

Short Rows

Welcome TKGGA Members. The subject is Short Rows. In this lesson we will concentrate on short rows with wrapped stitches, keeping in mind this is one way, but certainly not the only way to accomplish this technique. I hope you find it helpful and interesting, and will find the time to practice the suggested swatches.

Short Rows - *Are a means of shaping the knit fabric within the work and/or at the edges. The technique adds partial rows wherever needed, to build up, or shape the work, and is used in both flat or circular knitting.*

Some uses:

We use short rows in: Heel turns in socks; raising the back neck area in sweaters; shaping darts; a variety of collars, including shawl collars; shoulder shaping; elbows in fitted sleeves; increasing the length of the back collar; vest points; shirttail shaping; short row miters; ruffles; spheres; knitted toys, and so on. A versatile technique to include in your knitting arsenal, and one worth learning.

However, the technique has some shortcomings. For instance, patterns worked in colors, as in Fair Isle, or overall stitch patterns, such as Arans, do not easily lend themselves to short rows. The result of turning the work before the end of the row, or in the middle of a pattern section **may** disrupt some designs and become too visible.

A little planning goes a long way:

How to determine if short rows will work with your pattern? Before you CO a single stitch, chart the short rows on graph paper first, this will help you visualize if their use will adversely affect the pattern. If you haven't done this before, make your first short row attempts in a single yarn St. St. garment. The use of short rows is easier to plan in plain stockinette stitch and/or garter stitch. Wait until you have some experience using the technique before trying to work around more complicated stitch or color patterns.

Filling in the "Hole":

Another item to keep in mind when working short rows is the hole which occurs when knitting is turned within a row. However, there are several ways to help overcome this.

A: Wrap the turning stitch with yarn, working the wrap and stitch later.

B: Always slip the turning stitch before and after the turn (not always suggested in technique books, but highly successful in minimizing the "hole").

C: Wrap the turning stitch, but leave the wrap in place when work is completed, as in Garter Stitch.

D: Don't wrap the turning stitch, instead pick up a stitch from the row below (same as working a lifted increase) and knit the lifted stitch and the turning stitch together as one.

What do we mean by "wrap"?

On a knit row, once you reach the row stitch where the short row is made, the working yarn is brought

to the front of the work (the side closest to you), the next stitch on the left-hand needle (the turning stitch) is slipped purlwise onto the right-hand needle, and the working yarn is then taken to the back of the work (the purl side of St. St.). Leave the remaining stitches in the row untouched, turn the work and start the next row. It might help to think of the un-worked stitches as being placed on a stitch holder, except the "holder" is your knitting needle. Notice then, as you begin to work back on the next row, the base of the turning stitch is wrapped by the working yarn.

On a purl row, the wrap procedure is slightly different. After you work the stitch *before* the turning stitch, take the yarn to the back of the work. slip the next stitch from the left-hand needle onto the right hand needle, bring the yarn to the front, leaving the remaining stitches on the needle, turn the work, After working the next two stitches in the following row (a knit row), the turning stitch is wrapped at its base by the working yarn.

Wrap with pick-up:

In *Stockinette Stitch* the turning stitch is usually wrapped to provide extra yarn, which will fill in the resulting hole when the wrap and its stitch are later worked together as one. This is usually referred to as *pick(ing) up the wrap*.

Pick up the wrap - knit side:

After the short row shaping is finished, it's time to work the entire row of stitches, picking up the wraps and working them together as one with the turning stitches. This is where the extra yarn fills in the hole.

RS--Work to wrapped knit stitch, then, from the front of the work insert the RHN tip under the wrap yarn first, lift it onto the RHN, knit the turning stitch then slip the wrap from the RHN over the stitch (as you would when working an SKP). Some knitters prefer to use other methods to complete working the wrap and the turning stitch together, and that's acceptable also. Some pick up the wrap with the point of the LHN, others work a sort of SSK to combine the wrap and the turning stitch. The important thing to remember, pick up the wrap first, then work the wrap and stitch together. Take a look at the RS of the work, if the stitches are crossed, or the wrap is still visible, then something went wrong. Take a trip to the "frog-pond" and try again.

Pick up the wrap - purl-side:

From the **WS--**Work to the wrapped purl stitch, insert RHN tip into the wrap from the *knit side* of the work, lifting it onto the LHN, then purl together with the stitch it wrapped. Look at the RS of the work, the stitches should not be crossed, nor the wrap visible. Knitters sometimes find this side the hardest to work. Just remember to pick up the wrap from the right side of the work, and all should go smoothly.

Wrap without pick up:

In *Garter Stitch* the turning stitch should be wrapped, but the wraps are **not** picked up, instead they are left in place, wrapped around the turning stitch. The reason for this is because the wrap looks very similar to the purl stitch, and is less visible when left in place. If it's picked up and worked with the turning stitch, the resulting stitch appears as a knit stitch in the midst of purls, and is very obvious.

No wraps:

When the short row turning stitches involve **decreases** on the following row, working together both the turning stitch and the following one, a wrap is **not** required or desired. The decrease itself successfully provides enough extra yarn to fill in and hide any hole. *An example of this is the heel turn shaping in a sock.*

SWATCH #1: STOCKINETTE STITCH - WRAPS WITH PICK UP



TEST SWATCH: Stockinette Stitch - CO 26 sts, work 6 rows in garter stitch to hold down lower edge. Work 4-6 rows in St. St. beginning with a *knit row*. Now follow the instructions below:

Building the Short Rows:

Row 1 (rs): Knit to last 4 stitches, bring yarn to front of work, slip next stitch purlwise from LHN to RHN, take yarn to back, leaving remaining 3 stitches on needle, turn work.

Row 2 (ws): Slip the turning stitch and purl across row to last 4 stitches, wrap next stitch by taking the yarn to the back, slip next stitch purlwise from LHN to RHN, bring yarn to front. Leaving remaining 3 stitches on needle, turn work.

Row 3: Slip the turning stitch onto the RHN, knit across the row to the last 8 sts. Wrap the next stitch the same as you did on Row 1. Leave remaining stitches on needle, and turn work.

Row 4: Slip the turning stitch onto the RHN, purl across row to last 8 sts, wrap next stitch as you did in Row 2, leave remaining stitches on needle, turn work.

Completing Rows and Picking Up Wraps:

Row 5: Knit across row to first wrapped stitch, pick up the wrap by inserting the RHN tip into the wrap from the **knitside**, knit the turning stitch, then slip the wrap over the stitch. Knit across entire row picking up each wrap and its stitch working them together as described above.

Row 6: Purl across row, working each wrap and turning stitch together. First picking up the wrap and then purling both wrap and stitch together. This is where it becomes super important to insert the RHN tip into the wrap from the **knitside** and lift onto the LHN. If you lift the wrap from the purlside, it

doesn't clear the stitch of the wrapped yarn, which remains visible on the right side.

Work 4 more rows in st st , then BO all stitches.

SWATCH #2: GARTER STITCH WITH WRAPS - NO PICK UPS



TEST SWATCH #2 : Garter Stitch - CO 26 sts, work 10-12 rows in garter stitch, then work as follows:

Building the short rows:

Row 1 (rs): Knit to last 4 stitches, *bring the working yarn to the front of the work, slip the next stitch from the LHN to the RHN purlwise, take the yarn to the back of the work, leave the remaining stitches on the needle, turn the work*.

Row 2 (ws): Slip the turning stitch onto the RHN, take the yarn to back of work, knit across to last 4 sts, and work the same as Row 1 from * to *.

Row 3: Slip the turning stitch onto the RHN, take the yarn to back of work, knit across to last 8 sts from the end of row, then repeat Row 1 from * to *.

Row 4: Slip the turning stitch onto the RHN, take the yarn to back of work, knit across to last 8 sts from end of row, repeat Row 1 from * to *

Rows 5 - 8: Knit all rows, *do not pick up wraps*. BO on next row.

SWATCH #3: USING SHORT ROWS TO SHAPE SHOULDERS



TEST SWATCH #3: Shoulder Shaping - Using short rows instead of BO to shape shoulders. CO 50 sts, work about 2" in St. St. On next RS row, work as follows:

Building the Short Rows: Row 1 (rs): Knit across row to last 5 sts, *bring the yarn to the front of work, slip next stitch from LHN to RHN, take yarn to back, turn work*.

Row 2 (ws): Slip turning stitch to the RHN and purl across row to last 5 sts, * take yarn to back, slip next stitch from LHN to RHN, bring yarn to front, turn work *.

Row 3: Slip turning stitch onto RHN, then knit across row to last 10 sts, rep Row 1 from * to *.

Row 4: Slip turning stitch onto RHN and purl across row to last 10 sts, rep Row 2 from * to *.

Row 5: Slip turning stitch onto RHN, knit across row to last 15 sts, rep Row 3 from * to *.

Row 6: Slip turning stitch onto RHN, purl across row to last 15 sts, rep Row 4 from * to *.

Rows 7 & 8: Work across both rows completing each wrap and turning stitch together as you did in Swatch #1. BO the center 20 sts as you work the last row.

When the swatch is finished the center stitches are BO, and both shoulders have "live" stitches. The Front shoulders are shaped in the same manner, and both shoulders can then be seamed together using a 3-needle BO, kitchener stitch, or any other shoulder closing methods you prefer to use. You will find using short rows to shape the shoulder-line very effective, neat, and not as bulky as the "stair-steps" usually found when BO groups of stitches at the shoulder edges.

ABBREVIATIONS:

RS = right side

WS = wrong side

BO = bind off

RHN = right hand needle

LHN = left hand needle

St.St. = stockinette stitch

CO = cast on

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