

## Knitting proportions

When combining knitting in different directions, it is useful to know the relative heights of stitches, so that the fabric comes out reasonably flat.

This is affected by the relative sizes of needle and yarn, but in general, only **garter stitch** has an exact equivalence between rows and stitches. It will give a perfect 45° angle when you increase/decrease every other row, as one stitch is about the same width as two rows are high. Moss stitch and similar textured stitches are similar in shape.

With **stocking** stitch the stitches are slightly higher (or narrower). As a result stocking stitch fits better with a 30/60° angle (depending whether you decrease every row or alternate rows) – so it is good for hexagonal patchwork. When picking up the side of stocking stitch I usually find that 3 stitches are about equivalent to 4 rows.

**Stranding** on the back of stocking stitch tightens the stitches further, making them almost square, so a decrease every row will give about a 45° angle.

In **ribbing** stitches are even higher/narrower, so to get a 45° angle you'd have to decrease more than one stitch per row, and probably need to pick up more than one per row if knitting off the side.

Remember that sideways knitting tends to be less elastic, (more likely to stretch and not recover), so a garment knitted completely sideways will be more likely to drop.

Diagonal knitting avoids some of the “dropping” problems, and tends to hang quite well. It can add interest and different colours without needing lots of colours in a row, but avoid unflattering horizontal stripes. There are various types of diagonal knitting – the simplest increases at one side and decreases at the other, or increases at both and decreases in the middle. You can get zigzags by repeating this across the row.

The next stage is to knit patchwork in some form. There has been a recent upsurge of various types of patchwork knitting. I've not really tried very much apart from log cabin patchwork (as the back of cushion), but started knitting entrelac stitch about 10 years ago, and I've experimented with a wide range of things – mostly ones I've designed, but after I had done various garments, people started passing me patterns they found, some of which (e.g. the socks) I have tried out.

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## Scribble lace

This stitch is described in Debbie New's book “unexpected knitting”. She shows it in a scarf, a jacket, and as a yoke for a dress (with very complicated short-row shaping). So far I have made a poncho, a shawl and a scarf.

Basically it is stocking stitch, using very large needles (10-15 mm), and chunky (or thicker) yarn with fine (2-ply) yarn or sewing cotton.

Knit one row of the chunky, followed by two or three rows fine. Pull the knitting down regularly, particularly after the first fine row, and be careful not to knit two together accidentally with the fine yarn. Cast on and off with the chunky, as the fine yarn will not give enough width for the structure.

It is easiest to use double-ended or circular needles for this (large sizes available from the Knitting & Crochet Guild\*), as to do the single rows in the chunky you have to start again from the same end some of the time.

This is a good stitch to try out with an exciting chunky yarn, as it displays it very well, and doesn't need very much to produce quite a large shawl.

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