

## Needlecraft : Washing and Ironing

So you have just completed a beautiful piece of embroidery, be it cross stitch or surface embroidery.

You feel a sense of accomplishment, relief, pride. But, you now have to wash it!!!! AAAGGGHHHH!!!! Nerves! What if the colour runs! What if it gets scorched by ironing! What if the threads get damaged!!!! What if, what if, what if.....

Fret not dear friends. I have been doing this for years and if just a few simple rules are followed, all will be well.

Here is what you need:

- Hand basin
- 3 x towels
- Washing Powder – any brand
- COLD water
- Iron
- Ironing board
- A well ventilated room

Here is what you do:

- Put 1 scoop of washing powder into the basin
- Fill with COLD water – NOT LUKE WARM, NOT WARM and NOT HOT – COLD, COLD, COLD – otherwise you risk your colours running
- Make soap suds by agitating the water with your hand
- Immerse, yes IMMENSE the stitched piece (which should have been removed from the hoop by now) into the water
- Take the soap suds and gently rub it over the piece, taking note where there are perhaps hoop marks etc. Rub away until you are happy
- DO NOT rub the fabric the way you would when washing your dishcloths. Just rub the suds over the piece. Soak a little if needed.
- Then – RINSE, RINSE and RINSE some more. Even if your colours did not run, RINSE so that all the detergent is removed from the fabric. If the colours, for whatever reason, happened to have run, then rinse until the water runs clear.
- Now – Ironing Time:
  - Turn on the iron – steam setting – water in iron
  - Remove stitched piece from the water. DO NOT WRING but try to remove excess water from the piece by squeezing it with your hands
  - Place the wet piece RIGHT SIDE DOWN (FACE DOWN) onto the towel.
  - Place the second towel on top and iron through the towel. The towels will get wet ofcourse. Iron as much as you can to get the piece to a point of dampness. If you are brave enough, like me, remove the second towel and iron directly onto the back of the stitched piece – FACE DOWN

- You may even remove the bottom towel but replace with a fresh dry towel (the third towel) to help absorb more of the water. Remember though that your work must remain FACE DOWN!
- Your work will get to a point where it is damp but not dripping with water.
- At this stage you can hang the item over a chair in a well ventilated room AWAY from sunlight. Leave overnight and give it one last iron in the morning (FACE DOWN) on a towel before taking to the framers.

Ironing on a towel helps fluff up the stitches again. It also protects beads if they were incorporated into the stitching.

Please remember though that if you are doing a Goldwork piece, due to the make up of goldwork threads, Goldwork CANNOT be washed as the metal will tarnish and your work will be spoilt. It is therefore best to when hooping your work to either bind your hoop OR place a sheet of paper towel inbetween the hoop and the work.

Any further questions can be addressed to [info@needleworkrmporium.co.za](mailto:info@needleworkrmporium.co.za)