

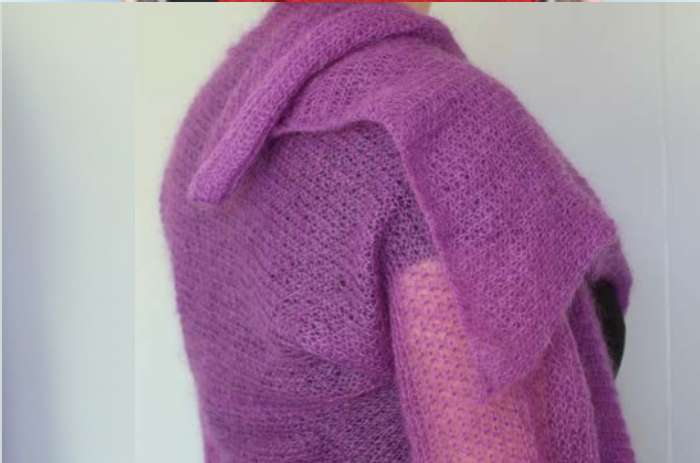


Not So SQUARE

Ideas for beginning
machine knitters

By the Brunswick Machine Knitting Novices

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Notes for a Successful Start

TO KEEP IN MIND:

- 1. Your finished object will only look as nice as the yarn you use.**
- 2. If size matters, take time to measure your tension swatch in the stitch and washing treatment you plan to use.**
- 3. Simple shapes offer an easy opportunity to experiment with stitch patterns and needles out of work.**
- 4. Loose tension often looks better in a simple shape compared to tight tension.**
- 5. To get a good idea of tension, you can knit a scarf.**

Yarns

Choose interesting yarn for maximum effect out of a simple shape. For example, silk and stainless steel give interesting results for very little effort. Fine wools, alpaca and cashmere are all beautiful. There are also linen and cotton yarns that are suitable for machine knitting. Make sure your piece is made in a yarn you can love. Knitting yarn can look very different after washing, especially if the yarn is still oiled when you buy it.

Tension

If you are knitting a piece for which size is important, you should always make a tension swatch. This is simply a tester piece of knitting used to calculate the number of stitches and rows you need to make your piece. Wash your swatch to see how the fabric will work as you wear it.

You could use this formula, or look up something more automated online:

$(\text{Rows} / \text{Length of swatch}) \times \text{Length needed} = \text{Rows to knit, and}$

$(\text{Stitches} / \text{Width of swatch}) \times \text{Width needed} = \text{Stitches to cast on.}$

The bigger your swatch, the more accurate it will be for measuring your tension. A good idea is to knit a scarf for your tension swatch. Cast on, say, 80 stitches and knit a few hundred rows. Wash the scarf and pin it out flat to dry. If you don't like the fabric all that much you still have a scarf. Many older books will suggest tensions that produce a firm fabric, but very loose tensions can give beautiful effects: a softer more flowing type of fabric. Experiment with different tensions and try leaving some needles out of work. If your tension seems too tight even on your machine's highest setting, try knitting using only every second needle.

Textures

Plain stocking stitch can look amazing.



Silk and stainless steel yarn knitted at loose tension.



Stainless steel reinforced yarn with a textured cotton yarn every third row. Knitted in stocking stitch, every other needle.



Fine linen cotton yarn knitted at loose tension with needles out of work.

Stitch Effects

A machine with the ability to make automatic stitch patterns makes fancy knitting easy. Always calculate from a swatch using the stitch, fibre, tension and washing method you plan to use.



A close textured tuck stitch pattern.



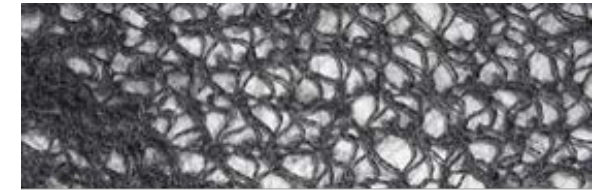
A fairisle pattern, one yarn of the two being variegated.



A simple eyelet pattern.

Fulling

Fulling is the deliberate matting of your knitted fabric. Use hot water with soap or detergent. Rub the the fabric on your sink board. Try all the things your mother told you to avoid when washing woollens.



A very loose tuck stitch in fine alpaca yarn, fullyed for stability.



Very loose tuck stitch cashmere, fullyed to the extreme to make a soft, dense and very warm fabric that can be cut without unravelling.

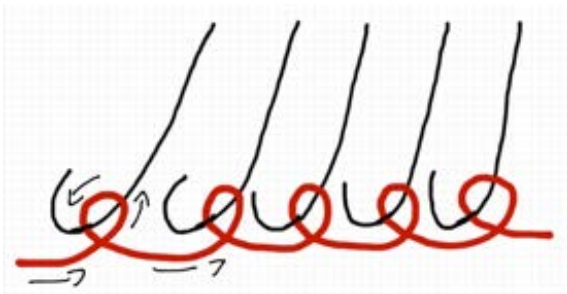
Basic Techniques

All you need to do...

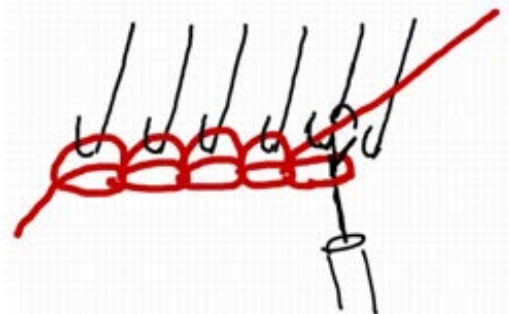
There is only one shape you need to knit to make the things in this book: a rectangle. This means that all you need to do is cast on, knit, and then cast off. You can see many cast on and cast off techniques demonstrated on YouTube. Diana Sullivan from Austin, Texas, [Dianaknits](#) on YouTube, has excellent video demonstrations.

Cast On

You can cast on by whatever method your manual recommends, or your own favourite. The e-wrap cast on is simple and effective if you have no previous favourite to draw on. To do an e-wrap cast on, starting with the needle furthest away from your carriage, wrap your yarn around every needle as depicted below.

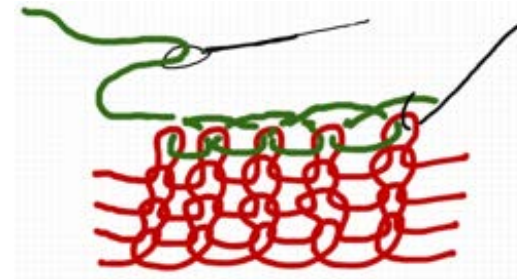


Another easy cast on makes use of the latch tool.

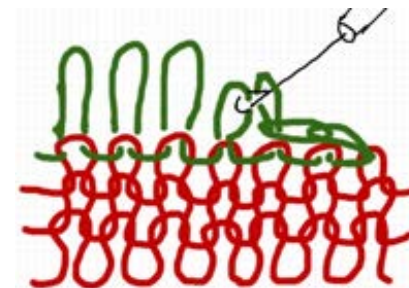


Cast Off

An easy cast-off is the Back Stitch method. Using a wool needle, thread through your stitches as depicted below. The added advantage of this cast off is that the edge it makes is similar to the e wrap cast on edge.



The latch hook cast off is neat and easy, and can be adjusted to any tension by knitting the last row at a looser tension, or by moving the needles back by hand.



Very simple projects: Bands and strips

Strips are easy and versatile: you could make wrist bands, hair bands, multi-strand scarves...Or you could make one long strip, and re-knit it using hands, a coat rack or anything you can use as a knitting frame to make statement pieces.



Simple scarves and shawls

Rectangular shawls and scarves can be beautiful and useful. They're very simple projects that work with any yarn, tension or stitch. Knitted large enough, your rectangle can be a throw for snuggling under, even a full sized blanket for your bed.



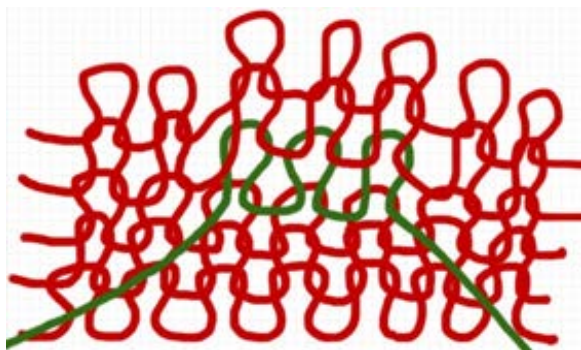
You will find that knitted fabric often has rolled edges. This can be a design feature of your scarf. Or, with some thorough blocking, you can minimise this effect if you prefer. The red shawl pictured here has rolled edges, but since the fabric is so airy, this adds to the design. Loose stocking and tuck stitch do not roll as much as tight stitches. Scarves are a great opportunity to experiment with colour and texture. The middle shawl above uses two different yarns for contrast in both colour and fibre.

Slits

A shawl with slits becomes a vest. Slits can be horizontal or vertical. This well filled piece has simply been cut to make horizontal arm slits. The horizontal slits make an interesting arm line, but become inconspicuous when the piece is worn as a scarf.



A heavily full piece can be cut without further treatment. Otherwise, to make a slit across the knitted piece, knit a removable cord into the fabric by moving the needles by hand. Cast off the stitches either side of the inserted row. To make a slit at right angles to the rows of knitting, use holding position to knit each side of the slit separately.



Moebius Scarf

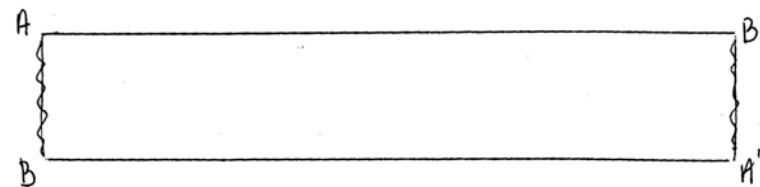
A great way to make a scarf with a twist is to make a moebius loop: a scarf with only one side.



As pictured, this works great in a lace stitch to combine with evening wear, but it can also look good in simple stocking stitch.



To create the moebius loop, make a rectangle that is long enough two wrap loosely around your neck twice.



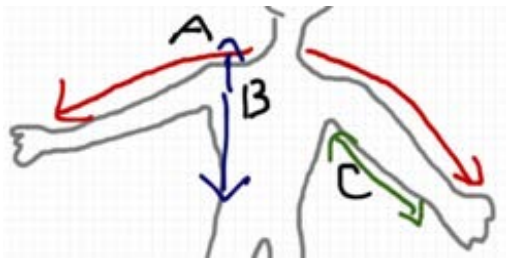
Seam the two ends of a rectangle together to form the loop: point A to point A' and point B to point B'.

Section 5

Seams

Shrug

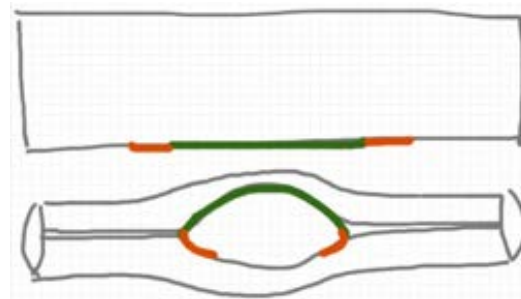
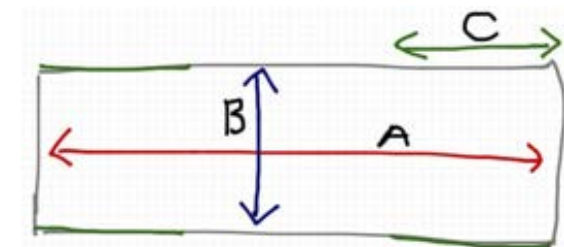
Seam two ends of a rectangle together for a simple shrug.



Shrug with shawl collar.



Shrug with extra piece worn on the lower edge, made with fairly close proportions.

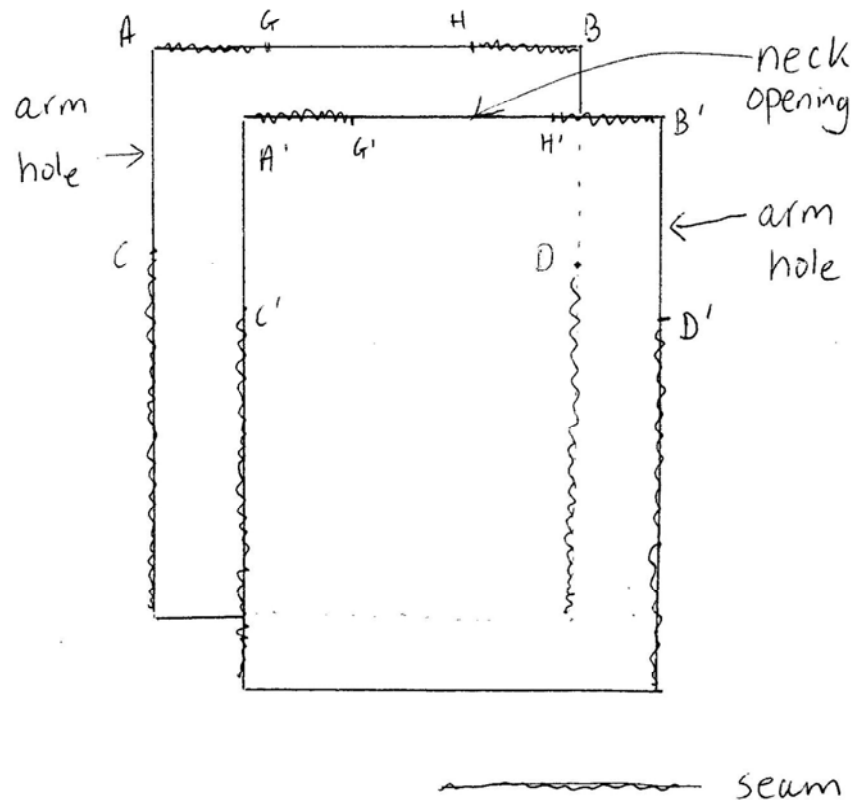


Seam along the green line to add a shawl collar to the shrug. Continue the seam along the orange lines for a more jacket like effect.



Top or Dress

To make a simple top or dress, start with two identical rectangles. Sew these together as pictured in the diagram. Add sleeves by making two rectangles twice the width of the armholes.



This looks good in a yarn with plenty of drape such as linen or combinations of linen and silk or rayon. It is also successful in cotton and silk & stainless steel combination.

In the variation pictured here, one piece is longer than the other. Add drawstrings if you require a more fitted shape.



Skirt

A skirt can be made simply by sewing two rectangles together. Measurement is important here: make sure your skirt is the correct width by calculating the number of stitches using your tension swatch. The waist can be fitted using elastic, or by knitting a hem then inserting a drawstring, as pictured here.





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Contact

Brunswick Machine Knitting Novices

chrisjd@bigpond.net.au

PO Box 1189

Fitzroy North Vic 3068

RESOURCES

Machine Knitters Association of Victoria - www.mkav.org.au

Brunswick Machine Knitting Novices - <http://brunsmachknit.blogspot.com>

Ravelry - www.ravelry.com

Dairing Yarns - www.dairing.com.au

Bendigo Woollen Mills - www.bendigowoollenmills.com.au

Colourmart Yarns - www.colourmart.com

Yarn Barn - www.yarnbarn.com.au