

HART OF EMBROIDERY

BY HELEN HART MOMSEN

We've Come a Long Way, Baby

Developments in Hooping

Hooping on table tops, measuring with rulers, T-squares and triangles, “eye-balling” projects, and learning as we went...that’s the way things were done back in the day. Now, I often hear an embroiderer who turns away left-chest jobs due to a lack of hooping device, or passes on an order for the dreaded “finished cap” because he just *can’t get it to behave*. Sharing the trials and tribulations of hooping on a table top with nothing but gumption and persistence earns me looks of disbelief. (I can remember many an order that made me yearn for a few hours doing something simple, like herding cats.) Those of us who experienced it have a greater appreciation for the advancement of the tools that make life easier.

I once was asked to write a review of all the hooping devices available—boxes arrived and I assembled the assorted boards, wing nuts and screws. Keeping track of the small parts

was a job in itself. But most of the more complicated assemblies have fallen by the wayside now, and even the machine com-

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Here, we see how deep magnetic hoops can go, unlike the clamp, which has a pinch-point on the hinge. (Image courtesy Jesse Mack, Hoop-Master)



Magnetic hoops maintain tension all across the hooped area in spite of the irregularity of the seam.
(Image courtesy Jesse Mack, HoopMaster)

panies show and sell simpler devices, often including one as part of a package deal.

HOOPS

Hooping pockets, pant legs, sleeves and other difficult locations became much easier with the invention of single-application hoops in a variety of sizes and formats. Expanding on this single-application concept, there are also products that incorporate sewing window frames. This was an update to the issue of sticky backing frames that were only available in only one frame, one

window, and one machine configuration. Get creative after investing in any of these devices, and you can add socks, gloves, beanies, cuffs, collars, and more to your repertoire!

HOLDING TIGHTER—CLAMPS AND MAGNETS

Companies keep their ear to the ground where embroiderers are concerned and develop products to meet hooping challenges. Many even listen to customers to come up with new approaches to difficult items, such as caps.

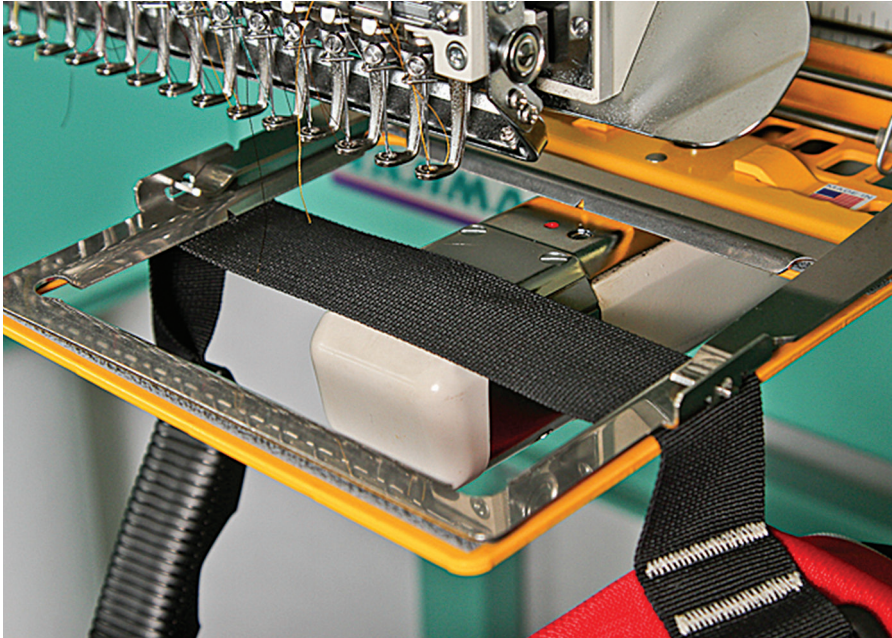
There are a variety of heavy-gauge stainless steel cap frames available. Some even offer handy features such as retaining straps that allow embroidery to be stitched closer to the bill, or engineering approaches to help stretch the material flat for easy and accurate stitching.

Clamping devices really shine when the embroiderer faces stitching goods that barely move: CD cases, portfolios, lunch boxes, backpacks, purses and more. Here, we see devices such as magnetic hoops that use magnetic force to hold items in place so users do not have

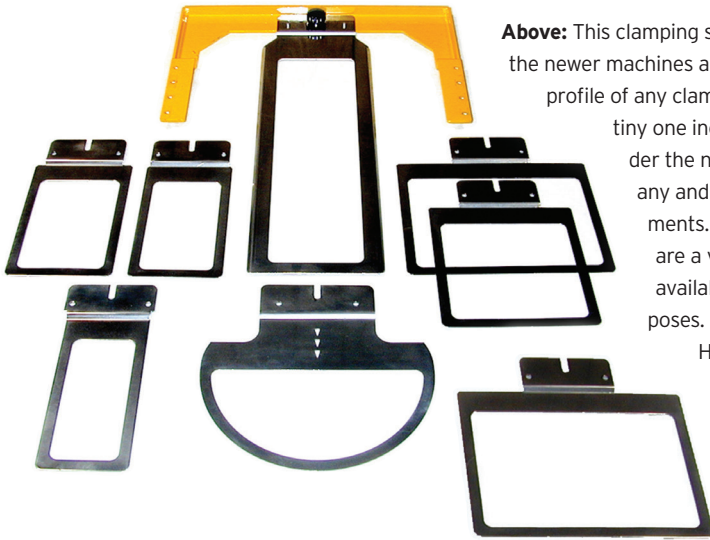
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This heavy-gauge stainless steel cap frame has a retaining strap that allows embroidery to be stitched closer to the bill. (Image courtesy to HoopTech Products)



Above: This clamping system is geared to the newer machines and offers the lowest profile of any clamping system. At a tiny one inch, it easily fits under the needle bar through any and all machine movements. **Left:** Today, there are a variety of hoops available for specific purposes. (Images courtesy HoopTech Products)



to adjust for fabrics of different weight and thickness. Less hoop burn and less wrist and arm burnout are bonuses.

Speaking from experience, I tend to reach for my magnetic hoop often. The fabric lays smooth, and it is easy to access the target area, so hooping left and right chest, and jacket backs is a breeze. Without the pinch point of a hinge, these can also reach deep into bags and into the center of blankets and towels. And, the consistent tension allows users to stitch across challenging surfaces such as zippers and seams.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Everywhere in life, and especially in the world of embroidery, the innovators and inventors are never idle, making for exciting choices and keeping the aftermarket sector always on its toes. Hugs go out to all of those who dream, create, and help embroiderers make the most of their time at the machine. I am still waiting for the never-ending bobbin... but that is a story for another time.—HHM

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