

# “Canadian Smocking” Learn-A-Stitch

For November 2, 2020, compiled by Leola Becker



## 1. Three Definitions

“Canadian Smocking” is not embroidery, but a form of fabric manipulations using stitches and knots to form a textured pattern. Different websites define it as follows:

- A. “North American or **Canadian** (or **Lattice**) **smocking** is a way of creating texture by marking, pinching and stitching over grids or dots to form a pattern.”

[Canadian Smocking - Vivebooks](#)

- B. “ Canadian smocking is a hand stitching technique that creates a unique and beautiful folded design on the front of the fabric. Here’s an example of a plain piece of fabric that has been smocked:

You can use your smocked fabric to turn ordinary objects into things of beauty!



<https://duluthfolkschool.com/events/canadian-smocking/>

- C. “Canadian Smocking or North American Smocking

Canadian smocking is also called as North American Smocking. In this type textural effect is created on the front side of the fabric. No pleating is required for Canadian smocking. A grid is drawn or designed on the back of the fabric. Later it is used to create the three dimensional effect on the front side of the fabric. This type of smocking is not usually pressed or ironed. The texture would be flattened or destroying if the smocked fabric is pressed.”

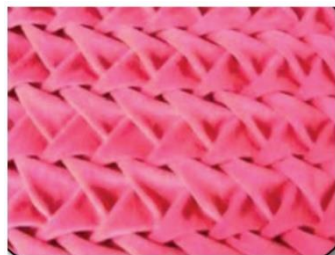


Figure 9.26 Direct Smocking



Figure 9.27 Direct Smocking

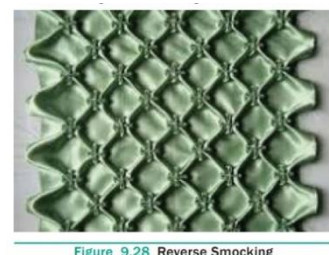


Figure 9.28 Reverse Smocking

[http://www.brainkart.com/article/Smocking-and-Types-of-Smocking\\_37506/](http://www.brainkart.com/article/Smocking-and-Types-of-Smocking_37506/)

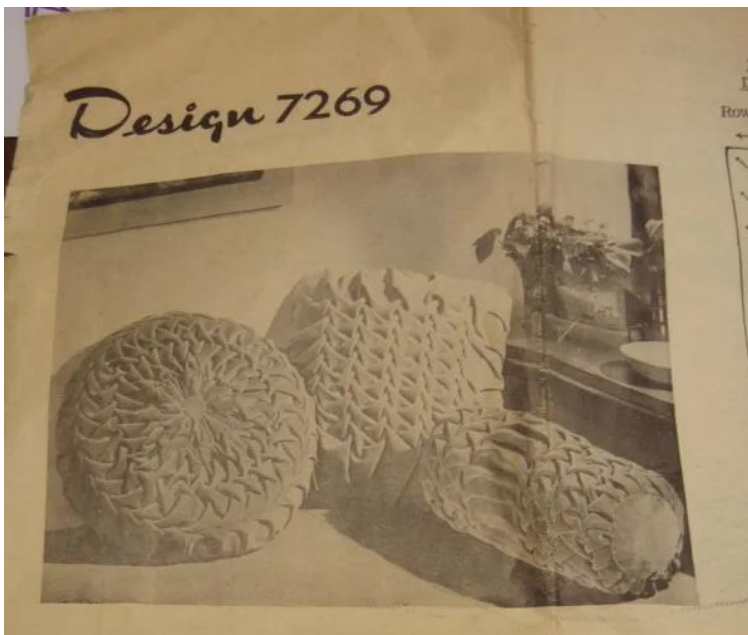
## 2. History of American or Canadian Smocking from <https://mrxstitch.com/smocking/>

“American or Canadian smocking is a different technique altogether. This type of smocking is all worked from the back, with the gathering and decorative pattern-making all rolled up into one. The earliest example of this technique that I have ever seen is on an 18th century French dress, now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art.



© Met Museum. Smocked 18th century dress

Sewing manuals of the 19th and 20th century don't seem to include reverse / American smocking, so it may be that it was fairly unknown to the amateur sewer, and only occasionally used by the professional. It became very fashionable in the 1930s and 40s and had a renaissance in the 70s. The most popular use of this technique was on cushions square, bolster and round cushions in synthetic velvet from the 60s and 70s, although this pattern is little earlier. There's no shortage of brilliant patterns for products using American smocking, some of which I have gathered on my Smocking Pinterest board, along with other historic and contemporary forms of smocking.”



Smocked cushion pattern

### 3. Uses in home and clothing

A Google search for “Canadian smocking images” displays the following images from multiple sites:

#### A. Pillows, framed art, bedspreads, curtains



#### B. Garment bodices, backs, sleeves, high fashion, costumes, masks, purses and hats







#### 4. Clear video explaining all the basics

30 minute video explaining basics : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GmQzHOE1ycA>

American / Canadian Smocking MASTER CLASS / Cloud Factory

Very slow, repetitive explanation to watch if you are having problems

Explaining how to read the patterns

Understand the patterns that you find online

## 5. Basic steps for making a sample

You may want to make one sample or try several. Its fun!

### A. Get a piece of fabric for your sample.

--Some sources recommend using "flowy fabric" and staying away from natural fibers.

I used a scrap of broadcloth from my mother's stash.

--It should be at least two times the size that you want for the finished product.

For a sample I would use about a 10 to 12 inch square. I started with about a 25 inch square which I tore into four smaller pieces after I had marked the grid (the next step).

### B. Tape the fabric to a flat surface like a table, counter, or floor. (I used the kitchen counter.)

### C. Draw on a grid with right angle squares between 2 to 3 cm, or use a quilting ruler to make a 1 inch grid.

--Some patterns want the grid on the back side of the fabric.

Other patterns want the grid on the front side of the fabric so your placement will depend on the pattern that you selected.

--Make sure that the grid is at right angles.

(I simply drew parallel lines with the quilting ruler, and it did get slightly distorted. You may want to mark precise locations and then draw the lines.)

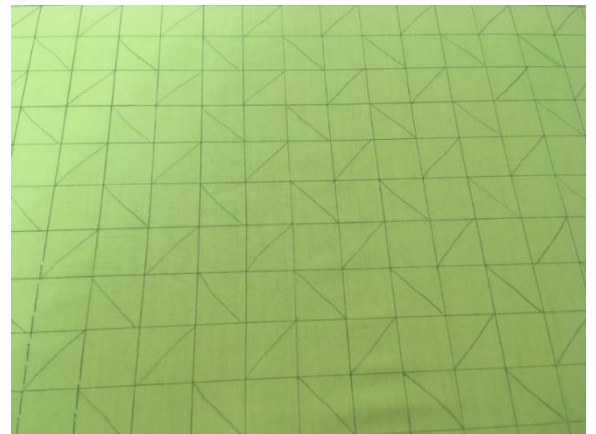


### D. Select a pattern to try from the videos listed in #5 or 6 below. Watch the video.

### E. Mark the stitching lines that your video specifies on your grid. (The picture is for a lattice design)

### F. Use strong thread to stitch as your selected video instructs. Many videos use three strands of embroidery floss.

Some patterns stitch consecutively along the length of  
the pattern. Others work in circles, and one lattice  
video simply ties knots to link different corners  
together.



### G. Enjoy the texture that you have created!



## 6. Explanations of individual stitches by Anita Edwin Crafts

“Hi friends, I have started a new channel for smocking tutorials. Subscribe to my channel & click bell icon so you know when I post new videos.”

To subscribe to channel, click this link: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCYS6MzpsDowauBLjOlpeo5g/...>



Links to individual videos

1. Lozenges pattern - <https://youtu.be/koWEgGF-7eQ>
2. Bones pattern - <https://youtu.be/sk0IFvolw6Y>
3. Basket weave pattern - <https://youtu.be/seTAeCeCayM>
4. Crisscross bones pattern - <https://youtu.be/5cyXdgM32Ik>
5. Shell pattern - <https://youtu.be/Ff8J3UhT6TA>
6. Brick and bow tie pattern - <https://youtu.be/s7-qOzaCrho>
7. Leaf pattern - <https://youtu.be/xhgMBxavd0s>
8. Flower pattern - <https://youtu.be/cVM75PL3RLQ>
9. Another Flower pattern - <https://youtu.be/1FCGY6h4Ibl>
10. Heart pattern - <https://youtu.be/NG2QanoLg00>
11. Heart shaped cushion cover - <https://youtu.be/2rN13lc2tUo>
12. Rectangle shaped cushion cover - <https://youtu.be/dh1ZvDUINI8>

## 7. Other videos

### Professor Pincushion

Lattice Smocking

<https://www.professorpincushion.com/professorpincushion/lattice-smocking/>

Honeycomb Smocking

<https://www.professorpincushion.com/professorpincushion/honeycomb-smocking/>

### Azalia Designs

How to do Canadian smocking as a beginner (zen music demonstration without dialogue)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vpTZQvB-aHk>

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Door

Canadian Smocking Design Tutorial -1 for very Beginners

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aZVcT4yU7WM>

(had trouble with volume on my computer)

### Handiworks

Round Smocked Pillow Tutorial: Make Your Vintage Cushion

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C7UqDDKO4Yg>

(There are hundreds of videos in all sorts of languages. The technique seems to be very popular in Asia.)