

# Step By Step Feathers

## Getting Started

You may be used to other terms to describe feathers and feather parts, but in order to standardize my instructions, I'm going to use some specific terms.

Freehand feathers designs have a **BOTTOM** and a **TOP** and are always stitched from the **BOTTOM** towards the **TOP**. At the machine, this direction might be left or right or forwards or backwards.

Freehand Over the Top Feathers are stitched in pairs consisting of an **OUT** feather and a **RETURN** feather.

## Basic Stitching Sequence

### PREPARING

1. Start with a line. Stitch it from the **top** to the **bottom**.

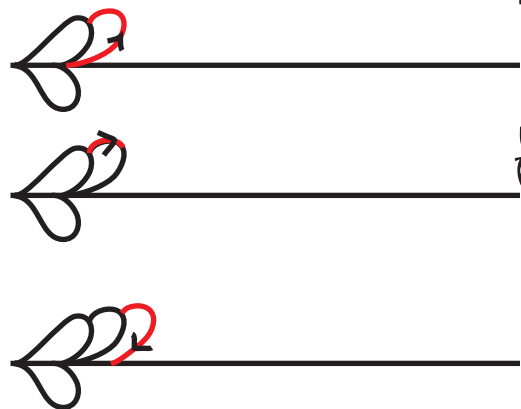


2. Add a teardrop on both sides of the line.



### STITCHING AN OT FEATHER PAIR

1. On one side of the line, stitch the **out** feather. This feather curves back towards the previous feather and touches it.
2. Retrace the **top** of the out feather. If you think of the curved part of the feather as a clock, you are retracing from approximately 10:00 to 1:30.
3. Stitch the **return** feather. The return feather will echo the out feather you stitched in the first step.

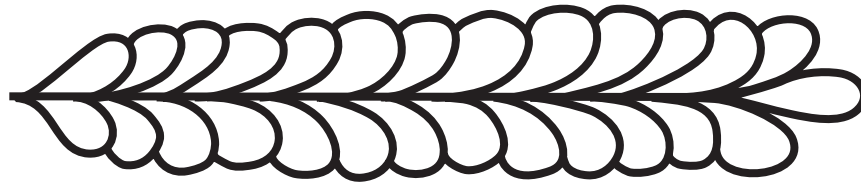


## KEEP GOING

1. On the other side of the line repeat the 3 steps to stitch an OT Feather pair.



2. Continue alternating back and forth along the line until you reach the top of your straight line. Add the top teardrop feather in LAST.



## Side to Side or One Side at a Time

I find that the rhythm and shape of my feathers look and feel the best when I alternate stitching from side to side along the spine. I also like the fact that when I get to the top, I am done.

If this is not comfortable for you, then do not alternate. Try one of these options instead:

1. Feather one side, retrace the spine to the bottom and feather the other side
2. Feather one side, stop at the top and cut your thread. Restart at the bottom, stitching feathers on the other side.

*Remember that you cannot feather up one side and down the other, you must always feather from the bottom to the top. More about this rule later.*

## Phrases to help you Focus

Sometimes it helps to repeat a mantra as you draw the steps of the OT Feather, here are some that you could try:

Out -- Top -- Return

Easy -- As -- Pie

One -- Two -- Three

# Drawing Assignment 1

Now that you have seen the basic stitch sequence, you are going to spend some time tracing and drawing a straight line feathered design. Before you start, make sure that you can work for at least 15 minutes without interruption.

## SUPPLIES

Pad of blank drawing paper (I like newsprint scribble pads)  
 Drawing pens and or pencils as desired -- something that flows smoothly. A Pen is best!  
 A printout of the tracing page (final page of this PDF)  
 Optional -- a blank transparency, a dry erase marker and something to erase with

## TASK 1

If you have a blank transparency, lay it over top of the tracing page, and trace the feathers on this page using your dry erase marker.

If you do not have a blank transparency, you can trace directly on the tracing page, but you might want several copies as you build up layers of tracings.

Remember to trace the spine from the **TOP** to the **BOTTOM**, but feather from the **BOTTOM** to the **TOP**.

Trace all 4 plumes on this page several times.

## TASK 2

After you feel comfortable with the rhythm, try drawing your own feathers on a sheet of paper in your drawing pad, in the same direction you were tracing. Concentrate on the sequence and the rhythm. Do NOT worry about what the feathers themselves look like.

## TASK 3

Turn the tracing page 90 degrees to the right and repeat tasks 1 and 2.

## TASK 4

Repeat tasks 1-3, until you have traced and drawn the straight line feathered designs in all different directions.

## Drawing Tips

1. Hold your drawing tool in your fingers the way you normally hold a pen or pencil. Hold your wrist in the air, off the paper. This engages the entire arm in the process.
2. You are training your muscles to remember these motions, and even if you quilt better than you draw, the training your muscles get now will help you at the machine.
3. Don't forget to breathe.
4. Every few minutes of drawing, set your drawing tool down and shake out your hand.
5. In this exercise, focus on the rhythm, not the shape.

