

"ENTRELACS"

by
Cheryl Brunette

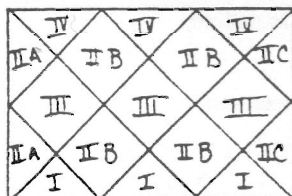
Entrelacs, basketweave or interlace knitting looks like strips of knitting woven over and under one another on the diagonal, neatly cropped straight across the top and bottom. It has long been a technique in the handknitting repertoire, but only within the last several years has it poked its pointy little head out of the knitting basket and jumped into the mainstream of fashion.

It takes time to knit, but because it's worked in small sections that are removed to waste yarn, it doesn't tie up the machine. It can sit patiently in the corner while you toss off a couple of soul-satisfying vests before you get back to it.

Because the technique requires some practice and its gauge is surprising, it's best to learn it by sitting down for a while and knitting up a swatch that is five tiers tall.

THE STRUCTURE

Finished pieces of entrelacs are usually square or rectangular and there are four kinds of "tiers" used. To add length, tiers II and III are repeated, ending with II, before the final tier is added. To distinguish these directions from those for a wedding cake let's look at a diagram:



Tier I is a series of triangles. Tier II starts and ends with triangles with rectangles in the middle. Although they look like diamonds in the picture, in real life they are rec-

tangles that puff to fill a diagonal space. Tier III, the easiest, is all rectangles. Tier IV (the top of the piece) is all triangles.

All sections have about twice as many rows as stitches causing them to "pouch out." That texture and the fact that the knitting appears to go every which way but up, are what make entrelacs fascinating to look at and to knit at.

SOME HINTS BEFORE YOU START KNITTING

The weighted hem is never used. Use claw weights under working needles, moving, adding, and subtracting them as the number of stitches changes.

On your first try, work each tier in a different color. However, keep in mind that entrelacs can be worked with one continuous strand; it will help orient you visually to your next section.

When you rehang the side edges of the triangles or rectangles, always hang the whole end stitch onto the needle, and pick up right to the "corner" to prevent holes.

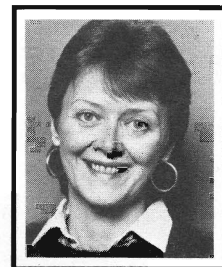
Use waste yarn color that contrasts sharply with your main colors so that it's easy to find live stitches. After you've gobbled up each set of stitches that were on waste yarn, pull it out and use it again. I use four rows of WY for each section.

Always work with the purl side facing you. All diagrams depict the purl side; the squiggly lines represent WY and the arrows show the direction of the knitting. You'll often want to examine the right side because it grows so magically. Hold the magazine up to a mirror and the reflected diagrams will look like the knit side of your work.

THE METHOD

CAST ON

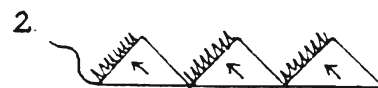
Starting at the 18th needle left of "0", and using an improved e-wrap cast on (KPN#7 or TIPS & TECHNIQUES II, 1986) toward the right, C.O. 36 sts.



TIER I

1. With COR thread up the yarn and put on the fabric guide.
2. Leave rt 2 ndles in WP, put the rest into HP. K across (COL). Take a wrap on the far right HP needle by tucking the yarn under it and over the remaining HP ndles. K 1 row (COR).
3. Put far rt HP ndle (it has a wrap on it) into HKP. K 1 row (COL). Wrap the far right HP ndle as above. K 1 row (COR).
4. Repeat step 3 until there are 12 ndles in WP and the CARRIAGE IS ON THE LEFT (i.e., don't knit back to the right the last time). Put these 12 sts on WY and drop them off the bed.

Repeat these steps 2-4 to knit 2 more triangles. Your piece looks like this:



Cut your main color yarn.

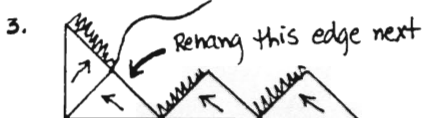
TIER II

A. END TRIANGLE

1. Rehang 2 sts closest to the yarn end you just cut. COL, thread up new color. K 2 rows.
2. Inc 1 st at left edge. Pick up next st on WY and hang it on right working needle. There are now 2 sts on that needle and you have 3 working needles. K 2 rows.

Repeat Step 2 until you have 12 sts and COR. Note that you have joined all the sts held on WY of the triangle below.

Pull out that WY and put it on the 12 sts you now have. Remove from bed. The piece looks like this:



B. RECTANGLE

1. Rehang edge shown in diagram over 12 needles (skipping about every other row along the side you are picking up from.) COL, if possible, do "Breaks All the Rules...Cast On" (see Marrowstone Video Class #2 entitled, "Your First BOND Sweater" or FASHION KNITS.) COR. K 1 row. COL.
2. Hang left end st of next Tier I triangle on right needle. K 2 rows. Repeat Step 2 until you've hung all the sts from the middle triangle. After you hang the last st, K 1 row, ending COR. Remove to WY.



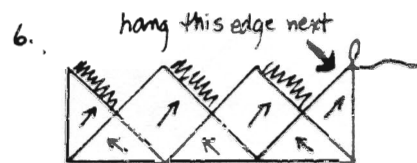
Rehang next edge and complete all of B to form a second rectangle.



C. END TRIANGLE

1. Rehang last edge on 12 needles and CO as you did to begin rectangles. K 1 row (COL).
2. Dec 1 st at right edge. K 2 rows. Repeat until 1 st remains. Cut yarn.

You now have this creature hanging by one st from your machine:

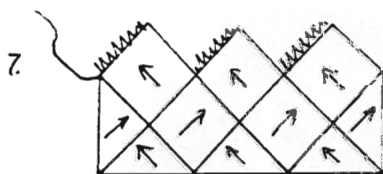


Take heart. Once you've made it this far, the rest is easy.

TIER III

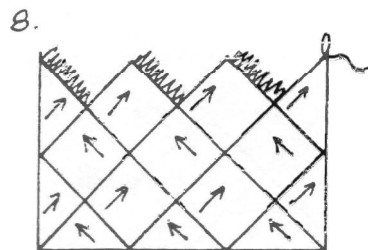
1. Rehang edge of the triangle you just completed on 11 needles, WORKING TOWARD THE LEFT. The 12th st is the one already hanging.
2. Join new yarn. COR. With right needle in HP, cast on, using "Breaks..Rules" cast-on. Right needle to HKP, and K 1 row. COR.
3. Hang right end st from WY on left working needle (2 sts on that needle). K 2 rows.

Repeat Step 3 until you've used all 12 sts from WY. END COL. Remove to WY. Complete 2 more rectangles the same way. Cut yarn.



See? That was easy! The rectangles grow quickly.

Now repeat all of Tier II with a new color to end with a piece like this:



TIER IV

1. Do Steps 1 and 2 of Tier III.
2. On left, place 1 st from below WY on end working needle...At right, dec 1 st...K 2 row Repeat until there are 2 sts left on needles and 2 on WY.
3. Hang next WY st on left needle (no dec on right)...K 1 row...Hang last WY st on left needle...K 1 row...Move right st to left needle...K 1 row...1 st remains.

Repeat this sequence twice more. At the end, when your piece looks like a "sort-of-square", fasten off last st and.....TA DA!

Don't be intimidated by the number of steps. If you plod through this exercise, you'll have the basics and you can then knit variations on the entrelacs theme until your imagination collapses in a heap. Each section of a single piece can be a different color, pattern, texture of yarn.

Entrelacs is the kind of challenge that encourages one to cultivate prize-winning cobwebs in ceiling corners and mutant cultures toward the back of the refrigerator. Frankly, I'd rather knit than disturb their quiet growth.

For some very exciting and inspirational entrelacs, have a look at the popular British designer, Susan Duckworth's new book, SUSAN DUCKWORTH'S KNIT-

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(continued)

TING, where she uses Fair Isle, intarsia, and tuck or pucker stitch techniques in contrasting colors in each of her entrelac sections.

For an easy entrelac starter piece, look for the simple entrelac pattern in our next issue. This way you'll have time to play with the technique before undertaking a project. ■

The diagrams below are for you to use in designing your own entrelac design.

Make a few copies to play with

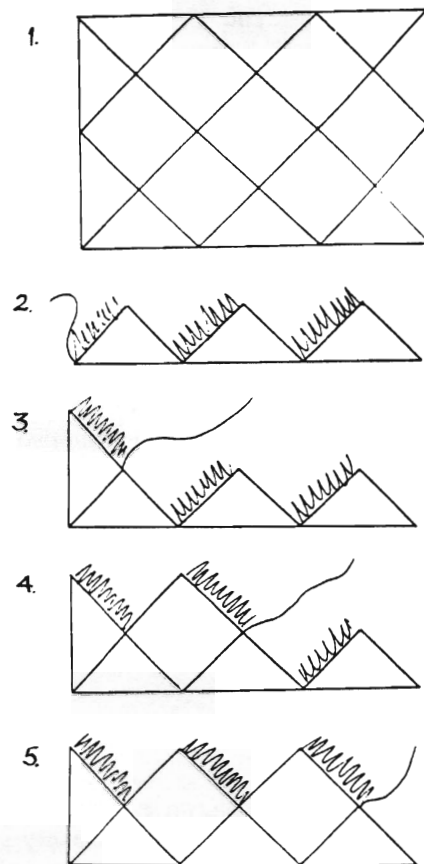
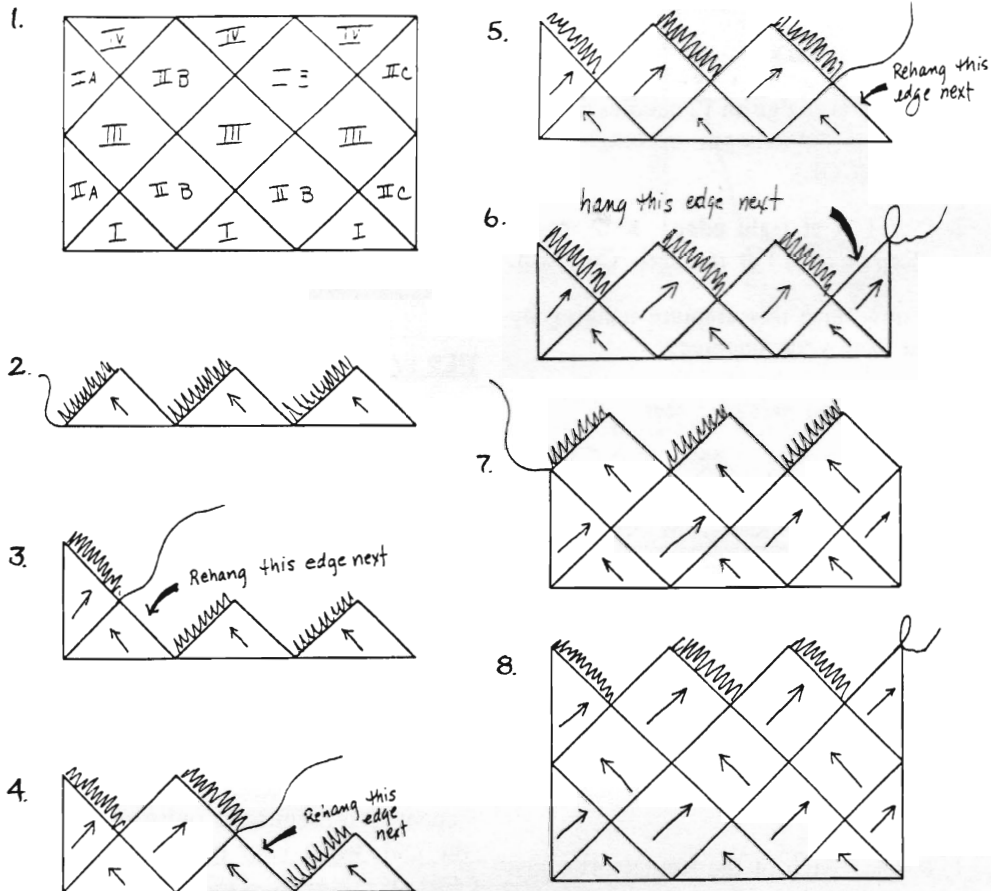


Photo of Entrelacs swatch

