
Learn to Knit: Basketweave Scarf with Jill Draper

Chapter 1 - Introduction

Overview

- Knitting in its most basic form is using two sticks and some yarn to make a stretchy and elastic fabric that's made up of a series of interlocking loops. There are two basic stitches in knitting, the knit stitch and the purl stitch. We'll be using both of those to create this basket weave scarf.

Chapter 2 - Getting Started

Materials you will need

- Before you can learn how to knit, you need to gather all your materials together. The first thing you're going to need is a pair of straight needles in size seven or eight. I prefer wood you can also find them in plastic and metal. You'll also need around 400 yards of worsted weight yarn. I prefer wool because it's soft and elastic, you want something that's nice and round and I also suggest picking something that's light in color. I'm using a super wash wool, so it's nice and stretchy without being too hairy, so if I make any mistakes it'll be easy to rip it out. To finish your project you're also going to need a darning needle, also sometimes called a tapestry needle. Basically it's just important that it has a nice big eye so that you can get the yarn through it easily. It's also a good idea to have a nice sharp pair of scissors it'll keep your ends really neat. Once you've gathered all your materials you're ready to learn how to knit.

Winding yarn using a swift

- Before you're ready to cast on, some yarns need to be wound into a ball. If you buy yarn like this, it's already in a ball, and you can start knitting with it, just like it is. On the other hand, if you buy yarn and it looks like this, you need to wind it. If you have one of these, a swift, you can use that. If you don't have a swift, you can use someone's hands, or the back of a chair. Have it in a loop, open the swift up, tighten it to hold it in place. Most yarn is going to have two ties on it. I'm just gonna snip the knot. There's one, and here's my second one. It doesn't matter which end you start with. One of them usually pulls a little bit easier. So you're just gonna wrap it around your fingers. And then, just start wrapping it around itself. One of the benefits of using a swift is the swift is doing all the work. It's rotating as I'm winding the ball. It's great for this woolly yarn, because it's nice and elastic. You can see the yarn I'm using is hand-dyed, so there's lots of variations in the skein between dark and light shades. The scarf that we'll be doing in this class is a basket-weave scarf, which I would say probably my first dozen scarves were all variations on the basket weave. It's a nice flat pattern, but there's enough going on with the pattern to keep you interested. The basket weave pattern also only utilizes knitting stitches and purl stitches, so it's a really easy pattern to memorize, and it looks good in a variety of different weights of yarn. The basket weave pattern we'll be doing is just with one yarn, worsted weight, on number seven or eight needles, but it looks equally good if you have a pair of 15s or 17s, and you could hold lots of yarns together to make a really, more textural scarf. So after you finish winding this into a ball, then you're ready to cast on.

Slip knot

- The first step to doing any kind of cast on is a slipknot. The cast on we'll be doing is the long tail cast on. So you wanna pull out about an arm's length worth of yarn. To make your slipknot, you're

gonna make a loop and then this strand that's laying on top, place the loop over so you get this pretzel shape. Then you're gonna take your needle, slip your needle underneath. Tighten that up. And the reason they call it a slipknot is because when you slide, it'll slip right up. This is your first stitch cast on. And it's the only one you're gonna cast on that way. The rest we're gonna cast on using the long tail method.

Long tail cast on - Righties

- Now that you have your slip knot on, you're ready to start with the long tail cast on. ^You're gonna lay the two strings over your palm, ^grasp it and make a gun. From the same side, push your thumb and your index finger through so you see a diamond. Bring the needle down. Take the needle up your thumb behind the string. Around the string attached to your index finger, and back through that loop. Again, it's up your thumb behind the yarn, grab the yarn around your index finger, and come right back through that loop around your thumb. Up, around, and through. Up, around, and through. I'm right handed, so you can see I'm doing this with my right hand. If you're a lefty, you're gonna do it the exact same way, but you can check it out in our segment called Casting On for Lefties. When you're casting on, you want to make sure not to cast on too tightly or too loosely. The stitches should slide really easily on your needle, but not fall off when you tip it. I have 20 stitches, so I need to cast on four more. Up, around, through. Up, around, through. Up, around, through. Up, around, through. So that's my 24th stitch. I have a little bit of yard left over here, which is fine. You want to leave a tail to weave in at the end. I'm just gonna butterfly this to keep it out of my way. So to butterfly it you just wrap it around your index and middle finger a couple times. Take the tail, wrap it around and through, and then just slip it up through that crosstie. And I'll jus do it one more time. And this is just to make sure that the end stays out of my way, and then I knit with the side attached to the ball, and not to that short end. After you've cast on your 24 stitches, you're ready to start knitting. Double count and make sure you have 24, and that includes your slip knot.

Long tail cast on - Lefties

- After your slip knot's on your needle, you're gonna do the long tail cast-on. In this segment, I'll be casting on with my left hand. If you're right-handed, you should check out the long tail cast-on for right-handers. ^So you lay the two strands across your palm, ^grab it, make a gun, ^stick your thumb and index through from the same side, bring the needle down, rub it up your thumb, grab that strand of yarn attached to your index finger, pull it through. There's your diamond. Up your thumb, around your index, through the hole. Pull the needle down, go up your thumb, behind the yarn, grab the one around your index finger, and pull it through that loop. Make sure that you're casting on loosely enough that the stitches slide easily, but not so loosely that they'll fall off. You're gonna keep doing this until you have 24 stitches cast on. That includes your slip knot. When you're casting on, you wanna make sure that you cast on loosely enough that your stitches slide easily, but not so loosely that they fall off. I have 20 stitches on here now. I need to cast on four more. Up your thumb, around and through, up, around, and through. After you've cast on your 24 stitches, you just wanna double-count and make sure that you do in fact have 24, including the slip knot. And then I have this tail of yarn here which I'm gonna butterfly to just keep it out of my way and make sure that I knit with the yarn attached to the ball and not the short end. So to butterfly it, you just wrap it around your index and middle finger a couple times, take the tail, wrap it around and through, through, and then just slip it up through that cross tie. And I'll just do it one more time, and this is just to make sure the end stays out of my way, and that I knit with the side attached to the ball and

not to that short end. Once you've done that, you're ready to start knitting.

Chapter 3 - Knit Stitch

Knit stitch - English method

- To knit using the English Method, you're going to pick up the needle that has your cast on stitches on it, put it in your left hand. The empty needle goes in your right hand. You're gonna go through the front loop of the first stitch on your left hand needle and make an X with your needle tips. Grab the yarn with your right hand, bring it under your right needle tip, over the top, make the X again and push your right needle tip through that loop. The second one again, through the front loop, make an X, take the yarn in your right hand, wrap it under and then over, you have an X and push your needle tip back through the same hole you came through. Through the front loop, around through the same loop, and use the needle tip to push it off. Into the loop, around the needle tip push the needle tip back through that loop, and take it off your left hand needle. For every stitch that's getting added to your right hand needle, a stitch should be coming off your left hand needle. Between your two needles, you should always have your original 24 stitches. Through the loop, the yarn comes around, push the needle tip through, and take it off your left hand needle. Into the loop, around, through to the front, off. Almost at the end of my first row, I've continued across, knitting all the stitches the same way. I'm at my last stitch and I'm gonna knit it the exact same way I've knit all the other ones. Around and off. Now the needle in my left hand is empty, and the needle in my right hand is full. I'm gonna switch hands. The full needle always goes in your left hand, and the empty needles always goes in your right. I'm ready to start my second row, and we're going to work that exactly the same as the first. The important thing is to make sure that you're going through the front loop of this first stitch on the needle and not this loop down here, which is from the row below. So you're going to continue the second row the exact same way as the first. Into the loop, make an X, around, through, off. You're just going to repeat this, knitting every stitch, every row, and every time the needle in your right hand is full, the needle in your left hand is empty, you're just going to switch hands. You want to count periodically, from time to time, to make sure that you still have your original 24 stitches. Continue doing this until you feel comfortable with the knit stitch. When you knit every row, every stitch it's called "Garter Stitch". Garter Stitch makes a nice, elastic fabric that you can use for scarves, because it won't roll.

Knit stitch - Continental Method

- To knit using the continental method, the full needle goes in your left hand, the yarn over your left index finger, and the empty needle in your right hand. You put your right needle through the front loop of the first stitch on your left-hand needle. Grab the yarn over your index finger, and pull it through the loop. Use the back of the right-hand needle to knock that stitch off the left-hand needle. Again, you go through the front loop, grab the yarn, pull it through to the front, make an X, pull the stitch off the left hand needle. Through the front loop, grab the yarn, pull it through to the front, and ah. Through the loop, grab the yarn, pull it off, through, grab the yarn, pull it off. For every stitch you're adding to your right-hand needle, one is coming off your left hand needle. The continental method is also sometimes referred to as picking, because you're coming through the loop, picking the yarn, and pulling it through to the front. You're going to continue on in this way, knitting every stitch of every row, until you're really comfortable with the knit stitch. Knitting every stitch of every row makes a pattern we call garter stitch.

Chapter 4 - Purl Stitch

Purl stitch - English method

- After you gotten the hang of the knit stitch you're ready to move on to the pearl stitch. The pearl stitch is basically the mirror of the knit stitch, to pearl using the English method, you're going to go into the front loop on the left hand needle, right to left, take the yarn, go over the top of the right hand needle, push it through to the back and pull the stitch off your left hand needle. Into the front loop, over the top, through, off. Into the front loop, over the top, through and off. You're gonna continue across the row, purling all the stitches. And just like the knit stitch, every stitch that gets added to your right hand needle gets removed from you left hand needle. Continue across, through and off, one more stitch to go, through, over the top, and off. So, I've just finished my first pearl row, I'm now gonna knit the next row and continue knitting one row and purling the next row, and this pattern is called stocking net stitch. The reason it's called that is because that's what stockings were made out of where as garter stitches was done at the top to hold them up.

Purl stitch - Continental method

- To purl using the continental method, you go from right to left through the first loop on your left hand needle, put the yarn over your right hand needle, pull it through and off, through, grab the yarn to the back, off, in through that front loop, grab the yarn from underneath, pull it through, off, in through, off, in, through, off. I have three stitches left to go, over the top, through, off. The top, through, off. Last one. Through, and off. You can see when you knit a row, and then purl a row, what you get is stockinette stitch which is the smooth looking stitch right here. I think it's a great way to practice, to continue knitting on one side, and purling on the opposite side, until you're really comfortable with both stitches. The next step? We're gonna try working them in the same row.

Chapter 5 - Combining Stitches

Knit and Purl same row - English method

- The next skill you wanna try is knitting and purling in the same row. The important thing when switching between knits and purls is to know that when you knit, your yarn is held in back, and when you purl, your yarn is held in front. So when you switch from knitting, I have four knit stitches here, to purling, I'm gonna move the yarn in between the needle tips to the front, and then get ready to purl. And as you can see, the yarn's in my right hand, so this is the English method. Now I'm ready to knit again. So to knit, my yarn's in front, I'm gonna move it in between the needle tips, and knit four. I'm ready to purl. Bring it in between the needle tips to the front, purl four. You can see all my purl stitches have these bumps, and all my knit stitches are smooth Vs. On the other side, all the stitches that are purls are knits, and all the stitches that were knits are purls. That's because the purl is the back of a knit stitch. The knit is the back of a purl.

Knit and Purl same row - Continental method

- After you've mastered the knit stitch and the purl stitch, the next step is knitting and purling in the same row. The thing you wanna remember is to switch your yarn in between your needles. I've worked my first four stitches as knit, and now I'm ready to purl using the continental method. My yarn's in back, which is the position that I knit in. I'm gonna move it to the front so I'm ready to purl. Enter my first stitch. Purl four. Now I'm ready to knit. So I'm gonna take my yarn in between my needle tips and move it to the back. You wanna think of these as goal posts, and the yarn can only move in between the posts. Knit. Purl. I'm ready to knit in between my goal posts. You can see I

have my knits and purls stacked on top of each other. Here are all my knit stitches that look like these, and all my purl stitches that look like bumps. Knits and purls. If you can't remember if you should be knitting or purling just by looking at it, if you end it by purling, that means you start by knitting. Because the knit stitch is just the back of a purl stitch.

Chapter 6 - Finishing

Bind off

- Once you're comfortable with both the knit stitch and the purl stitch, you can bind your swatch off. This is the step that's gonna get your stitch off your needles and it's how you're gonna finish every project. You'll often see in patterns, it says bind off in pattern. What that means is you're gonna knit your knit stitches and purl your purl stitches. My first four stitches are knit. So, I'm gonna knit them off. Knit the first stitch, knit the second stitch, take your left-hand needle and put it into the second stitch on the right-hand needle. Lift that stitch up, over, and off the top. If you're holding onto the yarn, you won't lose the second stitch on the needle. You now have one stitch on your right-hand needle. Work the next stitch on your left-hand needle. Mine's a knit, so I'm going to knit it. Put the left needle into the second stitch on the right-hand needle. Lift it up, over, and off. I have another knit stitch here. I'm gonna knit it. Take the second stitch over the first, and off the end. Now I'm ready to purl. Move your yarn to the front. Purl your stitch, the second stitch comes up, over the top, purl again, up, over the top. Two more purls, purl that stitch, up over, the top. Purl, lift the second one over the top. While you're binding off, your right-hand needle should only have either one stitch or two stitches on it. If you have more than one or two, you've gone too far. I'm gonna knit that stitch, take it off, knit the next stitch, take the second one over the first. Two more knit stitches. Knit, take it off. Knit, take the second stitch over the first. Now switch it to the front to purl. Purl, second stitch over the first. Purl, second stitch over the first. Purl, second stitch over the first. Purl, second stitch over the first. Ready to knit. Move the yarn to the back. Knit, up, over and off. I'm ready to purl. Purl, up, over and off. Purl, up over, and off. Purl, up over and off. Now I have one stitch left on my left-hand needle. It's a purl, so I'm going to purl it. Take the second stitch over the first. Now I just have one loop left on my right-hand needle. I'm gonna pull that stitch up nice and big. I'm gonna give myself a four to six inch tail to weave in, and then I'm gonna cut the yarn. Now I'm gonna take the tail, slip it through this loop, and give it a tug. You want that last loop to be the same size as all your other bind off loops. Now, all your stitches are bound off, and there's just once last step to finish your swatch.

Weaving in ends

- It doesn't matter how you finish your swatch, but I think it's a great time to practice weaving in your ends, so you're a pro at it when you're ready to move on to your first finished piece. You're going to need your darning needle. Take the end, thread it through the needle, and I like to use the purl bumps to hide my tail. So I'm going to go up through one, down through the next, up through one, down through the next. And if you're doing a neat job of it, it should be pretty much invisible. I'm gonna go about an inch in one direction, in this case, I'm moving to the left. And then I'm going to go up a row, and work to the right. The reason that you want to go in both directions is because knitting is stretchy, and if you only weave it in one direction, when the knit stretches, your tail will pop out. After I feel like it's secure, I'm gonna take my nice sharp scissors and cut it really close. It's barely noticeable on the wrong side, and when you flip it over to the right side, you can't see it at all. That's the way it should be.

Chapter 7 - Pattern

Basketweave scarf

- Now that you've learned the basics, the knit stitch, the purl stitch, casting on, and binding off, you're ready to work on your first project. I think a great first project is this basket weave scarf. It utilizes the knit stitch, the purl stitch, casting on, and binding off and it's an easy way to practice all your skills. As you can see, you use knit stitches and purl stitches in the same row just like you did here in your swatch. The only difference is you line up the knits on top of knits and the purls on top of purls for six rows. And then you switch and place the purl stitches on top of knits. That's what gives you this basket weave or checkerboard pattern. This is a great way to practice switching back and forth between knits and purls and also getting to recognize them by sight. When you're ready to start your scarf, download the pattern and cast on 45 stitches, as directed. Then you're gonna continue to follow the pattern, until your scarf reaches the length that you want it to be. Mine's just long enough to reach around my neck once and still have ends to tuck inside my coat. See, you can see with just a few basic stitches, you can make a scarf that'll keep you warm all season long.