

# Free Motion Zentangle Quilting

*These are not my patterns. They are freely shared Zentangle patterns, called tangles, and can be found, with a lot of others at [www.zentangle.com](http://www.zentangle.com). This is a drawing method using repeated patterns. I'm only showing you how to adapt the patterns for continuous line quilting. Phyllis Maddox*

## General Free Motion Tips

Use a Free Motion Quilting foot or Darning foot and put the feed dogs down, or if that's not possible, cover them.

Use a Super slider if you have one

Fabrics should read as solid so your quilting shows.

Cut your fabric so there is a one inch margin around your patterns to grab onto to guide the sewing. It's very hard to control the stitching at the edge of the piece.

**Always pull the bobbin thread up** to the top before you start stitching to avoid a rat's nest on the back. Take a stitch with the presser foot down. Then lift the presser foot to give the top thread a tug. This pulls the bobbin thread up through the fabric where you can pull the end of it free. Hold both threads to the back and take a few very small stitches to secure the threads.

Set your machine for Needle Down if you have it.

There should be a one inch margin around your patterns to hang on to. It's very hard to control the stitching at the edge of the piece.

Use thin batting for dense quilting like Zentangles, not more than ¼" thick unless it's

wool batting. Thicker batting makes for more distortion and is harder to work with.

Quilt small pieces and put them together, quilt as you go style. The largest piece I've handled without problems is 40 inches. A long narrow strip, 60 x 15 works well too. About 12 to 14 inches is my favored size. I like a size that doesn't require rolling the quilt up under the machine arm.

## Marking

Marking pen: either blue washout ink or purple disappearing ink. Don't iron these, it can make the marks permanent. Friction pens also wash out. The ink disappears when ironed, but that requires cotton batting.

Marking powder: For blue powder, starch the fabric first so the starch absorbs the color and it washes out easily. After you apply the powder, spray it lightly with either starch or hair spray so it doesn't rub off before you finish quilting. White powder washes out with less of a problem. But it does rub off easily when quilting. Some white powders also disappear when they are ironed, but ironing is not possible when you use polyester batting.

I've used spray marking chalk successfully. It comes in aerosol cans in white and charcoal. It works with stencils and doesn't rub off but does wash out.

**Starch** is your friend. It reduces the number of pleats on the back of the quilting.

I use **spray glue to baste**. Some brands say they are safer to use indoors, but I always use mine outside. Since it's hard to find a clean surface outside I have a clothespin tied on a string loop. The loop goes over a hammock hook on the front porch and clips to one corner

of the fabric. I use another clothespin to hold the other corner so I don't spray my fingers while I'm spraying. It involves a lot of walking to and from the porch and sewing machine. I keep the clothes pins in a bag along with the spray glue so I don't lose them.

**Even stitches** come with practice. You can get a better feel for it by sewing a straight line with your regular foot and the feed dogs up. Place your hands lightly on both sides of the fabric and sew at a comfortable speed. Pay attention to how fast your hands are moving as the feed dogs pull the fabric along. Also listen to the sound of your machine. That tells you how fast it's going. Then try to match this hand moving speed and sound of the machine when you are free motion quilting.

**Stop and stretch** every 20 minutes. A timer is useful. Get up and walk around every hour at least. Drinking lots of coffee is useful for this.

## Grid patterns

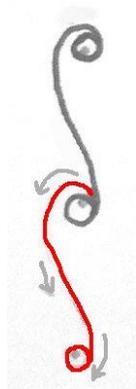
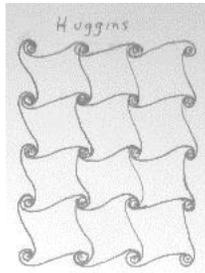
### Huggins

Starting at the upper left dot, pull the bobbin thread up to the top.

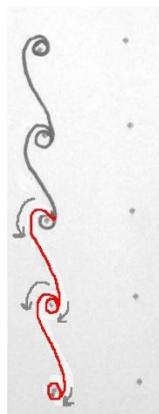
Stitch a small, about 1/8<sup>th</sup> inch, clockwise circle around the dot. Stitch over the first couple of stitches to lock them in place.

Stop at the right side and reverse direction.

Stitch back just above the top of the circle to start a tall thin letter S circling the dot to make a larger circle toward the left and curving down to make an 1/8" circle around the dot, approaching from the right, on the line below.



Reverse direction and make another S to the next dot below. You will be reusing the circle from the end of the previous S. Start each S with a larger circle and end with an 1/8 inch circle.



Repeat until you finish the last dot in that line.

Stop. Rotate the piece to the right.

Reverse direction and make an S reaching to the next dot on that line. (To make the curves

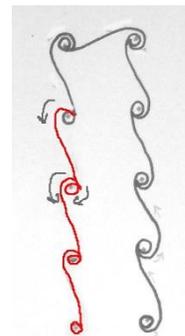


come out right, remember to reverse direction after you finish each circle. The last circle was clockwise, so reverse direction, start this S with a counter-clockwise curve.)



At the next dot, rotate the piece to the right again, reverse direction and make the next S.

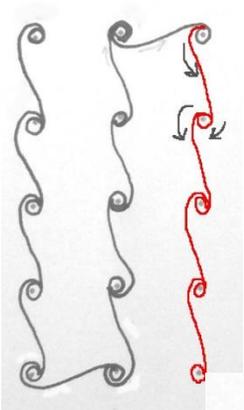
Continue making the row of Ss. The parallel lines should all curve in the same direction for this pattern.



Rotate the piece to the left.

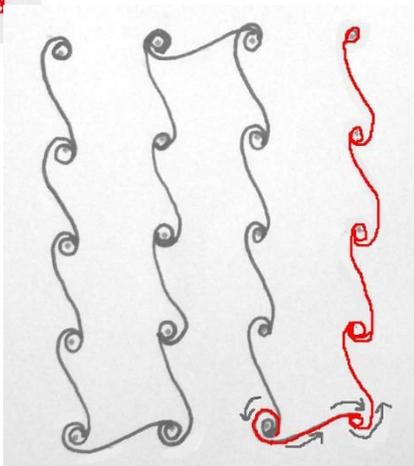
Reverse direction. Make another S to the dot of the next row.





Stop. Rotate the piece to the right again, reverse direction and make the next row of Ss.

Stop. Rotate the piece again, reverse direction. Make another S to the dot

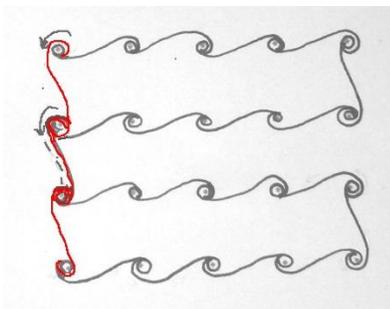


of the next row. Then stop, rotate the piece again, reverse direction and make the last row of Ss.

To make the horizontal lines you'll have to stitch over some of the circles and lines. Sew as exactly on the lines as you can, but stitching over the circles just slightly inside the previous stitches just makes them darker so they look more shaded.

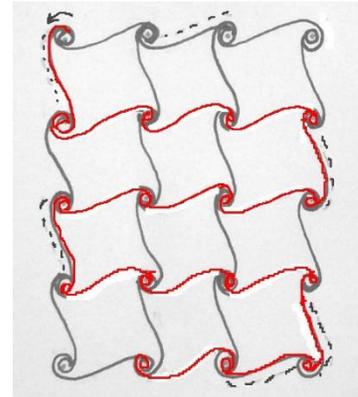
You can also stitch just outside the circle if it came out a little small the first time.

Rotate the piece, reverse direction and stitch an S to the line below. The next S is already sewn, so double stitch on that line. Then complete the row with another S.



Rotate the piece. Again, you will have to sew over the first S in that row to get into place to do the next row across.

You will also have to double stitch the S at the end of each row to get to the next one. I've marked the Ss that need to be double stitched.



If you're comfortable sewing the Ss sideways and upside down, you don't have to keep turning the piece. You just have to remember to reverse the direction of the circles so the Ss are all parallel. But it's easier to sew toward yourself when you are sewing over an existing line. You can sew more accurately when you can see the line better.

If your circles are all round and the curves all even it looks best. But when they're not, it still looks good at arm's length.

This also looks nice if the dots fan out. If they're more than an inch and a half apart, the illusion starts to disappear.



## Weaving Scroll Pattern

This uses the letter C instead of the S. The C's can be as fat or skinny as you like.

The curves are reflections of the adjacent row. This makes alternating Outies and Innies shapes.

Start with a small, counter clockwise circle around the first dot.



Spiral into a C that extends to the dot below. End the C with another small counter clockwise circle.

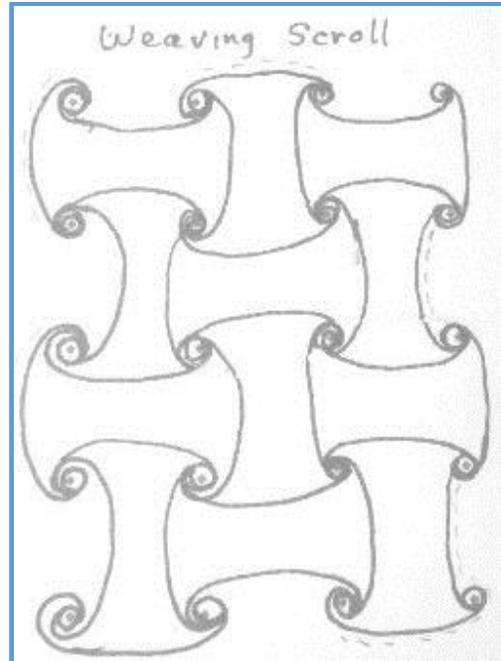
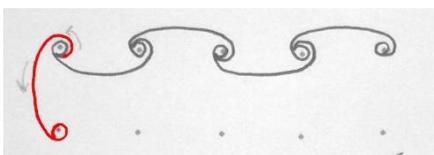
Reverse direction. Circle around over the top of the circle and make a backwards C that extends down to the next dot below. End that C with a clockwise circle.



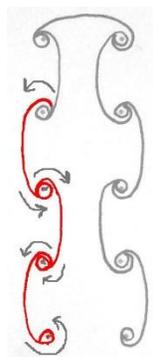
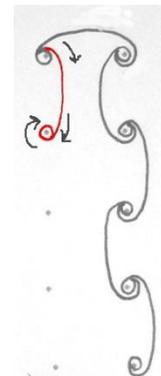
Reverse direction and do it again using a proper C followed by another backwards one.



When you reach the bottom dot of that column, stop, turn the fabric and reverse direction. If your last C was backwards, the C at the bottom of the column should face in the proper direction.

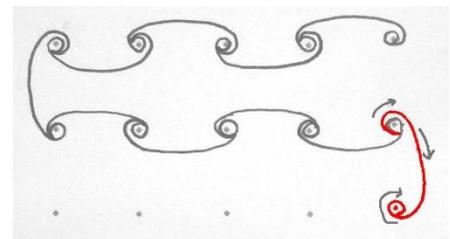


Stop, rotate the piece and reverse direction. This will be a backwards C and will create an innie.



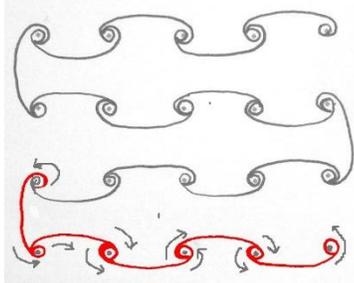
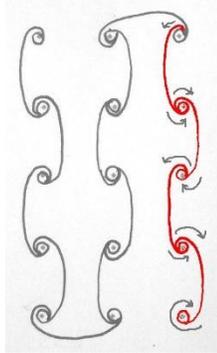
Continue making Cs. The next one will be a proper C and will make an outie. Alternate innies and outies down the row.

Stop, rotate the fabric to the left. Reverse direction and make one



backward C to go to the next row.

Stop, rotate the fabric. Reverse direction and make one proper C to create another innie. Finish the row alternating innies and outies.



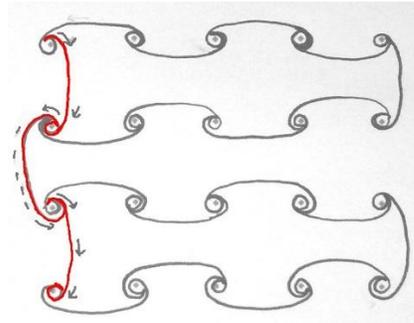
Stop, rotate the fabric, reverse direction and make the end piece, another outie. Stop, rotate the fabric

again and make an innie. Continue with the last row, alternating innies and outies.

To make the horizontal lines you'll have to stitch over some of the circles and lines you've already sewn to get into place to sew the missing lines. Sew as exactly on the lines as you can. This is easier if you are stitching toward yourself. You don't have to be quite so careful stitching over the circles. Stitching just slightly inside the previous stitches just makes them darker so they look more shaded. You can also stitch just outside the circle if it came out a little small the first time.

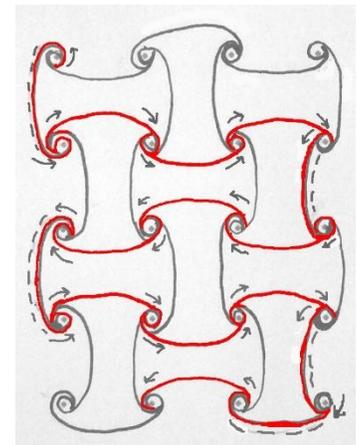


Stop, rotate the fabric, reverse direction and start the horizontal lines. If you're connecting 2 outies you need an innie and vice versa. It's easy to make the errors at the beginning of each line.



Stitch the first backwards C and the circle, then stitch over the C marked with a dashed line to get to the next backwards C to finish the line.

Stop, rotate the piece and stitch over the lines of the corner C. Then Stop, rotate the piece and go across the next horizontal row.



Finish all the horizontal rows.

You will have to stitch over the lines of the Cs at the ends of the rows. They are marked with dashed lines.

If you're comfortable sewing the curves sideways and upside down, you don't have to keep turning the piece. You just have to remember to reverse the direction of the circles to make the innies and outies.

If your circles are all round and the curves all even it looks best. But when they're not, it still looks good at arm's length.

## Ruffles

This makes a nice edge around a pattern or is a nice pattern itself off a straight or curved line.

Draw a line of dots equally spaced from each other and from the edge of the pattern edge or line.

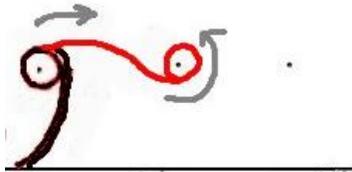
Make a small counter clockwise circle around the first dot. Continue with a curved line, like a comma, down to the line.



Overstitch the comma back up to the circle.



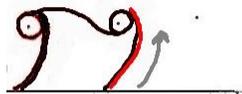
Stop, reverse direction and make a long, skinny S shape over to the next dot. The first curve of the S should go above the circled dot. End the S with a counter clockwise circle around the dot. This circle should be about the same size as the first circle



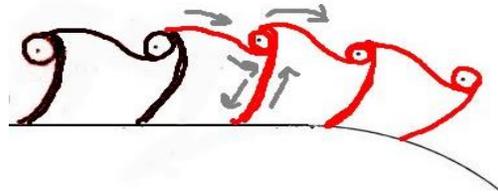
Make another comma shaped curve down to the line parallel to the first one.



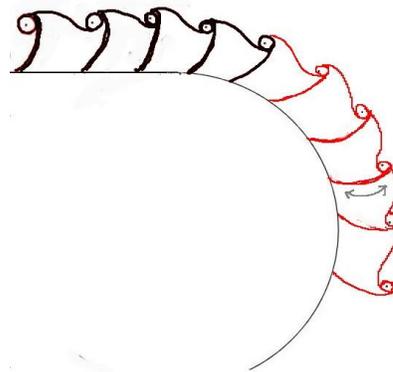
Overstitch the curve back up to the edge of the circle.



Stop, reverse direction and repeat across the line.



When going around a curved pattern or line, adjust the slant of curved line of the comma so it points to the center of the circle that pattern line would make if it were longer.

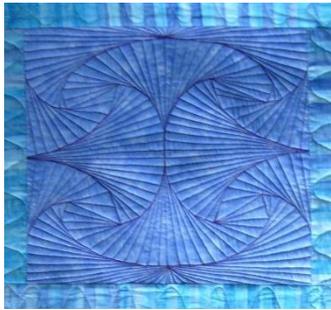


Remember to Stop and reverse direction after over stitching the curve so all the Ss go in the same direction.



## Paradox

The Paradox patterns can be done with feed dogs up, but you have to turn the piece a lot. Keep the lines straight



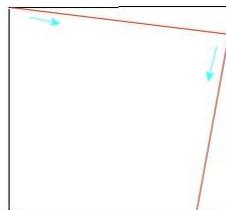
and end them exactly where they meet the previous lines to keep the illusion. Actually, when I'm doing a small piece, I turn it for almost all the lines anyway. It's always easier to sew toward yourself even with free motion quilting.

**Always pull the bobbin thread up** to the top of the fabric before you start stitching to avoid a rat's nest on the back.



First, sew a square box anywhere from 3 to 8 inches across.

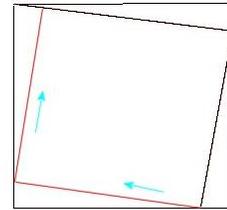
Then sew a slanted line from the corner of the box across to the other side. Maximum distance between lines at outer edge of rectangle is about 3/8



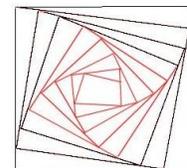
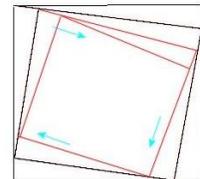
inch. 1/4 is the minimum, closer than that makes the piece really stiff. Larger than 3/8 loses the 3D illusion.

Turn the corner and go to the next side.

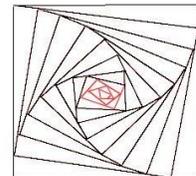
Then continue around the square, keeping the angles more or less consistent.



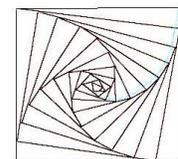
Repeat as many times as you want. The angles can gradually get smaller as you go toward the center of the pattern. You could leave a larger center space to use it as a frame, but the inner boxes are no longer square.



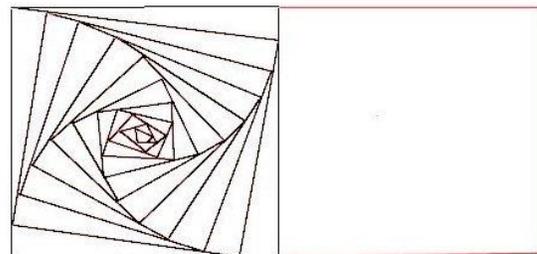
When the squares get small enough for you, you are at the center. To stop here with one pattern, stitch the last line with very small stitches to secure the thread ends.



When you join more than one pattern it makes more interesting shapes. Sew along the curve to travel to the corner where your next pattern begins.



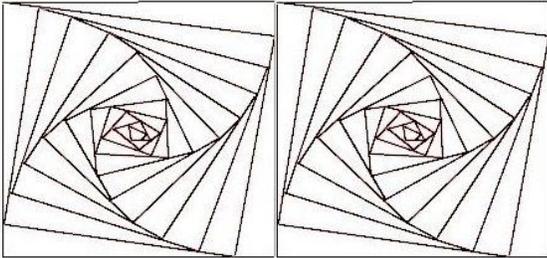
Then start your next square. You'll only have to sew 3 of the sides.



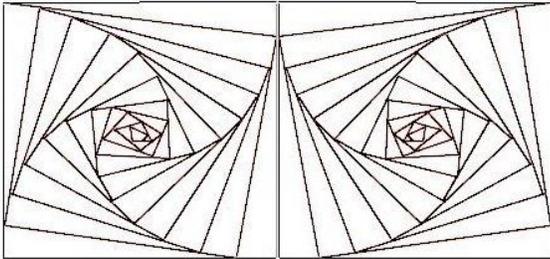
Different patterns emerge when multiple paradoxes join depending if you rotate the lines

in the same direction (all clockwise) or if the rotation alternates.

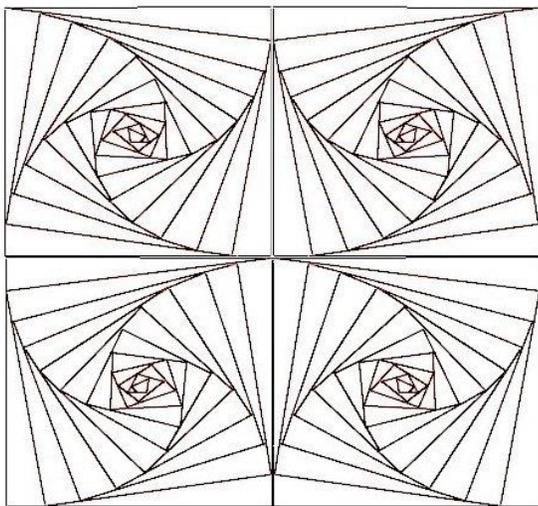
The first pattern we sewed went clockwise. If the next pattern also goes clockwise, you see a twisted pillar pattern where they join.



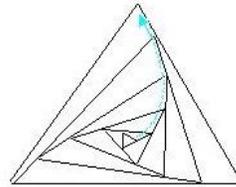
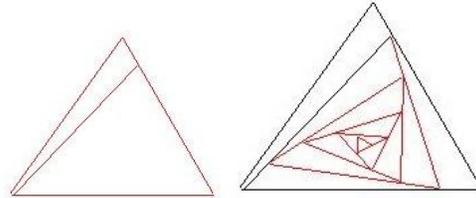
If you rotate the second one in the opposite direction; you'll get this pattern.



Put 4 of them together, reversing the rotation every time, to get this pattern.

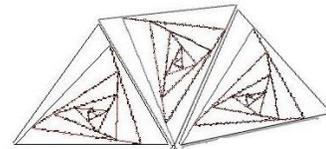


Paradoxes can be triangles, pentagons, hexagons, circles or irregular shapes. Just follow the outside lines, working your way to the center.

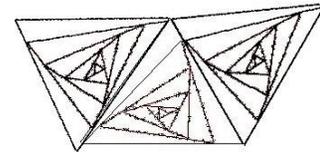


When you reach the center, follow a curve to where you want to start the next pattern.

Joining triangles rotated in the same direction produces this.



Rotating in opposite direction produces this.



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