
Intarsia Knitting with Edie Eckman

Chapter 1 - Intarsia Knitting

Introduction

Overview

(playful music tones) - Hi I'm Edie Eckman. I'm a knit and crochet designer. And I'm going to show you how to do the intarsia technique in knitting. What is intarsia? Intarsia is a colorwork technique that uses blocks of color. We won't be carrying the yarn or stranding the yarn, but using a separate ball of yarn or separate bobbin of yarn to work each section of color as we go across a row.
(lighthearted music)

Intarsia Knitting

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- This intarsia diamond is worked back and forth. Intarsia is usually worked flat, or back and forth. You can see that the odd numbered rows are right side rows, and are worked from right to left. The even number rows are worked from left to right. We'll be working in stockinette stitch, so knitting the right side rows and purling the wrong side rows. Each square represents one stitch. We'll be working from the lower right to the upper left hand corner, but as we work, we'll be counting each stitch as we go. The first two rows are plain stockinette stitch, rows one and two. When we come to row three, we'll be counting how many pink stitches we have, and then stop, add a green stitch, and then with a new ball of yarn, continue on with the pink stitches. Let's see what that looks like in real life. I'll be using orange yarn instead of the pink yarn you see here, the pink color you see here. And I have already cast on 23 stitches and done a few rows of stockinette to get ready. So let's say that I have already done rows one and two in plain, solid colored stockinette stitch, and I'm ready to start row three. I'm going to count the number of stitches I have up to the diamond. One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, 10, 11. So I'll do 11 stitches and then do one stitch in green and work the remainder stitches in orange. There are my 11 stitches. And now I'm going to come over here and take the green and I'm just going to leave a long tail and start knitting one stitch with green. At this point it's tempting to think that I should just pick up the orange yarn I was working with, and keep going, but that's not what I'm going to do. Instead, I'm going to begin a new ball of orange. Now I have prepared this bobbin with orange yarn, so I can work the other side of my diamond using a separate ball of yarn. You can use either an entire separate ball of yarn, or use a bobbin of some type if you wish, or you can just wind a little butterfly on your fingers, so that you have a separate strand of background color. And I'm going to begin working with that new background color here. Now this first part looks pretty messy because we didn't connect those yarns to each other. We didn't tie a knot, we didn't weave in any ends, we just have a big mess of yarn tails there. And that's part of intarsia. There are other ways you can prevent that, but for now, let's just say, yep, we have a little bit of a mess here, and we'll come back and fix that later. Let's take a look at what we do on row four. On row four, I'm going to be working in this direction. I'll work one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, 10 stitches in my background color. Then I'll work three greens, and then work

the remainder in my background color. One thing I wanna point out here is if you take a look you can see a pattern develop. Once I have established my first stitch, I find it helps me to think, instead of having to count, I just think, okay, I'm going to go out one stitch each side in my pattern color, my design color. So that's the way I think about it, that it just grows out a certain number of times. Let's work row four. Because I'm working a wrong side row, I'm purling. I'm just beginning with the yarn that was waiting for me, so that's the yarn that was on the bobbin. Now, when I get to the point that I need to do my green yarn, or change yarn colors, and you can see, two, four, six, eight, 10 stitches, you can see I'm one away, so these three stitches here are going to be green. I have to do something special to keep from ending up with a hole where I change yarn colors. If I just dropped this orange yarn, and started working with the green, I'd have a hole between the colors, and I don't want to do that. Instead, what I do is I take my old yarn color to the left, and I pick up my new yarn color, the green, from underneath. You can see that the orange is crossing over the green. So now I can purl this next stitch with the green. I'll do three stitches in green. And that gets a little loose, because that tail isn't tied into anything. Now once more, wanna be careful not to get twisted up. I'm gonna take this orange yarn that we began the row with, and get it out of the way. It is connected now to the green. But now my green is my old color, and my new ball of orange, my next ball of orange, is what's coming next. So I pass the green over the orange, that's the first ball we started with, and begin to purl. You do want to be careful not to get the yarns twisted unintentionally. But always take the old yarn color to the left, and pick up the new yarn color from underneath. Now I'm ready to turn my work, and I'll work the next row. And this time, maybe I don't even have to look at counting the stitches, because I just know that my green is going to go one more stitch out from where it is now. And I'll show you what that crossing those yarns, or twisting those yarns, looks like on the knit side. Here I am, I'm going to do a green stitch next here. I make sure my orange yarn is to the left, my old yarn is to the left, and I'm going to knit this stitch with the green yarn. You can see that by doing that, I'll be crossing those yarns. I can drop the old color, and begin knitting with the new color. Here I am coming up on my last green stitch. I'll pass the green yarn to the left and pick up the new yarn, the orange yarn, and knit the next stitch. That will cross the stitches, and then I'll just work in that background color all the way to the end. Whether you're on a right side row or a wrong side row, the rule is always the same. The old yarn color goes to the left and the new yarn color is picked up from underneath. I'm going to keep knitting according to my chart, and then I want to show you a trick about weaving in the ends. Just for fun I'm going to show you what happens when we don't cross the yarn. You see there's my old color, here's my new color. I'm not going to cross the yarn at this one point, and in just a moment, I'll show you what that looks like so you'll recognize it if it happens to you. Here I am going to cross my yarn. Now here's the point where I didn't cross my yarn last time. Can you see there's going to be a big gap here? I created a hole. Gonna cross the yarn here. There's a hole there, and we don't wanna hole there, but you see where I have crossed my yarn, it's nice and tidy and tight. Not even tight, just the same tension throughout. But there I've created a hole. So that's an error, it's a very common error in intarsia. But what happens down here at the beginning where I started I have a giant hole, oh, that's awful! Why is there a hole there? There's a hole because my ends aren't connected to anything, my yarn tails are not connected to anything, I just started working. So I need to go back with a tapestry needle and weave in those ends to close up this hole. Lemme take a tapestry needle and show you how to do that. Going to thread my green yarn onto a tapestry needle. See if you can see the path of the yarn on this stitch. Can you see that a stitch goes out, around, down, and it should be coming over here. So I'm going to take the tail of my yarn and go over here, just like this. That completes

the path the yarn wants to take. Now just to be sure I did that right, let me take a look at the right side. Can you see that I have made that yarn go out, around, down, and over here, where it wanted to go, and closed up that hole. Now that I've put the yarn tail where it wants to be, I can just weave this in the way I would normally weave in an end, and if possible I wanna do that in the same color to match the yarn. So I'm going up diagonally, and of course if I had finished my diamond, I would probably go up in a couple different directions. You can see though, if you cross your yarns, you don't end up with a hole. If you don't cross your yarns, you end up with a hole. And I can go ahead now and finish working my diamond. I'll do one more row, where I go out with the green, and then my green will start decreasing, and my orange will start increasing. I'm maintaining the same number of stitches, but the number of each color changes. Here's another swatch I made using that same pattern. This is a blue diamond, and you can see what it looks like when it's finished. You will probably notice that this diamond that's knitted is more squashed than the diamond in the chart. Why is that? It's because the diamond in the chart is charted using a square grid, but stockinette stitches are actually rectangular. They are wider than they are tall. That's because you don't have the same proportion of stitches to rows on the chart as you do on the actual knitting.