FREE EMBROIDERY TUTORIAL + PATTERN

Couching Stitch

How to couch a thick thread down with tiny stitches, plus a tree rings hoop

SKILL LEVEL	HOOP	DESIGN
Beginner	**6 in (15 cm)**	**6 tree rings + a crack**
FLOSS	**STITCHES**	**TIME**
5 DMC colours	**Couching**	**About 2–3 hours**

Materials

• DMC stranded cotton: 437, 434, 801, 3371, 3865 (1 skein each)
• 9 × 9 in (23 cm) natural linen, a 6 in (15 cm) hoop, a size 7 needle, a large chenille needle for sinking the laid threads, a water-soluble pen

Key

laid thread the thick thread (6 strands) on top
tack a tiny stitch over the laid thread, 2 strands
sink take the end to the back

Tacks every 6 mm (1/4 in) on gentle curves, closer on tight ones.

Couching

1	Bring the laid thread up and lay it along the line.
2	Tack it down with tiny stitches every 6 mm.
3	Sink the end with a chenille needle.

The hoop

Trace	Print the template at 100%, check the 1 in (2.5 cm) bar, trace the rings.	
DMC 437	2 inner rings	**(26 tacks)**
DMC 434	2 middle rings	**(59 tacks)**
DMC 801	ring 5, then the crack last	**(52 tacks)**
DMC 3371	the bark ring	**(54 tacks)**
Finish	Rinse out the pen, dry face down, press lightly and frame.	

How to Do Couching Stitch

A thick thread laid on the fabric · held down by tiny stitches in a second thread

1 · Lay the thread



Bring the thick laid thread (6 strands) up at the start and lay it along the line.

2 · First tack



With a thin thread (1-2 strands), come up on one side, go over the laid thread and down on the other side.

3 · Tack every 6 mm



Space the tacks evenly; closer on tight curves so the line keeps its shape.

4 · Sink the end



At the end, take the laid thread to the back with a big needle and fasten it.

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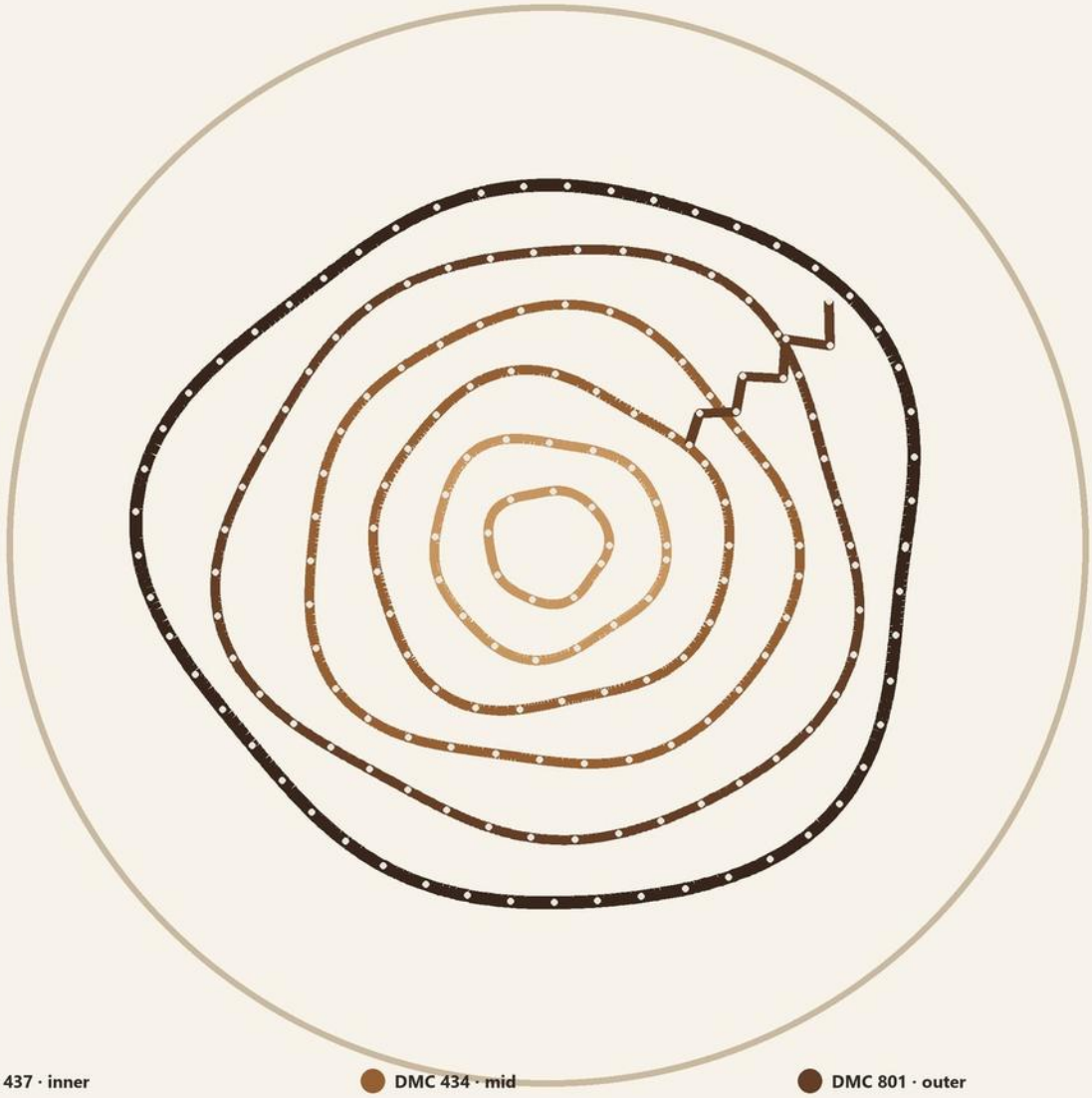
Tree Rings Hoop · Couching Plan

6 in hoop · 6 rings + a crack · 191 tacks · drawn to scale, enlarged



DMC 437 · inner
DMC 434 · mid
DMC 801 · outer
DMC 3371 · bark
DMC 3865 · tack (tacks)

White dots = tacks. Work from the centre ring outwards; the crack is couched last, over the rings.

Tree Rings Hoop · Floss

Laid threads: all 6 strands · tacks: 2 strands of DMC 3865 · natural linen 9 × 9 in (23 cm) in a 6 in (15 cm) hoop

DMC	Colour	Part	Tacks	Thread
DMC 437	light tan	2 inner rings	26	0.3 yd
DMC 434	light brown	2 middle rings	59	0.6 yd
DMC 801	dark coffee brown	ring 5 + crack	52	0.5 yd
DMC 3371	black brown	bark ring	54	0.5 yd
DMC 3865	winter white	all tacks	191	2.4 yd

1 skein of each colour is plenty. Time: about 2–3 hours.

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Tree Rings Hoop · print at 100% (actual size)

Trace the 6 rings and the crack. The laid thread follows each line.



1 in check bar: measure it after printing