
Sashiko Sewing with Lisa Solomon

Chapter 1 - Sashiko Sewing

Overview

- Hi, my name is Lisa Solomon. I'm a mixed media artist that lives here in the Bay Area and in this class we're gonna go over a really cool embroidery technique. It's a traditional Japanese one called Sashiko. It has a couple of different ways you can utilize it. There's a decorative aspect so you can use it to sort of put some embellishment onto a pillow or onto a shirt. It also has a utilitarian aspect. There's a whole tradition in Japan called boro where you use Sashiko to mend things. You use little scraps of fabric and you patch things together. So in this class we're gonna do both a decorative aspect, I'm gonna show you how to generate your own patterns based on traditional Japanese patterns but you can also make up your own designs and we're gonna mend some jeans as well.

Materials

- The great thing about Sashiko is that you really don't need very many materials, but I've got a lot here just so that we can really play and try a bunch of things out. Here we've got a stack of fabric. Traditional Sashiko comes usually in either white thread on indigo or indigo thread on white. That's a really traditional color combination, but I wanted to try some things on different colors, so we've got a little bit of pink fabric back here. Any kind of scrap you have to start out is great so just go through your stash and see if you have anything lying around. I tend to like cottons and linens 'cause they're easier to work with, but again, you can use whatever it is that you have lying around. Just make sure that whatever it is that you're using is a woven fabric. If you have some crochet thread lying around, you can use that or other kinds of embroidery thread. This is the traditional Sashiko thread. This brand is Olympus. You can find other brands. It's pretty easy to get. They're on Amazon or a lot of other places. It's twisted instead of stranded, so you can't pull it apart. It's just gonna stay together. And it's cotton, so it's really easy to use. I have a stack of circles here that I've cut out to use as templates. There's a lot of circular motifs, and so it's a lot easier to just have a circle. I've cut them out in various sizes, and I've labeled them, so I've got an inch up to four inches. We've got two different kinds of thimbles. This is the traditional Japanese Sashiko thimble. It actually ends up sitting on the inside of your hand, and it helps you to push the needle through. This is also a Japanese thimble, but it doesn't sit on the inside of your hand. It actually just goes right on top of your finger, and that metal point there is what's gonna help you push the needle through. I've got some various pins because, especially when we get to the mending part, you wanna pin your scrap into or over the hole that you're covering. We've got the traditional Sashiko needles. They're longer than embroidery needles, but you really can use any kinda needle you want. It just makes it easier to do the continuous running stitch if you have a longer needle. I've also used doll needles before. They work really well too. Various means to draw lines on our fabrics. We've got traditional tailor's chalk. We've got some quilting pencils here. We've also got a marker, a wash-away marker, which you can spray clear of your fabric when you're all done. We've got a quilting ruler, which is really great 'cause we wanna be able to see through so we can see what's going on. You'll probably need an iron and some kind of pad or ironing surface, ironing board. I've got some jeans here that have several really big holes. I also have what I want to use to mend the jeans, which is this really cute pair of my kid's jeans that she's not gonna wear. And then we also have a PDF. On the PDF, you're gonna find various traditional patterns and how to stitch them. There usually is a way, an

order, in which you're supposed to go. You don't have to follow that, but it actually makes your whole life easier. And we also have a few tips in the PDF so be sure to check it out. Oh, and then lastly we've got this little Clover hera marker. It's a tool that you use to fold and make a mark onto the fabric without actually making a mark, so it's kinda like a bone folder. You just fold the fabric over, and you rub with it, and you end up with a line that you can follow. So if you're using a fabric that's really delicate and you don't wanna have to worry about washing or spraying or erasing it, this is the tool that you wanna use.

Stitches

The Sashiko Stitch

- To begin, you really just need to practice the running stitch. So we're gonna set up a little practice scrap fabric here. We're gonna draw a little design out, and we're just gonna get used to the feel of running the needle through the fabric, and trying to make even stitches, 'cause that's really what's important, is just trying to get your spacing down. I personally like it when it gets kinda messy, and wonky, but I feel like that should be a choice, you should really know that that's what you're doing, and being really intentional about it. So let's practice by trying to make super neat, really nice refined stitches. I think an easy way to begin is to make a diamond, and then maybe run some stripes through it, so I'm gonna start by finding the middle of my square. I'm gonna use my little hera folder to help me get there. So we're gonna fold, and just, you'll see how it helps make a mark. Gonna fold in both directions, so I really know where the center is. Okay. Now I have a nice little cross in there, and I'm going to use the chalk and my quilter's ruler to just make an easy diamond. And then let's put some stripes in it, just so we have something else to practice with. Gonna use that center line as a starting point. Doesn't matter if the chalk goes outside of the diamond. And then I'm gonna use my ruler to measure. It's divided really nicely into these quarter inch lines. So now that I have the center one, I'm just gonna use that to keep going. I'm just placing the lines half an inch apart. Let's see, can I squeeze one in there. Teeny tiny. We're gonna unwrap our thread. So, traditionally the thread comes all together. Try and... And you can unfold it. There's a tie at one end with a little knot. You're supposed to actually just cut through the entire bundle. Then you take the little tie off, and you cut through so you don't have the knot anymore. And this is a really great length to start with. This will be long enough so that you don't have to change the thread on your needle all the time, and it will be short enough, so that it hopefully won't get tangled on you while you're stitching. I personally don't do this, because then you end up with all these threads that you kinda have to keep together. I like to keep things in a bundle, and then I just cut lengths that I like, but you could do whichever you want. I've threaded my needle, and I put a knot at the end of it. So in Sashiko embroidery, you definitely use knots. I'm just gonna pull all the way through. In Sashiko too, you don't use a hoop, because we're gonna be continually running the stitch, and you can't do that if it's in a taught frame. So you're just gonna hold onto it. You follow the line, and you just push your needle in and out, trying to keep the spacing nice and even. In the beginning it is really hard. You will intuitively start to know when your spacing is even, and when it's uneven, like I can tell that that's not even. But that's why we're practicing. So you can start to really feel the difference between short stitches and long stitches. Because this line isn't very long, I'm actually going to try and get to the very end of it. So everything is squished up, and we're just gonna pull. One danger is if you pull too tight. So if you pull too tight, you end up scrunching your fabric all together, it's really

easy at this stage to undo that. And if you still feel like it's too tight, you can pull your needle back through and give yourself some slack. So you can see, I made a couple stitches that are a little on the long side, a couple stitches that are a little on the short side. That's okay, this is just a practice. We're really trying to figure out what's going on. In the PDF I've included some tips of how your lines and stitching should intersect. We're gonna go over it right now, but if you forget anything, you can always refer back to it. So when pattern lines meet, you wanna space the stitches so that they don't touch, or if they do that they overlap evenly. So, like this is okay, this is okay, this is what you don't want. So you'll see here, what happened is that this stitch is touching this stitch, but it's not spaced evenly on both sides. So you wanna be mindful of that. This is like in a cross intersection. Or when you've got, like a set of perpendicular lines, you want the spacing to be really even. So this is good, this is okay, because we have this stitch, sort of meeting in the middle of this stitch, but you don't want this. So you don't want there to be like a little right angle, right in that intersection. It ends up kind of throwing the design off. So, you wanna keep it really neat. Also, when you're turning corners, you wanna make the stitches meet. Your last stitch should be right up to the corner. So you'll see, like this is correct, right? We've started going this way, and the stitch ends right in the corner, and then we're gonna turn and go in that direction. You don't want there to be a big gap, and then make the turn, because then that corner's not going to be very defined. You also don't wanna make the corner, and have the gap be big on the other side, because again, you end up with sort of this corner that doesn't make sense. Sometimes when you're working you'll have all of these lines that intersect with one another. It really looks cool when you leave, actually like a little circle in the middle of those, so that there's a really nice space there. It doesn't look so great when you have them kind of all overlapping, because it's really hard to control the spacing of the stitches, so just make sure that you keep that in mind when you have several lines that are joining up. Also, sometimes you have to keep in mind, that you're gonna need to leave a little bit of a loop on the backside of your fabric, that way you don't end up pulling the fabric really right or taught, or making any kind of pucker. So just make sure that sometimes, to turn your fabric over, and pull the thread back a little bit, so that that puckering isn't happening. And then finally, just be mindful of really sharp direction changes. So what happens is, you'll be in this corner, and you'll need to make a really big diagonal. You wanna make sure that you end up with a nice point. So in this case you might want your stitches to touch, unlike in some of the other examples where I said, don't have your stitches touch, so that you end up with this really nice triangle. You don't want something like this, where you end up with this weird kind of polygon. One final note, is when you're doing these turns, you might need to leave a little bit of loose thread on the backside too. And then just keep in mind, it's really about intention. If you want something to look a certain way, if you want it to be wonky, then by all means, make it wonky. But if you want it to be really neat, just be mindful of how your stitches are working and interacting with one another. I just realized I'm not making a very neat corner, so I'm gonna take this apart so I can fix it. It's actually easiest to de thread your needle. I'm gonna use the needle to help me back up. If I take out these last two stitches, I should be able to re space, in order to make it into that corner, so I can make a really nice, tight turn. Okay, so let me readjust. So I wanna end up here. Gonna make this stitch a little bit bigger. Gonna be mindful of that gap, and I'm gonna get right to the corner. Okay. Now that I've got this really nice neat corner, I'm gonna turn and start here. And we're gonna do the running stitch again. Just keep pushing fabric. I'm gonna try and pay attention to the end this time, so I get right to the corner. Okay. So be sure and pull so that you don't have any puckering. Continue stitching around the perimeter. There's no need to tie off. Actually one of the great things about Sashiko, is you just keep going until your

thread runs out for as long as you can. And then you just start on the horizontal lines until you complete the entire pattern. As I've been working, you'll notice I've been going from left to right, and right to left, just zigzagging back and forth. I'm nearing the end of my thread. I'm gonna have to switch it out, so let me show you how you tie it off. You just make a regular knot. If I'm near another stitch, I actually like to run it through, so that it's sort of, really securely knotted. Actually even gonna take it off of the needle, 'cause it is pretty short. Just use my fingers. Gonna hold it down with my thumb so that it stays really close to the work. And I'm just gonna double knot it to make sure that it doesn't come up. Again, using my thumb to hold it in place while I pull it and make a really tight knot. I can snip that end off. And I'm gonna re thread the needle, and finish the last two rows. We've finished with the practice swatch. Just keep practicing, you can do zigzag lines that go back and forth. You can do a series of squares, whatever it is that you wanna do until you feel really comfortable with the spacing, and with the running stitch, and getting the feel of how to pull the thread through the fabric, and flattening it out. Once you feel really comfortable, you can move on into some of the fun stitches.

Making templates

- In the PDF with the class there are nine different patterns. I'm gonna show you one of the more difficult ones to start, it's the shippo tsunagi, which is linked seven treasures. It's a circular pattern. And the reason why it's a little difficult, or maybe a little less intuitive is because the way you stitch it is a little bit challenging. You're not gonna go circle by circle, you're gonna go sort of around and around, so that you can utilize the length of your thread. One of the things to notice is all the patterns that we've provided are based on a grid. They're all a square grid. There are some patterns that are based on a rectangular grid, but we're not gonna think about those right now, we're just gonna be thinking about a square. So I'm gonna show you how to get started with folding your fabric and figuring out how to place your grid and then get the circles in there. We're gonna start with a tiny little swatch just to begin with. And you can change the size of the grid in order to change the size of your pattern and you'll see that later when I show you an example of it all stitched out. You really wanna find the middle of your fabric, that's super important, so we're gonna fold this in half. And you can use hera tool for this or I'm just gonna use my fingers. And then fold it in half again, so I have a really good middle point. I want this to be the middle, I want the two lines that form my grid to be surrounding the middle, so I don't wanna use this middle line when I'm drawing it out. I'm gonna use one of my fabric markers, 'cause I love these guys. They spray out with water. And I think I'll just start with a one inch grid, because that'll be easy. So I'm gonna line up this middle line of the one inch with my folded middle line. And then I can just flip it over and do the same. And then I can just use the ruler. So here we have another inch. And if your fabric isn't the perfect size don't worry about it. We're just kind of thinking of these as practice. Then I need to do the same thing with my center line. So I'm gonna line up the mark with my fold. And then I'm gonna use the circle templates that I already have cut out of cardboard. So I have ones that start as little as an inch and then they go up to four inches. So you can do the math or you can just place the templates in until they fit. So this two inch circle is gonna be perfect for this one inch grid. I like to start at the bottom. You'll notice that I've already marked the circle templates with sort of where their middles are, so that I can use the lines in the template to line up with my grid lines. And I'm just gonna go ahead and draw the circle around, or a half circle at this point. Even though I'm not sure I'm gonna end up stitching in this tiny little corner I'm still gonna put my part of a circle. You keep moving forward. And the one thing to keep in mind is that the circles sort of zig-zag around each

other. So my next circle I actually want to overlap. I've got a larger version where I've already done all of this, so I'm gonna switch to that, but you would just keep going. If you don't want to do this yourself you can use the templates that we've provided and you can enlarge them and you can use a tracing paper or you can use a lightbox and you can transfer the pattern that way. I've swapped out for this big piece of lovely pink linen. One of the things that's really fun to try with sashiko is to switch out the traditional colors. So usually it's indigo and white, but I really like changing it up and doing something like really hot pink. And I'm gonna use a green thread, because why not? So we're gonna start up here in the top corner and we're gonna wind our way around the circles. So it's a little counterintuitive, but it makes the best use of your thread. If you wanted to lay out the pattern so that every circle was an individual color, like let's say you wanted this row of circles to be red and then the next row of circles to be orange, you would have to work in a circular formation more traditionally. But we're gonna start up here at the top corner and we're gonna work our way down. You'll notice on the PDF that you just basically go under and over, under and over, under and over, until you get to the end. And then you flip the work around and you start to go back up. And you just continue that along until you've filled out the entire pattern. So I've already knotted this, it's got a nice quilt knot at the bottom, and we're just gonna try and do this nice and even, steady as she goes. You'll notice as I'm working that the curved line is not really that much different than working a straight line. I'm still using the running stitch, I'm pushing the fabric onto the needle. And then I stop at the end of each curve to just kind of pull it through and check and see what's going on. Remember, you wanna make sure that you pull your fabric back, so that you don't get any puckers. And then I'm gonna go this way. As you're working you wanna make sure that you don't just connect these lines, unless of course if you used a slightly larger circle these two lines would completely connect and then you could kind of make the jump easier. In mine I have a tiny little gap, so I'm gonna jump that gap, so that it looks like the circle is continuous when I'm finished. (upbeat music) So you'll notice here I'm getting to the end. I'm gonna pull this last bit through, make sure I'm not puckered, get this to go very nicely into the corner. And then I'm gonna flip around and go back up. So the lines will intersect, so it'll be easy for you to keep track of where you're going. You go this way. And it'll slowly fill out. You just continue until you fill out the entire pattern. I've got an example here where I made a pillow out of that exact same pink linen. On one side I've got the really big four inch circle with white thread, and then on the other side I did a little band of the same pattern, but I did it on a much smaller scale, these are two inch circles. So you can really see the difference of what happens when you change the scale of the pattern. And then I thought it was really fun just to not do the entire piece of fabric, but just do this one little stripe in the middle just to add some contrast. And then I think there are plenty of Creativebug videos that show you how to make a pillow. And so then I just sewed it together and stuffed a pillow inside.

Stitching with templates

- I'm gonna show you samples of the other examples that we have on the PDF. The next one is hirai jumon, which in English is crossed well curb. And for this pattern, I decided I would use it as an embellishment on a shirt, which is another way you can definitely use sashiko. So this shirt pattern is a free one from Purl Soho, and I just used two different fabrics, and I did the sashiko first, before I finished making the shirt, and I just spaced it out in a way that I thought would look good. Here's the pattern that's on my shirt. It's a really easy little grid pattern. The stitching for it is a little difficult, but once you get going, it'll be really easy. So you start on the right hand side, and you go up and down and up again, and then you're gonna flip around, you're gonna leave that little loop in the

back so that it doesn't pull too tight or pucker, and you're gonna go left to right to left, back and forth, until you get the entire grid done. I tied each grid off individually and then started the next grid. If they were a little bit closer together, you could just keep the string going, but I didn't want a lot of dangling threads in the back, so that's what I did for the shirt. Continuing on, I have each one of the samples that we have on the PDF stitched out so you can see what they look like. This is the masuzashi, or it's called square measure. And this one I used a variegated thread. You'll notice here that you can still see the grid lines, that's because I did them with chalk, and in order to clean out that tailor's chalk, you need to pop it in the washing machine and give it a good wash. But the great thing is, this is cotton, the thread is cotton, so nothing should happen, nothing should shrink, everything should be fine once you get it in and out of the wash. Next example is yabane, or arrow feathers. This one is really beautiful. It's super simple, but I really like it. It's all these triangles. This one too I used chalk, so this guy needs to get thrown into the wash in order for those lines to disappear. For this one I just used really traditional colorways, the indigo blue on top of the white. And all of these white pieces were just scraps that I had lying around. If I wanted to, I could turn these into coasters, or make a cute little pouch or a bag out of 'em, anything, it's super versatile, there's lots of things you can do with them. Then, we have the blue ocean waves. This one I left with the pen marks in here 'cause I wanna show you how easy it is to spray them out. This is why those marking pens are one of my favorite things to use. So you just grab some water. I like using a spray bottle. You're gonna have to get it pretty wet, so I like to do it in the sink, or I do it on top of the ironing board, so that the water kinda stays in a controlled surface, but I'm just gonna go ahead and spray. You wanna spray pretty evenly. And you'll just see the blue lines start to disappear. It's like magic! Great. If you wanted this to be dry right away, you could iron it. I always recommend that you iron embroidery on the back side. So you would flip it over. This is also a really good time to check to see if you have any long, dangling threads that you might wanna clip, and also check on your little loops that you left on the back side. So be careful when you're ironing. Sometimes the iron gets caught on these little loopy guys, so just be careful, if it does, don't worry, flip it back over, pull it back apart, and everything will be nice and straight and smooth. So in this one, I decided to use three tones of the same color. I used a light blue, a medium blue, and a dark blue, just for a different effect. So feel free to play around with the colors that you're using in your stitching as well. Our next pattern is ishidatami, or a paving block. This one I did in red, 'cause I just thought it would be really fun. You'll notice too that because these are scraps, I went all the way to the edge. If I was doing this with more purpose, I would be careful about where I was interacting with the edge, but because this is practice, I don't really mind that these little knots are hanging out. Then we've got idowaku, which is a diagonal well curb. This might be the most complicated pattern on this PDF. You have to use a much smaller grid, and again, I used chalk, so you can see some of the chalk lines that haven't washed out yet, to create this sort of really interesting diagonal shape. It's a really traditional Japanese sort of iconic symbol. You'll see it a lot in different patterns and different clothing, and it makes for a really beautiful, kinda more open stitch. It's really nice. And then lastly, we have two kind of little guys that I think are a really great way to segue into the boro, the mending technique. You can use any of these patterns for mending as well, but I feel like the last two in the PDF are a really good size that you can utilize for mending as well. So first we have kagome, which is a woven bamboo. This one is a lot more sort of full, right, than the last one? The stitching is a little tighter, it's closer together. That's why it would be good to use for mending. And then we also have hanabishizashi, which is a flower diamond. And I did this one in yellow, and I love this stitch. This is probably one of my favorite stitches in the PDF. For this one, you draw a grid, and

you draw diagonal lines through the grid, and you really only follow the lines for that center stitch. So in this case, it's this stitch right here. And then you eyeball the second and third rows. But it comes out so pretty, I just love this. It looks really good when it's small, it looks good when it's bigger. This is actually definitely one of my favorites to do.

Visible Mending

Boro mending

- One of the best uses for sashiko is to use it in a mending technique. There's a long tradition in Japanese history of boro, which is basically using small scraps. It's the idea that you don't waste anything and that you mend your clothing with these little pieces of other clothing that have fallen apart. Obviously, one of my favorite things to sashiko mend are jeans, because jeans always get holey. But you can mend anything. You can mend T-shirts. You can mend other kind of clothing. Elbow patches are really good. It's really, really versatile. But I'm gonna show you how to do a both inside mending, an inside patch, and an outside patch mending technique on a pair of my jeans which are very holey because I keep my jeans forever and ever. I think I have jeans that are like 15 years old (laughs) that are all patched up and really great. But I think they look cool with all the patches on 'em. I have a pair of jeans here. They have several holes. I have a swatch of blue linen. I'm gonna use this for one of our patches. And then I have my daughter's jeans that she no longer fits into that I'm gonna use for other patches because, A, these are the coolest things ever and I wish they fit me, and, B, they have stripes on them and I can use stripes to follow along with my stitching. I need to cut a couple pieces in order to make this work. We're gonna maybe patch this one and this one, and we'll start on a patch for this one. Let's use the linen for the sky. So you want to cut a piece of fabric that's going to definitely cover up the hole, keeping in mind that usually with jeans, the hole kind of spreads, right? So it starts little, and you can start to see where it's gonna fray. So I want a patch that's probably gonna be this big. So I'm gonna just kinda eyeball it. I'm gonna go ahead and just cut a whole strip of this or actually tear a whole strip of this. That patch is set. I'm gonna go ahead and cut off the ends of the jeans, 'cause I don't want that hem. Then same thing. This width seems really good. And this is gonna go on the inside, so I'm just gonna go ahead and cut up the seams. I'm pretty sure that's big enough, so I'm gonna just go this way. The fun thing with the stripes too is you could change the direction, so one of them could be going vertical and the other one could be going horizontal. This might be big enough for both. But I'll save this, 'cause it'll definitely be good for something else. Want it to be about that big. Okay, and then I want one more big one. So maybe we'll have the inside one be horizontal. Is that possible? No, let's have the inside one be vertical and this one be horizontal. Now we have to pin, 'cause you don't want these fabrics to be moving around while you're trying to stitch. So this one we're gonna do outside. I have a box of pins. And you just wanna keep in mind how do you want it to look, right? Do I want it to be vertical? Do I want it to be horizontal? Do I want it to be straight? Do I want it to be crooked? One of my favorite things about this is when it actually isn't perfect. I like my sashiko mending to look like it was handmade. I don't like it to look like it was done on a machine. I like it to really have that sort of wonky quality about it, and I encourage you to embrace that. It's actually pretty challenging to stitch perfectly straight on a pair of jeans, and why be frustrated when it's not straight? So I'm pinning the little scrap down so that I know it's not gonna move. And you do have to kinda keep your hand on the inside of the jeans so that you don't pin to the back side. That is one thing about

mending. You don't wanna stitch your leg closed, 'cause then you can't wear them. Okay. So, I'm gonna lay it back flat. I've noticed, oops, that's not a very great pin job, so I'm gonna flatten that back out and repin. And I'm not being precise. They're going in all different directions. If I wanted to be really picky, I could do nice, neat edge pinning, but I don't care. (laughs) So now I'm gonna pin these guys. This one is going to be on the inside, so I'm gonna flip my jeans inside out. Center the patch. And actually I'm getting a two-for-one on this one. There's a little hole starting right here, so this is actually gonna help mend two holes. And, again, I'm just putting the pins in around the edge. Looks pretty flat on this side. I'm gonna turn it back inside out, or the right side out, and see what it looks like. Excellent! That looks great. Then we have one more. Let's start with this little guy up here. I am not gonna worry about the frayed edges of this linen. I'm actually gonna blanket stitch the outside edge of this, so that will help to keep the fraying down. You can decide whether or not you wanna blanket stitch or not, I'm just gonna do it on this guy. On the other patches I'm not gonna blanket stitch, so you'll really see the difference between those two techniques and how they work and how they look. I'm using some cotton crochet thread from my stash. I actually am not sure what size it is. It's pearl that's twisted. I think it's about a six in size, but it could be an eight; I'm not sure. You can use any cotton crochet thread that you have. If you don't already have sashiko thread or you wanna buy some, that works too. I like this color because it's the same sort of tone as the thread that's in the jeans itself, so I wanna sort of pick up on that. And I've already knotted it and threaded my needle, and I'm gonna start with that blanket stitch. Mending can be a little bit awkward, because you, again, don't wanna sew your jeans shut. I'm gonna start in a corner, and I really just wanna get it going. I feel like this is a little long, my thread, so I'm gonna pull the tail a little bit so that it's not quite as long for me to pull through. And then a blanket stitch is basically like a little L. And you wanna be careful. Don't poke yourself. Don't get the thread caught on the needle. So you want a little L there. And I'm gonna go from the jeans, and then I'm gonna go through and I'm gonna keep the thread on the left hand side. And hopefully keep it from tangling. There we go. Okay, so you can decide how big or far apart you want your stitches to be. I like to just try to keep them pretty even. That has to stay on the left. Okay, so it's like little Ls. I'm just gonna keep going until I get all the way around. So we're at the corner. I'm gonna get one more stitch in here before, making sure this stays on my left. Okay, and then you basically flip and keep going. I'm gonna try and get my hand in all the way through the jeans. There we go. This definitely takes some getting used to, having your hand stuffed all the way through your jeans. But once you get the hang of it. And remember, we like funky stitches. I like funky stitches, okay. So I'm getting around that corner. Oops, I got a little knot. I'm not getting around the corner. Okay. Look, my thumb is poking through the hole (laughs) that I need to mend. (laughs) I have a little window. And now I need to pull this, 'cause the tail is getting too close to the work. I finished up with the blanket stitch. Since I have a decent amount of thread, I'm just gonna actually stick the needle and thread into the jeans over there, leave it to the side, and I'm gonna draw some guidelines so I know where I wanna be stitching. Because this is a dark fabric, I'm gonna use white chalk. Bust out my ruler. I think we'll just do some simple vertical lines on this guy. And I'm just gonna use the edge of the fabric as a mark, and we're just gonna say 1/2 an inch. And it's okay if the fabric bunches up a little bit. You just need a guideline. Oh, yay! Okay, right along the edge. I'm actually gonna make this tight again. The last line was gonna run right along the edge here, so I'm just gonna use the blanket stitch as my guideline. And I'm gonna sneak the needle into where I need it to be, okay. Right next to that first row of blanket stitches. Okay, and then I'm gonna set myself up. Because the jeans are kinda thick, I'm gonna put on a thimble so that I can do the running stitch a little bit easier. So I gotta get a

comfortable hand inside the jeans too. I'm gonna use the little hole for my thumb again. That worked really well. And I'm just gonna do my stitch. Trying to keep it even. Then I'm gonna use my thimble to help push that through. And then sneak on the inside. And then be sure and flatten it out so that you don't get the pucker. So you can see it's a little awkward going back and forth inside of the jeans, but you'll get the hang of it. Bring the needle back up for the next row. And then I'm gonna flip it around because I'm right-handed. I'm gonna use my thimble to help push that all the way through. (exclaims) So when I pull this straight, I'm gonna show you guys a couple strategies. You can either try to make these guys line up so that they're perfectly even, or you can try and alternate them so that they're in the spaces, or you can not care at all (laughs) and do whatever you want. So we're just gonna go back and forth until we finish all the little guidelines. I'm gonna turn it inside out and knot off the thread. I'm also gonna check to see how the mending went over the hole. If I feel like it's not a very secure mend, you can do more rows in between. But I feel like this is good, 'cause this hole is not very big, and you can see sort of where it's been patched and it's attached to the fabric, so I think this is fine. If you have a crazy hole, you can also just add some fun stitches around it, on the outside, on top to prevent it from getting bigger. I'm gonna double-knot this just for safety. Voila, super cute. I'm gonna cut this little extra guy off too. Random, don't cut the white thread. We're gonna move on to the other two patches. We're gonna start with the one that's on the inside, so I need to turn the jeans inside out. Maybe we'll switch to a light blue color thread, just to be different. This is the one that we cut in the very beginning to the length that is a good length to stitch with. This patch is on the inside, so I want the knot to be on the inside, so I'm actually gonna start on this side instead of starting on the other side. So I'm gonna use the stripes on the fabric. Lucky me that there are stripes. And I'm just gonna put in one running stitch to get started. Okay, now I'm just gonna work my way around. Gonna take that guy out. After you're done stitching, we're gonna turn it right side in. I'm gonna try and put my needle somewhere where I won't lose it, so I'm just gonna stick it in the pocket. And not poke myself with the other needles. Okay. And then let's check to make sure that it didn't pucker. Okay, that looks good. And I'm gonna draw some guidelines. I think for this one I wanna do a really simple little cross-stitch, so we're gonna go in both directions. And I want them to be a little bit closer together than the last patch. For this one, I can use the marker, because I can see it on the jeans; it's not dark. If that's 1/2 an inch, let's do 1/4. So I'm making these grid lines closer together. These are 1/4 of an inch apart. This is partially because I want it to look that way. I want the little crosses to be closer together. And also because this hole is bigger, so I wanna be sure that I patch through the hole to make sure that it's not gonna get any bigger. I have my grid all laid out. If I wanted to, I could also tack down around the hole. It adds sort of a different effect and another layer of stitching. I would do that now if you decide that you wanna do that. It's just an aesthetic choice. It's also a structural choice. It'll keep the hole from getting any bigger. But I don't wanna do that for this. I'm just gonna let the little crosses do their thing. So I'm gonna grab my needle from where I left it in the pocket. I need to put it back through to the other side to start. And I'm just gonna go ahead and jump over. Okay, so you're just gonna work in one direction, vertically go back and forth, and then after we get there I'll show you how to start horizontally. Make sure these vertical stitches are going over where the horizontal stitches are going to end up, otherwise you won't get the little crosses. You would continue on. I'm gonna stop and switch to the horizontal lines, just so you can see how these little crosses are gonna stitch out. So I'm starting at the top here. And I've got my guideline, and I just wanna make sure that I go over the first set of vertical stitches that I did, not under, not through, but over. And I'm going to use my thimble, because this is pretty thick. Okay. So you can start to see what's happening.

They're making these cute little crosses. And if you wanted more contrast, obviously you could do this in a white thread or a pink thread. Okay, I've got two more here. And I'm gonna switch and go back on the other row. So normally I would go all the way across, but because we're just demoing this, I'm gonna switch directions right here. Okay, now let me go ahead and push this out. With jeans, it's definitely harder to keep the running stitch going for a really long time, because it's so thick. So just do whatever feels comfortable. Okay. So when you get to these parts where there's some torn or some leftover threads, I just try really hard to make sure and grab some of those threads so they end up under the stitches. It can be a little tricky to see what you're doing. You can just go one stitch at a time instead of trying to do multiple stitches. I'm just trying to make sure and keeping up with those little crosses. Okay. And I'm kind of using the row previous as a guideline. So while I'm making this stitch, I was looking to see where I ended the other one. Okay, I'm gonna work my way back over here. There's no threads here, so this is easier. Okay, now I'm coming back onto where there's some loose threads. I'm gonna try and kinda push them down and out of the way so I can see what I'm doing. But I wanna make sure and grab them. You can always trim those loose threads too. Of course, as you keep washing the jeans, you're probably gonna end up with some stray ones. The stitches that I used to tack down, you can make crosses through those too if you want, but I wasn't thinking about having them line up, so I'm ignoring them. I'm just gonna do these one at a time here, 'cause it's really hard to see. Okay. Stitch through there. Through there.

Remember to check every once in awhile so you're not puckering. So remember we like the wonky stitches. So you can see the difference here between the one with the blanket stitch and the stitching that's going vertically, and this is the inside patch and we have little crosses. We're just gonna start on this last patch. I've already got it set up with a running stitch around the outside. You can see how it looks different from the blanket stitch on this side. I'm gonna use the lines in here and stitch with a navy, a dark indigo thread, in between the lines. So they'll be a little bit closer together than the first version we did, and they'll be going horizontally instead of vertically, so you can really see some variation.

Ooh ooh ooh ooh Ooh ooh ooh ooh

- I got through four rows here. You would continue on, but I'm gonna stop. This is enough for you to see kind of how it would look. I think it looks really cool, the little dotted lines in between sort of the thick navy lines. Here's a little recap of what we've done. We had a small hole that we covered with an outside patch using a blanket stitch and some vertical stitching. We had a slightly larger hole that we put the patch on the inside and then we did the tiny little crosses that went back and forth, both vertically and horizontally. And then we just have this giant big knee hole that we covered up with this nice big patch, and I used the stripes as a guideline and did a little teeny running stitch in between the stripes. You can use any of these stitches. You can use any of the stitches that we have in the PDF. It's really wide open for you to explore. Try different colors, try different fabrics. Really just have fun with it.

Variations and project examples

- I'm going to show you some other jeans that I've mended. This is one of my favorites actually. This one you'll see I went really pretty crazy. I wasn't trying to do anything really neat with the stitches

except for maybe on this patch. I actually really like how this looks. And this has been through the wash, I don't know, 50 times now so you can see what happens. The edges of the patches start to fray, but I like that too. I feel like it adds to the overall effect. This kind of mending is super easy because you're really just trying to be crazy and not think about anything. And I just made it thicker when the hole was bigger. Like here, this guy, I went right around the hole. I actually had these inside out so I wasn't even paying attention to what this side looked like. It was kind of a surprise when I turned them back right side in. And I have another hole here. I'm gonna have to add another patch. And then in this pair, I've done several different things. So I did a bunch of little patches. A couple with blanket stitch that we went over. I also just ended up mending some holes with the same thread so I didn't even really bother with the patch. I just closed them up with some stitching. And this patch I did an inside with, this is the same fabric. I had some of this beautiful indigo polka dot fabric. So I used that on the inside and I just did a horizontal stitch over here. And then on this one I did the little cross-stitch that we showed on the example. This one I did in white thread. And then this actually is one of the stitches that is in the PDF. So you can see how it looks when you utilize it in a mending technique. The example that I showed you earlier had a smaller version of this so I just blew it up a little bit. But it's really, I think really pretty, and it adds a whole different texture and changes the overall effect. I wanna show you a big source of inspiration for me. I love going to Japanese book stores and going through the craft section. There's just so much there to look at. So I have a couple of stitching books that I picked up on one of my visits. This one is really just straight sashiko. And they show you all these different ways to make stitches. And they're using them like as table runners and napkins. And this would be a great way to use your samples if you're just making samples, make 'em a little bit bigger. Table runner. And you'll see some of the stitching that we have in the PDF as well. And then I have this beautiful book that's full of sashiko and boro samples. This one is so stunning. It's dreamy. So there's all these indigo pieces. And they show you how things have been patched together. Like look at that. Oh, that's so pretty. And here's another one of my favorites. That kimono. And you'll see the stitching is not perfect. So really it's not about perfection, it's about the imperfection. I really think that that's an important point. Finally I just wanted to show you my book. I did an embroidery craft book a few years ago. It's called Knot Thread Stitch. It's not about sashiko. It's about regular embroidery techniques. But there's a whole bunch of different things and patterns in here. The fun thing about this book was I did a version of something and then I had an artist friend do another version. So I did a handkerchief and it has a cold virus. And then I had my friend, Blair Stoker WiseCraft, do some handkerchiefs. And she did one with a really cool applique. And then one with some lettering on it which I thought was really cute. And then I also just wanted to encourage you to try the sashiko stitch on all different kinds of things. So here I had a little bag. And I didn't, you know, set up a grid or do any templates. I just drew a little rainbow and I stitched it in with some colors of thread. And then on the other side, I just did a really simple circles. And I just changed the tone of the thread so I had a cream and a yellow and an ochre. And this just makes actually a perfect bag to carry your thread in. Sashiko is one of my favorite things to do because it can be decorative and it can be functional. I'm really excited to see what you guys do with it. Post your projects to the gallery or to Instagram so that I can check 'em out and see what you guys make.