

Color Stranding / Stranded Colorwork

Includes many modalities of knitting: Fair Isle, Lusekofte (Norwegian), Bohus, Faeroe, Cowichan and others.

General Commonalities

- Involves working two or more colors at a time.
- The color not in use lies loosely on the back of the fabric.
- Produces a warm fabric because of the extra layer created on the wrong side.
- Usually worked in the round.
- Usually worked in stockinet stitches to show of the color patterns.
- Intricate patterns can be created using no more than two colors in any row.
- Most patterns are charted.
- Best undertaken in natural fibers, not acrylic or super wash.

Technique Basics

- When a color is carried over fewer than 5 stitches the stranding method is used. The second color is left at the back of the work until needed. When next required the second color is picked up and used leaving the first color at the back of the work until needed. Stranded yarn “floats” on the wrong side of the fabric.
- It is important to loosely carry the yarn that is not in use on the wrong side – too tight and it will pucker the fabric. As you knit slightly stretch out the stitches that have just been knit on the right hand needle, before picking up the next color and stranding the yarn. The stranded yarn on the wrong side is called a float.

Bibliography/ Favorite Color Work Books

The Celtic Collection. Alice Starmore, Trafalgar Square Books, 1993.

Alice Starmore’s Book of Fair Isle Knitting. Alice Starmore, Taunton Books, 1988.

The Art of Fair Isle Knitting. Ann Feitelson, Interweave Press, 1996.

200 Fair Isle Motifs. Mary Jane Mucklestone, Interweave Press 2011.

Inspired Fair Isle Knits. Fiona Ellis, Potter Craft, 2007.

Knitting in the Old Way. Priscilla Gibson-Roberts and Deborah Robson, Nomad Press 2004.

The pattern for the hats with the hems can be found at: redsknits.com

Baby Color Pattern Hat

This simple pattern makes one premie or baby size hat.

Materials:

- DK or Worsted Weight wool or natural fiber yarn, no super-wash, in two or three contrasting colors.
- Size 16" circular needles in any size appropriate for your yarn.
- A set of double points or a longer circular (magic loop) in the size of the needles above

Instructions:

With main yarn color, Cast on 48 stitches, on your 16" circular needle and join. Place Marker at the beginning of the row. Continue to slip this marker throughout the knitting.

Knit in the round one inch of ribbing (2X2 or 1X1).

Change to stockinet stitch, increase two stitches evenly on the next round=50st. Knit for 1/2" to 1".

Knit chart: Noting color changes.

Knit one row in background color. Decrease one stitch. 49st.

Begin decrease head shaping:

- [Knit 5 stitches, SSK] repeat to end. 7 stitches decreased.
- Next row knit around.
- [Knit 4 stitches SSK] repeat to end. 7 stitches decreased.
- Next row knit around.
- Continue decreases until you have three stitches between each SSK and then decrease every row until seven stitches remain. Cut yarn leaving 10" tail, thread on darning needle, run through all seven stitches, pull tight, run through the seven stitches one more time, pass through small hole to wrong side and secure to reverse side.
- Weave in all loose threads.

