- Embroider on scrap fabric.
- After embroidering:
 - While the sample is still in the hoop, trace all the way around the inside of the hoop.
 - Draw a centered line from the top to the bottom of the hoop.
 - Draw a second centered line from the left to the right side of the hoop.
- Remove from the hoop:
 - Cut around the outside of the hoop line.
 - Place on a towel and pin.

Step 2: Hoop Your Towel and Stabilizers

- Place the cut-away stabilizer beneath your towel.
- Center your template inside the hoop. (The sample you pinned to your towel.)
- Using your palms, press the inner hoop into the outer hoop, effectively hooping your fabric. (You may need to loosen the screws on your hoop for the fabric to fit properly.)
- Remove the template.
- Secure the hoop in the machine.
- Float a piece of lightweight clear water soluble stabilizer on top of the towel.

Step 3: Embroider Your Monogram

- Press the start button and monogram your towel.

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Step 4: Finishing

- Remove your towel from the hoop.
- Using your fingers to stabilize embroidery stitches, gently tear-away the upper wash-away.
- To remove stray bits of wash-away, use a wet cloth and dab away the excess. The rest will wash away during a normal washing.

Method 3: Thick Towel, Simple Design (one to three letter monograms)

Supplies:

- Thick terry cloth towel
- Medium weight tear-away stabilizer
- Temporary spray adhesive
- Lightweight, clear wash-away stabilizer
- Embroidery thread
- Size 11 or 14 embroidery needle
- Full bobbin with embroidery bobbin thread
- Monogram (either built into your machine or downloaded to your machine)
- Scrap fabric (for pre-sewing design for perfect placement)

Step 1: For Perfect Placement

- Hoop your scrap fabric. (You may use interfacing or cut-away stabilizer.)
- Choose your monogram design.
- Embroider on scrap fabric.
- After embroidering:
 - While the sample is still in the hoop, trace all the way around the inside of the hoop.
 - Draw a centered line from the top to the bottom of the hoop.
 - Draw a second centered line from the left to the right side of the hoop.
- Remove from the hoop:
 - Cut around the outside of the hoop line.
 - Place on the towel and pin.

Step 2: Hoop the Stabilizer, Float Towel

- Hoop the tear-away stabilizer.
- Spray tear-away stabilizer with temporary spray adhesive (be certain to do this in a well-ventilated area, well away from your embroidery machine).
- Place the towel, being certain to center is using your template before pressing down on the towel to adhere to the tear-away stabilizer.

(Note: You are not actually hooping the towel, only the stabilizer.)

- Once you have secured your towel in the hoop, remove the template.

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Step 3: Embroidery Your Monogram

- Press the start button and monogram your towel.

Step 4: Finishing

- Remove your towel from the hoop.
- Using your fingers to stabilize the embroidery stitches, gently tear-away the upper wash-away and the lower tear-away.
- To remove the stray bits of wash-away, use a wet cloth and dab away the excess. The rest will wash away during a normal washing.

Method 4: Thick Towel, Intricate Design (design that stretches beyond three letters)

Supplies:

- Thick terry cloth
- Medium weight cut-away
- Temporary spray adhesive
- Lightweight, clear wash-away stabilizer
- Embroidery thread
- Size 11 or 14 embroidery needle
- Full bobbin with embroidery bobbin thread
- Monogram (either built into your machine or downloaded to your machine)
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 - Draw a second centered line from the left to the right side of the hoop.
- Remove from the hoop:
 - Cut around the outside of the hoop line.
 - Place on towel and pin.

Step 2: Hoop the Stabilizer, Float Towel

- Hoop the cut-away stabilizer.
- Spray cut-away stabilizer with temporary spray adhesive. (Be certain to do this in a well-ventilated area, well away from your embroidery machine.)

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- Place the towel, being certain to center it using your template before pressing down on the towel to adhere to the cut-away stabilizer.

(Note: You are not actually hooping the towel, only the stabilizer.)

- Once you have secured your towel in the hoop, remove the template.

Step 3: Embroider Your Monogram

- Press the start button and monogram your towel.

Step 4: Finishing

- Remove your towel from the hoop.
- Using your fingers to stabilize embroidery stitches, gently tear-away the upper wash-away.
- To remove stray bits of wash-away, use a wet cloth and dab away the excess. The rest will wash away during a normal washing.
- Carefully trim the cut-away stabilizer about 1/2" from the edge of the design.

