



## **CONSERVATION TIPS: Mounting flat needlework textiles on a fabric-covered board for framing**

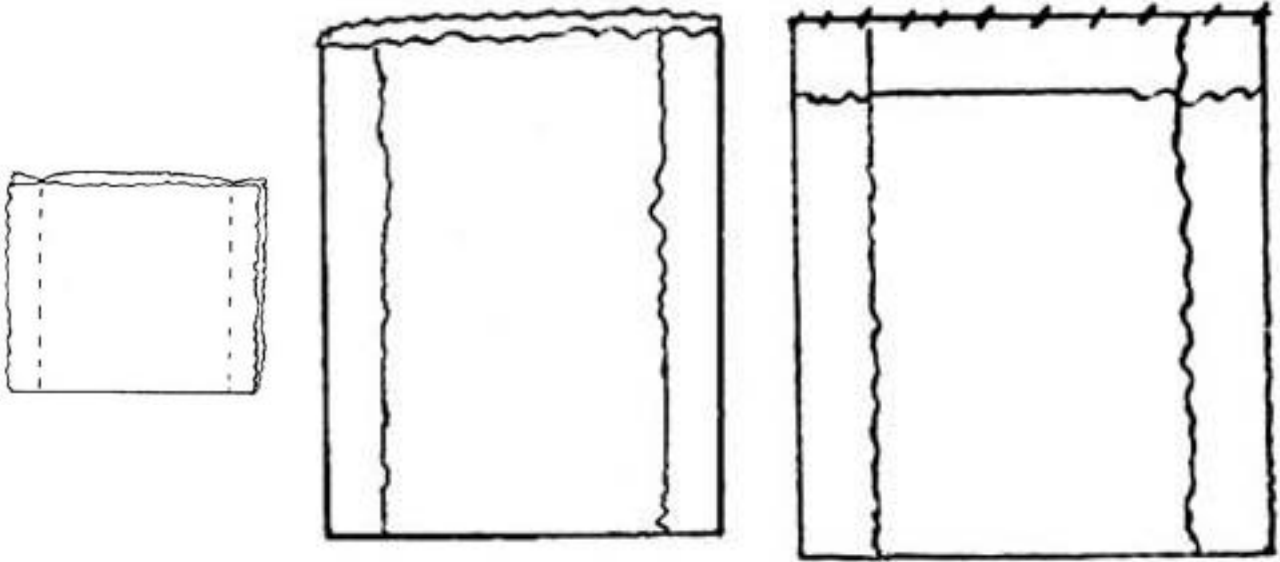
The materials you select on which to mount textiles for display will affect how long the textiles will last.

For longest life, use rag acid-free board, 4-ply or 8-ply thick. Cover the board with washed 100 percent cotton plain-weave fabric in an appropriate color. These materials are used within the museum community because they will not accelerate the deterioration of textiles. Choose color-fast fabric. When washing the fabric, do not add softeners or bleach, and be sure to rinse thoroughly. Washing the fabric will remove surface treatments, like starch, that cause discoloration. Avoid polyester thread, which will slice through fibers if drawn too quickly or pulled too tight.

Remember, the fabric covering the board should be taut but not so tight as to warp the board.

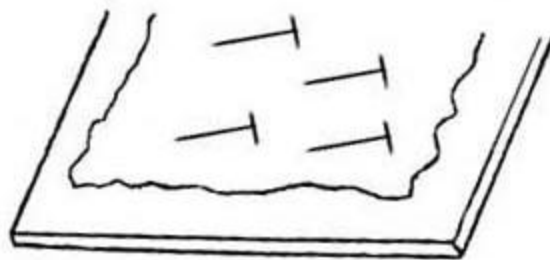
The following steps will guide you through the process of covering a board with fabric.

1. Cut your acid-free rag board to fit within the frame you have chosen for display. It should fit easily and not stick against the sides.
2. Fold the fabric in half and place the board on top. One side should be lined up against the fold.
3. Draw two lines in pencil along sides of board marking the fabric underneath. Remove the fabric and machine sew seams along the pencil lines.
4. Trim excess along the sides and insert the board into the pocket. The board should fit snugly inside.
5. Insert the unfinished edge inside towards the back and pin closed. Secure with overcast hand stitching.



Now that your mount is constructed you can place the textile on the fabric-covered board.

1. Cut a piece of smooth acid-free tissue to the size of the flat needlework textile to be displayed.
2. Place the needlework on top of the tissue and pick the piece up holding the tissue as a sling.
3. Position on the board and make subtle adjustments by handling tissue underneath.
4. Once positioned, carefully slide the tissue paper out from under the needlework.
5. Place pins on an angle through the textile. The pins don't have to be stuck into the board, just through the mount fabric.

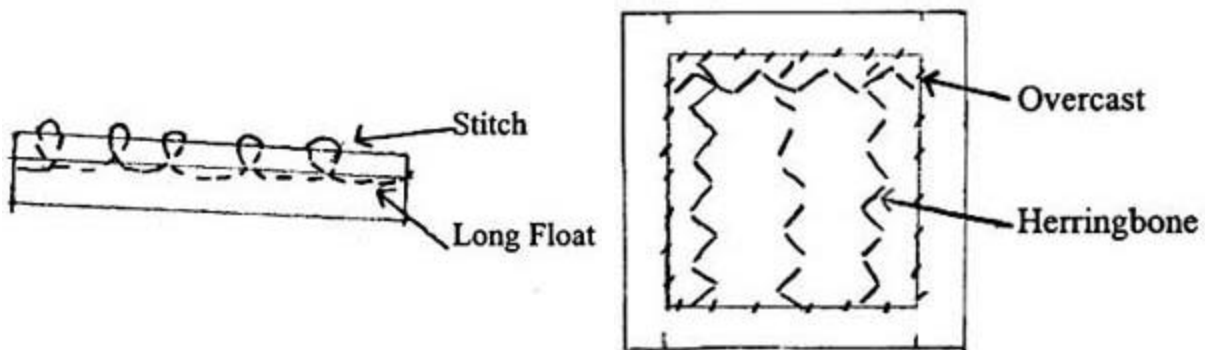


Use a curved needle to sew the textile onto the board. The curved needle should be long and thin. This is sometimes difficult to find. If you cannot find a needle long enough for your needs, bend a beading needle after heating it up with a match or lighter. Thread the needle with cotton or cotton wrapped poly thread. If

possible, use a 50-weight thread, because it is thinner and will minimize the visual disturbance to the textile.

Stitching techniques have been developed by the conservation community to support the textile without over stitching.

1. With the curved needle apply a horizontal row of herringbone to the top edge of the needlework.
2. Vertical rows of herringbone approximately 1 inch to 3 inches apart, depending on the fragility of textile, should be executed top to bottom starting from the center out.
3. An overcast stitch should be applied to the entire perimeter.



The long part of this stitch (float) should be in between the mount fabric and board leaving a small backstitch exposed on top of the textile. When stitching, try not to pierce the textile's yarns. Instead try to cross over them so that the stitch supports the yarn. Do not pull sewing thread tight. This will strangle your thread and cause it to break in the future.

Now that your textile is mounted, it may be inserted into a frame safely.

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## Glossary

**Glossary terms provided  
by Margaret Holben Ellis,  
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New York University.**

**Acid-free:** A popular and loosely applied term referring to matting, framing, and storage materials having at the time of their manufacture a neutral pH; sometimes used inaccurately as a synonym for alkaline or buffered.

**Alkaline:** Characterized by having a pH of more than 7.0

**Alkaline reserve:** The amount of alkaline precipitates which forms in deacidified paper upon exposure to air. A reserve of two to three percent of precipitates is considered a reasonable level for permanence. 2. In accordance with ANSI Z39.48-1984, the compound, typically calcium carbonate, in mat board and other paper-based storage materials, deliberately introduced in order to impede acid degradation, by acting as a buffer to maintain a pH greater than 7.0. A 3% reserve is generally recommended.

**Archival:** (Archivally Sound) A non-technical qualitative term that describes a material or product that is permanent, durable, or chemically stable, and can therefore be safely used for preservation purposes; more accurately describes documents or records deemed significant and worthy of preservation.

**Backboard:** (Back Mat or Bottom Mat) The mat in direct contact with the verso (back) of the artwork and to which the artwork is typically attached.

**Backing Board:** The stiff foam board, corrugated paper or plastic board inserted into the frame to protect its contents from physical and atmospheric damage.

**Buffering agent:** (Buffer) In chemistry, a solution or material which contains both a weak acid and its conjugate weak base such that the addition of other acid or alkali causes only slight changes in the pH; also, the alkaline reserve contained in paper based materials in order to counteract acids that may form in the future.

**Cockling:** (Waving, Buckling, Warping, Curling, Undulation, Gondolage) Localized deformation or a repeating and regular pattern of deformation in paper, usually across the sheet or around the edges due to irregular drying or

fluctuating relative humidity. Cockling is sometimes considered to be more closely and regularly spaced than buckling.

**Glazing:** The glass or acrylic sheet used in a frame as a protective interface between the environment and the work of art.

**Japanese tissue:** (Japanese Paper) Hand- or machine-made bast fiber paper, typically made in Japan, used in conservation because of its strength, suppleness, and stability; in printmaking because of its softness, absorbency, and dimensional stability. It is often erroneously called "rice paper" or "mulberry paper."

**Methyl cellulose:** A chemically modified cellulose ether which has many uses in conservation as an adhesive, poultice, and sizing agent.

**Polyethylene:** A translucent thermoplastic material prepared by polymerizing ethylene at high pressure and temperature in the presence of oxygen. In sheet form it is used for lamination of documents in lieu of cellulose acetate or for encapsulation. It can also be used as a hot-melt adhesive or made into foams.

**Polypropylene:** A stiff, heat-resistant, chemically stable plastic. Common uses include storage enclosures.

**Sizing:** (Size) A substance that inhibits the penetration of water into the internal structure of paper and therefore decreases the swelling of the paper fibers in response to moisture. Sizing affects the stiffness, strength, smoothness, and weight of the paper, as well as its aging characteristics. Sizing agents include rosin, gelatin, animal and synthetic glues, starch, cellulose ethers, synthetic resins. 2. Chemicals added to paper and board that make it less absorbent so that inks applied will not bleed. Acidic sizing can be harmful and can cause paper to deteriorate.

**Verso:** (Reverse) The back or opposite side of a sheet on which appears an image or printed text, usually characterized by having no image or printed text or one deemed to be of lesser importance. Also called the reverse. The left hand side of an open Western codex.