

*I have been having an incredibly good time helping to create all of these fun different motifs to help us all learn more and more about our free motion machine quilting. So I am super excited today to take some of the basics we've already done and elaborate them a little bit more. Now I have to share with you, this new book, and it's not a new book to me, but it's a new book hopefully for all of you: First Steps to Free-Motion Quilting by Christina Cameli. I was blessed to get to interview Christina about a year or so back. And when I looked at this book I literally told her if I was going to write a book on free motion quilting, especially because of the trouble shooting, the set up, the feet, the needles, the threads, all of that and motifs, this is the book I would have written. Now in talking to her last week to make sure it was ok that we used some of her motifs, because we're going to do open or stretchy meandering, let me find that while we're talking here. And making sure that it was ok with her that we use some of her ideas and her motifs, we started chatting, she sent me a brand new book. And check this out, if you haven't seen this before, it is incredible because it's page after page after page of fantastic motifs completely broken down. And it is wonderful. And I found it to be incredibly inspiring. So thank you, Christina. I appreciate that. I appreciate you letting us work from some of your motifs. Today we're breaking down the simple basics of meandering but we're stretching it out. Let's wander over to the sewing machine and just get this going, right?*

*Now before I get too caffeinated and start running the needle I want to talk about the use so you have probably already bounced down into the description below and printed out your free printable for this. So the stretchy meandering is just like our early meandering but we're opening it up a little bit. We're making longer straight passes before our curves. And I do a lot of nature quilts or landscape quilts so if you take this stretchy meandering you can break it down. And if you start to add swoops and swirls, another one of our videos that we have for you out there. Then you can start to get a watery look or a watery effect that I use a lot in my waterscapes. And then if we crush it all together, pack it in nice and tight it gives us a really awesome wood grain effect where we're focusing kind of like on the knots it would be the tree or the branches and things like that. So I'm going to show you how to do all of those real quick on our little piece. And then we're going to bust out the big quilt and we're going to do it on a big quilt as well. Because remember a lot of the information or tip that I really want you to be thinking about today, a lot of us get overwhelmed and we look at the big quilt, the all over process. And we're not worrying about that. We're just thinking small amounts of quilting at a time. One square at a time. So that's the big tip that I want you to take. Remember don't get overwhelmed by the project. We're just looking at it one block at a time. I'm slipping on my Machinger's gloves because I love the fact they give me traction in my fingers. A quick reminder if you haven't seen the other videos I'm using a Sew Slip mat on my machine so that it has a nice flow to it. And*

*we're going to start right here with an open, the original meandering and we're going to go into stretchy meandering. And then I'm going to break it down piece by piece. Let me get us a fresh sample so you can see what we're doing here.*

*Ok So first of all, and I talk about this not as often as I should, right now my machine has a thread cutter in it. But I want to talk about our starts and our stops. So we're starting in the middle of our project. Basically I'm going to take a single stroke while hanging onto the thread that's from the needle. I've got that pinched on the fabric there. I'm going to lift my presser foot to open up my tension. And I'm going to lift. Oop my little tail snuck away so let's see if we can do this one more time. If you've used your thread cutter on your machine, chances are your thread tail is so short it's going to be hard to get ahold of. I've pinched it with my scissor to grab it. If you're not using a thread cutter that trick would have been really smooth. And your thread would have been nice and long. Either way I now have both the bobbin and the needle thread on the top of the project. So I can lower my presser foot. And let's just warm up. Keep our shoulders nice and light. And we're going to start by that easy meandering. So we're just doing big circles and big loops. Kind of half hearts. After I get to a certain spot I'm going to stop so I can cut these threads out of my way because they just visually bother me. Get many distraction out of your way that's driving you mad. Make sure you're listening to music that you like or a book on tape that you like. Here's that basic curves. So there's really not straight between my meandering yet.*

*So to do the open meandering or the stretchy meandering we're going to start to take longer passes between the curves. We're going to head back. And I should stop and point out that I should always keep my hands in location or in sync with my needle a little bit. Coming down. You can go both directions with your curves if you need. If you get in a tight spot you can do a short curve. Keeping the meandering going. Now let me stop you right here. And I'm hoping you can see all of this area. One of the things I'm starting to try to do is I try to break it out so I don't have all these stopping in a line. Because I want it to look random when I'm done. So I'm going to bring this one short, bring it back down. I can just tie into that section that way. So there's really no pattern. It's just a feel or a flow for our open meandering. Now let's talk about how to, oops I was warming up earlier and I was using the last of my bobbin. I forgot to re-thread the bobbin. I say we take a quick break for commercial. And I'll be right back with a fresh bobbin.*

*Commercial: When you're looking for a treat. That's light refreshing, not too sweet. Just walk into your favorite store and get the treat you're looking for.*

*Hey welcome back to the show. I appreciate the message from our sponsors there. Now let's talk about this because this happens all the time. We want to change colors of threads or we need to change bobbins or something as we're sewing along. Now I ended up cutting my thread because I needed the spools and everything to wind my bobbin. So I have left here both the bobbin thread and the needle thread coming up from the last series of work we were doing. Now I'm going to back up here a couple of stitches. I'm going to drop my needle right in the path I was quilting in. I'm going to bring up the new bobbin thread. I left a nice long tail down there so it would be easy to get ahold of. And now I'm going to try to keep all four of those threads out of the way. I'm going to take a few stitches to tie in or lock in that stitch. And then I'm going to continue on the path that I was quilting. Stopping here so that I can get all of these threads out of the way. And if I need to come back later and clean them up, I can. But that should work and that should hold and it should also secure those loose ends of the threads we have going before.*

*Now we were just coming out of our stretchy meandering and we're going to go into what it would look like if we started making water. So while I'm doing water we kind of need to think that our horizon is running from side to side right now the way this is set up. But I'm going to now start to add a little bit more curve or character to my line. Instead of it being straight I'm doing more of this wavy motion. And maybe some faster turn arounds. And then every now and again we can add in our ripple in the water, our swirl or our swoop that we've done before. And we're just going to keep on going. And meandering back in here. You want to keep your swoops spaced out a little ways. And they can go both directions of course. Circling in and out like yay. So this especially done with some fun shiny threads, and I really like the poly threads for the sheen that are available. The poly neons. And what happens with those is it gives a really neat water texture. Those swirls are also used as a really great way to get yourself out of trouble. So I've started quilting myself into a circle a little bit there or a ditch. So now I'm just coming out of that area. Kind of filling in with that curvy loose open meandering. Keeping a good amount of negative space of the fabric. And of the threads playing together there. Ok. Now let's move onto wood grain.*

*So as I'm coming around here we're going to do the wood grain it's just like the water. I'm going to do long stretches and really tight, almost where they come back and they touch. Then I'm going to come out loose. See I'm kind of veering away from where I was working. Coming in we're forming a knot right now. I should say a wood grain knot, not a knot in our threads. See that is starting to form up. Come back around the bottom end of it. Lock it in, do some more wood grain. And then we're going to follow that knot up. Keep in with the wood grain a little bit.*

*Same thing with like our open meandering. We don't want all of our starts and our stops of our curves in the same spot. So I'm coming about halfway down and heading back up again. If you're not aware the knots in tree branches or trees come from where the branches were coming out of the stock or the trunk. So you don't have millions of them in your wood grain but you do have them often. And often off to the side of the tree you're looking at. So we can do another little one here.*

*So now that I'm all warmed up, and I cannot stress enough how important it is to warm up. Even if it's just for a few moments before you put your real project, your real quilt inside of machine. So we're going to do some of these same designs on what I'm calling the Man Sampler, one of our sampler quilts. No I'm sorry there's no pattern for this. It's just blocks from a lot of our other tutorials. I wanted to point out, you can see that a lot of this is quilted. I'm going to do some quilting right here. I don't care what's going on over here. I'm only worried about what's happening right here underneath the machine because I'm only focused on that. But I have it spread out right now. One of the things a lot of times we do, we stretch our quilt out. I want to bring it in and I really want to do what is called the fluff and stuff method today. So I'm actually getting all of this close to the machine so that as I move the quilt I'm not trying to drag the weight of all of that quilt across the table. So I brought it all in close so the area that I'm working in will look nice.*

*Now I've mentioned before that I like to use these curved safety pins for basting. And I'll bring this in so you can see that I have thread now within my hang loose sign. So I can remove this pin so it's not in my way. I'm close enough to it that it's, it's all secure with the threads I'm using. And I'm going to come down here and I'm going to start in the corner. And my goal for this motif is to come out of the swirls like I was doing with that stretchy meandering and kind of do that watery motif in here. But because this is in a landscape I'm just going to play with those design elements. And I'm not going to actually make it look just like water. At any rate so I've brought up my bobbin thread. I've got my needle thread. I'm going to take a few stitches to hold it in place. And then I'm going to continue first by following kind of a meandering around that curl that was already there. Just to add some fun interest. And now I'm going to break into an open meandering. And I'm going to try to kind of triangulate it a little bit. So you can see that even though I've got a ginormous quilt under the machine. It's moving freely because I'm only working in one section. I've got my hands with nice control here. And I'm not stressing over all the motifs that I can do later. I'm just trying to think of all of them one at a time. And of course you can do your stretchy meandering in a triangular fashion. Not just linear if you like. But I want to build on this so I'm going to add in my curls now. And I'm just going to sit and play for a little*

*bit of time. Turn on some music like I do when I'm quilting. So you enjoy what we've got going on here.*

*Ok and as you can see I love to work kind of in the seam allowances. That's kind of where I trap my brain into those different squares and what not. And I will just keep working on those different motifs. And keep filling in our Man Sampler here as I go. Just thinking about it one section at a time. So I am so excited that you're all following along. And I really want to say thank you to all of the fans out there, especially those of you who are putting your comments. It is really awesome for us to get to read the comments, see all the positive feedback. But also to get all the good ideas and know what you want to learn. So again please keep putting in the different kinds of motifs and the different styles of quilting you would like to be more educated on because I will do my best to do just that for you here at Man Sewing.*