

Stem stitch versus outline stitch – getting technical

The difference and when to use which!

(see our YouTube channel for videos on both of these stitches)

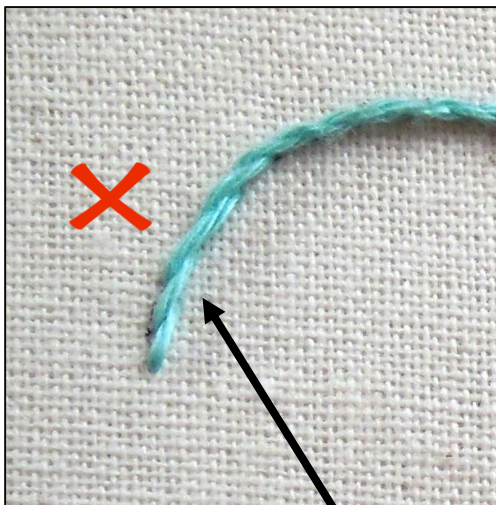
Stem stitch and outline stitch are essentially the same stitch that forms a twisted rope effect. The difference between them is that the twist of the 'rope' goes in opposite directions; stem stitch has a 'Z' twist and outline stitch has an 'S' twist:

Stem stitch: 

The thread lies in a diagonal direction bottom left to top right

Outline stitch: 

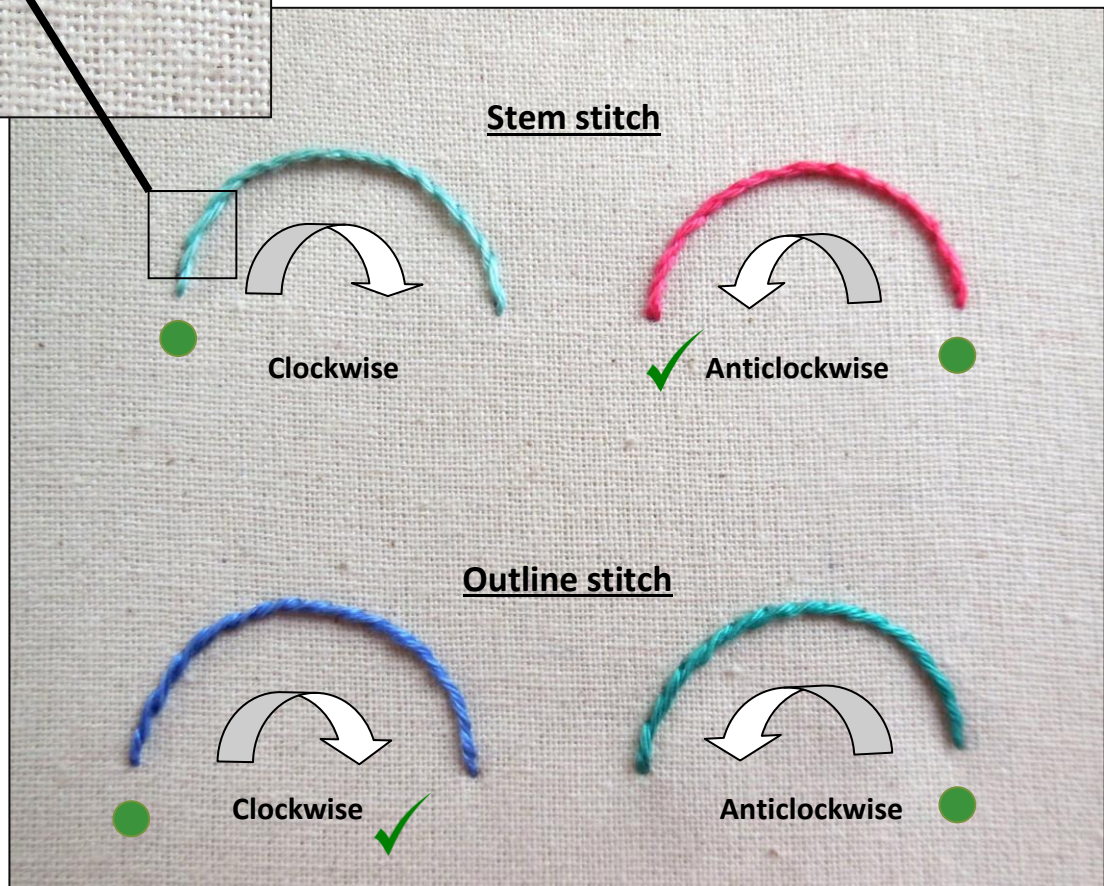
The thread lies in a diagonal direction bottom right to top left



Because of this twist:

- **Stem stitch works best for an anticlockwise curve**
- **Outline stitch for a clockwise curve**

(Start at the ●). Note how the stitches 'open up' when going in the other directions to those mentioned above (see left).



Some shapes have both clockwise and anticlockwise directions (the letter S for example starts anticlockwise from the top and finishes in a clockwise direction) so pick whichever stitch you find the easiest and stick to it (don't switch half way through)! **TIP:** Shorten the stitches a little to get around the awkward curves.