



chapter 1

Maryland Sheep and Wool Festival

Newcomers to Maryland Sheep and Wool, held the first full weekend in May at the Howard County Fairgrounds, often say that they encounter sensory overload. Crowds of festival goers surge up the path from a nearby grassy field, covered with thousands of cars. Music fills the air as an Old Time band tunes up. Eager shoppers consider the purchase of dye plants, yarn, fleeces, and sheep pens within feet of the festival's entrance. The air is filled with pungent odors of barbequed lamb, fresh smelling spring air, and more subtle smells of hay, animals, and freshly shorn fleece.

This is the first festival I ever attended, and my “home” festival. For perhaps 15 years I’ve seen the festival grow and change. Today, one hears that this festival, in its 34th year, has upwards of 50,000 visitors in one day, and I’d believe it.

People come to festivals for various reasons. Sometimes, I’ve had a shopping list and left with a spinning wheel or a special fleece. My mother often purchases several sweaters’ worth of knitting yarn, and my friends leave with looms, books, cheese, frozen lamb, and other treasures. In lean years I’ve spent the festival differently, visiting with friends, trying out new spinning wheels, and enjoying the enormity of the event. I’d eat a lamb gyro or burger, watch sheep breed competitions and sheep dog demonstrations, and collect inexpensive mementos, ideas, and connections to cherish throughout the year.

Although special things are available at all festivals, the enormity of Maryland Sheep & Wool and its many vendors allow people to focus on purchasing exactly what they want—no matter what it is. In recent years, the festival has become known for its hand-dyed and hand-painted yarns and roving. Wool, cashmere, alpaca, rayon, Tencel, superwash or hemp, laceweight, sock yarn or bulky, whatever your preferences, you can find it here.

Knitters, spinners, and weavers all have their strategies. Some fiber-crazy folks make a beeline to see Brooks Farm’s special hand-dyed yarns; others race to find Hatchtown spindles, Socks That Rock yarn, or to get a deal on a special spinning wheel. Along the way, everyone (it seems) bumps into someone they know. Even if you don’t see friendly faces, you might see someone wearing a sweater that matches the design you knitted last year. This is a chance for fiber artists from up and down the east coast to be around people and interests they love.

As a result of this huge event and shopping opportunity, many fly into a nearby airport to attend. At Baltimore-Washington International Airport, you can recognize the other festival goers by their huge carry-ons, bursting with wool, and their t-shirts, bags, and other festival paraphernalia. Festival goers even greet complete strangers, showing off great finds with one another while waiting for their planes to board.

Those who buy raw fleeces but are traveling long distances home by plane or in a car already crowded with purchases have easy solutions available. One can buy the fleeces and drop them off at one of the many fiber processors. These folks fill trailers full of fleece and drive home to their mills. After washing, picking, and carding fleeces

into lofty, fluffy roving for spinning, they will ship everything right to the purchaser’s home.

Sheep farmers from all over the country bring their animals here to compete for awards. The pens are filled with a buzz—not just of activity, but of the trimming shears. Some breeds of sheep are given a trim so judges can evaluate their meat market potential, while others pant in full fleece, to be judged on the basis of their fiber.

These top competitions help shepherds nationwide to evaluate the quality of their livestock. Young 4-H farmers learn the ropes and often sleep near their animals. Other family members network, making connections that may one day boost their flocks through the purchase of a prize ram. Near the pens, fleeces wait for savvy spinners, who shop by meeting the shepherds and the sheep before purchasing their fiber.

Other shepherds participate in the festival’s livestock shows simply by putting their animals on display. Maryland Sheep and Wool has an extensive display of rare sheep breeds each year, with live examples. If sheep aren’t your thing, you can visit llamas, alpacas, and angora rabbits as well. This is a chance to see a diverse and very competitive array of fiber on the hoof.



Shearer Emily Chamelin

This festival offers it all: classes, competitions, and free demonstrations and performances for those who aren't shopping. Maryland Sheep and Wool Festival is a good reflection of its fast paced, east coast hustle and bustle location. The entrance may be traffic-clogged and the crowds can be overwhelming for those who don't expect it. Vendors fight hard to land booths at this festival and say that selling their wares here is always good for business.

On years when I've flown back to see my parents and go to this festival, I've actually had to remove things from my suitcase on the way back so it was light enough to be checked. As I hauled books, knitting projects, and other goodies in my carry-on bag through the airport, I remembered why each purchase was worthwhile . . . and absolutely necessary!

The Food

Walk down the fairway at the Howard County Fairgrounds, and prepare for a lamb feast. Although choices have improved for vegetarians in recent years, the main dish on the menu here is L-A-M-B. Pit Lamb sandwich, sausage, ribs, shish kabob, gyros, lamb burgers, lamb stew in a bread bowl—if it can be done with lamb and eaten while strolling the fair, it's served at this festival. Also popular are the numerous fresh lemonade stands, funnel cake, ice cream, éclair, caramel corn, nuts, homemade soda pop, potato chip ribbons, and other fair delights. While you may come to the fair to shop, you'll surely be sidetracked by the food. Groups of friends share tastes, and in one rare instance, a lady who didn't know us walked right up and said, "You've got to try this funnel cake! Here's mine—and don't worry, I haven't got any communicable diseases!" (Yes, spinners and knitters are this friendly!)



Sheep Dog Demonstrations

On many farms, the sheep dog, often a border collie, is indispensable. Bred with a unique combination of herding instincts and brains, this dog can round up hundreds of sheep on the farm. The farmer, (also called a handler), uses a special combination of whistle calls and voice commands to help his or her dog to do quickly the job that would take one farmer all day. Sheep can be moved from pasture to barn or from field to field without any trauma. How? Through the careful crouch, sharp stare (called “the eye”) and herding skills of a dog who looks like a predator to a sheep. Sheep automatically respond to these dogs’ crouches and stares, by edging away. It’s in their genes to “escape” from a predator.

At Maryland Sheep and Wool, these hardworking farm dogs with names like Scout or Aggie are taken off the farm and brought to demonstrate their skills to crowds of 200 or more. Three times a day, these dogs show the crowds what they can do. Since bringing a flock of sheep to a gravel pen at the festival isn’t practical, the demonstration flock consists of no more than 10 hair sheep, (varieties that don’t grow wool) who can take the stress of being herded round and round for the festival goers’ education. In order to simulate the farm, competitive dog trials all over the world use picket fences, pens, and cones to challenge the dogs. The smartest dogs have such focus that they are unaffected by crowds. They listen carefully to the handler’s commands and the sheep move en masse in complicated figure-eight patterns, in and around “bridges,” Y gates, and into and out of a pen in the middle of the ring. The crowds cheer for the dogs, but the dogs have eyes only for the sheep—and their handlers.

At the end of their runs, panting with excitement and exertion, the dogs must be leashed or hooked with a shepherd’s crook to keep them from taking off again, to work more. This drive to work has to be monitored; dog handlers in hot climates have a special command to prevent heat exhaustion. That command forces the dog to jump into water to cool down so that their sheep herding obsession doesn’t become deadly. In the demonstration ring at the festival, the applause makes the owners and handlers proud to show the city slickers their best working farm “tool.” The dogs can’t wait to get back to their home ground, the farm, to herd and work again.





Mary Jane Socks

These toe-up socks with a short row heel provide fun nostalgia and a funky picot ruffle for those of us who love their Mary Jane shoes. This pattern is ideal for using every last bit of precious hand-dyed yarns. While the Mary Jane socks are designed with a round toe and short row heel, an experienced sock knitter should be able to substitute whatever heel and toe suit the wearer best.

Skill level

Intermediate

Size

Women's Medium (Large)

Finished Measurements

Foot circumference: 8 (9)" (20.5 [23]cm)

Length from toe to heel: 9 (9½)" (23 [24]cm)

Materials

- 350 yd. (320m) of any superfine weight or fingering weight yarn that knits up at the appropriate gauge
- Sample knit with: The Barefoot Spinner *Superwash Fingering Weight Hand-Dyed Sock Yarn* (100 percent superwash wool; 350 yd. [320m] per 3 oz. [85g] skein): 1 skein; color Rose
- Set of 4 size 2 (2.75mm) double-pointed needles *or size needed to obtain gauge*
- Stitch marker
- Tapestry needle

Gauge

30 sts and 41 rnds = 4" (10cm) in St st

Special Stitch

Backward Yarn-Over: With purl side facing, bring yarn to the back under needle, and then over the top. (The leading side of the loop will be on the back of the needle.) For more information about this technique, see *Simple*

Socks: Plain and Fancy (Nomad Press, 2004) by Priscilla Gibson-Roberts.

Instructions

Note When only one set of numbers is listed, it is applicable for both sizes.

Toe

Using 1 dpn, cast on 6 sts.

Preparation row: Kf&b across—12 sts.

Distribute sts evenly onto 3 needles. Join and place marker, being careful not to twist sts.

Rnd 1: *K1, kf&b; rep from * to end of rnd—18 sts.

Rnd 2: *K2, kf&b; rep from * to end of rnd—24 sts.

Continue in this way, evenly inc 6 sts in each rnd, another 6 (7) times—60 (66) sts, 20 (22) sts on each needle.

Work even in St st (knit every rnd) until foot measures 7 (7½)" (18 [19]cm) or desired length.

Heel

Beg at marker, distribute sts as follows: 15 (16) sts on first needle (#1), 30 (34) sts on second needle (#2), and 15 (16) sts on third needle (#3).

Work the heel over 30 (32) sts, back and forth on needles #1 and #3 as follows:

Row 1 (RS): On needle #1, k14 (15).

Row 2 (WS): Turn work, backward YO, p28 (30), continuing across to needle #3.



Row 3 (RS): Turn work, YO, k27 (29).

Row 4 (WS): Turn work, backward YO, p until first paired sts made with a st with YO attached—26 (28) sts purled.

Row 5 (RS): Turn work, YO, k until first paired sts made with YO attached—25 (27) sts knitted.

Repeat rows 4 and 5, with fewer sts worked in St st each time, until 10 (12) sts rem between the YOs and you have just completed the following WS row: backward YO, p10 (12) sts.

Next row (RS): Turn work, YO, k10 (12), k2tog-tbl, (YO and next st on needle), closing the gap.

Next row (WS): Turn work, backward YO, p11 (13), p2tog (YO and next st on needle), closing the gap.

Next row (RS): Turn work, YO, k until reaching 2 YOs, k3tog-tbl, (2 YOs and next st on needle).

Next row (WS): Turn work, backward YO, p until reaching 2 YOs, p3tog, (2 YOs and next st on needle).

Repeat the last 2 rows, continuing to turn work and decrease until all YO pairs have been worked. At the end of the last p row, p3tog (2 YOs and the last st on the needle).

Next row (RS): Turn work, YO, k30 (34), k2tog (YO and first st on needle #2); knit across to the last st on needle #2; k2tog (last st on needle #2 and the YO on needle #3); knit rem 15 (16) sts on needle #3.

Cuff

Return to knitting in the round.

Work 2" (5cm) in St st.

Next rnd: *K1, p1; rep from * to end of rnd.

Continue working k1, p1 ribbing for 4" (10cm) or until cuff is desired length.

Picot Ruffle

Bind off 2 sts. *Sl 1 st back to left-hand needle. Using the single cast-on (also called backward loop cast-on, see p. 152), cast on 3 sts, then bind off 5 sts. Rep from * until all sts have been bound off.

Finishing

Using tapestry needle, weave in ends, making sure to connect the first picot ruffle to the last one on the cuff. Close toe tip with a running stitch as a drawstring to create a smooth inside seam. Make second sock for best results!



Spirited Entrelac Polo

I love using hand-painted yarns, and one of my favorite producers is Jennifer of Spirit Trail Fiberworks. Spirit Trail sock yarn is always a sellout at fiber festivals, but the merino/silk I've used here is my favorite of the company's yarns because of the lovely way that the fibers take the dye, and also because it feels so good while knitting and wearing. This design popped into my head at a spring sheep and wool festival, and I jotted down a sketch as soon as I got home. It uses entrelac patterning to show off the subtle colors in the yarn, but puts the shaping and sizing in the side panels rather than in the entrelac. It would also work well in cotton, because the stitch pattern and the horizontally knit sides and sleeves will minimize cotton's tendency to "grow."

Designed by Shelia January

Skill level

Intermediate

Size

S (M, L, XL)

Finished Measurements

Bust: 36 (40½, 42½, 46)" (91.5 [102.9, 108, 116.8] cm)

Materials

- 1,040 (1,150, 1,240, 1,420) yd. (951 [1,052, 1,134, 1,298]m) of any medium weight or worsted weight yarn that knits up at the appropriate gauge

Sample knit with: Spirit Trail Fiberworks *Minerva* (50 percent merino wool, 50 percent silk; 400 yd. [366m] per 5.7 oz. [161g] skein), colorway Antique Tapestry, 3 (3, 4, 4) skeins

- US size 7 (4.5mm) circular needle 24" (61cm) long, *or size to obtain gauge*
- US size 7 (4.5mm) circular needle, 16" (41cm) long
- US size 6 (4mm) needles, straight needles or circular needle at least 24" (61cm) long
- Set of 4 US size 6 (4mm) double point needles, at least 6" (15cm) long
- Stitch markers
- Stitch holders
- Tapestry needle

Gauge

18 sts and 24 rows = 4" (10cm) over St st using US size 7 (4.5mm) needles

Stitch Patterns

Entrelac Pattern

Foundation Row Triangles

Beg with RS facing.

Row 1 (RS): K2tog, turn.

Row 2: P1, turn.

Row 3: K2, turn.

Row 4: P2, turn.

Row 5: K3, turn.

Row 6: P3, turn.

Row 7: K4, turn.

Row 8: P4, turn.

Row 9: K5, turn.

Row 10: P5, turn.

Row 11: K6, turn.

Row 12: P6, turn.

Row 13: K6 (on ninth triangle only, k5, k2tog instead), do not turn *except* on the ninth triangle.



Tier 1 Triangles and Rectangles

Beg with WS facing.

Right Side Triangle:

Worked once at beg of tier.

Row 1 (WS): P1, turn.

Row 2: K1, turn.

Row 3: P2, turn.

Row 4: K2, turn.

Row 5: Pf&b, p2tog, turn.

Row 6: K3, turn.

Row 7: Pf&b, p1, p2tog, turn.

Row 8: K4, turn.

Row 9: Pf&b, p2, p2tog, turn.

Row 10: K5, turn.

Row 11: Pf&b, p3, p2tog, do not turn.

Purl Rectangle:

Repeat 8 times across tier.

Row 1 (WS): Pick up and purl 6 sts from the edge of the previous row rectangle. Slip the last picked-up st to the left needle, p2tog, turn.

Row 2 (and all RS rows): K6, turn.

Rows 3, 5, 7, and 9: Sl1 pw, p4, p2tog, turn.

Row 11: Sl1 pw, p4, p2tog, do not turn.

Left Side Triangle:

Worked once at end of tier.

Row 1 (WS): Pick up and purl 6 sts, turn.

Row 2: K6, turn.

Row 3: Sl1 pw, p3, p2tog, turn.

Row 4: K5, turn.

Row 5: Sl1 pw, p2, p2tog, turn.

Row 6: K4, turn.

Row 7: Sl1 pw, p1, p2tog.

Row 8: K3, turn.

Row 9: Sl1 pw, p2tog.

Row 10: K2, turn.

Row 11: P2tog. Keeping the last st on the needle, turn work to begin Tier 2. This last st will replace the first picked-up st on the first knit rectangle.



Tier 2 Knit Rectangles

Begin with RS facing. Repeat 9 times across tier.

Row 1: Pick up and knit 6 sts from the edge of the previous row rectangle or triangle. (On the first rectangle the last remaining st from the previous tier will replace the first st to be picked up) Slip the last picked-up st to the left needle and ssk with the next st. Turn.

Row 2 (and all WS rows): P6, turn.

Rows 3, 5, 7, and 9: Sl1 kw, k4, ssk, turn.

Row 11: Sl1 kw, k4, ssk, do not turn *except* on the ninth rectangle at the end of the tier.



End Row Triangles

Begin with RS facing and after completing Tier 1.

Row 1: Pick up 6 sts, slipping last picked-up st to the left needle, ssk with the slipped st and the next st, turn. (On all succeeding triangles, you will have 1 st on the needle and will only be picking up 5 sts.)

Row 2: P6, turn.

Row 3: Ssk, k3, ssk, turn.

Row 4: P5, turn.

Row 5: Ssk, k2, ssk, turn

Row 6: P4, turn.

Row 7: Ssk, k1, ssk, turn

Row 8: P3, turn.

Row 9: Ssk twice, turn.

Row 10: P2, turn.

Row 11: Sl1, k2tog, psso, keeping the resulting last st on the right needle to become the first st of the next triangle. On last triangle, break yarn and pull end through the last st.

Double Knit Edge Pattern

Worked over first and last 5 sts of the side panels. Slip all sts knitwise.

Row 1 (RS): K1, sl1 wyif, k1, sl1 wyif, k1.

Row 2 (WS): Sl1 wyib, p1, sl1 wyib, p1, sl1 wyib.

Rep rows 1 and 2 for patt.

Instructions

***Note** Due to the building block nature of entrelac and the way that the decreases are constructed for the neck opening, all sizes of the sweater are the same length. As it is designed, the sweater will fall at the hip for a small, and just below the waist for an extra large. If a different length is desired, the sweater can be lengthened or shortened by the depth of a combination of one Tier 1 row and one Tier 2 row. This means that the length will probably be changed by at least 1½–2" (3.8–5.1 cm). Remember, if you lengthen the Front and Back panels, you'll need to increase the number of stitches picked up on the sides by the appropriate amount and you may need extra yarn.*

Back Entrelac Panel

With size 6 or smaller 24" circular needles, cast on 64 sts and work 1" (2.5cm) in garter stitch (knit all rows).

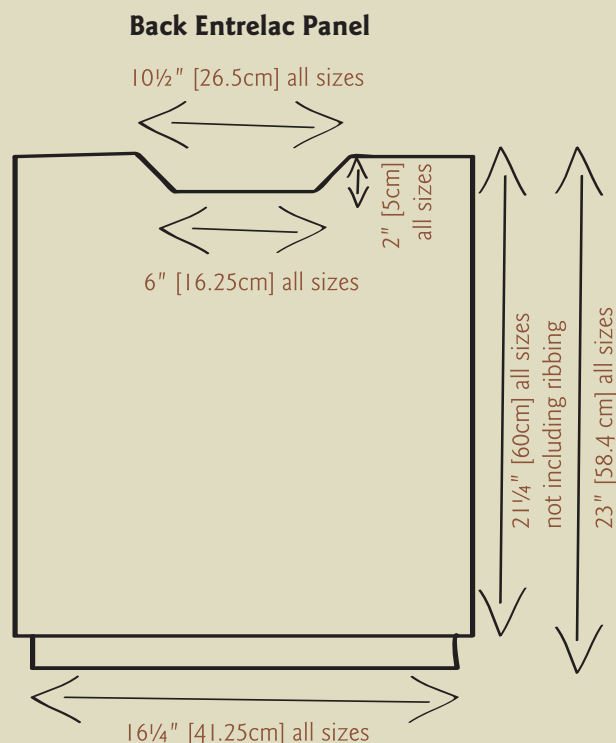
On next row, work 9 Foundation Row Triangles across the garter stitch hem—54 sts rem, 6 sts in each triangle. The triangles will be angled on the cable of the needle.

Work, alternating between Tier 1 and Tier 2 patterns, until the Back measures approximately 19¼" (48.9cm). End after completing a Tier 1 row.

Next entrelac row: Work 3 Tier 2 Knit Rectangles, then work 3 End Row Triangles, resulting in 24 bound off sts. Keep the last st from the bound-off triangles to begin working 3 more Tier 2 Knit Rectangles. You will still have the first 3 rectangles worked on the right needle (18 sts). Do not work these sts for the next 2 entrelac rows.

Left Shoulder

Entrelac row 1 (WS): Work Tier 1 for the first Left Side Triangle and 2 Purl Rectangles, turn. (Do not work the Right Side Triangle.)

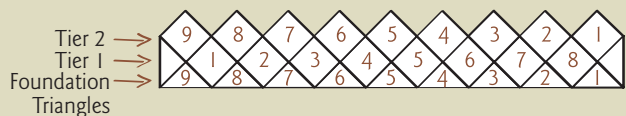




Entrelac Back Panel Shaping



Repeat Tier 1 and Tier 2 to Shoulder Shaping



Entrelac row 2 (RS): Bind off 5 sts, then use the last st to replace the first pick-up st of the first End Row Triangle. Work 2 End Row Triangles. Break yarn and pull through last rem st.

Right Shoulder

Turn work, and attach the yarn to the neck edge to begin working the reserved 18 sts.

Entrelac row 1 (WS): Do not work the Tier 1 Right Side Triangle, bind off 5 sts, then use the last st to replace the first pick-up st of the following 2 Tier 1 Purl Rectangles. Work 1 Tier 1 Left Side Triangle, turn.

Entrelac row 2 (RS): Work 2 End Row Triangles. Break yarn and pull through last rem st.

Front Entrelac Panel

Work as for Back until piece measures approximate 16½" (41.9cm) including the hem. End after completing a WS row (Tier 1).

Note If the neck shaping is begun on a WS row (Tier 1), the neckline will not be symmetrical.

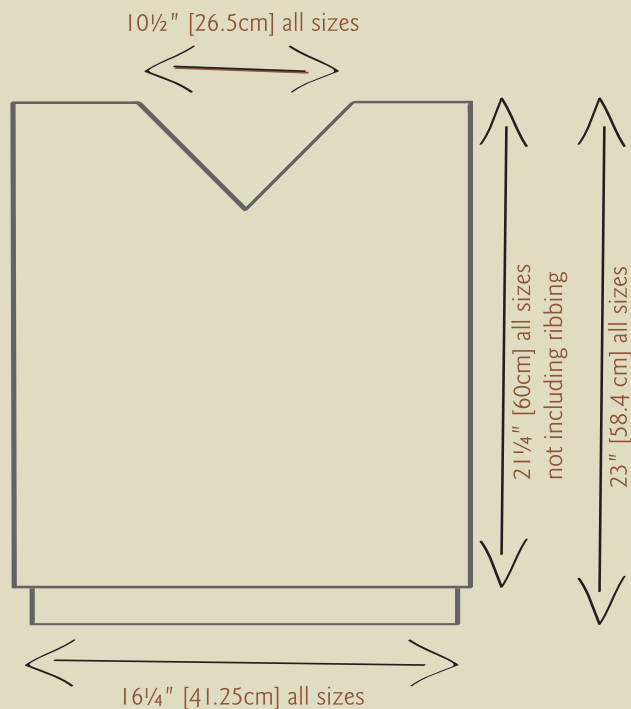
Right Shoulder and Neck Shaping

Entrelac row 1 (RS): Begin a Tier 2 row, and work 4 Knit Rectangles, turn. (The rest of the work can be put on a stitch holder at this point.)

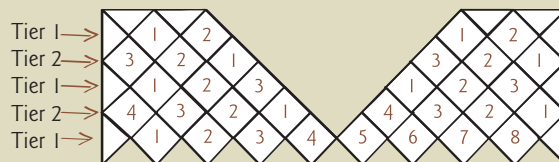
Entrelac row 2 (WS): Bind off 5 sts, work 3 Tier 1 Purl Rectangles. On the first rectangle only, do not slip the first st of the purl rows, purl these sts instead. Finish the row with a Tier 1 Right Side Triangle.

Entrelac row 3: Work Tier 2, making 3 Knit Triangles only, turn.

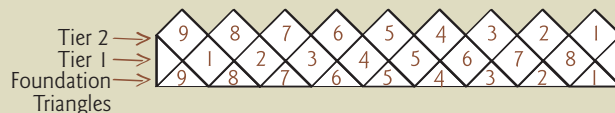
Front Entrelac Panel



Entrelac Front Panel Shaping



Repeat Tier 1 and Tier 2 to Shoulder Shaping



Entrelac row 4: Work Tier 1 as follows. Bind off 5 sts, using the sixth st as the first st of the next rectangle, work 2 Purl Rectangles and 1 Left Side Triangle, turn.

Entrelac row 5: Work 2 End Row Triangles. Break yarn and pull through last rem st.

Left Shoulder and Neck Shaping

Entrelac row 1 (RS): Put the sts that have been on a holder back on the needle, and working from the RS, attach the



yarn in the middle of the neck (the point of the V). Bind off 5 sts. Use the sixth st of the first group as the first picked-up st of the next rectangle, and work the 4 rectangles remaining in the row as Tier 2 Knit Rectangles, turn.

Entrelac row 2 (WS): Work a Tier 1 Left Side Triangle and 3 Tier 1 Purl Rectangles. Do not finish the row with a Right Side Triangle, instead, turn the work.

Entrelac row 3: Bind off 5 sts. Use the sixth st of the first group as the first picked-up st of the next rectangle, and work the 3 rectangles remaining in the row as Tier 2 Knit Rectangles, turn.

Entrelac row 4: Work a Tier 1 Left Side Triangle and 2 Tier 1 Purl Rectangles. Do not finish the row with a Right Side Triangle, instead, turn the work.

Entrelac row 5: Bind off 5 sts in knit. Use the sixth st of the first group as the first picked-up st of an End Row Triangle. Work a second End Row Triangle. Break yarn and pull through last rem st.

Sew shoulder seams, matching the entrelac pattern. It is very helpful to block the joined Front and Back entrelac panels before continuing.

Sides and Sleeves (make 2)

Using the size 7 or larger 24" (61cm) circular needle, and working from the RS bottom edge of the Front Entrelac Panel, pick up and knit 106 sts on each side of the shoulder seam—212 sts total.



***Note** An easy way to pick up the sts is to pick up 6 sts in the bottom garter borders, then an equal amount of stitches in each of the triangle sections up the sides of the Front and Back panels. For example, if there are 10 triangles on the sides of each of the entrelac panels, 6 stitches would be picked up in the garter stitch border of the Front panel, 10 in each of the side triangles of the Front, and over the shoulder seam, 10 in each of the side triangles of the Back panel, and 6 in the back bottom garter stitch border for a total of 212.*

Setup row: Work first 5 sts in Edge Pattern, place marker (pm), work in St st (knit RS rows, purl WS rows) to last 5 sts, pm, work last 5 sts in Edge Pattern.

Work in St st and Edge Pattern as est until the side measures 1½ (1¾, 2, 2½)" (3.8 [4.5, 5.1, 6.4]cm) from the picked-up sts.

Join the first and last 54 (51, 48, 44) sts of the side with the three-needle bind-off (see p. 155). The center 104 (110, 116, 124) sts rem on the needle.

Underarm Shaping

Continue working back and forth in St st and work 24 rows, dec 1 st at the beg of each row. When 24 sts have been bound off (12 at each side of the work), join the rem 80 (86, 92, 100) sts on the 16" (41cm) circular needle and work the sleeves in the round as follows:

Sleeve

Join work, placing marker at the beginning (underarm seam) of the sleeve.

Knit 4 rnds.

Begin sleeve shaping: Continue working in st st (knit every md) and at the same time dec 1 st on each side of the marker every other row 1 (1, 2, 3) times, then every fourth row until 48 (50, 52, 56) sts rem.

***Note** Use an ssk dec to the left of the marker, and a k2tog to the right of the marker.*

If necessary, work even until piece measures 18 (19, 19, 20)" (45.7 [48.3, 48.3, 50.8]cm) from the picked up sts. On the last round, dec 6 sts evenly around the arm—42 (44, 46, 50) sts rem.

Change to dpns for cuff.

Work in garter stitch (purl 1 rnd, knit 1 rnd) for 1" (2.5cm), beginning with a purl round.



Bind off.

Rep on the opposite side for the second Side and Sleeve.

Finishing

Collar

Using size 6 or smaller 16" (41cm) circular needle, with RS facing and beg at the V of the Front Entrelac Panel, pick up 34 sts from right neck edge, pick up 51 sts from back neck edge, and pick up 34 sts from left neck edge—119 sts total.

Turn and work back and forth as follows:

Row 1 (RS): *K1, p1; rep from * to last st, k1.

Row 2 (WS): *P1, k1; rep from * to last st, p1.

Work another 4 rows of k1, p1 ribbing. Switch to size 7 or larger 16" (41cm) circular needle.

Continue in k1, p1 ribbing until the collar measures 3¼" (8.3cm) from the beg of the ribbing. Bind off in knit if working from RS, and in purl if working from WS.

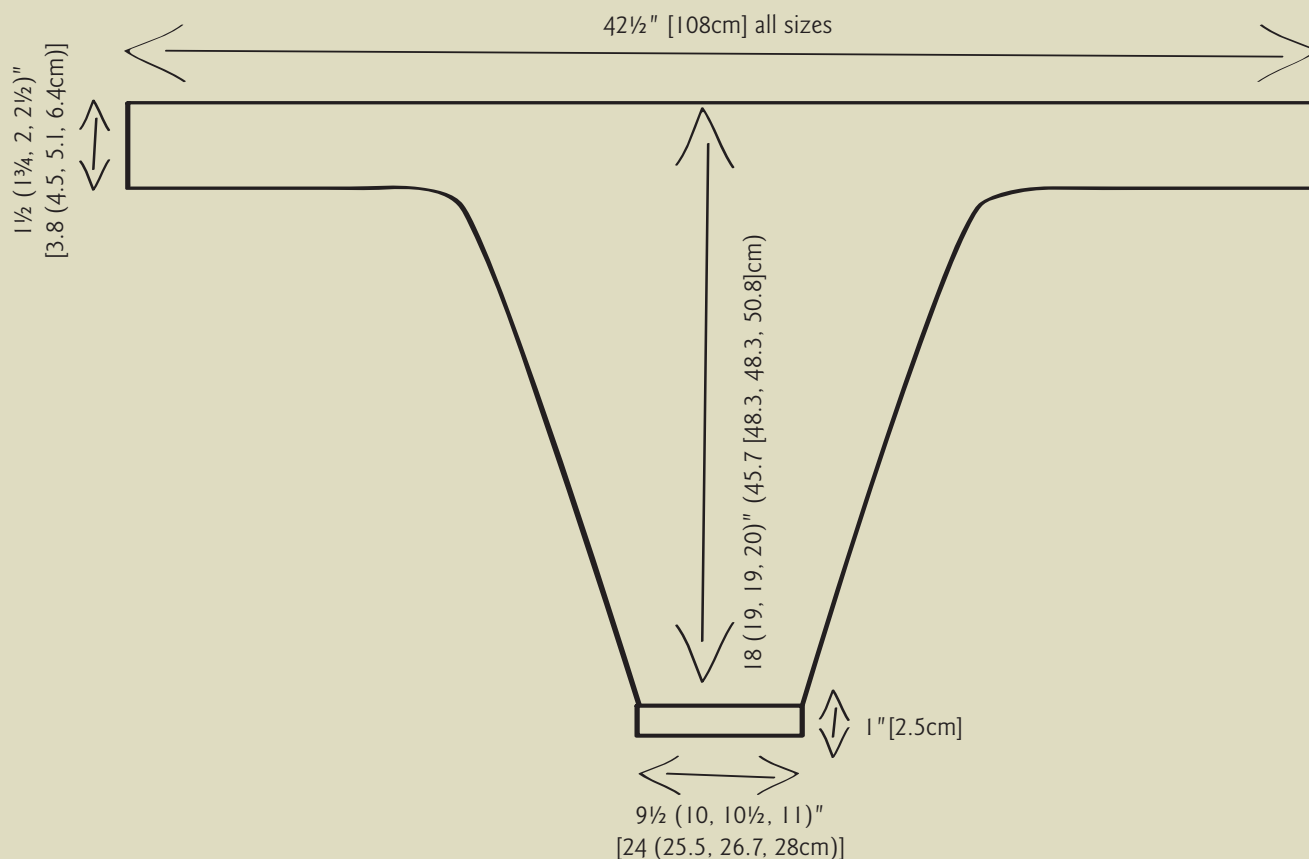
Sew underarm gusset seams. Weave in ends. When weaving in the yarn end at the V of the neckline, use this opportunity to tighten up the V, both to neaten and to reinforce at this point.

Wash and lay flat to block, paying special attention to the side seams. They will need to be flattened because of the three-needle bind-off. Fold the collar down to dry.

Designer Bio

Shelia January is a longtime knitter and designer who lives on a farm in Oregon. Shelia, who worked for 28 years in the financial services industry, says knitting keeps her sane. She became a spinner just a few years ago and now collects spinning wheels as well as yarn. She knits and designs with her homespun yarn as well as commercial yarns, and has taught spinning and knitting at retreats and shops in New York, Massachusetts, and Virginia. Shelia attends lots of fiber festivals, too. You can visit her blog at www.letstalkstash.blogspot.com.

Sleeve/Side Unit





Learning to Hand Dye Multicolored Yarn

Learning to hand dye your own yarn can be a very liberating and creative experience, not to mention lots of fun! This tutorial will cover the basics of hand painting yarn using sock yarn and commercial yarn dyes. The process is very simple, and the results are as limitless as your imagination!

By Adam Church

Skill Level

Intermediate

Materials

- 3½ oz. (100g) of any undyed wool yarn

Samples used for dyeing are:

- Knit Picks *Bare Superwash Merino DK Weight* (100 percent merino wool; 246 yd. [225m] per 3½ oz. [100g] skein): undyed, 1 skein
- Knit Picks *Bare Merino Fingering Weight* (100 percent merino wool; 440 yd. [402m] per 3½ oz. [100g] skein): undyed, 1 skein

***Note** The Knit Picks Bare line of undyed yarns was used for this tutorial, as they are ideal yarns for the beginning dyer. Both the Superwash Merino DK Weight and Merino Fingering Weight yarns were used for the sample skeins, but any yarn from the Bare line is suitable.*

- Jacquard acid dyes: These dyes are commercial acid dyes, and are used with household vinegar to dye yarn. All of the colors used in the tutorial are available from Knit Picks.
- Measurement utensils
- Latex or rubber gloves
- Dust mask
- Sealable plastic containers
- Household white vinegar
- Disposable cups or bowls
- Foam paint brushes
- Plastic wrap
- Vinyl tablecloth

- Microwave or stock pot with a steaming rack: To set the dyes, the yarn needs to be heated after painting. The yarn can either be heated in a microwave or steamed on the stovetop in a stock pot with a steaming rack.

Safety Considerations

Yarn dyeing is a very safe process provided that a few simple rules are followed.

1. When working with the dye powders wear a dust mask, as the powders are very fine and can be a lung irritant. Once the dye is mixed with water, it is safe to remove the mask. If any dye powder spills on your work surface, use a wet paper towel to wipe up the mess to prevent the dye powder from becoming airborne.
2. Once mixed into liquid form the dyes will stain, so wear latex or rubber gloves to prevent colored fingers. Also, cover your countertop or table with a vinyl tablecloth to prevent staining.
3. All utensils that come into contact with the dyes should be set aside for dyeing only. If an item is only used to measure out water or vinegar, it is safe to use for food preparation. It is also very important to have a heating source (microwave or stock pot) that is only used for yarn dyeing.
4. After your yarn is wrapped and heated, it can be very hot, so be sure to allow ample cool-down time before handling the dyed yarn.

***Caution** Handling hot yarn without proper precautions can cause moderate to severe burns. Always wear protective gloves and allow the yarn to cool before handling.*



Top row: two skeins of Colorway #2, bottom row: two skeins of Colorway #3, far left, one skein of Colorway #1, before reskeining.

Instructions

Project Colorways

The three sample color combinations, as well as the Jacquard acid dye numbers used, are provided to help you get started with the project. However, these colors are only a guideline, so feel free to choose any combination of dyes that you wish.

While the dyeing is done in stripes, you can simply reskein your yarn into a different length or size skein to break up the solid stripes so that the skein looks variegated. Note the contrast above in Colorway #1 on left (before reskeining) and Colorways #2 and #3, after being reskeined.

Mixing the Dyes

The best way to mix up the yarn dyes is to make a 1 percent stock solution. This simply means that there is 1g of dye

powder for every 100ml of stock solution. If you have a digital scale that can measure small metric amounts, use that for measuring the powders. Otherwise, the following approximation works well.

1. To make a 1 percent stock solution, mix 1 level teaspoon (3g) of dye powder with approx 1¼ cups (300ml) of hot water.
2. Stir the solution well, making sure that all clumps of dye powder are dissolved. Repeat for each color of dye powder.

***Note** Be sure to use a sealable container, so that left-over dye solutions can be stored for future dyeing. This solution can be stored up to six months in a dark place. If the dye solution becomes cloudy, simply reheat it in a dye-safe microwave or pot to dissolve the powder.*



Dyeing Preparation

1. Soak all the yarn you intend to dye in a sink full of warm (not hot) water for at least 30 minutes.
2. While the yarn is soaking, mix up the dyeing cups and prepare the workspace for dyeing.

To calculate how much dye solution is required, use this simple rule:

Use 1ml of yarn dye solution for each gram of yarn that you are dyeing.

The Knit Picks Bare yarns used in this tutorial are sold as 100g skeins, so 100ml (approx 20 tsp) of stock solution is required to dye each skein. Divide that number (in this case, 100ml) by the number of colors per skein to determine how much dye should be used for each individual color.

Then the dye required per skein is multiplied by the color's "Depth of Shade," a number indicating how dark you want the color to be. The most used depth of shade values are:

¼–½: Pastel Shades

1–1½: Medium Shades

2–3: Dark Shades

For example, all colors in the sample colorways are dyed at a medium shade, except for black, which is dyed at a shade of 2 to give a darker, richer hue. Also, white is considered a color with a shade value of 0.

To illustrate, let's examine Colorway #1. This colorway is composed of 4 colors, so we know that 25ml of dye is required for each color. Then we multiply that amount by the shade value desired for each color, giving 0ml for white, 25ml for chestnut and gold ochre, and 50 ml for black.

Colorway #1			
Color Name	Jacquard Color	Depth of Shade	Dye / Color
White	(No Dye)	0 (No Color)	0ml
Chestnut	80335	1 (Medium)	25ml (5 tsp)
Gold Ochre	80322	1 (Medium)	25ml (5 tsp)
Black	80337	2 (Dark)	50ml (10 tsp)

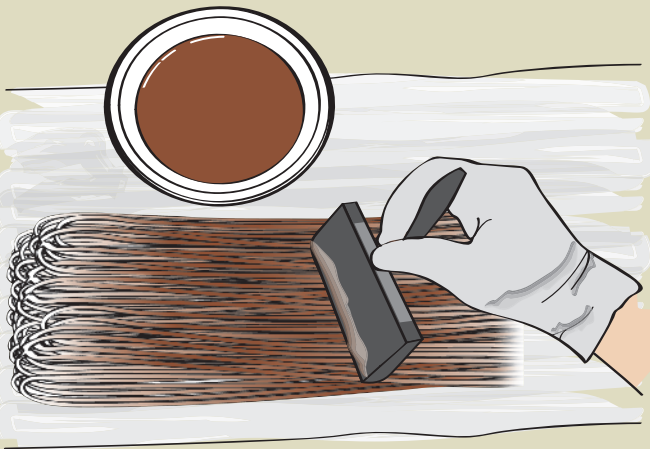
Colorway #2			
Color Name	Jacquard Color	Depth of Shade	Dye / Color
Emerald	80325	1 (Medium)	35ml (7 tsp)
Chestnut	80335	1 (Medium)	35ml (7 tsp)
Teal	80326	1 (Medium)	35ml (7 tsp)

Colorway #3			
Color Name	Jacquard Color	Depth of Shade	Dye / Color
Purple	80330	1 (Medium)	35ml (7 tsp)
Sapphire Blue	80332	1 (Medium)	35ml (7 tsp)
Gold Ochre	80322	1 (Medium)	35ml (7 tsp)

3. Once you've figured out how much stock solution is needed, measure the required amount for each color into a paper bowl or cup. Then add 1 tablespoon of vinegar, and 250ml (1 cup) of water.
4. Repeat this process to prepare the dyes for each skein of yarn.

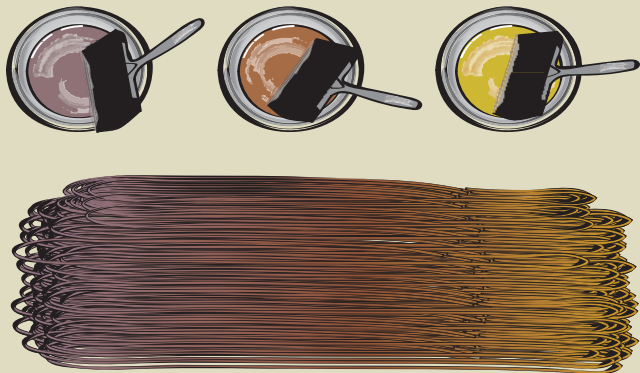
Dyeing the Yarn

1. Working with one skein at a time, remove the yarn from the sink and gently squeeze out as much water as possible. Tear off a piece of plastic wrap long enough for the skein to lay on with 6–8" (15–20cm) of space on either end. Lay the plastic wrap on your work surface.
2. Now all you have to do is paint away. Just take a foam brush, dip it in each color, and paint it onto the yarn using an up and down blotting motion.





3. Apply the colors onto the entire skein of yarn, then gently flip the yarn over and repeat on the other side. Using your fingers, inspect the skein for even color coverage, and apply dye to any remaining white spots as necessary. If you run out of dye, just mix up extra cups as necessary, using the original measurements.



4. Once the skein is saturated, soak up any excess water with a paper towel, as this will help the plastic wrap stick to itself better. Fold the bottom half over the yarn, and then the top half over the bottom half. Twist the ends closed and roll the whole package into a coil.



Processing the Yarn

Once the yarn is wrapped up, it is ready to be heated by microwaving or steaming.

Microwaving: Place the yarn in a microwave safe bowl and heat on 50 percent power for 5 minutes. Let it rest for 5 minutes, then heat it again for 5 minutes on 50 percent power.

Steaming: Place the yarn on a steamer rack in a stock pot with 1–2" (2.5–5cm) of water at the bottom. Bring to a boil and steam for around 30 minutes.

Rinsing:

1. After the yarn is heated, wearing latex or rubber gloves, remove it from the heat source and place in a drained sink to cool. *Take care as the yarn will be very hot.* Let the yarn cool to room temperature (this may take a few hours), then rinse in tepid water. It is very important to let the yarn cool to prevent felting and to allow the dye to finish setting.
2. After rinsing, gently squeeze out as much water as possible and hang the yarn to dry.

Finishing: Reskein yarn into a differently sized skein in order to break up stripes and show skein variegation.

Enjoy your beautiful hand-dyed yarn!

Designer Bio

Adam Church is an electrical engineer by day and a fiber enthusiast by night. He runs Yarn Nerd, a company with a scientific twist on hand-dyed yarn, creating unique colors to excite the nerd in everyone. When he's not creating fun colorways such as *Printed Circuit Board*, Adam likes to knit, knit, and knit. His yarns can be found at www.yarnnerd.com.