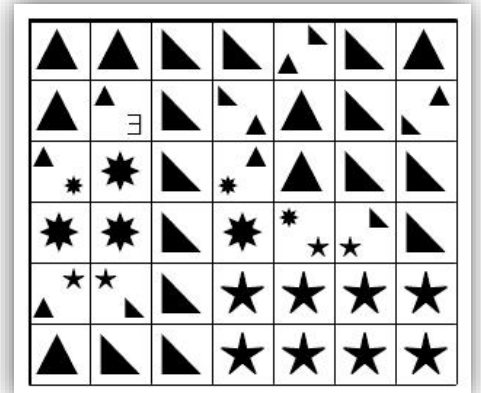


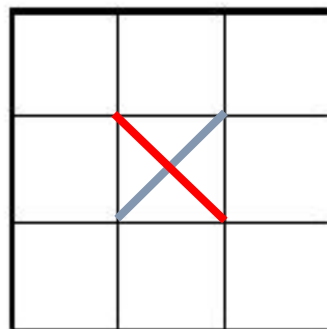
FRACTIONAL STITCHES

Fractional stitches can be a bit intimidating the first time you see them on a chart. And I will admit that sometimes they still trip me up if I'm not paying close attention while stitching. But with a little practice, you can learn to not be phased by complex patterns with fractional stitches.

Fractional stitches are used to create finer details within designs. The majority of patterns use what are known as three-quarter stitches. This means that we will be cutting either our top or bottom stitch in half so that in all, our stitching only covers three-quarters of the stitching space.



To break it down farther, a full cross stitch is created with a bottom stitch and a top stitch. Both of these will cover the full expanse of our stitching space diagonally. I always stitch with my bottom stitch going from bottom-left to top-right, and my top stitch going from top-left to bottom-right (see diagram).

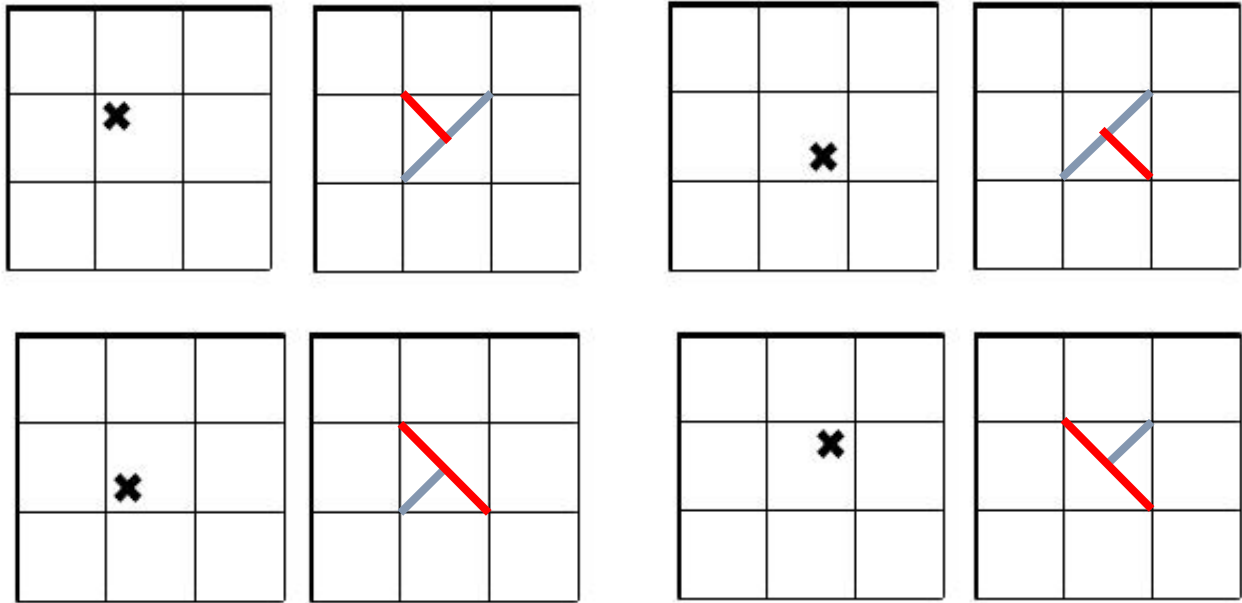


Blue represents a bottom stitch and red represents a top stitch.

If you typically stitch with the opposite order of stitches, you will need to adjust this tutorial by having blue represent your top stitch and red represent your bottom stitch. Remember, even with fractional stitches, all of your bottom stitches and top stitches should be in the same direction unless otherwise directed by the designer.

Now, depending on the orientation of a three-quarter stitch in a design, either your top or bottom stitch will be cut in half. If you are working on Aida fabric, this means puncturing the center area of your stitching space. If you are working 2 over 2 on an evenweave fabric, this means simply going over one thread instead of two for the halved stitch.

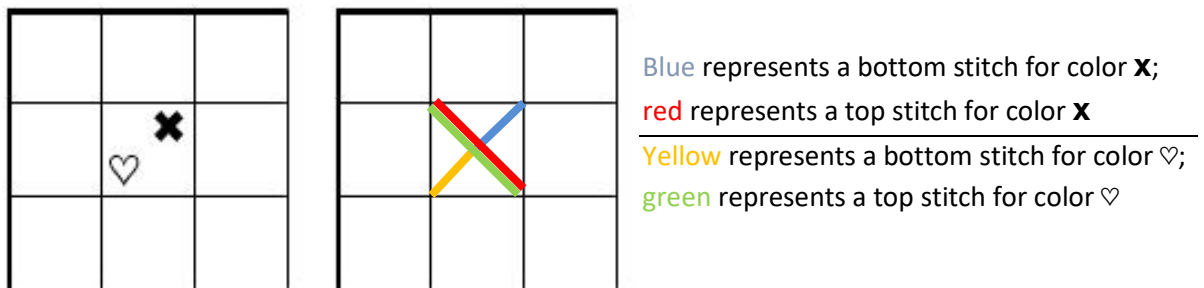
The diagram on the next page shows all four orientations of this type of fractional stitch.



Blue represents a bottom stitch and red represents a top stitch.

As for reading fractional stitches on a chart, they do not have special characters to represent them within the floss legend. They will use the same symbols as full stitches but will be placed in miniature form in the corners of a grid box.

There may be instances where two different colors have fractional stitches in the same stitching space. In this case, complete both colors like they are individual stitches as described above. Depending on the orientation of the stitches, this may mean that you have two full top stitches in the same place, as shown below. The same can occur where there are two full bottom stitches.



The *Anne of Green Gables* pattern makes use of a lot of fractional stitches. And the design instructed stitchers to complete them as described in this tutorial. *The Great Gatsby* is the other Book Club design that features a significant number of fractional stitches. That design, however, came with special instructions to always have the top stitch be the half stitch regardless of its orientation. This was done to help create the sleek, crisp lines of the art deco style. That's why **it's important to always read the designer's instructions before starting a piece** because you never know what might be required to get a particular effect in a design.