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Opening Extract from...

Ultimate Knitting Bible

Written by Sharon Brant

Published by Collins & Brown

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Sharon Brant spent ten years as a Design Consultant and now works as a Retail Manager for Rowan Yarns. She has worked closely with prominent knitwear designers such as Kaffe Fassett and Brandon Mably, and often teaches workshops and provides technical support for up-and-coming designers. Her work has been seen in films including Harry Potter and Phantom of the Opera. Sharon Brant is the author of Finishing Techniques for Hand Knitters, also published by Collins & Brown (978-1-84340-491-0).

Ultimate Knitting Bible is the definitive reference for all aspects of knitting – from the first stitch you cast on to the care and maintenance of your projects. If you are a novice knitter then this book will guide you step by step through everything you need to know in order to confidently knit any project that catches your eye, from the simplest scarf to the most gorgeously textured and embellished sweater. If you are an experienced knitter then this book will be an invaluable treasure trove of techniques that you can dive into and look up new skills.

In the first two chapters, Getting Started and Knitting Basics, you will find useful information for all knitters – from choosing the right needles and understanding your tension (gauge) to casting on. Next, Structure and Shaping reveals how knitting projects are constructed.

The Texture With Stitches chapter covers cables, crosses, twists, bobbles and more. Types of Knitting looks at different knitting techniques and includes pockets. Next, discover how Knitting With Colour can produce simply stunning results. The Embellishments chapter reveals how the plainest knitted project can be made stylish and interesting by the addition of sparkling beads, colourful embroidery, perky pom-poms or an elegant fringe.

Once all the skills are mastered Professional Finishing Techniques and Troubleshooting chapters will arm you with all the know-how you need to take your knitting to a whole new level.

With a simple format and cross-references on virtually every page, this one-stop volume makes every aspect of the knitting process accessible to knitters of all ages and abilities. This is the one knitting resource that you will turn to time and time again.

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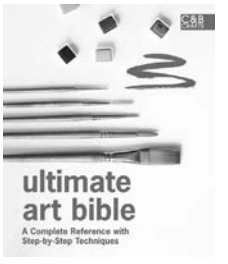

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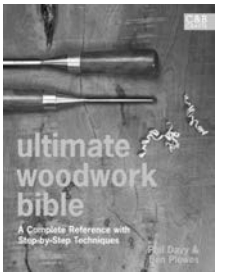

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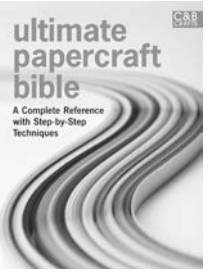

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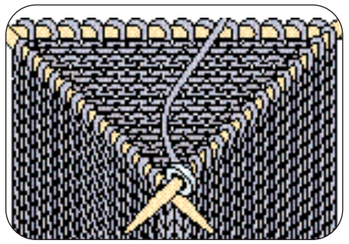
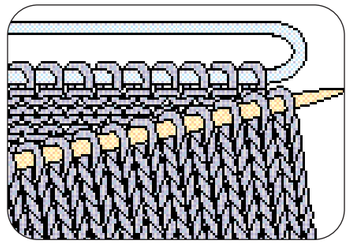
Knitting a sock

Here is a sample pattern for a child's sock, which is worth knitting to practise all the techniques. Choose a double-knit or Aran-weight yarn and four double-pointed needles the size recommended on the yarn ball band.

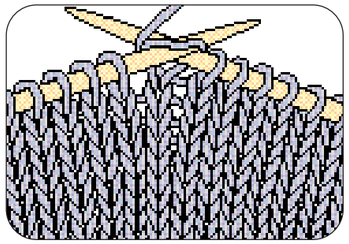
Cast on 42 stitches, casting 14 stitches on to each needle (page 122). Place a round marker after the last stitch cast on.



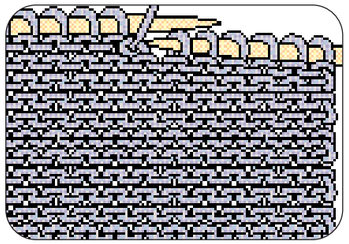
1 Work 6 rounds (page 122) of single rib (page 46). The top edging is complete. Change to stocking (stockinette) stitch (remembering that in the round this means knitting every row), and knit until the leg is the required length. (This is the measurement from the cast on to the top of the heel.) Cut the yarn, leaving a 15cm (6in) tail to sew in later (page 200). The leg is complete.



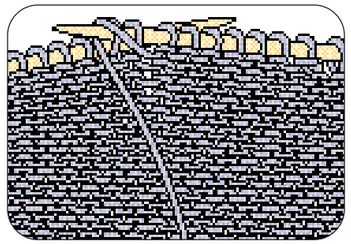
2 Slip the first 11 and the last 11 stitches of the last round onto one needle: these 22 stitches will be used for the heel. Slip the remaining 20 stitches onto a stitch holder (page 12) or spare needle: these will be picked up when working the instep.



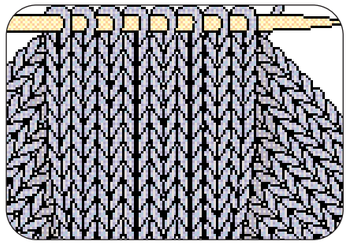
3 With the right side of the work facing you, re-join the yarn (page 53) to the right-hand side of the heel stitches. Using a spare needle, knit across these stitches. Continue working back and forth on these 22 stitches in stocking (stockinette) stitch (remembering that when working back and forth you knit and purl alternate rows), for approximately 5cm (2in), ending with a wrong side (purl) row.



4 With the right side facing, knit 14 stitches then skpo (page 79) to decrease by 1 stitch. Leave the last 6 stitches not worked and turn the work by swapping the needles in your hands. The right-hand needle holds 6 stitches from the previous row and the left-hand needle holds 15 stitches.



5 Purl the next 7 stitches then p2tog (page 78) to decrease by 1 stitch. Leave the last 6 stitches not worked and turn the work.



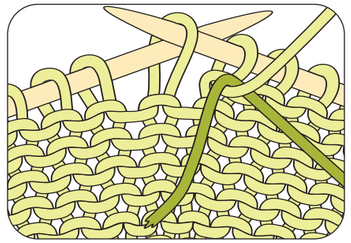
6 On the next row, knit 7 stitches, skpo, turn. On the next row, purl 7 stitches, p2 tog, turn. Repeat these 2 rows until 8 stitches in total remain on the needle, ending with a wrong side row. Turn the work.

knitting stripes

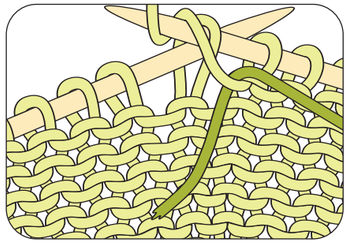
The easiest way to introduce colour work into your knitting is by working stripes. They are simple and fun and can be added to almost any existing pattern.

Joining in a new colour stripe

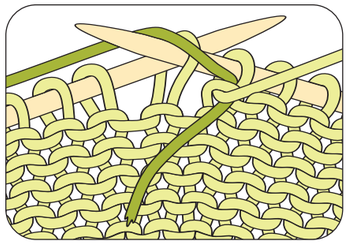
You can simply join in a new colour at the side seam (page 53), but to eliminate some of the ends at the side it is best to join in the new colour before the end of the last row of the old colour. This technique leaves you with fewer ends to sew in (page 200) when the knitting is complete.



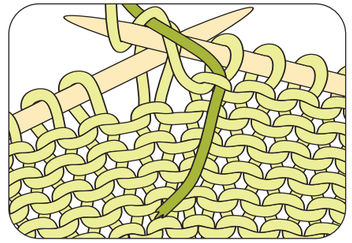
1 On the row before the new colour is needed, stop about ten stitches before the end of the row. Lay the new colour over the existing colour.



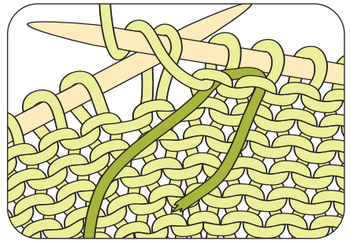
2 Hold the new colour down with your left thumb and work the next stitch in the existing colour, catching the new colour into the back of the stitch.



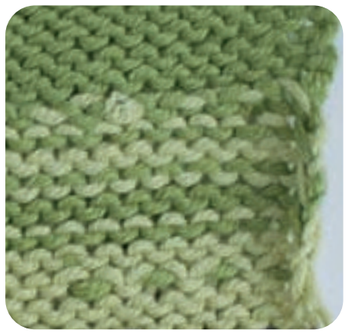
3 To weave the new colour in as you work, lay it over the tip of the right-hand needle.



4 Work the next stitch using the existing colour and keeping the new colour held high to stop it from going through the stitch.



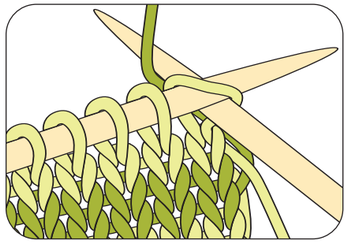
5 Holding the new colour down, work the next stitch with the existing colour. Continue in this way, weaving the new colour in on every alternate stitch to the end of the row. Turn the work and the new colour is safely secured and ready to do the next row. If you no longer need the old colour, cut the end and weave it in on the following row on every alternate stitch using the same technique.



The new colour woven in on the previous row.

Carrying yarn up the side of the work

When you are working stripes, do not join in a new colour for every stripe. Instead, carry the colours not in use up the side of the work until you need them again. The colours must be caught into the knitting at the end of every alternate row to prevent big loops appearing.



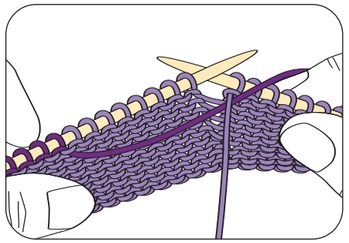
If you are working a two-row stripe, then just knit the first stitch of the third row with the new colour. For wider stripes, catch in any yarns being carried up the side at the start of the next row. Put the right-hand needle into the first stitch, lay the yarn to be carried over the working yarn and work the first stitch in the working yarn.

Working stripes

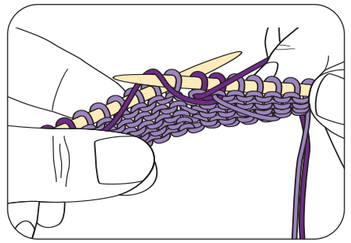
If the stripes are over an odd number of rows, the next time you need a specific colour it will be at the wrong side of the work. Rather than joining in the new colour (page 53), work back and forth on a circular needle and when the yarn is at the wrong end, simply slide your stitches to the other end of the needle and turn the work and the right colour will be there ready to knit with. If you are not working on a circular needle and the yarn you need is at the wrong end, slip the stitches back onto the left-hand needle, then start the next row. Remember to carry the yarn up both sides of the work.

Bringing a colour across the back

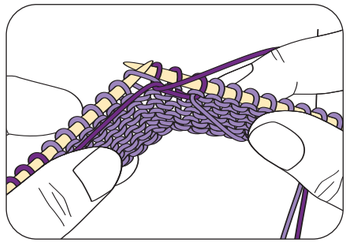
When working in intarsia you will sometimes need to carry a contrast yarn across the back for a few stitches, ready for the next row where it will be needed earlier than where it was left on the previous row. You can do this by weaving in the contrast yarn along the row (page 148), but if you have missed doing this, there is another technique.



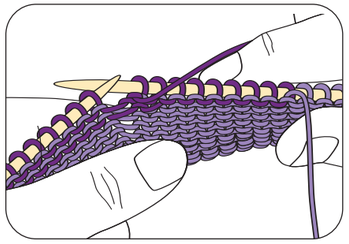
1 On a purl row, bring the contrast colour across the stitches to where it is needed, keeping the loop quite loose. Bring it under the original colour and purl a stitch with the contrast colour.



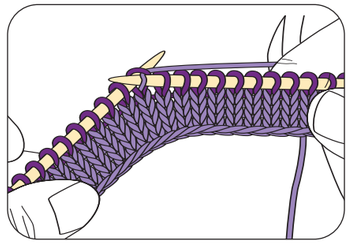
2 To anchor the contrast loop as you purl across the row, put the tip of the right-hand needle into the next stitch and then under the loop.



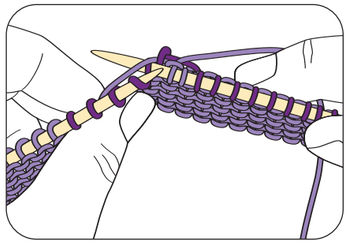
3 Purl the stitch, making sure that the loop doesn't go through the stitch. Repeat on every alternate stitch until the loop is anchored across the fabric.



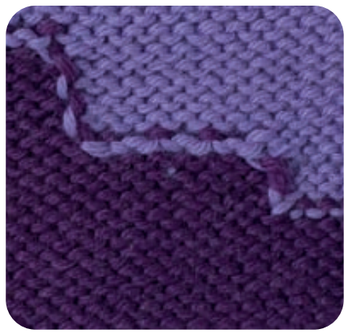
4 Here you can see the back of a knit row and the dark purple yarn that needs to come across the stitches.



5 Bring the yarn across the back of the stitches to where it is needed, keeping the loop quite loose, and knit the stitch with it.



6 To anchor the loop as you knit across the row, put the tip of the right-hand needle into the next stitch and then under the back of the loop. Knit with the new colour, not allowing the loop to come through the stitch. Repeat on every alternate stitch until the loop is anchored across the fabric.



A loop anchored across the back of stitches.