

Entrelac knitting

Basically diagonal patchwork, knitting sections together as you go with twice the number of rows as stitches.

How to do it – basic entrelac (ignoring colour changes)

Instructions for a sample using 5 st per block (s= slip 1, k = k1 unless specified, p = p1 unless specified)

Cast on a multiple of 5 sts, e.g.20 sts

Start by producing a foundation row of base triangles:

*K turn;... .. p turn; S k turn; ... s, p turn

S k2 turn, ... s, p2 turn; S k3 turn, ... s, p3 turn

S k4*

This completes the first base triangle – leave these sts on the needle and repeat * to * to end of row.

Then do the first side triangle (not necessary for knitting in the round)

P into front and back of first st, turn; ... s k turn

Inc in 1st st, p2 tog (with 1st st of next triangle), turn, s k2 turn

Inc in 1st st, p p2 tog; turn, s k3 turn

Inc in 1st st, p2 p2 tog; turn, s k4 turn

Inc in 1st st, p3 p2 tog (5 sts from this block on needle)

To continue along row, work first “purl block”

Pick up and p 5 sts along side of next base triangle, turn

*S k4 turn; s p3 p2 tog (with 1st st of next triangle), turn

rep from * until all sts left on next triangle joined, ending on p side.

Leave these sts on needle and work next “purl block”

Repeat along row until last half of last base triangle remains, then for the last side triangle, pick up and purl 5 sts as before, but on every k row, k the 1st 2 sts tog. When 1 st remains, this will become the 1st st of the k row of blocks.

“knit blocks”

Work with k side facing, pick up and k 5 sts down side of block, turn,

s p4 turn; S k3 k2tog tbl (with 1st st of next block) turn

Cont until all sts of next block worked, ending with a k row.

Continue along row.

Repeat these two rows of blocks until the piece is long enough, then one row of “purl blocks” again, then work top triangles (on a “knit” row of blocks):

K side facing, pick up and k 5 sts as usual, turn

S p5 turn; k2 tog, k k2 tog tbl, turn

S p3 turn; k2 tog k 2 tog tbl, turn

S p turn; k2 tog tbl

Continue with next top triangle, until all sts have been worked off.

You will need decreases before beginning the base triangles, and increases at the end if you want to put entrelac on to or before a section of straight stocking stitch, as the knitting on the cross is wider and shorter than standard stocking stitch. (e.g. my socks needed between 2 and 3 stitches per block)

Variations

You can use garter stitch – this will be flatter as 2 rows are twice the height of a stitch – or any other stitch or stitch pattern. The squares can be any size, and you can even do oblongs with more stitches/rows in some sections of the pattern.

Colours

The simplest way to knit entrelac is in one colour, which gives texture, but no colour changes (e.g. the back of my variegated waistcoat) or do the patches without trying to continue on to the next section (e.g bits of my ikat waistcoat).

Converting this to a 2-colour pattern, so rows sloping one way are one colour, and those going the other way a different colour means that you have to start/finish the colours at the beginning and end of the rows, unless you knit in the round (e.g. socks). (3 colours will mean that the colour could be stranded up and knitted back – but would not give a false-woven pattern.)

Multicoloured “woven” entrelac

I have worked out away to strand the colours to give an impression of weaving (originally for a Weavers Spinners & Dyers exhibition). For this, you have one row more per block, leaving the end of the yarn at the highest point of the block, and slipping the stitches on the completed block so that you are in the right place to start the next one with a new colour, (a different ball of yarn for each block).

On the next row, you strand the yarn for the next block up the side of the previous block as you work it, so that when you come to the relevant square it is in the right place to start the block. Difficult to explain, but works!!

Multicoloured entrelac works both in the round and backwards and forwards. The big disadvantage is that you have one ball for each woven “strand” – I ended up with 60 balls on my entrelac jackets!!

Shaping

Garment shaping is easiest in multiples of blocks (e.g. waistcoat, pattern worked out as a number of 5 cm squares), but you can also do gradual shaping by knitting 2 together in the middle of a block – this reduces the number of rows in the following block, and gradually travels diagonally across the fabric (used for sleeves of entrelac jackets).

Multicoloured entrelac knitting

Sarah Cage

Knitting & Crochet Guild, Warwickshire Regional Coordinator

5 Beaks Hill Road, Kings Norton, Birmingham B38 8BJ

0121 433 3486; email ps-cage@digital-explosion.co.uk

Yarn stranded up on the back from one square to the next

