

Knitting in Color - Stranded Knitting

Color knitting named for the loose yarn (floats) stranded across the wrong side of work

Features

- small patterns
- 2 colors traditionally per row
- thick and warm fabric = yoke, hem, cuffs eg
- can be less elastic if effort is not made to prevent this
- typically represented by charts
- typically worked in the round (floats can obscure stitches on the wrong side)
- stickier and thinner yarns make floats and easier

Techniques:

- carrying a yarn in each hand is often cited as best practice
- strongly 'handed' knitters may maintain better tension by holding both colors in their dominant hand, whether left or right.

Color dominance

- identify the dominant theme or figures of the colorwork pattern versus the background, always hold that yarn to the Left

Steeks

- "steeks" or bridges of up to 9 extra stitches are created to allow openings in the circular fabric, added (backwards loop in alternating colors) at cast on edge or neck or underarms.

Maintaining tension

- use longest possible needle (5 in circ, longer DPN) so that the completed stitches can be spread out to to the right when changing colors to create more generous floats
- work the tube inside out so float travels on the outer circumference and is naturally longer
- secure long floats (>7 stitches) by inserting the Right needle under the float when knitting a (center) stitch above it

Shaping

- work increases or decreases in single color rows when possible
- work increases by M1L or M1R or by YO with twist in the following row to tighten
- work single decreases with two colors considering what color should be on top
 - K2tog the left stitch is on top, ssk or skp the right stitch is on top
- double decreases
 - sl2, k1, pss0 is a centered double decrease, center is raised and center stitch shows on top
 - sl1, K2tog, pss0 is a left slanting double decrease, rightmost stitch on top
 - K3tog is right slanting and leftmost stitch shows on top
 - ssk, k1, k2tog is a centered double decrease without a raised center stitch

Finishing

- bind off by shifting the colors one stitch to the right to line up colors in the bind off over color in the row.
- using 'sticky' wool can minimize finishing as the cut ends do not need to be secured as they will felt when trimmed, otherwise weave in ends normally, or preferentially into the steaks if used.
- washing/saturating and drying under tension is essential for evening out the tension in stranded work