ALIX's LACE PRAYER SHAWL

Introduction to Lace Knitting

Introduction to Lace Knitting at knitting lace is difficult. It's not - knitting lace is simply using knitting needles and yarn to connect a series of holes in a pleasing fashion. The holes are so easy to make -- just put the yarn over your right needle -- voila -- you have made a hole. Often, the hole made with the yarnover is paired with a decrease. The most common decrease is that of simply knitting two stitches together. When knitting two stitches together, the stitch you first place your needle into lies on top of the second stitch. For most knitters, when two stitches are knit together the stitches end up leaning to the right.

Alix's prayer shawl includes right-leaning decreases, the mirror image left-leaning decreases and reducing three stitches to one stitch. For a left-leaning decrease (1) insert your right needle into the next stitch on the left needle as if you are going to knit that stitch, but instead just slip that stitch onto the right needle, (2) knit the next stitch, and then (3) lift up the slipped stitch and pass it over the newly made stitch. The 3-to-1 decrease combines these steps: (1) insert your right needle into the next stitch on the left needle as if to knit that stitch, but instead just slip that stitch onto your right needle, (2) knit the next two stitches together, and then (3) lift up the slipped stitch and pass it over the newly made stitch.

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A great way to practice knitting the lace stitch pattern is by knitting a triangular dishcloth. Use worsted weight 100% cotton yarn and size 8 knitting needles so you can see exactly what happens with each stitch as your lace pattern develops. Knitting a dishcloth is a great way to practice casting on, the lace stitch pattern, the bottom border and the bind-off. Even if you make a few mistakes in your practice, the cloth will work great for washing dishes.

Shawl Instructions - The Preliminaries

Before beginning your shawl print these instructions and the chart. Be sure to make your copy of the chart nice and big. One of the very best things about knitting the Alix Lace Prayer Shawl is that you get to make the fun decisions including what yarn to use, what size needles to use with that yarn, and what size shawl to make. The most difficult task is to make sure you reserve sufficient yarn for working the bottom border. It is important to work a full 18-row pattern sequence before working the eyelet row and the bottom border.

This shawl, which begins as the center back neck with just eleven stitches and increases by four stitches on every pattern row, can be made whatever size you wish it to be.

Selecting the Yarn: Any yarn you enjoy working with may be used. The amount of yarn needed depends upon a number of factors including the size needle used, the weight of the yarn, and the size shawl you wish to make. The smaller the needle used the more yards needed; the finer the yarn, the more yards, but likely fewer ounces, of yarn needed; the larger the shawl, the more yarn needed.

Two skeins of Blue Moon Fiber Arts [2] lightweight "Socks that Rock" yarn made a wonderful shawl, whether knit in stockinette stitch or garter stitch. One skein of "Socks that Rock" yarn made a very nice shoulder shawl. A hand-painted or variegated yarn in a color way with low contrast and color changes every four to six inches works great when knitting lace. Tina of Blue Moon Fiber Arts designed the color way "Grandma's Flower Garden" especially for Alix's Lace Prayer Shawl.

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2 Go to www.bluemoonfiberarts.com for information on yarns available from Blue Moon Fiber Arts.

Eight ounces of Haneke fingering weight merino/alpaca yarn made a wonderfully soft and cuddly shawl. For a large stockinette stitch shawl I used almost ten ounces of a fingering weight North Ronaldsay yarn.
For an elegant, fairly large, dressy shawl I used 3.4 ounces [96 grams] of natural black Jamieson & Smith lace weight Shetland yarn. For a smaller, but just as elegant, shawl I used 3 ounces of fingering weight Buffalo Gold 100% bison yarn.

Deciding on the Size Needle to Use: Generally, when knitting lace a knitter will use a circular needle in a larger size than when knitting a stockinette stitch garment. Begin your swatch (or shawl) using a needle two sizes larger than recommended for stockinette stitch and work rows 1a through 18b. If you would like your lace more open, try a needle a size or two larger and work rows 1c through 18c. Knitting is an individual art and; every knitting produces a unique fabric. Use the size needle that produces a fabric that is pleasing to you, both in hand and in look. Enjoy using your creativity.

Using a Chart: Many lace knitters prefer knitting from a chart, rather than knitting from the written word. The chart is a picture of your knitting as one looks at the public side of the shawl. The chart is read from right to left, and from the bottom to the top, just as your knitting progresses. The chart shows only the odd-numbered rows on which the pattern stitches are worked; the even-numbered rows are worked plain. By knitting from the chart you will soon learn to "read your knitting." After a bit of practice you will be able to see if something has gone wrong with your stitch pattern. Alix's prayer shawl is constructed using a four-stitch beginning border, two triangles joined by a column consisting of just one stitch, and a four-stitch ending border. Each triangle begins at the point and increases in size as the shawl increases in size. Because the two lace triangles are identical, the same chart is used for each triangle. The chart shows one half of the shawl; it does not show the center stitch that is between and connects the two halves, nor does it show the four border stitches at the beginning of each row and at the end of each row. Work the beginning four border stitches; work the chart one time; knit the one center stitch; work the chart for a second time; work the ending four border stitches.

The first four stitches and the last four stitches of every row form the top border of the shawl. Although it works to just knit the first stitch, I recommend the chain selvedge: (1) With the yarn in front of your working needle (2) slip the first stitch as if to purl (3) move the yarn to the back of your work by passing it between the tips of your needles and (4) work the next three stitches; always knit the last two stitches of every row. In the written instructions the four border stitches are referred to as B4 at the beginning and the end of every row.

Knitting From the Written Word: Detailed written instructions follow for those who prefer words rather than charts.

Stitch Markers - Tools of the Trade: I recommend using stitch markers in three places on your needle: (1) immediately after the first four border stitches; (2) immediately before the center column of stitches; and (3) immediately before the last four border stitches. Attach about a 12-inch thread to each marker; the thread keeps the marker from flying across the room if the marker accidentally jumps off the needle. The symbol ^ is used in the written instructions to show where a stitch marker is placed.

Alix's Stockinette Stitch Lace Prayer Shawl

Casting On: Leaving a tail of yarn approximately 10 inches long, cast on 11 stitches.[3]

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3 I use a provisional cast-on. When I complete the shawl I take out the provisional cast-on and, using the tail of yarn, I weave the live stitches together using the Kitchener stitch. You may use your favorite cast-on and then sew the cast on stitches together using the tail of yarn after you complete your shawl. For instructions on the provisional cast-on see Stahman's Shawls and Scarves or another good knitting reference book.

Setup Row: K2, p1, k1, ^, p3, ^, k1, p1, k2. [11 sts]

Using the Chart: The chart is a picture of your knitting as you look at the public side of your work. The chart is read from right to left and from the bottom to the top. Only the odd-numbered rows, which are the public side rows, of the lace stitches of your shawl are shown on the chart. Although only three stitches are shown on row 1a of the chart, row 1a of your knitting is worked on 11 stitches, and ends with 15 stitches. The stitches not shown on the chart are: (1) the first four stitches of every row, which are the border stitches of one side of your shawl; (2) the center back stitch of your shawl; and (3) the last four stitches of every row, which are the border stitches of the other side of your shawl.

Beginning with row 1a, and for every odd-numbered row thereafter, work B4 at the beginning of the row by slipping the first stitch as if to purl, k1, p1, k1; work the chart one time; knit one stitch; work the chart a second time; work B4 at the end of the row as k1, p1, k2. For every even-numbered row work B4, purl across to the last four stitches, work B4.

The Written Instructions
To assist you in understanding the chart, the following detailed written instructions are given. Every odd-numbered row is a pattern row. In every pattern row there is an increase of four stitches. Each increase is made by working a yarnover. One increase is made directly inside each four-stitch border and one increase is made on each side of the center back stitch. The center back stitch is written in bold.

Row 1a: B4, place a marker on your needle, [yo, k1, yo], place a marker on your needle, k1, [yo, k1, yo], place a marker on your needle, B4. [15 sts]
Row 2a and all even-numbered rows: B4, purl across to the last four stitches, B4.
Row 3a: B4, ^, [yo, k3, yo], ^, **k1,** [yo, k3, yo], ^, B4. [19 sts]
Row 5a: B4, ^, [yo, k5, yo], ^, **k1,** [yo, k5, yo], ^, B4. [23 sts]
Row 7a: B4, ^, [yo, k7, yo], ^, **k1,** [yo, k7, yo], ^, B4. [27 sts]
Row 9a: B4, ^, [yo, k9, yo], ^, **k1,** [yo, k9, yo], ^, B4. [31 sts]
Row 11a: B4, ^, [yo, k11, yo], ^, **k1,** [yo, k11, yo], ^, B4. [35 sts]
Row 13a: B4, ^, [yo, k13, yo], ^, **k1,** [yo, k13, yo], ^, B4. [39 sts]
Row 15a: B4, ^, [yo, k15, yo], ^, **k1,** [yo, k15, yo], ^, B4. [43 sts]

Row 1b (the first row of lace knitting, known in this pattern as the first trinity row because of the triples of many stitch maneuvers): B4, ^, [yo, k1, (yo, ssk) three times, k3, (k2tog, yo) three times, k1, yo], ^, **k1,** [yo, k1, (yo, ssk) three times, k3, (k2tog, yo) three times, k1, yo], ^, B4. (47 sts)

Row 2b and all even-numbered rows: B4, purl across to the last four stitches, B4.".

Row 3b: B4, ^, [yo, k1 (yo, ssk) four times, k1, (k2tog, yo) four times, k1, yo], ^, **k1,** [yo, k1 (yo, ssk) four times, k1, (k2tog, yo) four times, k1, yo], ^, B4. (51 sts)

Row 5b, the second trinity row: B4, ^, [yo, k3, (yo, ssk) three times, yo, 3-to-1 decrease, yo, (k2tog, yo) three times, k3, yo], ^, **k1,** [yo, k3, (yo, ssk) three times, yo, 3-to-1 decrease, yo, (k2tog, yo) three times, k3, yo], ^, B4. (55 sts)

Row 7b. the third trinity row: B4, ^, [yo, k5, (yo, ssk) three times, k1, (k2tog, yo) three times, k5, yo], ^, **k1,** [yo, k5, (yo, ssk) three times, k1, (k2tog, yo) three times, k5, yo], ^, B4. (59 sts)

Row 9b: B4, ^, [yo, k7, (yo, ssk) two times, yo, 3-to-1 decrease, yo, (k2tog, yo) two times, k7, yo], ^, **k1,** [yo, k7, (yo, ssk) two times, yo, 3-to-1 decrease, yo, (k2tog, yo) two times, k7, yo], ^, B4. (63 sts)

Row 11b: B4, ^, [yo, k9, (yo, ssk) two times, k1, (k2tog, yo) two times, k9, yo], ^, **k1,** [yo, k9, (yo, ssk) two times, k1, (k2tog, yo) two times, k9, yo], ^, B4. (67 sts)

Row 13b: B4, ^, [yo, k 11, yo, ssk, yo, 3-to-1 decrease, yo, k2tog, yo, k 11,yo], ^, **k1,** [yo, k 11, yo, ssk, yo, 3-to-1 decrease, yo, k2tog, yo, k 11, yo], ^, B4. (71 sts)

Row 15b: B4, ^, [yo, k 13, yo, ssk, k1, k2tog, yo, k 13, yo], ^, k1, [yo, k 13, yo, ssk, k1, k2tog, yo, k 13, yo], ^, B4. (75 sts)

Row 17b: B4, ^, [yo, k 15, yo], 3-to-1 decrease, yo, k 15, yo], ^, **k1,** [yo, k 15, yo], 3-to-1 decrease, yo, k 15, yo], ^, B4. (79 sts)

Congratulations! You have mastered the lace stitch pattern, which consists of 18 stitches and 18 rows. Knitting the remainder of the shawl is essentially repeating the stitch maneuvers of Rows 1b - 18b. Every additional 18 rows of knitting add one stitch pattern in width to each side of the shawl.

Row 1c: B4, ^, [yo, k1, (yo, ssk) three times, k3, (k2tog, yo) three times, k3, (yo, ssk) three times, k3, (k2tog, yo) three times, k1, yo], ^, **k1,** ^, [yo, k1, (yo, ssk) three times, k3, (k2tog, yo) three times, k3, (yo, ssk) three times, k3, (k2tog, yo) three times, k1, yo], B4. (83 sts)

Row 3c: B4, ^, [yo, k1 (yo, ssk) four times, k1, (k2tog, yo) four times, k1, (yo, ssk) four times, k1, (k2tog, yo) four times, k1, yo], ^, **k1,** [yo, k1 (yo, ssk) four times, k1, (k2tog, yo) four times, k1, (yo, ssk) four times, k1, (k2tog, yo) four times, k1, yo], ^, B4. (87 sts)

Row 5c: B4, ^, [yo, k3, (yo, ssk) three times, yo, 3-to-1 decrease, yo, (k2tog, yo) three times, k3, (yo, ssk) three times, yo, 3-to-1 decrease, yo, (k2tog, yo) three times, k3, yo], ^, **k1,** [yo, k3, (yo, ssk) three times, yo, 3-to-1 decrease, yo, (k2tog, yo) three times, k3, (yo, ssk) three times, yo, 3-to-1 decrease, yo, (k2tog, yo) three times, k3, yo], ^, B4. (91 sts)

Row 7c: B4, ^, [yo, k5, (yo, ssk) three times, k1, (k2tog, yo) three times, k5, (yo, ssk) three times, k1, (k2tog, yo) three times, k5, yo], ^, **k1,** [yo, k5, (yo, ssk) three times, k1, (k2tog, yo) three times, k5, (yo, ssk) three times, k1, (k2tog, yo) three times, k5, yo], ^, B4. (95 sts)

Row 9c: B4, ^, [yo, k7, (yo, ssk) two times, yo, 3-to-1 decrease, yo, (k2tog, yo) two times, k7, (yo, ssk) two times, yo, 3-to-1 decrease, yo, (k2tog, yo) two times, k7, yo], ^, **k1,** [yo, k7, (yo, ssk) two times, yo, 3-to-1 decrease, yo, (k2tog, yo) two times, k7, (yo, ssk) two times, yo, 3-to-1 decrease, yo, (k2tog, yo) two times, k7, yo], ^, B4. (99 sts)

Row 11c: B4, ^, [yo, k9, (yo, ssk) two times, k1, (k2tog, yo) two times, k9, (yo, ssk) two times, k1, (k2tog, yo) two times, k9, yo], ^, **k1,** [yo, k9, (yo, ssk) two times, k1, (k2tog, yo) two times, k9, (yo, ssk) two times, k1, (k2tog, yo) two times, k9, yo], ^, B4. (103 sts)

Row 13c: B4, ^, [yo, k 11, yo, ssk, yo, 3-to-1 decrease, yo, k2tog, yo, k 11, yo, ssk, yo, 3-to-1 decrease, yo, k2tog, yo, k 11, yo], ^, k1, [yo, k 11, yo, ssk, yo, 3-to-1 decrease, yo, k2tog, yo, k 11, yo, ssk, yo, 3-to-1 decrease, yo, k2tog, yo, k 11, yo], ^, B4. (107 sts)

Row 15c: B4, ^, [yo, k 13, yo, ssk, k1, k2tog, yo, k 13, yo, ssk, k1, k2tog, yo, k 13, yo], ^, **k1,** [yo, k 13, yo, ssk, k1, k2tog, yo, k 13, yo, ssk, k1, k2tog, yo, k 13, yo], ^, B4. (111 sts)

Row 17c: B4, ^, [yo, k 15, yo, 3-to-1 decrease, yo, k 15, yo, 3-to-1 decrease, yo, k 15, yo], ^, **k1,** [yo, k 15, yo, 3-to-1 decrease, yo, k 15, yo, 3-to-1 decrease, yo, k 15, yo], ^, B4. (115 sts)

For rows 1d - 18d the instructions for just one side of the lace body of the shawl are written out.
Work each of the following rows by working B4, the written instructions, **k1,** the written instructions, B4.

Row 1d: Yo, k1, (yo, ssk) three times, k3, (k2tog, yo) three times, k1, [k2, (yo, ssk) three times, k3, (k2tog, yo) three times, k1] two times, yo. (119 sts)

Row 2d and all even-numbered rows: B4, purl across to the last four stitches, B4.

Row 3d: Yo, [k1, (yo, ssk) four times, k1, (k2tog, yo) four times], three times, k1, yo. (123 sts)

Row 5d: Yo, k1, [k2, (yo, ssk) three times, yo, 3-to-1 decrease, yo, (k2tog, yo) three times, k1] three times, k2, yo, (127 sts)

Row 7d: Yo, k2, [k3, (yo, ssk) three times, k1, (k2tog, yo) three times, k2] three times, k3, yo. (131 sts)

Row 9d: Yo, k3, [k4. (yo, ssk) two times, yo, 3-to-1 decrease, yo, (k2tog, yo) two times, k3] three times, k4, yo. (135 sts)

Row 11d: Yo, k4, [k5, (yo, ssk) two times, k1, (k2tog, yo) two times, k4] three times, k5, yo. (139 sts)
Row 13d: Yo, k5, [k6, yo, ssk, yo, 3-to-1 decrease, yo, k2tog, yo, k 5] three times, k6, yo. (143 sts)
Row 15d: Yo, k6, [k7, yo, ssk, k1, k2tog, yo, k6] three times, k7, yo. (147 sts)
Row 17d: Yo, k7, [k8, yo, 3-to-1 decrease, yo, k7] three times, k8, yo. (151 sts)

Making the Shawl the Size Desired: For every subsequent pattern of 18 rows you will work one additional pattern repeat per side. In rows 1e-18e work the stitches in brackets four times. In rows 1f-18f work the stitches in brackets five times, and so forth. In every pattern row the number of stitches increases by four. Work as many 18-row pattern repeats as necessary to make the shawl the length that is best for the person for whom you are knitting this shawl.

Bottom Border, worked after completing row 18d for the final time:
Row 1, the eyelet row: Work the four border stitches, (yo, k2tog) until you reach one stitch before the center back stitch, (yo, k1) three times, (yo, k2tog) until just four stitches remain on your left needle, yo, work the four border stitches.
Row 2: Work as you have worked all even-numbered rows.
Rows 3, 5, & 7: Work in seed stitch to the center back stitch, work a closed increase by making a half-hitch on your needle with your working yarn, k1, work a closed increase, work in seed stitch to the end.
Rows 4 & 6: Work in seed stitch.
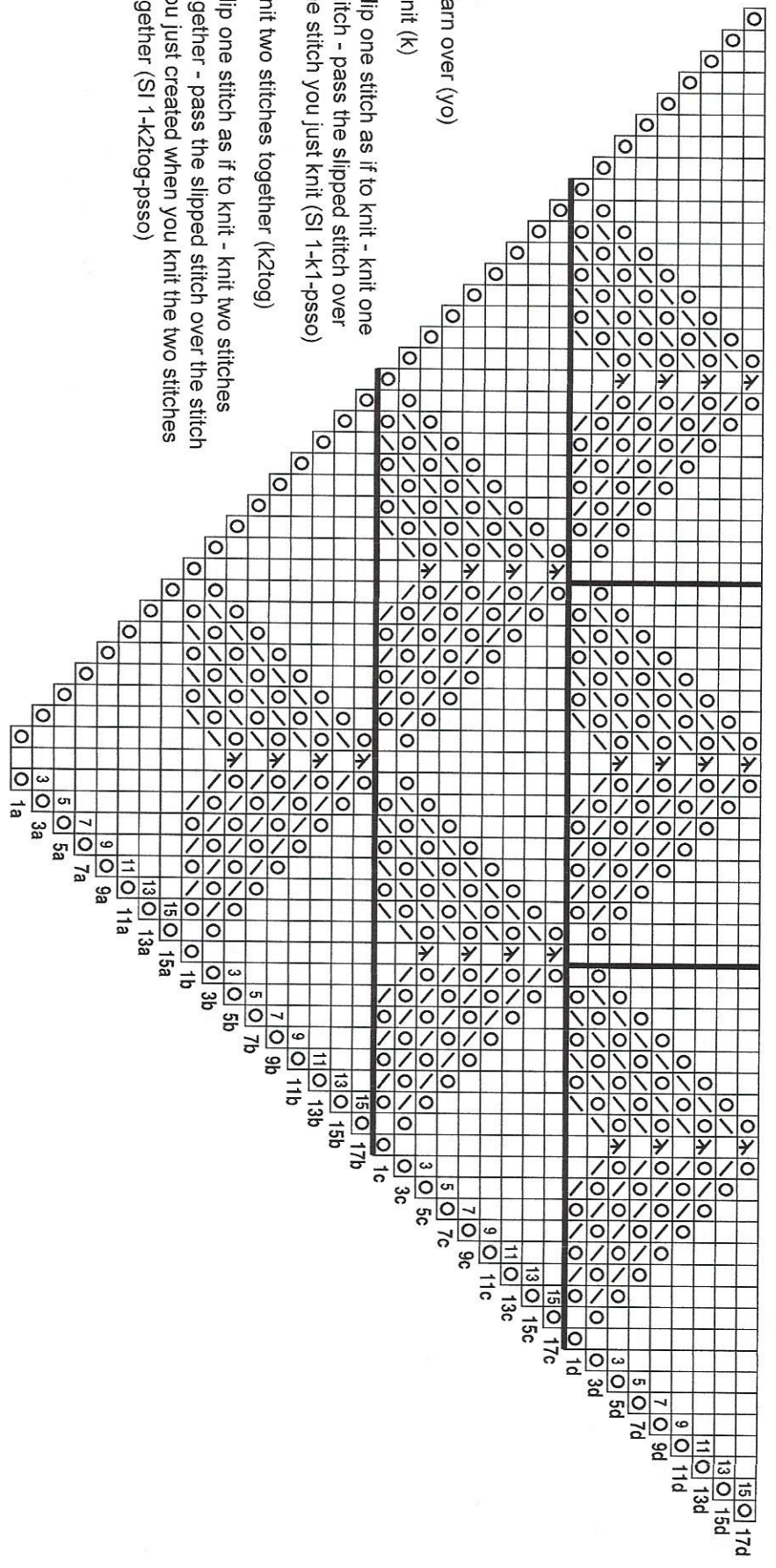Row 8: Bind off, using a larger needle for your right needle.
Wash and dress your shawl. A shawl is a knitted hug. Enjoy giving your completed lace prayer shawl to someone who is in need of a comforting hug. Knit a second shawl for yourself or for another friend.

Alix's Garter Stitch Lace Prayer Shawl
Follow the instructions for the Stockinette Stitch Lace Prayer Shawl, with the following modifications. When working in garter stitch, work the setup row by knitting all stitches. B4 at the beginning of every row is slip the first stitch as if to knit, k3. B4 at the end of every row is k4. All even-numbered rows are worked as Sl1, knit across.

Alix's Lace Prayer Shawl

○ Yarn over (yo)

☐ Knit (k)

╱ Slip one stitch as if to knit - knit one stitch - pass the slipped stitch over the stitch you just knit (Sl 1-k1-psso)

╲ Knit two stitches together (k2tog)

⋌ Slip one stitch as if to knit - knit two stitches together - pass the slipped stitch over the stitch you just created when you knit the two stitches together (Sl 1-k2tog-psso)