**Accent Stitch**  An independent, free-standing stitch that highlights or adds detail to a smocking design.

**Accent Color**  A thread color that is highly contrasted to the color of the fabric and/or other thread colors used in the design.

**All-In-One Flowerette**  Method to incorporate a complete single flowerette as part of the beginning and/or ending cable stitch of a wave, chevron, or trellis stitch.

**Alternating Cable Pattern**  A series of three cable stitches alternating above and below a base row of cable stitches.

**American Smocking**  Also known as French Smocking. See French Smocking

**Appliqué Smocking**  Method to attach ribbon, lace, etc., to pleated fabric using smocking stitches; i.e. cretan stitch

**Attached Lazy Daisy Stitch**  See Chain Stitch.

**Baby Diamond Pattern**  Two or more rows of baby wave stitches worked in mirror image and touching each other so as to form a diamond pattern.

**Baby Wave Stitch**  See Chevron Stitch.

**Backsmocking**  One or more rows of smocking on the wrong side of fabric in the same color as the fabric. May be used to (1) invisibly maintain or stabilize pleats in areas where there are no surface stitches or (2) to create texture or a shadow pattern.

**Barbed Trellis Stitch**  A variation of the trellis stitch; adding level stitches as the steps are made going up or down the wave.

**Bars**  Three or more satin stitches wrapped around one or two pleats to form narrow columns of color.

**Base Row(s)**  The first row(s) smocked within a design to establish the basis for the overall pattern.

**Basket Pattern**  Multiple rows of cable stitches worked adjacent, each row worked in mirror image of the previous one so that alternate cables touch.

**Binding Row**  See Holding Row.

**Braid Pattern**  See Wheat Pattern.

**Bridge Stitch**  See Closure Stitch.

**Broken Wave Stitch**  See Barbed Trellis Stitch.

**Bulgarian Smocking**  Fabric is pleated using threads the same color as the fabric. After the design is stitched the gathering threads are not removed. The piece has no elasticity. Most frequently found on panel inserts of Slovic-type folk wear. A version of this technique has been called backsmockingless stitching

**Bullion Stitch**  A stitch created by the wrapping of thread around the needle, enough times to cover the length of space desired, then passing the needle through the fabric to anchor the thread. This stitch has a coil-like effect.

**Cable**  A row of smocking formed by alternately placing the thread above the needle (up) and below the needle (down) for each successive stitch. A row of cables should have little or no fabric showing between stitches.

**Cable and Loop Stitches**  Made with a cable stitch, followed by a loop wrapped around a pin at the desired distance from the cable, and followed by another cable stitch. This can be done as individual accents or across an entire row.

**Cable Diamond Pattern**  Two or more rows of cable stitches and wave-shape stitches that are worked in mirror image so that opposite rows touch at the cable, forming a diamond shape.

**Cable Stitch**  A stitch over two pleats formed with the needle held horizontally and the thread either above or below the needle.

**Cable-wave Pattern**  A wave-shape stitch that has more than one cable stitch at the top and/or bottom of each wave.

**Calico Smocking**  Techniques which can be used to fill an area of space within a stacked cable design. The smocking patterns created through these techniques will have the look of small print, plaid, and textured fabrics.

**Canadian Smocking**  Stitches applied to fabrics patterned with evenly spaced dots, checks, stripes or squares. The placement of the smocking stitches creates the design. Thread color changes are secondary to the pattern created by the formation of the resulting pleats. This type of work is actually a form of fabric manipulation. Counterchange and lattice smocking are examples of this type of smocking. Also known as North American Smocking.

**Cardigan Stitch**  See Extended Cable Stitch.

**Cell**  The pulled-open valley between pleats of a honeycomb pattern.

**Chain Pattern**  See Double Cable Pattern.

**Chain Stitch**  This stitch is adapted to smocking where one or two pleats are picked up for each stitch. The needle...
points forward in the direction to be stitched. It resembles a continuous attached lazy daisy stitch.

Chevron Stitch One step wave, whose height may travel from ¼ step to 2 spaces.

Closed Herringbone Stitch See Double Herringbone Stitch.

Closure Stitch The top or bottom cable of a wave-shape stitch. The purpose is to reverse direction of the thread.

Colonial Knot An alternative to a French knot using a figure-eight wrap to make a somewhat larger knot.

Control Row See Holding Row.

Counterchange Smocking A technique of manipulating striped, dotted or checked fabric to form a pleated or smocked pattern.

Cretan Stitch Similar to herringbone except only one new pleat is picked up for each stitch. The needle is held parallel to the gathering threads.

Criscross Pattern See Crossover Waves.

Crossover Waves Two or more rows of the same or similar wave-shaped stitches which cross over each other, usually in different colors.

Curved Smocking A type of geometric smocking that uses an odd number of level stem and outline stitches that appear to curve by virtue of their placement. Sets of curved stitches proceed and followed by trellis stitches. This allows the line to undulate across pleats.

Curved Stitches A row of stitches or stitch pattern where each stitch is made on succeeding pleats slightly higher or lower than the preceding stitch. Used in free-form smocking and template smocking and also to form curved lines and shapes.

Daisy Stitch See Lazy Daisy Stitch.

Decorative Stitch See Accent Stitch.

Design Repeat The number of pleats in a design to complete one full motif, usually counted from the center of the first cable stitch of the repeat to the center of the last cable stitch.

Detached Chain Stitch See Lazy Daisy Stitch.

Diamond Pattern Two or more rows of wave-shape or trellis stitches with the same number of steps that are worked in mirror image so that opposite rows touch at the cable.

Dot See Seed.

Dot-to-Dot Smocking Smocking done on flat fabric. Fabric is dotted, checked or with a pattern smocking dot transfer applied. The size of the pleats formed is controlled by the fabric/pleat ratio. Dots can be placed on at equidistant spacing, thus changing the size and depth of the resulting pleats.

Double Cable Pattern Two rows of cable, the second worked opposite and adjacent to the first so that alternate stitches touch.

Double Flowerette See Flowerette.

Double Herringbone Stitch A variation of the herringbone stitch with an extra stitch taken at the top and bottom. It has the appearance of a herringbone stitch enclosed by two rows of backstitches.

Double Outline Pattern See Wheat Pattern.

Down Cable A cable stitch where the thread is below the needle when piercing the fabric.

Echo Row A row of smocking which duplicates the preceding row.

English Smocking A design that is worked on pre-pleated fabric using smocking and embellishment stitches. The finished piece has some elasticity. Gathering threads are removed after stitching.

English Smocking Dots Uniform dots in transfer form usually ironed on the back of a piece of fabric. A separate thread is used for each row and each dot is picked up with a running stitch. When all the dots have been picked up, the fabric is gathered into pleats.

Extended Cable Stitch Following a down cable, two or more evenly spaced whipped stitches are taken over the final pleat of the down cable, moving up. A closure stitch connects the next pleat and whipped stitches (on that same pleat) are taken down to the original cable line. This may also be worked down from an up cable. This stitch is also called the “Cardigan Stitch” as the pattern that forms with multiple repeats resembles the stockinette stitch in knitting.

Extended Trellis Stitch See Barbed Trellis Stitch.

Fabric Manipulation See American Smocking, Canadian Smocking, Counterchange, Lattice Smocking and North American Smocking.

Feather Stitch An open looped embroidery stitch worked through two pleats where needle points forward parallel to the pleating threads in the direction to be stitched.

Single Feather: Each stitch alternates direction.

Double Feather: Two stitches are made before altering direction.

Triple Feather: Three stitches are made before altering direction.

Slanted Feather: Each stitch is worked through two pleats where the needle points forward at a 45-degree angle to the pleating threads in the direction to be stitched. When traveling down, the needle slants down. When traveling up, the needle slants up. Three stitches are made before altering the direction of travel.
**Feather Wave** Feather stitch is used to travel up and down in a wave formation. There may be 3, 4, or 5 stitches between two pleating threads.

**Fill-in Stitch** See **Accent Stitch**.

**Filling Stitch** See **Independent Stitch**.

**Flat Project** A smocking project which lays in a flat plane during stitching. Flat projects can be flared or rectangular in shape. Smocking must be centered.

**Flower Smocking** A form of fabric manipulation worked on the right side of the fabric. After a grid of squares is marked, the four points of each square are pulled up tightly and fastened, creating deeply-textured flower shapes.

**Flowerette** Three cable stitches worked over four pleats with a fourth cable below the middle stitch forms a single flowerette. A double flowerette is formed by working three cable stitches over four pleats with an additional three cable stitches worked in mirror image and below the preceding three cables.

**Flowerette Point** A single or double flowerette incorporated into the closure stitch at a point of a wave-shape stitch.

**Free-form Smocking** The placement of stitches with little or no regard to the gathering thread guidelines to form a smocked picture or design.

**French Knot** A stitch formed by wrapping the thread around the needle once. Larger knots are formed by using more strands of thread.

**French Smocking** A type of dot-to-dot smocking. The design develops as the stitches are executed. There are no gathering threads. In early needlework literature it has been called American Smocking. Not used as such today.

**Gathering Threads** The threads used to gather fabric by hand for smocking, which then serve as an aid in lining up the elements in a smocking design.

**Graph** A drawing that indicates the placement of stitches for a design.

**Grub Knot** See **Bullion Stitch**.

**Guidelines** See **Gathering Threads**.

**Hearts** Two small waves matched to an adjacent larger trellis to create the heart shape.

**Herringbone Stitch** A back stitch that creates a crossover pattern. One new pleat and one old pleat is used for each stitch.

**Holding Row** The row of pleating threads above and below the actual smocking thread rows used to control the pleats for improved stitches on the first and last smocking row and to aid in construction.

Also see **Binding Row**.

**Honeycomb Pattern** A pleat formation of open cells created by multiple rows of honeycomb, surface honeycomb, herringbone and Van Dyke stitches.

**Honeycomb Stitch** A stitch connecting two pleats at a time and worked alternately between two rows. The thread connecting the upper and lower stitches is carried on the back of the pleats.

**Independent Stitch** A single stitch not connected to others on the design surface. Unlike accent stitches, this does not necessarily highlight or accent the design.

**Intervals** The needle entry point(s) within the space between gathering threads. Stitches may be taken at 1/2, 1/3, 1/4, 1/5, etc. intervals between gathering threads.

**Italian Smocking** (Also known as Italian shirring) Stitches worked from the back of the fabric on a grid to form symmetrical patterns of pleats. A non-elastic form of smocking. Two types include: Contoured-pleats that turn and angle; Shirred-straight stitches form a puffy raised design.

**Laced Stitches** A length of thread looped over and under a line of smocking stitches to enrich the pattern. This length of thread does not enter the fabric. Also called **Whipping Stitches** and/or **Wrapping Stitches**.

**Ladder Stitch** A vertical stitch using four pleats. It gives the effect of steps on a ladder.

**Lattice Smocking** A fabric manipulation technique in which small, regularly spaced diagonal tucks are made on the wrong side of the fabric. These produce lattice-like configurations on the right side of the fabric.

**Latticework Pattern** Multiple rows of trellis stitches laid adjacent and opposite each other to form an interlocking pattern.

**Lazy Daisy Stitch** A detached loop or a single unit of a chain stitch used as an accent.

**Level** A horizontal plane or line.

**Level Stitch** An up or down cable stitch parallel with the gathering threads at the top or bottom of a wave-shape stitch or between traveling stitches in a barbed trellis stitch.

**Link** Two rows of cable wave pattern that are adjacent and in mirror image to each other, having an uneven number of cables at the top and bottom of the wave.

**Lozenge Smocking** A form of fabric manipulation based on Honeycomb stitch, worked on the wrong side of the fabric. After stitching, the fabric is firmly pulled open and a texture forms on the right side which resembles interlocking capital “I”s. The lozenge name refers to the diamond or “lozenge” shaped cells which appear on the wrong side of the work.

**Mirror or Mirroring** A row of smocking which is the reverse or opposite of the preceding row.
Mock Chain Stitch  See Wheat Stitch, N° 1.

Motif  A major design area.

North American Smocking  See Canadian Smocking

Open Herringbone Stitch  See Herringbone Stitch.

Opposite Combination  See Mirror.

Outline Stitch  A row of smocking that forms a downward slant of the stitch to the left. The thread is usually held above the needle on each stitch.

Parallel Combination  See Echo Row.

Parallel Pleating  The same two pleats are fastened together by a down cable in one row and an up cable in the following row. The pleats remain parallel to one another.

Patchwork Pleating:  A method for joining and pleating different fabrics together to create the effect of patchwork. Fabric "patches" can then be smocked.

Pattern  1. A design element made up of stitch or row combinations. 2. Instructions for sewing a certain design, cutting directions, pleating instructions, and pieces to cut out necessary to complete the design.

Pattern Smocking Dots  A transfer usually found with a pattern for the technique that is commonly called dot-to-dot smocking. The stitches are limited to the ironed on design.

Peak  Top surface of the pleat.

Picture Smocking  The use of any stitches (stacked cable stitches used most often) to form a recognizable image. Houses, figures, trees, animals and simple objects are some of the items frequently depicted.

Plaid Smocking  Crisscrossing multiple rows of trellis stitch each of which is a different color to create a diagonal plaid effect.

Plaits  An older, English term for Pleats.

Plate  A smocking design with diagrammed and/or written instructions on how to stitch the design.

Pleats  The vertical ridges of fabric formed by the gathering rows. Each pleat has a peak and a valley on each side.

Pleating Machine  A hand-cranked device containing sixteen or more needles used to prepare fabric for English smocking. There are different spacings of the needles for the 16 row, 24 row, and 32 row pleaters. The difference in needle spacing may affect smocking plates as well as the size of finished smocked pieces.

Pleating Threads  The threads inserted for smocking by a pleating machine that help draw the fabric into pleats, which then serve as an aid in lining up the elements in a smocking design.

Ply  Individual threads that make up a strand.

Point  See Closure Stitch.

Pyramid  The stacking of stitches to form a triangular shape.

Quarter Diamond Pattern  Two or more rows of quarter wave stitches worked in mirror image so that opposite rows touch at the cable forming a diamond pattern.

Quarter Wave Stitch  A trellis stitch worked in two steps that is one half-space high from top closure stitch to bottom closure stitch.

Raised Chain Stitch  A variation of the chain stitch, worked right to left. It appears as an open loop with a level stitch in center. (Also known are the "Y" stitch or "Fly" stitch.)

Reeds  An older, English term for Pleats.

Reverse Outline Stitch  See Stem Stitch.

Reverse Smocking  Any series of stitches worked on the reverse of the fabric as in backsmocking to create surface texture on the front of the fabric.

Reverse Stem Stitch  See Outline Stitch.

Ribbonweaver  A flexible bodkin used to weave ribbon through smocking stitches. It can also be used for duplicate stitch knits. Ribbonweaving: A technique for adding texture and dimension to smocking by incorporating ribbons into geometric designs. Various widths of ribbon are woven through horizontal and diagonal wave stitches as well as through vertical bullions.

Rolled Rose  See Bullion Rose.

Rope Stitch  An older English term for Stem or Outline Stitch.

Round Project  A smocking project in which rows of smocking are joined together to make a continuous circle. Stitch centering is NOT required because there is no beginning or end to the row. (Synonymous with "tube style" smocking.)


Running Stitch  Small, forward-moving stitches taken by evenly weaving the needle in and out of the fabric. Also a basic sewing stitch.

Satin Stitches  Side by side straight stitches solidly covering a given motif.

Seeds  An accent stitch formed by two satin stitches wrapped over one or two pleats to form a dot of color.

Shadow Smocking  Textured surface design created by stitching a pattern on the reverse of the fabric using a sharply contrasting color thread which shadows through to the front.

Shoulder  The side of the pleat between valley and peak.

Single Flowerette  See Flowerette.
Smocking Decorative stitching across the tops of pleats. This stitching is used to decorate the surface, to add texture and dimension, and/or as a means to control fullness of the fabric.


Smocking In The Round Sometimes called tubular smocking where pleated fabric is held so that the final stitch of a particular row joins into the first stitch of that same row creating a seamless appearing seam. This technique is often used for smocked ornaments.

Spools Three or more satin stitches wrapped around three or more pleats to form a column of color.

Spread Pleating Two or more consecutive rows of cable stitches stitched in the same sequence. The pleats between the two rows form a "V" or spread apart.

Spruce Stitch See Extended Cable.

Stacked Cable See Stacked Stitches.

Stacked Stitches Alternating mirror image rows of cable stitches next to each other, forming a solid block or a band of color.

Stem Stitch A row of smocking that forms a downward slant of the stitch to the right. Usually the thread is held below the needle.

Steps See Interval.

Straight Stitches Stitches smocked on one level to form a straight line.

Strand A length of thread used for stitching.

Stranding See Stripping.

Stripping Separating the plies of floss to prepare for smocking.

Surface Honeycomb Stitch A wave-shape stitch worked between two levels with the thread carried on the surface of the same pleat.

Template Smocking A design that is stitched by filling in an outlined area drawn onto pleats using a pre-cut shape or template. Any smocking stitch can be used.

Three Cable Crown An accent made of 3 cable stitches in which the two outer stitches often match up with level stitches or backstitches of some previously stitched motif.

Travel The motion of thread moving from one level to another in forming a wave-shape stitch.

Travel Stitches The diagonal stitches between the level or closure stitches in a wave-shape stitch.

Trellis Stitch A stitch that travels between two or more levels to form a zigzag line. It consists of a beginning and ending closure stitch, usually a cable stitch, connected by a series of interval stitches, or steps.

Two-step trellis Two stitches are made between the beginning and ending closure stitches, with the first usually taken at the half-way point and the second at the closure point.

Three-step trellis Three stitches are made between the beginning and ending closure stitches, with the first usually taken a third of the way, the second at the two-thirds point and the third at the closure point.

Four-step trellis Four stitches are taken between the beginning and ending closure stitches, with the first usually taken at a quarter of the way, the second at half, the third at three-quarter and the last at the closure.

Tubes An older, English term for Pleats.

Turkey Work A cable stitch in which alternating cables are left in a loop, thereby forming a pile.

Turret Pattern A stitch pattern that consists of a row of surface honeycomb between two parallel and adjacent rows of cable stitches.

Turret Stitch An older name for surface honeycomb stitch.

Twisted Cretan Stitch A variation of the Cretan Stitch. A twist is added by passing the needle under and around the thread being crossed.

Up Cable A cable stitch where the thread is above the needle when piercing the fabric.

Valley The space between the peaks of two pleats.

Van Dyke Stitch A wave-shape stitch worked between two or more levels picking up two pleats that are stitched into twice before carrying the thread vertically between the level stitches. It is worked with the needle pointing forward in the direction yet to be stitched. It is worked in the opposite direction of most stitches (i.e., stem, outline, cable, trellis, etc.), usually right to left.

Van Dyke Wave Van Dyke stitch is used to travel up and down in half-space increments, creating a wave form. These waves may travel over 1, 2, 3, or more spaces.

Vertical Smocking A stitch design worked over a set number of pleats for the entire vertical depth of the gathering rows.

Wave Stitch A stitch that travels directly between two or more levels to form a zigzag line. It consists of a top and bottom closure stitch.

Wave-shaped Stitches Any stitch smocked between two levels to form a zigzag line. Includes wave/trellis, chevron/wave, Van Dyke, surface honeycomb, honeycomb and herringbone.

Weaving 1. See Basket Pattern. 2. See Laced Stitches.
**Wheat Pattern**  1. Outline and stem stitches worked adjacent to each other. 2. As in Nº 1, with baby diamond pattern evenly spaced along the width of the row.

**Wheat Stitch**  See **Wheat Pattern**, Nº 1.

Whipping Stitches  See Laced Stitches.