
Modern Doily with Anna Maria Horner

Chapter 1 - Intro

Introduction

- Maybe you're like me and you grew up in a house where every tabletop was covered with some pretty cloth or doily to protect it against any scratches or nicks from vases, glasses, or whatever might be sitting on the table, and I find that the ones that I have from my mother, and grandmother, as an aunts are really special to me and I kinda wanted to create my own brand of that, but maybe a little more contemporary and simplified. So I call this the Modern Doily Project and what it is is just a simple circle that has been double layered and hand-stitched with a running stitch, and I kind of have two doilies in one because I did this different color on the backside. I think that this would be beautiful in a pair or maybe in triplets along a very long table, or you could even shrink it down and make some beautiful little coasters as a nice set for your table. So it's a very simple, just one machine sewing step, and one hand-sewing step and you'll have a beautiful modern doily.

Chapter 2 - Materials

Materials

- The materials for the modern doily are pretty straightforward. I just chose two favorite solid fabrics. For the white side of the project I chose a really pretty linen fabric. And for the back side I just chose this pretty mustard 100% cotton material. I did all of the hand sewing with this pretty pearl cotton in several shades. This is the two-ply pearl cotton. You don't have to separate the strands when you use it. And then to mark the circles on the fabric, I developed this really cool little measuring device that I simply made out of a scrap postal envelope. And I cut it and make little measurements with my measuring device, poke holes with a nice thick tapestry needle, and then use a T-pin to mark on the fabric my circles with this water soluble pen. So I can't wait to show you that trick. And for the embroidery, of course, we're gonna need an embroidery needle as well. And you're also gonna be doing some machine sewing and some pressing, so be sure and have those things ready too.

Chapter 3 - Make Doily

Cut circles

- We are going to cut both of these doily circles out together at the same time, but to do that we're gonna develop our little nifty tool for creating a perfect circle. I just have a cut strip of postal envelope paper here and because our entire circle is gonna be cut at 20 inches, I just need to cut the radius at 10 so I'm gonna start this one point and mark it. Going to use my measuring device guide here and measure out 10 inches and make another dot. Okay, so now we have our radius mark. What turns this little dude into a tool is poking and kind of loosening up a little bit bigger hole with this T-pin. You can do this with a needle too. T-pins are nice and fat compared to regular straight pins. Okay so what we're gonna do next is fold our fabric over so that we're only marking a half circle. So I'm gonna fold the fabric in half, both pieces nice and smooth together, slide it a little closer to me. I'm just kinda eye-balling the center here. Slide the T-pin through and press the fabric down so you're getting very very close to the edge. We're just gonna pin that there, hold it in place while I grab my marking tool. So this is just a water-soluble pen that's gonna go away with a spritz of water. I like this for this particular little trick because it has a really fine tip and can fit in that hole

that I made. So I'm gonna place that inside and I start at the middle. Just kinda go back and forth and you can see it's working. I try not to drag too much, I go back and forth a little bit, if I drag too much, I might end up pushing too much of the fabric with it and we don't want our circle to get askew. So I can just pick up and start at the middle again. We're marking, we're marking, we're feeling smart for figuring this out without buying any kind of fancy tools. Okay, so now we can set that aside, we'll use it again later so don't throw it away. And now we wanna keep all these layers in place as we cut, I don't wanna use a rotary cutter for this just because that can go a little bit quick for me. I wanna get this circle really nicely cut, so I'm gonna pin through all these layers. And I'm gonna hand cut with my shears. Okay. So now, we have two very perfect circles waiting to be sewn all the way around the perimeter.

Sew together

- I've got both my layers pinned together here, just to keep them in place as I sew around the perimeter. The seam allowance that I'm doing for this project is just a quarter inch. One special tip, you wanna keep your stitch length rather short when you're doing anything that is on a curve. I've got mine set to about 2.2, most sewing machines these days operate with digital markings of the stitch length. Sewing is kind of like driving, when you go around curves you don't wanna go too fast. So just take your time moving around. Removing your pins as you go is your safest route. As I begin to approach where I started, you can see it's coming up here, I'm gonna backstitch. And then I'm gonna change over to a basting length, which on my machine is all the way up at five. So these are going to be longer stitches, in other words, stitches that are easy to snip out. I'm gonna go ahead and sew the whole thing closed. Typically, you'd leave yourself a hole to pull through, but I'm marking that hole with these perforated stitches, so that when I turn it back together it'll be easier to see. We are going to notch the seam allowance all the way around. Notching is a little bit different than clipping. We're actually gonna be removing some of the fabric because there'll be excess. When we turn this seam allowance towards the inside, you'll end up with excess fabric, so we've gotta get rid of that. We're gonna do that by carefully making some little V chops out of the material. A really good rule is to not let the point... Don't cut like this, you might very easily slice all the way down through your stitch line. So just keep your tips just shy of that stitch line. I've notched all the way around, with the exception of the basting area, which I'm now gonna clip out. You can just clip about every second or third stitch. Okay, and that should make it loose enough to pull apart. And now we're gonna pull the whole thing through to the right side. When you pull through to the right side, you don't wanna put too much pressure on either one of these seams. So I go straight in and straight across with my hand, to grab directly opposing side to pull through to the right side. And then, before you press with an iron, it's a good idea to do what's called finger pressing. And that just prepares the layers, and that's this. You're sort of spreading the layers apart, and you're preparing it to get sewn. And then just slip your hand carefully out. Now I sort of like to go around the edges and smooth them first. The more that you can do with your hands to get it smooth and ready and prevent any unwanted creases that might be hard to remove, the better. Sort of roll that seam allowance between my fingers to get it ready to be ironed. Believe me, it's worth the time of really working this material and the seam edge in your hands first because it's no fun to try and undo what the iron has done. Over in this area you can see that perforation, if you look really carefully, that happened because of those basting stitches that we put in. So that's given you a guide now, to turn both layers of fabric, preparing it to be blind sewn together. I'm gonna go ahead and pin that in place as well. I'm gonna keep the little tops of my pins pointing out, so that they

won't get in the way as we come around to do the pressing step. We've got it really well prepared now. It's almost perfect without pressing. But just to get a nice crisp edge, let's gently go around the perimeter. Pressing not only creates a nice crease, smooths out your fabric, but also sets your stitches that you've made on the machine. We are going to begin our blind stitching. We've got this one open edge here that we need to shut by doing a little bit of hand sewing. I like to thread a double threaded needle, not because we necessarily need the strength of two threads. I just find it annoying to have to worry about whether or not my thread is gonna come undone out of the needle. So I'm gonna double thread and knot the ends. I don't do any fancy knots. I just knot it. Okay, so we're gonna wanna bury that knotted tail inside one of these creases. And to do that we're gonna kind of find... I'm gonna remove one of these pins for a minute, or maybe permanently. I'm gonna find the farthest edge of the opening, which is here. So I'm gonna sneak my needle into one layer and just nestle it between that folded edge and come out at the crease. So when I pull through, my knot is gonna get buried down between the layers and I'm ready to stitch. And you'll also notice that I pulled my first thread out right next to where the machine sewing stops. Line sewing, I think about it like crossing the street. You wanna go straight across and not at an angle. So I go straight across to the other side and I turn and take a stitch. And then instead of any needle that you see visible here is gonna translate to thread that you're gonna see visible in your stitches. So you don't wanna see any needle, you wanna sneak across the street and just nestle your needle right underneath that crease. And then we're gonna continue. You don't have to load a lot of stitches if you're not comfortable with the process yet. But once you do get comfortable with your stitch length and moving across smoothly to load a little bit of fabric on it's gonna save you a lot of time. So I've loaded about six stitches now. I'm gonna turn and gently pull. Look, no thread. Again, we're gonna take our needle straight across to the other side. Blind sewing is just maneuvering the needle from one side to the other. This process of poking the needle through one side at a time. You can sort of begin to get a feel for what it feels like when the needle goes through just one layer, cause you don't wanna poke out on the other side. But I find that if I just sort of sandwich these layers between my fingers, if I feel a prick on my finger, I'm gonna know that I've popped through. So that's kind of a good... It's like getting a little bit of discipline. You're getting punished. You get poked if you come out the other side. You either love hand sewing or you sort of avoid it. I kind of love it. Something really satisfying about hiding those stitches. I can even see some of those perforated dots from our machine basting step right on the edge, which is super cool cause I know I'm still inline. You can pull it tight to get the thread all the way through, but I continue to spread it back out flat again. Almost there. You can see little tiny glimpses of my needle in there. And you definitely want to choose a color of thread that is the color of either your front side or your back side of your doily, cause your eye will just believe that it's just part of the material and not a thread that you're seeing if you happen to have any showing. We're almost there, and I'll show you how I'm gonna knot and hide the tail. Okay, I see some of that pink stitching from the machine, so we've made it to the end. I like to go, because we have a little opening here, I like to go straight across one more time to meet the stitching from our machine. And normally I would've chosen a color of machine thread for that stitching that blends as well, but we wanted you to be able to see it as we go. So I just knot right on the outer edge, and since I've got a cream colored thread, I'm gonna knot over on the cream colored side. I do that by just taking a little back stitch, pulling almost all the way through, and then looping my needle back through that loop that I left, and then tugging tight using my fingers to pull the knot down to the edge. And then I just send the needle back through just that crease of the white, or about an inch. Tie it kind of tightly. Bury it in, and we're done. And your

threads are hidden inside. And we're all ready to get marking and hand stitching again.

Mark concentric circles

- To mark our concentric circles for the modern doily, we're gonna pull out our friend, paper guide measuring tool, and as you can see, it still has the first marks that we made from the center and then the outer line, and that marked the cut line. But now, what we're going to do is we're going to mark these other lines from the center out. The first one I started, I believe it was three inches away from the center, and then I marked every inch out for one, two, three, four, five, six, seven lines. So at every inch increment, I marked, so that I can create these concentric circles. And so, you can just get your measuring device, let me find a one. Turn it this way. Put the corner at your center point, and then we're gonna mark our first position at three inches away, and then continue marking every inch. If you wanna do more dense stitching than what I've done, mark every half inch or... Whoops, I just marked a half inch when I said that, but I'm gonna skip that, draw a line through it. And then the nine inch mark is the last one that I did because this is the mark that gave us our cut line for the piece. So now I've got it marked every inch, and I'm gonna poke holes using my T pin again. Right into these little dots. I wiggle it around just a little bit. All you need to do is leave room to set the point of your water-soluble marker in there. Try not to poke your finger. You could also lay this over a pillow and poke right through a pillow, would be possibly an easier route. Okay, so I've got my holes. And now it's time to mark, so what we're gonna have to start with is the center point again. I actually can still see a little bit of a prick mark from where we measured and cut this circle, but just to be extra sure, if you can't see that anymore, I find the center line by folding it in half one way, then folding it again in half the other way, and then this point in the center is your center. You can take a pin and just poke it through just one thread, open back up, and there's your center. This is your center hole, and you're gonna grab your T pin again. Poke it through the hole, and that's gonna be your stationary spot. So once you have your T pin held firmly in place, you can get your water-soluble pen tip inside the first hole to begin marking. Just like with the marking the outer edge, I don't like to go all the way around in one direction, I don't wanna feel like I'm dragging the fabric too much one way or another, so I kinda go about half way around. Stay down. And that's your first one. I love this. It feel super grade school crafty. This would actually be a really fun thing for kids to do, and not for lines that are eventually gonna go away, they could make some fun art with this. These pens are funny, some of them mark so lightly, this one wants to mark pretty dark, so I'm just going really lightly with it. But it'll all go away with a spritz of water. And this is what we are going to continue to do until you have reached your last mark and have drawn your last circle. And then we're gonna get on to the hand stitching.

Chapter 4 - Finish Doily

Add running stitch

- The stitch that we'll be performing to make these beautiful concentric circles is just a simple running stitch. The real trick with it that maybe you haven't seen before is just hiding your knots at the beginning and the end. But it's really fun. Can't wait to show you that. Now when I talk about color, I get super excited. And I love selecting colors for any project. With this, it's so straightforward with just this cream linen. You could do whatever you want, and the look will be really different depending on what you choose. For this, because mostly it's gonna be sitting underneath a vase of flowers, I chose a full spectrum of pearl cottons. And this is size eight, which is my favorite size to use for hand quilting as well as craft projects. And it's this two-ply thread that

you don't have to separate. So it makes a little bit quicker work of getting to just the stitching. We're gonna start this embroidery work in the center. And for the most part, any embroidery that you do or hand quilting that you do, you wanna start in the center of the work and work your way out. That's so that if there's any shifting of the material as you work, that it gets worked out towards the edges, rather than starting on the outer sides and moving in. And then you might end up with a little excess fabric that bunches up and is not pretty. So we're gonna start in the center. The color that I used in the center was this pretty ochre. And the rule of thumb, or the rule of forearm I should say, for embroidery, is to cut your threads about 18 inches, which for most of us is from our fingertips to our elbow. And I'm just gonna single thread my needle. 'Cause we only want one strand showing in our running stitch. This is an embroidery needle. Embroidery needles have a larger eye than just a regular hand sewing needle, which accommodates the thickness of this pearl cotton really beautifully. On the other end, we're gonna just tie a simple knot. Slide it down towards the tip as far as you can without it coming undone. The way that we're gonna start is right on the top. And rather than putting our needle all the way through, we're just going to pass the needle underneath the first layer. You can flip over to make sure you haven't gotten it from the back, and I haven't. So I'm just gonna put the needle in, and then come out about an inch or so away. And then pull the slack until the knot is just sitting on the top there. And then carefully set your fabric down. And you're gonna grab the very base of where the thread is coming out, and gently tug. And you pull your knot through. And it's hidden underneath now to begin. And now that the knot is hidden, we're ready to begin the running stitch. The running stitch is really just the most basic sewing stitch there is. But because this is an embroidery piece and we wanna see the beauty of the stitch, we'll take a little bit more care in how we make it. And by care, it's really about making your stitches a consistent length, beginning and ending them in an even distance from one another all the way around. As simple as in, and back out, and back in. This is really very similar to what you do when you're hand quilting. When you're hand quilting, you have a thicker layer of batting in between, so you have to be very conscious of putting your needle at a direct 90 degree angle straight down, which ensures that the stitches on the back are the same length as the stitches on the front so that they're not entering the thick layers at an angle. But when you have something thin like this, you don't have to be quite as picky about your angle going in. You could use an embroidery hoop if you want to. But I find it much more difficult to load several stitches at once using an embroidery hoop. Now I like the way the fabric feels in my hands. And I sort of almost create a tension with the fabric with my non-working hand, and laying it down either against my lap, or against a table like I am here. When you hand sew for a length of time, as you will be to finish this project, you can without proper adjustment of your body get a little bit of a crick in your neck. And I learned from a good friend of mine that it's actually much more comfortable to sew towards yourself than it is to sew away. It's a matter of how you hold your shoulder. When you're sewing towards yourself, you tend to be able to drop your shoulder. When you're sewing away from your body, you have your shoulder up like this. So I always tend to turn the fabric so that I'm headed back towards my body as I sew. With the actual mechanics of this stitch, the amount of needle that you see exposed is the length that your stitches are going to be. So if it doesn't look good, pull it out and start again. And don't worry about loading more than one stitch at a time. If you can only do one at a time to make stitches that you're happy with, that's totally fine. It is easier to go down and up than it is to go down, reach towards the back, pull through, and back up again. I do like to keep, this is called a continuous stitch. The other way is called stab stitching, which just sounds horrendous, so you wouldn't wanna do that. If the finger that you use to push the needle through from the eye end gets

a little sore, you can definitely put a thimble on that finger. I've yet to really find a thimble that I like a lot. So sometimes I just put a bandaid on my hand, because it's really comfortable and doesn't move around, or make my finger sweaty. We're coming pretty close to the end of this thread. And when we do, I'm gonna show you how to knot and hide your tail at the end. I think that is just about it for us here. Yup. So I'm gonna lay it down. What I'm gonna do now is I'm gonna tie a knot in this thread, and I'm gonna place the knot one stitch length away from the base where it's coming out. So I'm gonna loop around. And I'm gonna actually unthread it for just a second so that I can get my knot just exactly where I want to. And you do that by holding the needle at the position on the thread where you want the knot to be, and then tugging. And then pull your needle out. Rethread, which gets slightly more challenging towards the end, 'cause your ends have gotten kinda fuzzy. See what I mean. Well, I'm just gonna clip that guy. Show him who's boss. Okay. And just like we began, we are only going to pass the needle underneath this first layer. I can reach underneath and feel with my hand that I haven't gotten to the other side. And I've entered the needle about a stitch length away from where it's coming out. And I'm just gonna go ahead and pass it out of the surface a little ways away. And see that knot is sitting on the top? Now we're gonna give it a little tug. And here's another little hint about this tug to get the knot to come down. If you place your needle right in front of the knot like this, give it some resistance, you can hear it snap through. Then you can just sort of rub that hole out. And I always kind of draw up like this, so I don't have to get close to the fabric. And then replace it, and then the knot is buried. And the tail is buried between the layers. We're going to pull another length of thread. Threaded the needle, we're gonna give it a knot at the end. And we are going to begin the stitch line again from the back, because we finished on the front. Which means that otherwise we would have a missing stitch if we started from the front again. So I'm gonna flip over. And I'm gonna enter the needle about an inch away. Again, just nestling between the layers. Come on, layers. And not poking through. And I'm gonna surface, again, a stitch length away from the last stitch. Pull through, you gotta set it down, and then grab at the base. And the reason I'm telling you to grab at the base is if because you're this far away from it, then you're gonna have a tendency to pull through both holes because you have that much distance. So if you're pulling from here, you're only gonna have a little spot to yank from. And one little tip again, put your needle there to provide some resistance, pop the knot through. You can rub out those holes with your finger. And now I begin. And there's no lines on this side, but we're gonna be gutsy. And we're gonna say it continues here. But we can double-check. And look, I'm on the line almost, on the front. And that's how we begin again. And we're gonna continue to the end. And once we're at the end, we're gonna go through that same knotting, hiding the knot process again. But we will have to do that on the back side to replace the stitch that we didn't make when we began this circle. As we approach your beginning point, you wanna start eyeballing about how many stitches you think you can fit. And just kind of accommodate that distance by making maybe one or two that are a little shorter or longer. And I can do that. It looks like I can fit this one, and then one more in between really evenly. And I can see that in my needle. That needle stands for what the stitch is gonna look like. And again, I have to finish on the back. So we're just gonna pull through here. But you can see that we have space for one more stitch here. So to finish, again, we're gonna tie a knot, and position the knot a stitch length away from where the thread is coming out. Enter just between the two layers. Resurface an inch or so away. The knot sitting on the surface. I gotta use my needle for a little resistance here. (knot taps) Pop it through. It's a fun sound. Okay. Draw string up so we don't have to trim too closely, and snip your thread. We've completed our first full row of running stitching. And then you are going to just continue that all the way around like I

have here. And actually, you have this lovely new color to look forward to every time you get to the next row. And again, I ordered mine in color order. One thing that you'll need to do when you're done stitching and no longer need those water-soluble blue lines, you can just use a water bottle and spray a fine mist, and they'll dissolve. Some of them can get a little pesky, and you might wanna spray them a little more heavily to get them to go away. And then give it a nice pressing and you have a beautiful cloth. Now that you know how to do this running stitch, as basic as it is, it's still a beautiful decorative stitch, especially when you've concentrated several together. And like I said at the beginning of this project, it's very similar to just the hand quilting stitch. And in fact, this is one of my favorite projects where it's just the running stitch. And I have created them by just following the designs of the fabric print. I also drew some lines on here with a water-soluble pen for some straight stitches to go in the background, sort of activate the surface. So this one little stitch can take you so many beautiful places.