

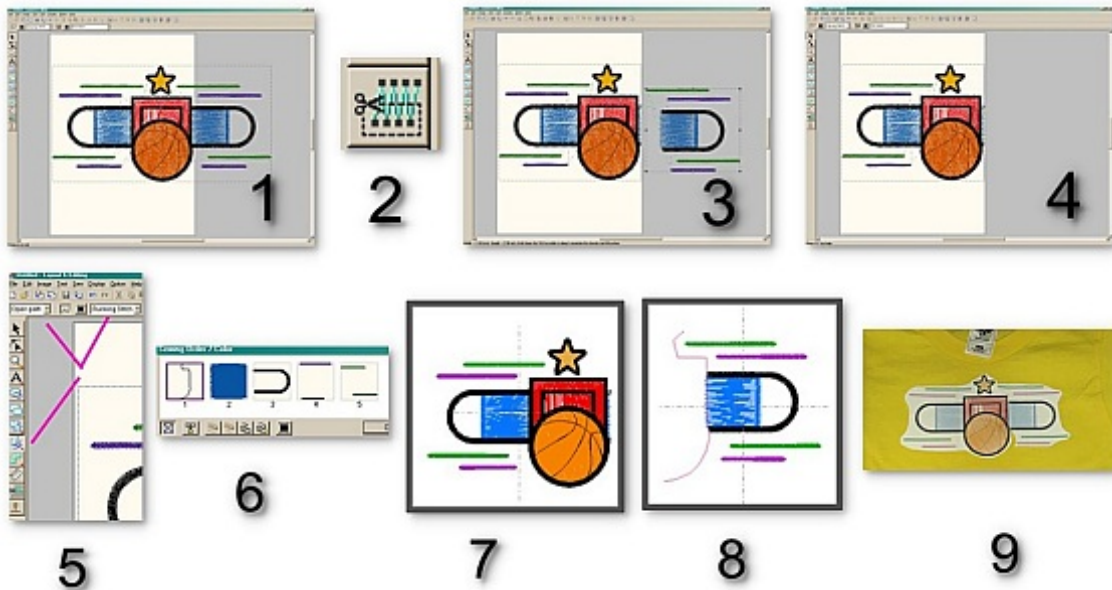
Does size matter? Well, that all depends.

Size matters if you have a design that's 5 inches wide and your largest hoop is 4 inches wide. Size matters if you want to make a border along the edge of a tablecloth. Size matters if you want to combine two or three designs, each the size of your largest hoop, into one big design.

First the cardinal rule for hoping. Always use the smallest hoop possible. In other words, if you're stitching a 2" by 3" design, use your 4" by 4" hoop rather than the largest one you have. The less play in the hoop the better it is for the stability of the stitch-out. In addition, why use a huge piece of stabilizer when you can use a smaller one?

Now, that said, if my largest hoop is 5" by 7" and I want to stitch a design that's 6" by 9 inches, what should I do? Well, of course, I could always reduce the size of the design using Catalog XPress or any other software program what will re-calculate the stitches. But I've found that machine embroiderers like designs larger, rather than smaller. My solution is to cut the design into two pieces, save them as two separate designs and sew them out in sequence, re-hooping between the first and the second. Okay, you're going to need some kind of embroidery design editing software to do this, and you have to choose a design that has an obvious place to split it like the one on the top left side of the page. I've drawn a bright pink line to show the place I've chosen to split the design.

- First import the design into your software, showing your hoop.
- Next, slide the design over to the side so that only the first portion of the design rests in the hoop.(1)



- Now, zoom in closely and, using your cutting tool (2), carefully draw along the edge of where you want to split the design.
- Pull the two pieces apart. (3)
- Okay now, pay attention. If you goof up this part you're going to have to start over.
 1. Right click on the part of the design that's out of the hoop and select "Cut." (Or Ctrl>x)
 2. **Save this design as "design_name-1."** (4)
 3. Now either Undo (Ctrl>z) or right click and Paste (Ctrl>v). You'll now have both pieces back on your screen.
 4. Slide the pieces back together, using your arrow keys, if possible, to insure that the pieces stay in the same plane.
 5. Choose an open path running stitch in a color that is not in the design (5) and draw carefully along the edge of the first design that meets the edge of the second design. Take in as much of the first design as you can. A preview of this step won't show in a small thumbnail, but you'll see it in the next step.
 6. Delete the first design (the one you've already saved), slide the second part, along with the running stitch you just drew, into the hoop.
 7. Correct the sewing order so that the running stitch will stitch first. The first segment must be a different color from the next part of your design because you'll need the machine to stop after the line is stitched, but you can make it a color that will match part of the design. (6)
 8. **Save this design as "design_name-2."**
 9. Print both design pieces. (7-8) I like to print from Catalog XPress because it will put cross-hairs in the centers of the designs.
 10. Cut out the designs and put them together with tape. You're going to use this as a template for centering the design when you sew. (9)

Stitching it all together

You've done the hard work. Now it's time to stitch your design. PLEASE sew a sample first. We don't want to be ruining any brand new silk blouses.

- Hoop your garment, tote, or whatever. I'm sewing this on a fairly small t-shirt so I've hooped stabilizer, sprayed it with temporary embroidery adhesive and placed the shirt, centering the first part of the design in the hoop. (10)
- Carefully attach the hoop to your embroidery arm and center the needle exactly over the center of the first design. (11) Close is good enough. We're just making sure that the design fits in the hoop here.
- Remove the template and start stitching.
- When part 1 is finished, remove it from your hoop and hoop another piece of stabilizer. For this part you must use either a sticky stabilizer or temporary embroider adhesive. In order to line up the designs you won't be able to actually hoop the garment.
- Put the hoop on the machine and sew just that alignment line. (12)
- Remove the hoop from the machine and place it on a flat surface.

- From the back, fold back the part of the design you've already stitched and carefully place it on the hoop, snugged up against the alignment line. (13)
- Very carefully smooth down the rest of the garment, being careful to not pull it away from the line you've stitched on the stabilizer. (14)
- Return the hoop to your machine and stitch the second part of the design. (15) Your garment is already properly aligned, so you don't have any measuring to do. Just start stitching.
- When you're finished, well, here it is! (15)

A few quickie tips

Because I was stitching this for a child I used [soft nylon stabilizer](#) and cotton thread in the bobbin. Ordinarily I would have used an [adhesive backed stabilizer](#), but this was a knit and the adhesive backed stabilizers are tear aways. Had I wanted to use an adhesive backed stabilizer I would have hooped cut away stabilizer underneath. That way, when I tore the adhesive backed stabilizer away, the cut away would remain to stabilize the knit fabric.

Again, because this was a little shirt, I turned it inside out before placing it in the hoop. I wrestled with hooping little t-shirts for several years before I realized that if I just turned the shirt inside out it would be a lot easier, and much easier to keep the excess shirt from getting caught in the stitching.

Which brings me to . . . You have to baby-sit garments with spare parts hanging around. The minute you leave the room your machine will see that you're not there and grab a sleeve or collar or hem and catch in up in the stitching. If that happens often the only way to get the hoop off the embroidery arm is to release the foot and cut it out of the garment. You don't have to stare at it, but stay nearby.

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