

Continuous or Multi-Hoop Embroidery

Sometimes I have a project that is just too big for one hoop. What do you do if you need to run the edge of a Christmas tree skirt, embroidery down the length of a table runner, or make a banner? You divide up the design and run in it in multiple hoopings!

Great! Now... how do we do that?

Start with the Design

It is far easier to know in advance that you need to divide your embroidery, and if you can choose how and when, it gets even easier. I prefer designs that are curvilinear and can overlap slightly to mask any imperfections of lining things up. It isn't strictly necessary, but I'm not perfect. If there is anything I can do to hide my imperfections in my embroidery, I'm going to do it.

I also try to create design sections that are an inch or two smaller than my hoop. This gives me a little more wiggle room when I'm working on lining up my next embroidery segment.

I usually create registration marks in my design that can either be removed or covered by later embroidery elements. It is easiest for me to create them at an easily measured distance apart. In the lemons design, I made sure the registration marks fell at the half inch.

Use laser registration and design origin!

With laser registration, your job of lining up the multiple embroidery sections can be made much easier. The big trick is to move the design OFF origin. I know. I know! I can hear the person who taught me digitizing crying, "Always center your design before sewing it!" Usually, I would agree. Having a design that is center on origin (0,0) helps placement for normal embroidery make sense. Pressing the laser button on the machine before embroidering the design will show the design origin. It does not necessarily indicate design center.

For multiple placement embroidery, you want to know exactly where that laser will be in the design. The laser on the machine points to the design origin. I move my design so that the later hoopings of the design have the origin right where my registration marks are. This allows me to tilt my design at the machine using laser registration, and then move the laser over to my designated mark and just start sewing.

The sample fall runner that I created needed three hoopings. I digitized it all as one file at actual size first. Sometimes this is possible, but if not, you can separate the artwork into sections first.



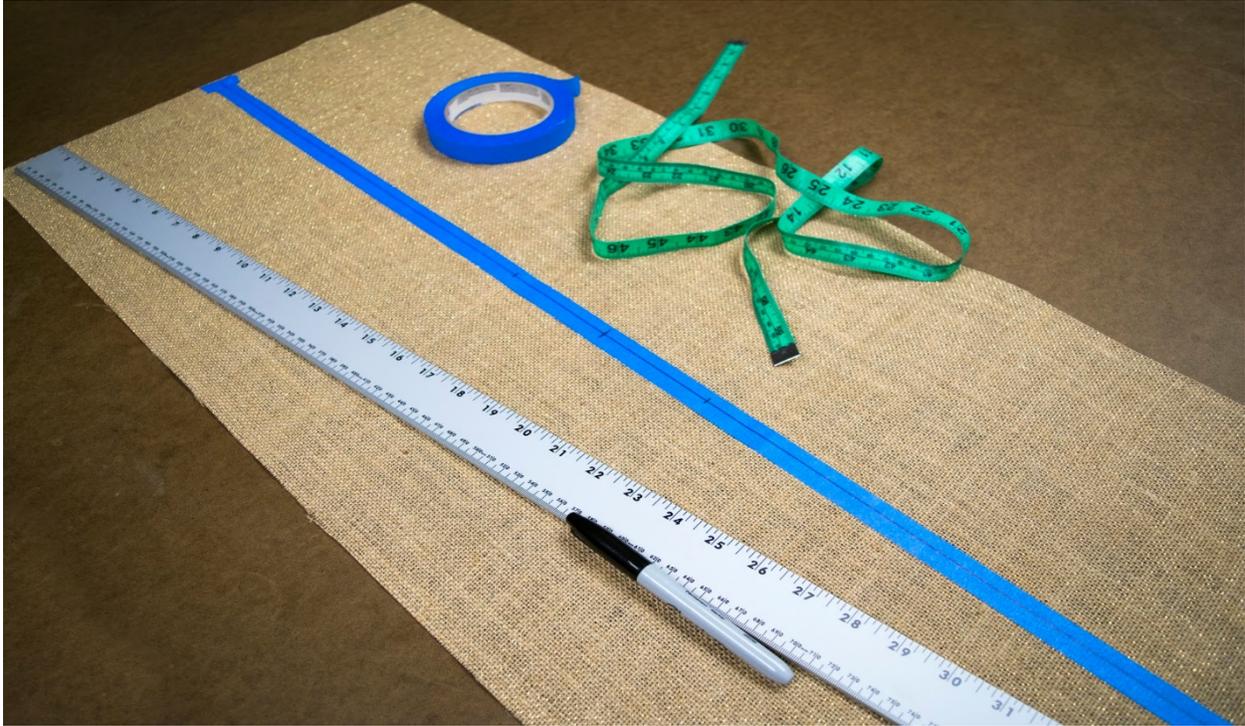
I then divided the overall design into three smaller designs. I decided to complete the two sides first and then use the middle section to cover up any areas that did not line up perfectly. When deciding this, I used vector lines to determine what would fit in the hoop. In addition, I used vector lines to indicate the distance between hoopings and my future registration marks. On the sections of the design to sew first, I digitized a registration mark into the file. This way, when my tape or chalk marks were removed, I still had markings to align to. Figuring out where to place the registration marks is completely up to you, but I like something that is easy to measure and can either be covered up or torn out after I'm done sewing.

Finally, I shifted my designs so that my design positioned with digitized registration marks were aligned on the origin.

Preparing the Product

I start by stabilizing the material as much as I can. A little push and pull over a four-inch design can be annoying, but it can also be dealt with. Push and pull over multiple designs spanning several feet needs to be minimized as much as possible. Using adhesive to attach the backing to the material can help. With the burlap that I used, I added a cutaway stabilizer.

Using tailor's chalk, disappearing ink, or masking tape and a marker, mark down the center of the piece. I also make marks at the center and each registration point.



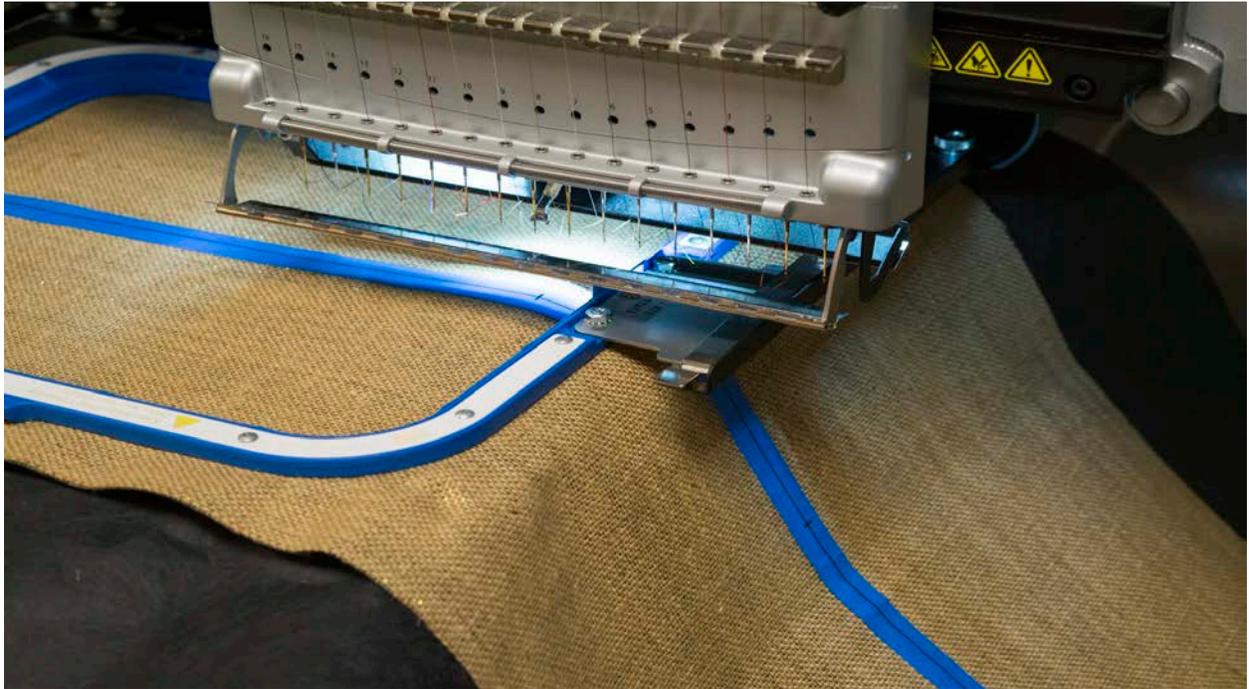
Hooping

Now it is time to hoop up and sew the first design. I chose to sew the left side first, so I hooped the left side of my fabric with the registration mark on the right side of the hoop.



Laser Align It!

Using laser alignment, I aligned to the drawn center line and then moved the laser to the registration mark. Don't be discouraged if you notice that you are out of hoop limits and have to rehoop. I had to a couple times before I got used to the offset in this project.



Once aligned, you can remove the tape from within the hoop, but leave the rest of the tape. If you're using chalk or ink, you can just sew through the mark.



Trace & Sew

Trace the design and make sure you're ready to sew. Sew your first segment!

Continue Hooping & Sewing

Using the same methods as before, continue hooping the next sections and sewing them.



And finally, hoop your last section. For this one, I aligned to the previously sewn registration marks with my origin in the center.



Finish Up

I used the pumpkin in my example to cover any areas that didn't want to line up due to push and pull, but with practice, you can achieve tighter and tighter registrations.

