

CHOOSING YOUR NEEDLEWORK FRAME

Dramatically improve your needlework overnight by using the right frame and accessories!



There are lots of needlework and embroidery frames out there – some good, some bad, some hard on the pocketbook, and some a total waste of money! When embroidering in-hand or with a bad frame, here is what sometimes happens:

- ☞ uneven stitching due to poor tension
- ☞ hand cramps, hunched shoulders and back, neck strain
- ☞ wrinkles and creases in fabric
- ☞ soiled or damaged sections
- ☞ supplies not at hand
- ☞ errors caused by poor lighting or vision
- ☞ a project that's still a mess, even after you've blocked it!

I don't know about you, but when I'm ready to invest the time and money in a project I'm really excited about, I want it to turn out well. That's where a good needlework frame does wonders to enhance comfort, improve your stitching, and get a great result every time! This article will explain for you the ways the right frame and accessories can improve your stitching.

This is an information-packed article, so you may want to print it out or save it to consult later as you work through your decision. (Tip: Set your printer to print "fast draft" in grayscale or black to conserve ink. 😊)

1) BENEFITS OF USING A NEEDLEWORK FRAME

Here are reasons why you may want to consider a needlework frame:

✓ **Get more uniform stitching**

Although it's possible to keep your stitches all the same when working in your hand, it's pretty challenging. The right frame

In This Article:

- ✓ *Benefits of using a frame*
- ✓ *Choosing a frame*
- ✓ *Selecting accessories*
- ✓ *Links to all K's Creations products*
- ✓ *Save both time and money with frames by K's Creations!*

K's Creations makes exciting affordable products that can help you improve your stitching overnight!

Your dollar goes furthest when purchasing a K's base frame with scroll frame. The bases adjust, so that each different base will accommodate variety of scroll frame sizes. Find these on our K's Creations page.

K's Creations Products:

Want to see more info about specific K's Creations frames mentioned in this article? Scroll down for links!

can help you keep each stitch the same as the one before it, leading to a **smooth, uniform and professional** appearance.

✓ **Stitch longer – without hand cramps!**

Have you ever become engrossed in working on your stitching project in-hand, then you realize your hand is frozen in a painful cramp? Ouch! Using a scroll frame or, better yet, a lap or floor stand, allows you to keep your hands loose and **cramp-free**.

✓ **Better posture while stitching**

It's too tempting for lovers of needlework to relax and start to hunch over a project, which is not doing your posture any favors! Ever felt **stiff and sore** after a few hours? Not fun. Placing your frame on a table or floor stand allows you to sit with your project at a good working height, encouraging better posture. Handy accessories, like a magnet board holder for your pattern, help eliminate awkward spinal twisting.

✓ **Keep valuable projects clean and wrinkle-free**

Once upon a time, people did their embroidery in wood hoops with metal and cork bands. Those horrible **hoops left sharp creases**, oil stains and sometimes rust marks on the background fabric. Did we mention splinters? Scroll frames roll your fabric onto a muslin covered dowel, keeping it clean and wrinkle-free. Or you can mount the entire work on stretcher bars or use a QSnap and cover it when not in use. Either way, your **heirloom stitchery is preserved**, not wadded in a bag where the cat may decide to snuggle!

If you're ready to solve these and other problems, read on!

2) CHOOSING A NEEDLEWORK FRAME



We love K's Creations frames because they are so versatile and easy to use. Thus, our examples on choosing a frame are mostly based on their products. If you have a brand you prefer, or your favorite shop carries a different line, these tips will help you as well.

Before starting, you will need to answer the following questions for yourself:



[Standard Base Lap Frame](#)



[Baby Base Lap Frame](#)



[Large Base Lap Frame](#)



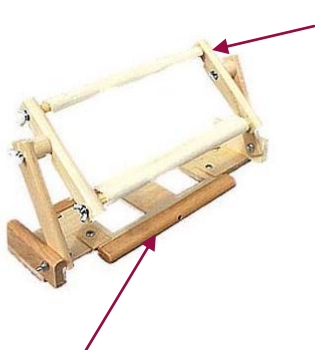
[Z Frame](#)



[Baby Z Frame](#)

- Ⓢ Do you want a lap or tabletop frame, or a full-sized floor frame?
- Ⓢ What styles of stitchery will the frame need to hold?
- Ⓢ Does the frame need to fold up flat when not in use?
- Ⓢ Will you want to adjust to a wide range of widths in your projects?
- Ⓢ Do you already have a preference for QSnaps, stretcher bars, hoop, or have a scroll frame you want to use?
- Ⓢ Do you like having easy access to the underside with your stitching hand?

Now that you have thought through your concerns, let's work through the available choices. But first, you'll need to know some basic terms.



The **frame**, technically, is the part of the assembly that actually holds your stitching project. It can be a scroll frame, a QSnap, stretcher bars. It is usually rectangular and flat, though some stitchers use hoops. We'll discuss these in more detail below.

The **base** is the part that holds the frame. It can be a floor stand, a base designed for tabletop or lap use, or a "sit on" base (described in the next section).

Accessories are the fun part! Lamps, trays, holders, foot rests and more all help enhance the stitching experience. We'll go through those, too.

OK, now for the good stuff.

Scroll frame, lap frame or floor stand?

Choose what fits your lifestyle. Remember, if you start with a scroll frame, you can always buy a lap or floor stand to hold it later. Or you can buy the base and frame, then use only the scroll frame when you need a really quick and portable project. The K's Creations system is modular, which allows you to move between the different sizes and configurations without having to buy all new parts. What a great idea! But if you already own



[La Petite Frame](#)



[Tag-A-Long Frame](#)



[Stow-Away Frame](#)



[Ultimate Stitching Station](#)



[Stainless Steel Floor Frame](#)

a scroll frame, don't despair! Using the [Universal Clamps](#), you can put another brand of scroll frame on a K's base.



How about **just a scroll frame**? [Scroll frames](#) alone work for many people. They are small, lightweight, and keep even tension. However, you have to rest the frame in your lap, or against one arm so you can work back and front. That supporting arm gets tired after a while, and you can't use it for stitching. A frame base takes the weight off and frees both hands for stitching (or talking on the phone!). A frame base also enables one-handed stitchers to keep on stitching, in case your other hand is impaired for any reason.

The **table/lap frames** are exceptionally versatile. Collapse them for travel, or to take to a class. Remove the scroll frame and tuck it in a tote bag for an airplane flight, or an afternoon trip to your favorite coffee house. If you're a rug hooker, there is even a sturdy wooden frame and base for you - and it will hold a needlework frame, too! If you don't have much of a lap because you are petite and the base slides towards your knees (it seems all chairs are made for men!) you can use a footstool or a handy [Portable Stitcher's Foot Rest](#) to level your lap – not to mention encourage good circulation!



"Sit-on" bases have a stabilizing wooden piece that holds your stitching frame above your lap and then curves around under you. You sit on the flat part of the wood support and your weight keeps the frame stable. This is a fairly lightweight solution. This style of frame is not ideal if you prefer to sit in a cushiony chair while stitching, but works pretty well if the cushion is thin and the chair flat. The [sit-on frame](#) pictured is by Frank A. Edmunds.

Some stitchers rule out **floor** frames thinking they need a lot of space, perhaps because they've seen other brands of needlework floor frames that are so large and heavy that they're pretty much furniture. While the amazing [Ultimate](#)



[Rug Frame](#)



[Belt Frame](#)



[Scroll Frames](#)

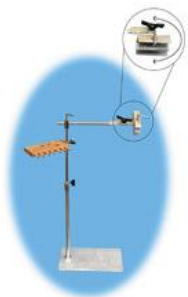


[PerfectTension II Side Bars](#)



[Magnetic Board Holder](#)

[Stitching Station](#) is a commitment in space, there are other versions that are exceptionally compact. If you like to stitch in your favorite armchair and don't like a frame in your lap, a floor frame will work for you. Just find the one that has the other features you need. (And make sure that any floor base you pick will fit around your recliner or under your couch, or wherever you prefer to stitch.)



If you've had your sights set on an expensive imported **stainless steel stand**, consider buying one made here in the US! K's now has a lightweight, sturdy [Stainless Steel Floor Frame](#) with a clamp for holding all forms of frames. This is a classy, modern stand that is highly adjustable in height and working angle.

Optional Big Foot Base and table frame kit gives the stainless steel stand extra sturdiness for working on large and heavy projects such as rugs.

Do you quilt, needlepoint, cross stitch AND hook?

If you switch between quilting, needlepoint and cross stitch, you'll want to select a system that can hold all types of projects. K's Universal Clamps will allow you to put certain sizes of quilting hoops on your base or stand. The easy-baste system used on the scroll frame dowel rods will hold needlepoint, cross stitch, or embroidery. Due to the size limitations, a scroll frame is not generally suitable for quilting, though there are quilting frames by K's Creations available ([email](#) for info!).

In floor stands, quilter/stitchers should look for one with a heavy clamp like the [Tag-A-Long](#), the [Stainless Steel Floor Stand](#) or the [Ultimate Stitching Station](#) that can hold a larger quilt hoop or QSnap. The Tag-A-Long can't hold a scroll frame but the other two can. The rug frame can work for quilters, but only if the project can be basted onto the dowels like a quilt frame (min. width 36", max. width 68").

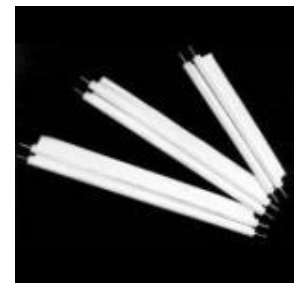
Rug hookers have three choices – the wooden [Rug Frame](#), the stainless steel floor frame, and also the large base lap frame that can hold projects up to 34". Attach the [large base lap frame](#) to a sturdy table with an ordinary C-clamp for extra stability! You can also [email us](#) for information on three



[Travel Magnifier](#)



[Professional & Mini Professional Scroll Frame Sets](#)



[Extra Dowels](#)



[Universal Clamps](#)



[Portable Foot Rest](#)

additional options for rug hooking frames available from K's Creations.

If you're a truly serious **quilter**, don't try to make one frame do everything. Buy the right tool for each job. There is a wide range of products made just for quilters, by many different companies. If you like working on smaller quilting projects (pillows, baby blankets, etc), K's Creations makes a swivel tabletop frame with a 14" hoop, and also a quilting floor frame with a 25.5" x 17.5" work area. Please [email us](#) for more info on these frames.

Portable or collapsible?

If you like to take your stitching on trips, to classes, or just around town, you'll want a portable base and frame.



All K's Creations lap/tabletop bases collapse into a compact size for carrying. That includes the original design and the Z-Frames discussed later. Quilted totes designed for needlework frames have been around for a while, but now there are a wide variety of totes to meet every taste. The [Stow-Away](#) floor frame is designed to fold up quickly when not in use so that valuable floor space isn't used when you're not stitching. It has a luggable case for travel. The [Tag-A-Long](#) is primarily a travel floor stand, but can be used like the Stow-Away where space is tight. The floor space it takes up is minimal compared to the larger floor frames. The [Ultimate Stitching Station](#) disassembles like all K's Creations frames, though the Ultimate Stitching Station is designed for semi-permanent assembly. If you need a stand that collapses easily, consider another choice.

Size of projects?

No single frame option can cover every needlework need. It's a good idea to consider the types and sizes of projects you prefer to do, and pick a frame according to your needs.



The lap bases each fit a particular size range of projects. The nice thing is that if you already have a lap frame and a

scroll frame, then you can buy **interchangeable dowels** separately to accommodate other projects. K's Creations has three base sizes: Baby, Standard and Large. The standard base packed with 16 or 18 inch scroll frame is the most popular, as it can comfortably hold 12" and 14" needlepoint pillow canvases as well as most cross stitch designs. While you can put a small piece on a large frame, the tension is harder to control.

If you work on a wide range of sizes, from very small to very large, consider an **Ultimate Stitching Station floor stand**. It is highly adjustable and will meet all size needs from 4" to 36" (though keep in mind that this frame isn't very portable). If you want portable options, you may want to invest in multiple bases or get a **Tag-A-Long**, which is designed to be portable. The **Stainless Steel floor stand** is another option for portability, but it weighs 8 lbs (a few lbs more than the average laptop), and might be cumbersome to lug around an airport. Each holds a wide range of frames, using a central clamp.

The truly ambitious stitcher can also purchase a complete assortment of dowels and side bars to make a wide size range of scroll frames at an affordable price. The K's Creations assortments include the [Professional Scroll Frame Set](#), the [Mini Professional Scroll Frame Set](#), and the smaller [Mini Professional Scroll Frame Starter Set](#).

Which type of frame?

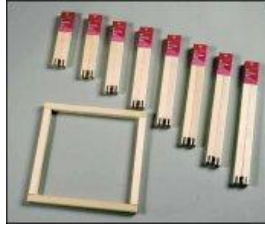
If you already work on a Qsnap, stretcher bars, or scroll frame, you may opt to select a base or stand that will work with what you already have.



The **QSnap** is a plastic frame with top clamps that comes apart into 4 pieces that are interchangeable to make a variety of sizes: 6" x 6", 8" x 8", 11" x 11" and 17" x 17" or variations you get from switching two sides. QSnaps are favorites of quilters and cross stitchers because

they adjust easily, are inexpensive, and do not leave marks on the fabric. Also, no basting is required. QSnaps do not work well for needlepoint, which is too stiff for the clamp. The largest size combo with QSnaps is 20" x 20" with an extension kit.

To use **stretcher bars**, you assemble your bars into a rectangle and stretch your project across the top just like an oil painting canvas and tack or staple it down. The tension is fixed at that point. "Stab" needlepointers or rug hookers can use stretcher bars effectively, but the fasteners are hard on the more delicate cross stitch fabrics (Aida is usually sturdy enough, just make sure to secure on the *back* of the frame) and tricky to get the tension just right. To put stretcher bars into a frame, you need a system with side clamps or a single central clamp (like the **Tag-A-Long** or **Stainless Steel** floor stands), or to make sure your lap frame has [Universal Clamps](#).



Scroll frames are the most commonly used by cross stitchers and needlepointers alike. With several brands, the fabric is slipped into the groove of a split dowel and rolled up until taut. It can be a challenge to get the tension right with this type of scroll frame. K's Creations frames have a muslin strip attached to the dowels onto which you baste or sew your project. This improves tension, and makes it easier to roll your project up for safe storage.

Another company, American Dream, makes scroll frames worth considering if you don't like basting your work onto the muslin strips. The EZ Stitch No Baste scroll frame requires you to purchase velcro-type strips. One side sticks on the dowels permanently. The other side is stuck to the very edge of your project and then cut off when the work is done. You have to buy more strips for each project, but if you dislike basting it's an option. These frames will fit on K's Creations bases using a Universal Clamp.

Scroll frames and stretcher bars can be found in a wide range of lengths, from 5" to 36".

What about that right hand?

Have you tried a base, but find that your stitching hand keeps bumping the supports? If you don't work from the top only

(running stitch-type stitchers), then having side supports on both sides can be bothersome.



If that's the case for you, look into the Z Frame bases which have a scissor-like support on one side that gives you the added bonus of adjustable height, plus leaves the other side open for easy access by the dominant hand. Handy! The two options available here are the

standard [Z Frame](#) and the [Baby Z](#).

Any of the floor stands that use a central clamp system, such as the Tag-A-long, will also have the same advantage for ease of movement with your dominant stitching hand.

Do you like working on the back?

I'm not one of those people who want the back to look as good as the front (I'm bad enough about wanting my X's and /'s to slant the same direction!), but there are plenty of good reasons to get at the back of your work, such as tying off your threads.

All K's Creations frames offer an easy way to get at the back. The lap/table bases require that you swivel the frame 180 degrees in the base, so that the back is facing up. The bases that have a central clamp allow you to turn a knob to loosen the support so that you can flip the frame over.

Make sure any other brand of frame you consider allows you to easily get at the back. The little things make a difference!

Other considerations:

When selecting your needlework frame, those little extra details can have a huge impact on ease of stitching. Do you like the wood finish? Are the scroll knobs easy to grip and adjust? Do the necessary tools come with the base? (K's Creations packages a little wooden "wrench" to help turn the wingnuts). Are the instructions clear? Does the company have a website with more information about the product, and are they responsive to questions about best usage? Can you add or exchange frame features? Is there a good warranty? **A good**

needlework frame is a significant investment - make sure the designer stands behind it!

3) SELECTING ACCESSORIES

And now, the fun stuff! Here are some recommended extras that really help improve your stitching.

✓ Reduce eye strain with a lamp and/or magnifier



Don't underestimate the value of good **light and magnification**. K's Creations makes a magnifier/pen light combo called the [Travel Magnifier](#) that fits right onto the K's bases and is still small enough for travel. Other brands of clamp lamp can attach to your sturdier wooden bases, or onto a nearby table or chair. Good light helps keep colors straight and reduces eyestrain, and magnification helps with the most delicate work. Make sure to check if the light is plug-in or battery-powered before you buy!

While we're at it, here are some other lighting tips: use a true color light that provides **full spectrum light** for complete control over colors. Full spectrum bulbs are widely available now for any type of light fixture. Plus, they're energy-efficient and last for ages!

Magnifiers and craft lamps come in a wide variety of options, prices, sizes, and brands. We've stood behind Daylight lamps for many years, and also carry several other brands. Check out our [Lamps & Magnifiers](#) section for the lamps that we currently carry.



✓ Keep even tension for uniform stitches



Ever struggle with lumpy stitching? This is often caused by poor fabric tension that makes it difficult to pull your thread to the same tightness with each stitch. A scroll frame takes care of the tension from top to

bottom, but it can be a little tricky to baste your fabric and adjust your dowels just right every single time, particularly if you're swapping projects frequently. Upgrading your scroll frames with [PerfectTension II Side Bars](#) makes fine adjustments extra easy.

QSnaps also give you some control over tension just by swiveling the clamps, but since the frames are smaller you may find yourself having to disassemble and reassemble frequently to keep the tension just right.

✓ **Ease back strain with proper positioning and tools**



If you find yourself experiencing back strain even after switching to a lap or floor frame, the problem could be posture. Try raising your feet a bit using a footstool. K's Creations makes a nice little [Portable Stitcher's Foot Rest](#) that collapses (of course!) for travel. You'll find more uses for them every day, such as working on the computer, or practicing a musical instrument, or just needing a little boost to reach to a higher shelf.

Other adjustments may do the trick, such as moving your frame from your lap to a table, or vice versa. TV trays or rolling laptop desks are handy for raising your project a little higher (good if you're tall). I tend to curl up on the couch, so I like to balance my Baby Base on a pillow in my lap. One of those cushioned lap desks for your laptop work, too. Make sure to get one with a sturdy desktop.

You may discover that you're craning your neck while working, or constantly twisting to look at your chart as you stitch. Solve this with a [Magnetic Board Holder](#). These are designed to fit right onto most of the K's Creations bases without extra parts. You just clip your chart onto a magnetic board, and put the board on the holder, then position so that your posture is improved. Line magnifiers also help reduce eye strain.

✓ **Keep supplies at hand for maximum enjoyment.**



Many organizational aids are available to help you keep your supplies neat and orderly. For example, the floss tray of the

Ultimate Stitching Station is super handy for your bits and pieces. Some magnifying lamps come with a similar tray attached. Our [Organizers & Totes](#) section has some great items worth checking out. Personally, I'm never without my [Floss Fly](#)!



There are lots of neat options for keeping scissors and needles handy, too. In earlier eras when most women did needlework, it was commonplace for an embroiderer to keep track of her tools by wearing them. Victorian-era women in particular adored decorative versions of these necessities, and some designers today have re-created antique designs! Check out our [Notions](#) and [Jewelry](#) sections for some goodies.

Now You're Ready To Pick Your Frame!

We've gone through all the different K's Creations frames, plus tools and accessories, as well as tips for quality and comfort in your needlecrafting. We invite you to check out [K's Creations website](#), then come back to [Discountneedlework.com](#) to shop! If there is any information you need that wasn't covered in this article, or you would just like to offer some feedback, an email to sew@discountneedlework.com is always welcome.

Happy stitching!

Leigh
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