

Woolly Thoughts

IN PURSUIT OF CRAFTY MATHEMATICS



To Bias Or Not To Bias

*Garter stitch shawls in any yarn
designed by*

Pat Ashforth & Steve Plummer

To Bias Or Not to Bias

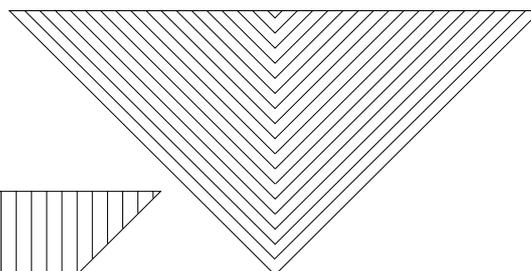
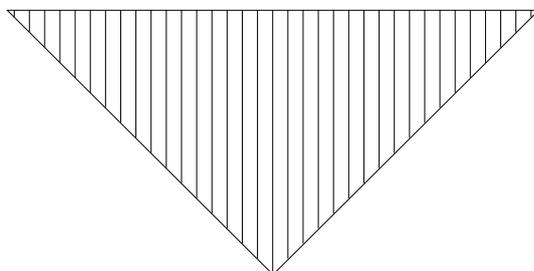
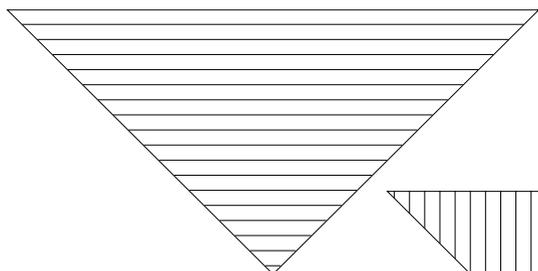


In recent years the way of knitting shawls and scarves has changed. They used to be simple affairs in basic triangular, round, or rectangular, shapes. Nowadays the shapes are much more varied. This pattern concentrates on triangular shawls.

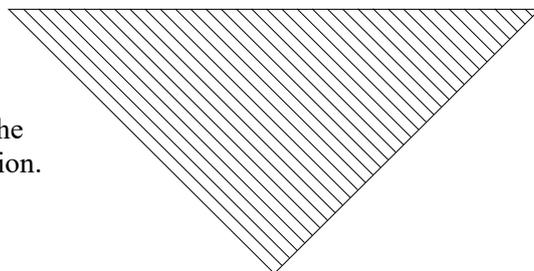
There were four main ways of knitting (one piece) triangular shawls

- From the bottom point upwards
- From the long edge downwards
- Side to side
- From the centre to form a spine

Traditionally, most of these shawls were right-angled isosceles triangles.



This pattern only discusses the newer, very popular method of starting at a point and always increasing. The thing that makes this style of shawl different from the others is that it creates an apparently asymmetric shape. The shape is actually the same as the others; the knitting merely runs in a different direction.



Basic method for knitting this shawl

Begin with two stitches

Row 1: Knit into front and back of the first stitch, knit to the end

Row 2: Knit

Repeat these two rows until the shawl is big enough. Cast off loosely. Finished!

Yarn and needles

You can use absolutely any yarn you want on any size of needles.

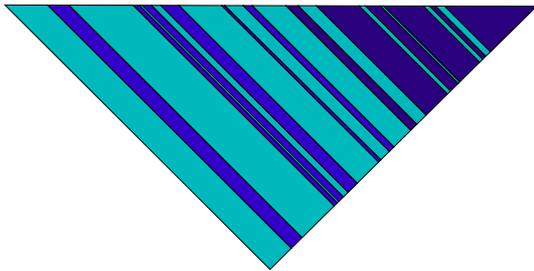
I usually use larger needles than those recommended for the yarn. I go up by two or three sizes but you can go higher if you want. Larger needles give a more open fabric which could possibly stretch more. On the other hand, they give a soft and cuddly fabric. Use the needles that give a texture you like.

The amount needed will depend on the yarn you choose.

Size

Your choice. Stop when you get bored/run out of yarn/the shawl is big enough.

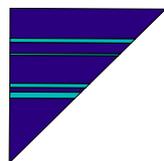
I usually make mine about 120 cm (48") on the short edge, when I am using 4 ply or DK, which gives a width of approximately 167 cm (66"). The width will always be about 1.4 times the length of the shorter sides.



This shawl was made using the basic pattern, changing yarns randomly. I had three shades of the same textured yarn. One was navy, the second green and the third a mixture of the two.

I wanted it to look green at one end and navy at the other but had no other plan at the start. The table shows how many garter ridges I worked in each colour. You could achieve a similar effect by using two yarns and holding two strands together, changing them as required to create three different shades.

Stripe	Ridges	Colour	Stripe	Ridges	Colour
1	30	navy	13	3	mix
2	3	green	14	6	green
3	2	navy	15	1	mix
4	2	green	16	14	green
5	13	navy	17	6	mix
6	1	green	18	3	green
7	5	navy	19	3	mix
8	2	green	20	1	green
9	14	navy	21	2	mix
10	6	green	22	21	green
11	4	navy	23	7	mix
12	11	green	24	14	green



This diagram shows the beginning of the shawl as you see it when you start at the point.

Note

A garter ridge is two rows of knitting. Changing colour in garter stitch results in a row of little dots on the wrong side. You should always knit complete ridges before changing colour if you want to avoid getting these on the front. You could choose to deliberately create the dots on alternate sides so the finished shawl has no right and wrong side. One row of dots looks like a mistake; several rows make the design look planned.

Finishing

I did not add anything extra to any of the edges of my shawl.

If you want to add any garter stitch edging, and keep your edges flat, pick up

- one stitch from the end of each garter ridge on the short side
- one stitch from each stitch on the cast-off edge
- seven stitches from every five garter ridges along the long edge

Variations

Use any sequence of stripes you like. You could even use remnants of odd balls of yarn provided that they are all of similar thickness. The yarns do not all have to be of the same fibre but remember to wash according to the instructions for the most fragile.

Change the shape

If you would like a long scarf, or shawl, with pointed ends instead of the triangle, it is easy to adjust the shape.

Begin in the same way as for the shawl and work until the scarf is the width you want (as shown by the red line)

Next row: Increase at the beginning of the row (as before), k2tog at the end of the row.

Next row: Knit

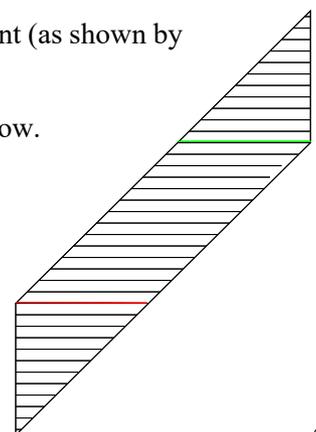
Repeat these two rows until you reach the green line.

Next row: Knit to last two stitches, k2tog

Next row: Knit

Continue until all stitches are worked off.

To make a scarf with both points on the same side, cast off at the green line.



Add some lines of holes

This simple change will dramatically affect your shawl in a variety of ways.

- The drape of the shawl will change because the fabric is more open.
- The long edge is soft with a line of holes near the edge so it can be pulled up and folded over to form a 'collar'.
- The shawl will scrunch up along the lines to make it wearable as a scarf.
- There will be interesting illusions because the ridges and stripes of the knitting do not run in the same direction as the lines of holes.

Method

Begin with two stitches

Row 1: Knit into front and back of the first stitch, knit to the end

Row 2: Knit

Next row: kfb, knit to end

Next row: Knit

Repeat the last two rows until you have 14 stitches

Next row: kfb, k8, k2tog, yfd, k3

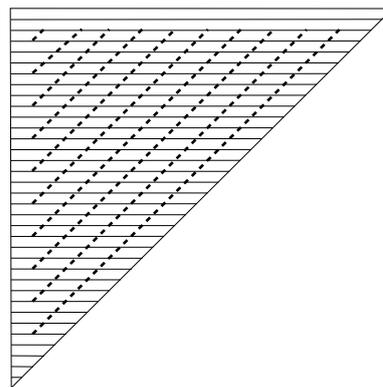
Next row: Knit

Next row: kfb, k8, k2tog, yfd, k4

Next row: Knit

Next row: kfb, k8, k2tog, yfd, k5

Next row: Knit



Continue in this way until you have 14 stitches after the last yfd (26 stitches)

Next row: Knit **Note: All wrong side rows are Knit so will not be mentioned again.**

Next row: kfb, k8, k2tog, yfd, k10, k2tog, yfd, k3

Next right-side row: kfb, k8, k2tog, yfd, k10, k2tog, yfd, k4

Next right-side row: kfb, k8, k2tog, yfd, k10, k2tog, yfd, k5

Continue in this way until you have 14 stitches after the last yfd (38 stitches)

Next row: kfb, k8, k2tog, yfd, (k10, k2tog, yfd,) twice, k3

Continue, beginning a new row of holes each time you have 14 stitches after the last yfd, until the shawl is the size you want. You can make the rows further apart, or closer together, if you prefer.

The holes are slightly inset from the left-hand edge to stop the edge from stretching. To make the top edge match, work three or four more rows, still increasing at the beginning but omitting all k2tog and yfd. Cast off loosely.

You might consider your shawl to be finished or you may wish to add an edging which can be as simple, or complicated, as you like.

The number of ridges on the left-hand edge is the same as the number of stitches on the top edge so making matching borders is relatively easy. Bear in mind that the border will be parallel to your ridges/stripes at the top but perpendicular to them at the sides.

My Edging

I prefer to pick up stitches along the left-hand edge and cast off again on the next row. This gives a finished edge very similar to the other cast-off edge but it is not essential.

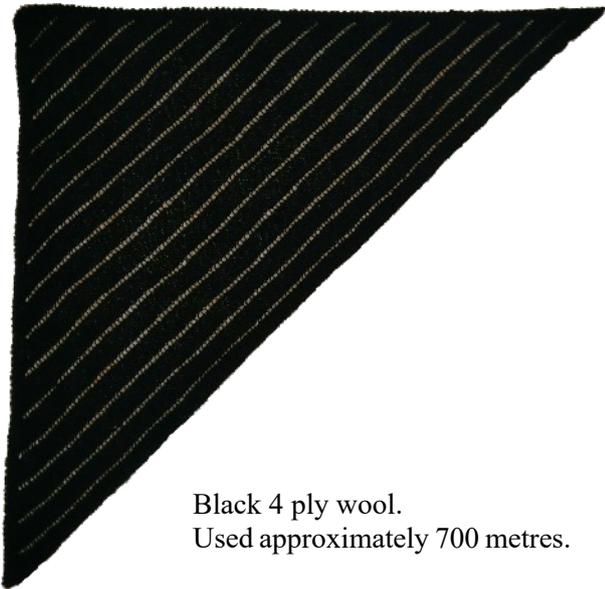
On both of the dark shawls shown I added a small looped crochet edging:

Join in yarn,

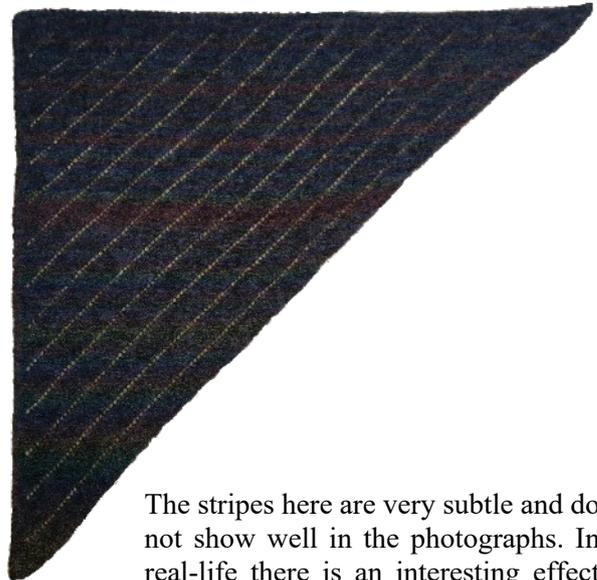
(chain 4, slip-stitch into same stitch, slip-stitch into next stitch, slip-stitch into next stitch) repeat to end.

I prefer to leave the long edge without any further finishing so that it remains soft and flexible. My shawls were worn a lot before the photos were taken and do not seem to have stretched out of shape. The kfb increase seems to keep the edge tight enough. You could use other increases but they may not be so firm.

Completed shawls and scarf

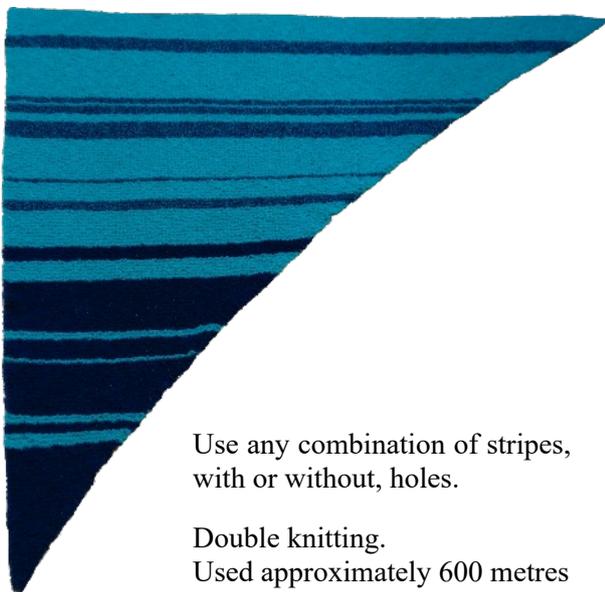


Black 4 ply wool.
Used approximately 700 metres.



The stripes here are very subtle and do not show well in the photographs. In real-life there is an interesting effect created by the holes being at 45 degrees to the knitting.

Double knitting.
Used approximately 600 metres.



Use any combination of stripes, with or without, holes.

Double knitting.
Used approximately 600 metres



Oddments of yarn can be tied together. Leave all the knots sticking out so they don't just look like a mistake.

Double knitting.
Used approximately 200 metres.

Close-ups

These shawls and samples are all shown in the direction they are knitted



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