

Hedebo embroidery from Denmark

You can find interesting information about the history of Hedebo embroidery at the site of the TRC (Textile Research Center): <http://trc-leiden.nl/trc-needles/clothing-undergarment/regional-traditions/europe-and-north-america/embroideries/hedebo-embroidery-an-introduction-denmark>

Traditionally Hedebo is a form of whitework embroidery, but I have found modern versions of Hedebo in color too. There are several types of Hedebo embroidery. It can be done on fabric or attached to fabric, but it is also possible to do it without fabric, forming a lace fabric. Our challenge will be about this type of Hedebo lace.

There are some basic forms that we can use in Hedebo lace. Most of them are explained in this tutorial: <http://www.bobbinmaker.com/hedebofaq.html>

Rings are often used as basic elements for Hedebo lace. The Hedebo stick is a special tool that is used for making these rings, but you can use every stick that has the desired diameter to make rings. Just wind your embroidery thread or yarn several times around the stick and then use **plain buttonhole stitches** all around.



I have made several of these rings, using different yarns and threads and making them in different sizes.

I also experimented with wrapping a very bold yarn around the stick, together with the thread I used for the buttonhole stitches. Sometimes I spaced the buttonhole stitches, so that you still can see the bold yarn inside.

I also used unspun yarn and a strip of tulle like fabric..

For most of the other elements in Hedebo lace embroidery we use a **variation of the buttonhole stitch**, called the **looped edge stitch** (explained in the previous mentioned tutorial). The looped edge stitch is a very firm stitch, with a lot of definition.

With this looped edge stitch you can make **piramids**. You can also use this stitch to make **bars** between motifs. With these bars you can create **arches**.

Playing with rings and piramids

Playing with rings and piramids you can make stars or star like flowers.

First make rings as described above. If you use a stick with a small diameter you will probably not have to fill the hole in the middle, but you also will have less space to build your piramids. If you work with thread, this will be no problem.

You can have a raised middle if you wrap worsted yarn quite a number of times around your stick. Always also wrap the yarn or thread you use for the buttonhole stitches a few times around the stick, to secure it. You can hide those wrappings under the worsted yarn if you like.

Large rings, with a hole in the middle can be filled with bars, arches or very loose buttonhole stitches (see tutorial).

I did freeform and cheat a bit with the piramids. I often started with 6 looped edge stitches, next rows 5, 4, 3, 2 stitches and then whipping the right edge. But sometimes I did 2 rows of 5 stitches, to get a larger piramid. This means that I had to do somewhere in the row 2 stitches in 1 stitch. Just play with it and find your own solutions....



The different elements of Hedebo, as explained in the link, provide a lot of opportunity to play. Rings can be connected to each other. You can play with arches and looped edge stitches at the outside of the rings. You can connect motifs with bars, etc., etc.

Here is another link for inspiration: http://www.anna-handwerken.info/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Hedebo-cursus_deel_1.pdf

(It is all Dutch, but the pictures are international.....)

And still another one: <http://www.nordicneedle.net/guides/stitching-techniques-guides/scandinavian-techniques/hooked-on-hedebo-roger-buhr/>



If you know some basic stitches of Hedebo embroidery you can play with it. It can easily be combined with other techniques. I can imagine a combination with freeform weaving, crochet or knitting.

Sprang

Sprang is a very old braiding technique, done with stretched threads. It is probably older than every other textile technique, so sometimes sprang is called "the mother of all other textile techniques". For more information about the history of sprang you can visit the website of "Den blauwen swaen": <http://www.denblauwenswaen.nl/en/ambachten/sprang/> or the website of my Ravelry friend Sylva-Les: <https://www.krosienky-sprang.cz/clanky/from-history-21.html> (If it appears in Czech, just click at the English flag).

Among the oldest finds of sprang there are a lot of hairnets. I have decided to take one of these hairnets from Denmark as an inspiration for our challenge.

<https://nl.pinterest.com/pin/327144360402835658/>

In this sprang multiple twists and chained ridges are used.

I have made 2 short video's at my [You Tube channel Sprangria](#) to show you how to do this. But first of all you will need a frame to stretch the threads of your sprang and you need to know how to put your threads on the frame. I have made video's for this too: [Frames for sprang](#) and [preparing a sprang](#).

The most simple frame can be made of cardboard, but if you want to do sprang the way our ancestors did it, you can also make yourself a frame using a greenwood rod: <https://www.krosienky-sprang.cz/clanky/how-to-make-a-simple-loom-27.html>

I advise to use 2 alternating colors, because it is easier to see which thread you need with 2 different colors.

Something about the choice of yarn:

I advice a smooth firm yarn with a little bit elasticity to start with. In the samples I show at the video I use a cotton crochet yarn. You can however use other yarns such as acrylic yarn or linen. Because of the tension the yarn has to be strong. I would not use a hairy yarn such as mohair or an art yarn. I would not use a very thin yarn for your first sprang either.

How many pairs of threads and what length

I started most of my samples with 36 pairs of threads and the one with more colors has 48 pairs. In one of the samples the length of the threads was about 24 cm when I started, but after finishing only 12 cm was left (the threads shorten while braiding and also when the sprang is from the frame the sprang will stretch in the width and shorten in the length). You might have different results, using different yarn and different stitches, but you will always end with less length than you started with.

When the yarn is on your frame you can start with the multiple twists in sprang as shown on the video "[Multiple twists in sprang](#)".

After you have finished your first row, you can make one or more ridges as shown on the video "[Ridges in sprang](#)".

It is our challenge to play with this, as suggested in both video's:

- You can vary the number of twists within the same row.
- You can twist 2, 3 or 4 front threads together with the same number of back threads.
- You can divide the row in several parts, treating each part in a different way (making holes between the different parts)

- After you have done several rows in the different parts, you can close the holes between the different parts again by uniting the different parts or divide the total in a new way
- Make 1,2, or 3 ridges
- Make several ridges directly under each other, all from right to left or all from left to right or vary the direction of the ridges with every new ridge.

If you are really brave you can also do a plait row and overplait row in basic Z-twist (there are video's about this too at my You Tube channel Sprangria), but it is not necessary to do this in your first sprang.

Finishing the sprang in the middle: You have to secure the middle of your sprang, before you remove the safety cord or stitch holders. Usually this is done with chaining (video "**finishing your sprang 1**"), but you can also do this with embroidery (video "finishing sprang with the lock stitch") or weaving.

Finishing the ends of the sprang: I use many different ways to finish the ends of the sprang. You can finish it the same way as you finished the middle, or choose another method to finish the ends. Because the sprang is stretchable, you can manipulate your sprang into a different form by choosing another way to finish the ends:

- You can put the sprang at your knitting needle and add stitches to it in the first row
- You can use crochet to finish it and add some picots between the stitches
- You can weave a number of times through the loops, pulling them all together at one end....
- You can finish the sprang with Tunisian crochet.....



- You can use buttonhole stitches around several front threads and several back threads (see picture above)

Combining your sprang with Hedebo embroidery

As already said you can use buttonhole stitches to finish the front threads and the back threads of your sprang. This way you can create a kind of Hedebo rings.

You can also fill the holes in your sprang with Hedebo embroidery, either working directly at your sprang or making separate shapes and sew them into the holes.

Of course you can also work Hedebo at the outside of your sprang....

Just play with the different possibilities you have.

To manipulate your sprang and make a nice composition with the pieces of embroidery you can pin it to a cushion.....









All pieces joined together...