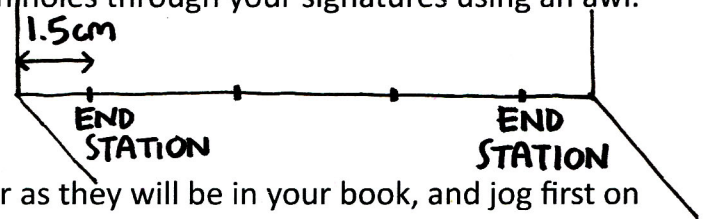


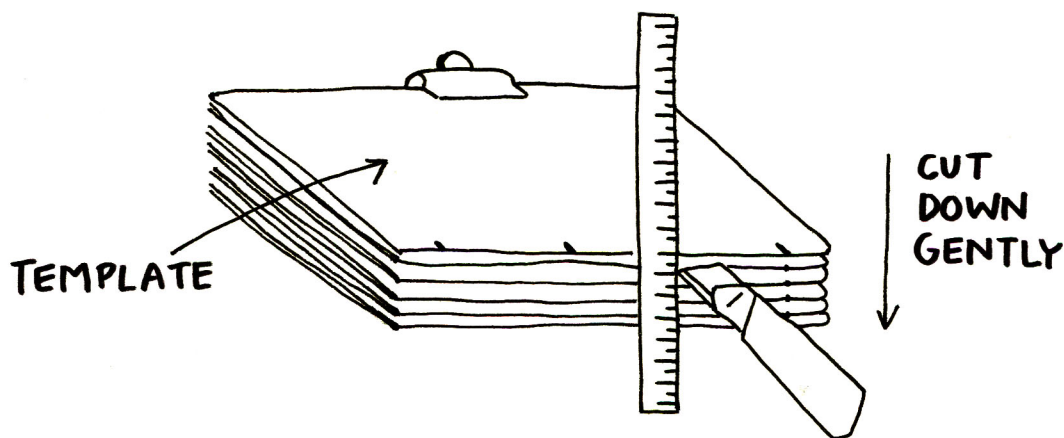
# COPTIC STITCH or CHAIN STITCH

- Fold your pages to make your signatures – each signature is a collection of two or more pages folded and collected together
  - The maximum number of pieces of paper to include in a signature is around five, depending on the thickness of the paper. Any more and the book may not lie shut
  - You can have as many signatures as you like with chain stitch. Make a book three inches thick with hundreds of pages, impress your friends!
- Make sure your signatures are exactly the same size now; trim using ruler and knife if necessary. It is almost impossible to trim a coptic stitch book once it's stitched and finished.
- Fold and trim your two cover pieces, also.
  - The covers are stitched in with the stack of pages
  - Slightly heavier, coloured stock works well
- Create a template using the scrap paper piece to indicate where your stitch holes are going to be.
  - You can have as many holes as you like, either an odd or even number. Do a minimum of 4; add extra for larger books, and for the aesthetic.
  - End stations should be no less than 1.5cm from the head and foot of the book.
- Using the template as a guide, pierce the stitch holes through your signatures using an awl.



## ALTERNATIVE METHOD for making the stitch holes:

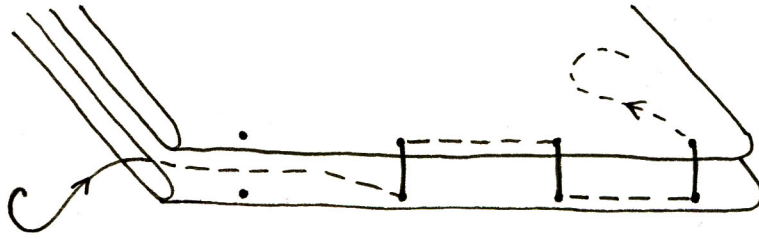
- Gather your signatures and covers together as they will be in your book, and jog first on the head and then on the spine so that the book is neat and aligned.
- Clip the book stack together, with the template on top and also aligned with the stack.
- Lay a ruler against the spine, lined up with the template, and use your knife to score down, making a very shallow cut through each signature where the stitches will be. Voila, stitch holes!
  - The advantage of this method is that the stitch holes will be perfectly aligned. It can also be a bit quicker if you are making a thick book with lots of signatures.



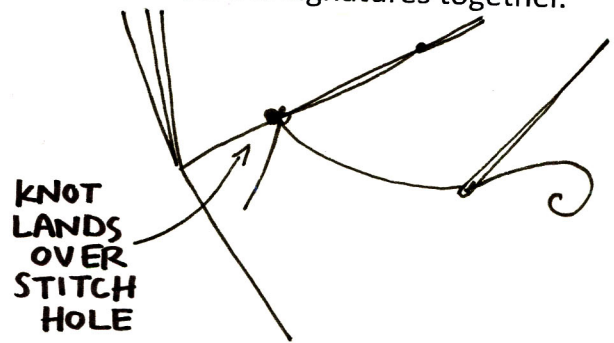
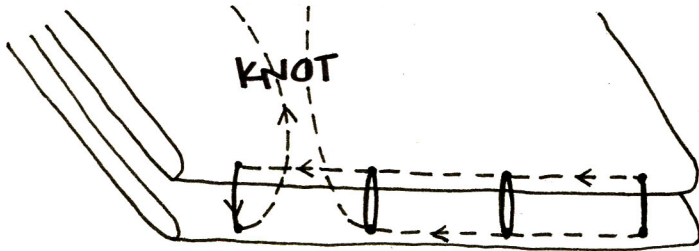
## The stitch:

- Measure out enough thread for each signature you're stitching, and then half that again.
- Begin with the signature on the bottom of the stack (i.e. the cover), going from the inside out, on the second sewing station along. Leave a hand's width of thread behind.

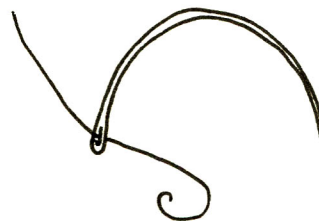
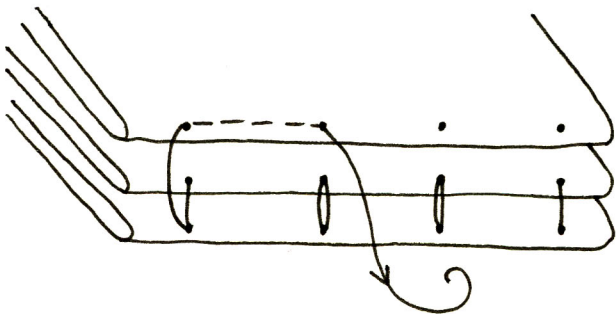
- Hop up to the second signature up the stack, and go in at the same sewing station.
- Come out again at the next stitch hole along, then hop back down to the first signature - do this all the way along until you reach the end.



- Then go back the other way - filling in the gaps in the stitch inside the signatures, and making a sort of double stitch on the outside which connects the signatures together.

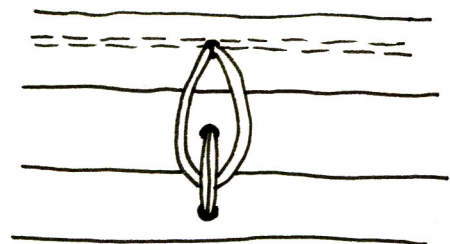
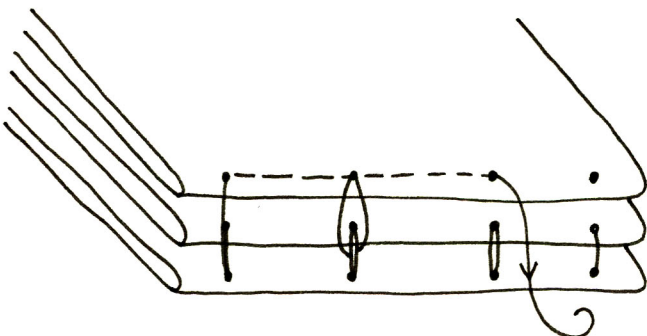


- You'll end up at the end sewing station, inside the first signature. At this point, tie the two threads together in a reef knot, and make sure the knot lands over the end sewing station.
- Come out of the signature again. You've now made the first 'link in the chain', the foundation for sewing the rest of your book.

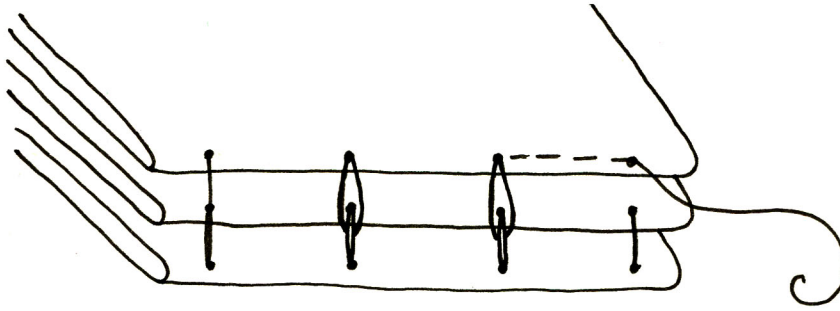


**CURVED  
NEEDLE**

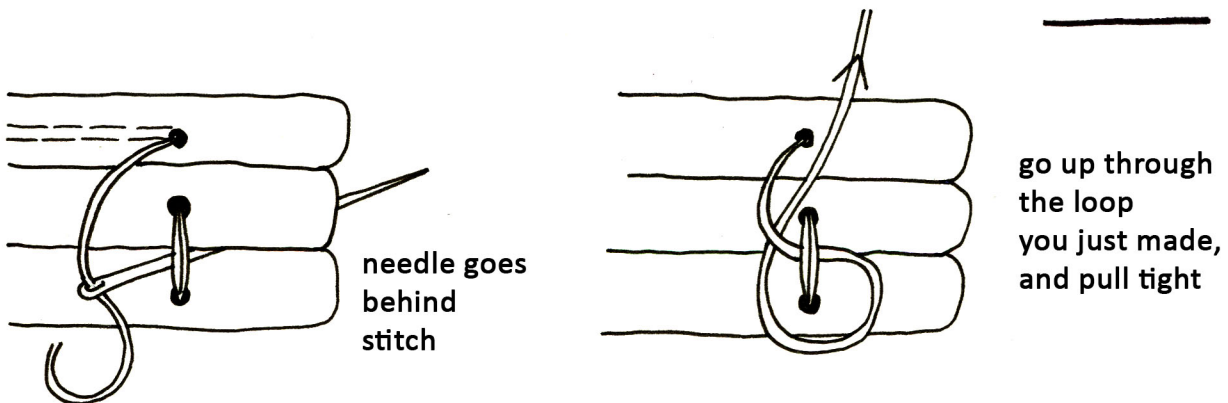
- If you have a curved sewing needle, now is the time to switch to using that.
- Hop into the next signature up the stack, and then come out at the next stitch hole along
- Now to add another link to the chain you started - sneak behind the stitch below, (in between the previous two signatures), and then go back inside the signature at the same stitch hole you just came from



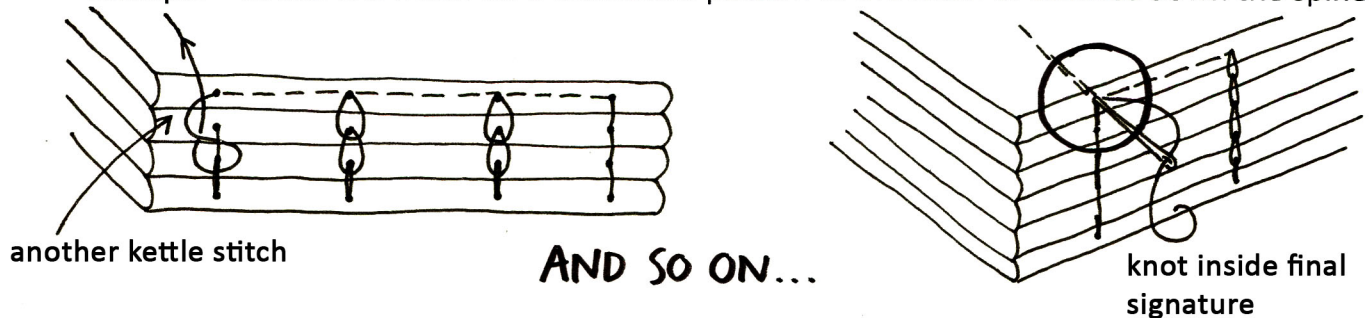
- Come out again at the next stitch hole along, and do the same - loop around/add another link



- Do this until you reach the stitch hole at the other end - and then do a kettle stitch:



- Now hop into the next signature up the stack, and repeat - adding the next lot of links to the chain
- Try to loop around in the same direction every time – pick right to left and stick with it, for example – as this will make for a consistent pattern in the chain of stitches down the spine



- Continue ad infinitum! Once you've added all the signatures you want, and the other cover, and done your final kettle stitch, knot the thread on the inside of the final signature/cover.

NOTES

- Advantages of the chain stitch book: the stitch looks very cool, they open out flat, and you can add on extra signatures at a later date if you leave a loose length of thread to tie another length onto.
- There is another version of coptic stitch which includes hard covers, stitched in with the pages. This version starts and ends quite differently than the one we have here.
- You may see this stitch referred to as link stitch binding, chain stitch, kettle stitch or coptic binding, or as an unsupported exposed spine binding. Personally, I don't think it matters too much if you end up with a nice book at the end of it...