

Lesson 4 - Snowflake Headband and Mittens

http://com.yarnspirations.pattern-pdfs.s3.amazonaws.com/Patons_KW500925_05_kn_headbandmittens.en_US.pdf

Fair Isle or Intarsia

There's so much more we can do with colors than stripes. We can make actual designs or pictures in color with our yarn. Fair Isle is carried along the back, also known as "stranded". Intarsia ends a color and then adds another. We are going to start with a relatively simple design to learn. We will work on the headband first which is knit flat and then move on to the mittens. We are doing it in this order because the bigger project will be the easier project.

The headband is knit flat and then seamed up the back and then around the center on the inside. The mittens are knit in the round on dpns (double pointed needles). Again, I'm not going to get into the magic loop method. You can if you want to, I like dpns. You will need size US 6 (4 mm) needles. You can use straights or circulars for the headband because it is knit flat. You will need the same size dpns for the mittens.

Charts

There is really no way to work fair isle or intarsia without learning to read charts. They are relatively simple except for one thing. You always start a chart in the bottom right hand corner. Read left for row 1. On row 2, you'll read the next row up left to right. Row 3, one row up, right to left. Just as if you are going back and forth on your knitting needles. On a cable or lace chart, there are symbols telling you what kind of stitch to use. On a color chart, there will simply be dots representing different colors. The white empty blocks will always be your main color. In this instance, there are only black dots because we are only working with 2 colors. If you were working with multicolors, you would have multicolored dots or black dots on multicolored squares or just multicolored squares. Fair Isle is usually only 2 colors per row but as with all rules, it's meant to be broken so don't panic if you see more than one color in a row.

Adding a new color

Don't tie a new color in. When you first add a new color, simply loop that color over your needle and make the stitch. Knots are hard to hide with fair isle and we will cover that in a bit. Leave a long enough tail that you aren't going to accidentally pull it out. With fair isle, you will make sure that your colors don't trade places. If the main color is below the contrast color, you will make sure it stays that way or it will affect the appearance of your project. If there is a long carry spot from the last time you use a color to the next time, you will twist the carried yarn with the knitting yarn every 5 to 6 stitches to keep from having long swags. All yarns are always carried along the back and never in front. If you find that you are purling, you will still carry the yarns on what is the back of the work.

Oh what a tangled web we weave

The biggest complaint many people have about knitting fair isle or intarsia is the tangle of yarns that happens when you are knitting with more than one color. I find the easiest way is to tie them into a butterfly skein by starting with the yarn across my palm and spreading my fingers like Mork (nano nano). I then wind the yarn in a figure 8 around my fingers. When I have a sufficient amount, I cut the yarn and wind it around the middle and secure it. Work from the end that you laid across your palm and then add more when you need it. For this project, I will only cut the snowflake colored yarn and work from the skein for the main color.

Easy Method of carrying the yarn:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZTOyB5Q3NJA>

Burying the threads:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bpOCCGamF9Yw>