
Mitered Knitting: Make a Pillow with Edie Eckman

Chapter 1 - Mitered Knitting

Overview

(bright music) - Hi, I'm Edie Eckman. I'm a knit and crochet author, teacher, and designer. And in this class, I'm going to be showing you techniques to make a mitered square pillow. Mitered squares are great fun to knit because, in this case, we're going to be working only knitting, we're going to be doing garter stitch. But because of the way we decrease, every row gets shorter. So we're always moving along with our knitting, but we're having fun at the same time. I'll show you how to do a basic mitered square, and I'll show you a couple of different ways to decrease. I'll also show you how to pick up stitches along the edge of your square so we have a minimum amount of seaming. We'll change out colors, learning to do both stripes and squares within squares of color, and finally, we'll seam our squares together to create a pillow. Once you've learned this technique, you'll be amazed at the ways you can use it in many different types of projects. (bright music)

Materials

- The yarn you'll need for the pillow is worsted weight yarn. I'm using Brown Sheep Lamb's Pride. You can use any worsted weight yarn you like, as long as you're going to get 18 stitches over four inches in garter stitch. You'll need two skeins of the main color, in this case I'm using an off-white, or Aran color, and then one skein each of four other colors. Feel free to use any colors you like. This is your chance to make it your pillow. You'll also need knitting needles. I'm using US eight, or five millimeter needles, and I'm using circular needles because that's what I like to use, but you don't have to use circular needles. I just use circular needles because I like them. You can use straight needles, whatever's your preference. And also, just because I'm using five millimeter needles doesn't mean that's what you'll use. Again, you want to make sure you are getting a gauge of 18 stitches over four inches in garter stitch. You'll also need scissors, a tapestry needle, and a stitch marker. A fourteen inch pillow form, and you'll want to print out the pattern instructions from your class materials.

Cast on, Pick up, and Decrease

- Let's talk through the construction of our mitered squares. We'll begin by casting on with our main color and the cast on line is this line right here. Because we'll be decreasing, the decreases will create a fold or a diagonal line along our square. Then we'll work back and forth, doing a double decrease. At some point, we're going to change colors and work to the end. Then our second square will be cast on and picked up along one edge of the first square. The third square is going to be picked up and then cast on and worked out in this direction. And then our final and fourth square is going to be picked up along the edges of existing squares. I'm also going to show you how to do a different decrease on our second square, so go ahead and watch both sets of decreases before you decide which one you want to do. Now I'm going to be demonstrating on a smaller sample here. You'll be making a much larger set of squares for your pillow. To begin square one, we'll cast on 55 stitches. Now you're going to cast on 55, I'm just going to cast on 25, because I'm doing a smaller sample. I'm using my main color yarn, color A, and doing a long tail cast on. Once I've cast on my stitches, I need to determine where the center stitch is and I'm going to be putting a marker in that stitch. Now your 55 stitches has a center stitch of stitch number 28, so make sure that you've

counted in each direction and make sure that you're in the center stitch. I'm going to go ahead and put my marker in the center stitch. And once I've done that, I wanna count in the other direction and make sure it is the center. And I'm keeping my marker in the front, so this shows me that it's the right side. As I work my decreases, I will be moving this marker up. Now that I've done one long tail cast on, I'm going to turn and knit one row plain. I'm holding the yarn in my left hand, but of course, if you are an English-style knitter and want to throw your yarn or use your right hand, that's absolutely fine. Knit whatever way works for you. Now I finished row one, which was my first wrong side row that I knit. Now I'm going to knit up until one stitch before my marked stitch. And you can see I may want to move my marker up to that center stitch. Now I'm going to knit that row, but I'm gonna stop when I'm one stitch before my marker. The nice thing about these rows is that we've done the longest row already. That's the longest row and now they're going to get shorter. Here I am, one stitch before my center stitch. I'm gonna go ahead and remove that marker for the moment and do a knit three together decrease. So I'm going to go all the way over here to the third stitch and knit all three stitches together. Now I have a new center stitch, have to make sure not to split my yarn, and I want to put that marker right back in here because I don't want to lose track of the center stitch. I'll finish this row and then I'll knit one more wrong side row, so we're knitting all of the wrong side rows. Once you've knit your wrong side row, stop a minute and count your stitches. You'll see that you have decreased two stitches so that you only have 53 stitches at this point. You'll be decreasing two stitches on every decrease row or every right side row. Let me show you one more decrease row. Once again, I'm going to knit up to one stitch before my marked stitch. So here I am, one stitch before my marked stitch. I'm going to remove the marker, knit three together, that knit three, sometimes you have to really fight it a little bit, put the marker back in because I don't want to lose track of it and knit to the end of the row. Then I'll work another wrong side row by knitting it. Continue working right side and wrong side rows, decreasing two stitches on every right side until, at the end of row 16, you'll have 39 stitches. Let's add in the second color. I'm done with my A color, so I'm just going to cut it, leave about a six inch tail, and pick up color B and, again, leave about a six inch tail and I'm just going to start knitting with B. I'm not going to tie a knot or anything, I'm just going to start knitting and do a right side row. So I'll continue to do my decreases in the center and do exactly what I've been doing with color A, until I end up with three stitches. The rows get shorter and shorter, so it gets faster and faster to complete each one. The nice thing about doing all garter stitch is it's just knit and knit and it's easy to get into a rhythm. Sometimes you can even get to the point where you don't have to move the marker, where you can see several rows up where the decrease is, or you don't need the marker at all. I'm gonna try leaving the marker out at this point and see if I'll be able to see where my decrease needs to happen. Here I don't have a marker, but I can pretty much see now because I only have a few stitches left that I'm going to, in this case, knit four, then do my decrease. There's my decrease. Here I've got three stitches. I'm going to knit one more row and then I'm going to end with knitting those last three together and fastening off. Leave a nice long tail. I can pull that end through. And then I can just weave in my ends if I want to. I can go ahead and do that now. And I prefer to try to weave in the ends behind the same color, so go in a couple of different directions, don't just go up and down. You wanna go maybe diagonally one direction and diagonally another to make sure they're securely woven in. You can do that with all four ends. Make sure you're weaving your ends in on the wrong side, even though this is garter stitch, because we change colors, there's a little blip where the color change is, this is the wrong side. The right side is much smoother, so I'm weaving in on the wrong side. Go ahead and weave in your ends and then we'll be ready to start square number two.

Pick up on Square

- To begin square two, you'll cast on 27 stitches using a long tail cast on. And then pick up and knit 28 stitches along the edge of the first square. Here, I've cast on my stitches, that's half my stitches. My center stitch is going to be put into the corner of my first square. And I'll want to put a marker there. And then I'm going to pick up and knit stitches along the edge of the square. So, you can see if I have it oriented the way that I have it in the diagram, I'm going from the bottom right hand corner to the top right hand corner of square number one. So, I'll just pick up and knit one stitch in each of those and when I've finished, I'll have 25 stitches, you'll have 55. Now, I'm working under just one strand here. And as long as I stay in the same place it's fine, if you choose to work under two strands that's fine, just do the same thing all the way across. One thing that gets a little tricky, when you get to the edge sometimes it's hard to know exactly where to put the last stitch. It's easy to get off just a little bit, so I'm going to stop and count. I need one more stitch, and sometimes I just have to kinda, make up where the stitch goes. You wanna make sure you go all the way to the edge. Stop and count and make sure you have 55 stitches. You want to go all the way to the edge and sometimes it's not quite clear where that edge is. So, have 55 stitches, put a marker in your center stitch, then knit one wrong side row. And then I'll show you how to do a different type of decrease on the next right side row. I'm starting my first right side row that has a decrease. And once again, I'm going to work up until one stitch before the marker, because I'm going to be making a double decrease. But instead of doing a knit three together which, leans a little bit, I'm going to do a centered, double decrease. So, here I am at one stitch before my corner stitch. Now, for this one, lemme take the marker out, I'm going to slip two together knit wise. So they're my three that I'm decreasing. I'm going to take my right needle tip and go over here between the second and third stitches. And slip those two together, as if I'm going to knit, but I'm not knitting them, I'm slipping them. Then I'm knitting one. And, I have to be careful not to split my stitch, knit one, and then I'm going to slip those two stitches over. So, the two stitches that I passed, I'm now slipping over. And I've done a double decrease, but this double decrease is a little more centered. Now I've completed my decrease, I'll put my marker back in the center stitch. And finish the row. So, if you want you can choose to do the slip two together, knit one, pass slip stitch over or S2KP decrease. That's another double decrease or you can do any double decrease you like. I've knitted wrong side row and lemme just show you once more, how to do that S2KP decrease. Now work up to one stitch before my center stitch. Slip two together, knit wise, so not this way, but this way. Slip two together knit wise. Knit one then pass the two slip stitches over. Now, if you have trouble containing the yarn or controlling this yarn, even though I'm a continental knitter, sometimes I'll take the yarn in my right hand, it gives me a better angle as I reach and pull those two stitches over. Then I'll switch it back to my left hand. Then I'll finish the row, but I wanna show you what happens now that we are doing some decreases. Lemme finish this row and show you what happens with that cast on edge that we've got going. Here the cast on edge is straight, but if I let it go into the cable here, so that we can bend it, you can see that my cast on edge is here and my decreases are starting to form along this diagonal line. So, I'm folding my cast on edge in to create that square. Finish up square two and then we'll be ready to do square three. I'm going to be picking up and knitting along the bottom edge of the first square. And then turning and doing a purl cable cast on down this edge. So, in order to do that, I have to turn my work over, so that I can work on the wrong side. I'm gonna start in the very corner over here by picking up a stitch. I'm just gonna leave that six inch tail. And pick up and knit that stitch. And work all the way across. Now you're going to pick up 28 stitches across the edge of this square right to the center where the two squares meet. Here I've got my last stitch

working up to the corner. And now I'm going to turn and purl cable cast on. So, in order to do that, I'm going to turn my work this way and my yarn is in front because I'm going to purl. Now a cable cast on, normally if we're doing a knitted cast on we're going to work between the stitches like this. But I'm gonna work between the stitches from back to front. So with my wrong side facing I'm going to insert my needle between the first two stitches from back to front. So I'm not going through a stitch, I'm going between the stitches. And then I'm going to wrap my yarn as if I'm purling and pull that stitch back out. I've created a stitch and I'm going to put it back on the left needle. So, that's my first stitch cast on. Once again, I'm going between the needles from back to front wrapping the yarn as if to purl, pulling the stitch back out and putting it back on the left needle. And I'm going to continue to do that until all of my stitches are cast on. When you've finished, you'll have a total of 55 stitches. That's including the stitches that you picked up plus the ones that you cast on. Put a marker in the center stitch, work a wrong side row and continue working your square as you've done for the first two squares remembering to change your color when you get to that point.

Square Four

- Square number four is just picked up stitches, so we'll be picking up stitches along this edge and this edge. I'll just begin, I'm going to start right in the corner. Don't want to start over here, I wanna make sure I'm getting all the way over to the edge and picking up a stitch, and I'll pick up one stitch in each stitch cross. Try that again. So you will pick up 27 stitches across this edge. And you see I have kind of two strands here from my pearl cable cast on, I'm working under both of those strands. Stop and count when you get near the corner to see if you have 27 stitches but not quite yet at the corner. Now I'm going to pick up one stitch in the corner stitch and to do that, I'm going to try to go over here to the blue square, the first square that I did, and pick up right there in the corner. Then I'm going to turn, that's my center stitch so maybe I wanna put a marker in it, then I'm going to turn and pick up and knit along this side. You will have 27 stitches along this other edge. When you finish, you'll have 55 stitches. Make sure you go all the way to the edge. Stop, make sure you count that you have 55 stitches and that you have a marker in the center stitch, go ahead and finish your square as you've been doing the other squares. When you've finished, it will come together looking like this, of course yours will be bigger, but you'll have four different color blocks on the edges of your mitered square pillow top.

Back of Pillow

- The back of the pillow is made exactly like the front of the pillow in terms of its construction, but because we're doing a stripe of one color and then a stripe of another, we get a very different look. The good news is, we're only using one color at a time. I've cast on my stitches with my second color, color B, and done one wrong side row. So I'm ready to work the next color and to do that, I'm going to leave my first color, just drop it, and begin knitting with the second color, leaving about a six-inch tail. And this is a regular right side row that's going to feel familiar to you by this point. We're going to do a double decrease, right in the middle of the row, and then work a wrong side row. Now as I work the colors, working first two rows of one, then two rows of another, I'm going to leave the other color that's not in use just hanging. I don't need to do anything with it, because it will travel up the edge of the square. And with this stripe pattern, you don't even have to worry about working to row 16 or anything, because this is just the same pattern throughout. So a right side and wrong side row of one color, followed by a right side and wrong side row of another color.

If you like, you can do stripes of many colors. Just keep in mind that if you're doing a lot of colors and not cutting the yarn, you're going to have a thicker edge if you have additional colors. So if you're using two, you can carry that yarn up the side. But if you're using many colors, you wanna be careful not to get too thick of an edge where you're carrying the yarn colors up. Here I finished my white rows and it's time for me to start my teal rows again. So just drop this color, maybe even hold it out of the way and start knitting with this color. So I'm just going to keep alternating back and forth. Keep alternating your colors, two rows of each, back and forth, until you finish the first square, and then work three more squares, picking up stitches, casting on and so on, exactly as you did for the front of the pillow. When you finish the back, it will look something like this. Yours will be bigger. But you'll have kind of a wide cross of blue, or whatever that color is, and then these small stripes radiating out.

Seaming

- So far we've avoided seaming because we picked up stitches and cast on stitches to join our squares, but now we need to join the front to the back. And to do that we're going to do a mattress stitch in garter stitch. Mattress stitch is a way of seaming pieces where both right sides are facing so we can really see what's going on. I'm going to be using a pink yarn so it will really show up, but you're going to want to use either your off-white yarn or your teal yarn or whatever your colors are so that it will blend right in. To start, I've woven in one end of my sewing yarn. And I don't want a piece of sewing yarn that's way too long, because I can always cut it or use a shorter piece and then add more yarn later. So I have a length of sewing yarn threaded onto my tapestry needle. We're going to be working from one side to another, back and forth, going under the bars of the stitch. So under these bars here. And I wanna stay at the same distance in on each side. So to start with, I've got my yarn coming out of my right edge. I'm going across here, and then I'm gonna start back here. The very corner stitches are a little bit tricky. It's kind of hard to see exactly where to put those because there's a decrease there. Don't worry too much about that, because it's not really going to show once you get your pillow form in there. But here I have a bar, and another one here. So I'm going to work back and forth. Now, if you think with garter stitch, there are two bars. There's what I call a frowny bar, that's the one that's kind of facing down, and a smiley bar. So you see the ridge of garter stitch is made up of two bars. If you really want to be careful about this, you're going to work from a frowny bar on one side to a smiley bar on the other. Let me show you what I mean. If I work into this stitch, that's a smiley bar, because there's my frowny bar, there's my smiley one that goes this way. If that's a smiley, I'm going to skip over a little bit and work into a frowny. You see, that's a smiley. Here's a frowny. That will make it absolutely, completely invisible. But I don't necessarily need to worry about this, because these pieces are going to be folded like this, so I don't really worry about whether or not they're going to be exactly joined together frowny to smiley. I can work frowny to frowny or smiley to smiley and stay on the same column of stitches because of the way they're going to be folded. If I were doing garter stitch next to each other where the pieces were going to be staying adjacent like this, I would be paying more attention to having that absolutely seamless look. But in this particular project, I'm not going to worry about that. I'll just keep working back and forth. And in this case I'll work along the same column of stitches each time all the way up. Now, one thing I wanna be careful about is when I reach my seam where the squares joined each other, I wanna make sure that I really am at the same spot on each side. To do that, I might take a safety pin or a stitch marker or something and connect those pieces so that my seaming is absolutely parallel to each other. I wouldn't want it to end up offset a little bit. As you work back

and forth between the two pieces, keep your tension even, but you don't need to pull too tight. You don't wanna have something that's going to be really tight. You wanna try to match the tension of your knitting. But you obviously don't want it to be too loose either because you don't want the pillow form to peek out the sides. So just aim for a nice, even tension. Continue seaming three sides. And when you've done three sides, you'll have a full-sized pillow just like I've done here. And let me show you the close-up of the seam that you've been working on, because this is what it looks like when you've worked in the same color. I was showing you earlier a contrasting color, but this is a close-up of the seam and you can see that it really does look seamless. It's hard to tell where that seam is when you use one of the colors that's in the pillow. Now, you may have stopped and measured this and wondered what's going on, because your pillow form is 14 inches wide and this is really only about 12 inches. That's done intentionally. If you make a pillow cover that is exactly the same width or dimensions as your pillow form, it's going to be too loose. You really want your pillow for to be slightly larger than your pillow cover and stretch the pillow cover over the pillow form. So let's see what that looks like. Here I have my 14 inch pillow form, and I'm going to insert it into my cover and I'm gonna let the cover stretch a bit. Make sure I get those corners of the form into the corners of the cover. And sometimes you have to smush it and move it around a bit. So you see that it doesn't quite fit. That's okay, because now I'm going to seam this last edge, and it will work as I stuff the pillow down into it. Before I begin seaming, I want to match up the corner, the picked up edge here, with the picked up edge here, just so that I make sure that I'm hitting the same spot when I get to it, because it's not good to have them not match. And I just have stitch markers here. You may want to use pins or pieces of yarn, something to help you keep track of what needs to join where. So, I'm gonna put a couple of stitch markers in here just to help it hold together, because I don't wanna have to be fighting as I work my seam. So the only one, these two are just to hold it together, and this one I really do want to hit that point. Now I'm just going to continue working back and forth from one side to the other just as I've been doing before. And if I need to, I'm stuffing my pillow form a bit as I work. So I really have to stick my fingers in there and let it go inside, and then I wanna pull this tightly. You really do wanna work in every ridge back and forth, because this is the thing that keeps the stuffing from coming out or showing through. With a singles yarn like this Lamb's Pride, you'll notice that it may start to untwist a bit as you stitch. And if that happens, if this starts looking a little loose through here, just give it a little more spin by twisting your needle. You can spin your own yarn to keep it from untwisting. That will not happen if you have a two or three or four-ply yarn. It just happens with the singles or one-ply yarn. Now, as I come up to my marker here in the center, I wanna make sure that these two really do match, so I'm paying attention now, going one for one. And if I have to do any fudging between one side or another, I wanna do it before I get to the center seam. Looks like I'm gonna be okay. You can take that out. And then just keep working to the end. I'm finishing up the last corner. And you can see the pillow form just fit in there just fine. And I do the last few stitches. Then the tricky part is I'm gonna have to figure out how to weave in this end inside the pillow, 'cause I really do want it to stay secure, but there's not a super-duper good way to do that because there's no way to get inside the pillow now, so I'm just going to stick it down here and kind of feel my way really underneath some stitches. I don't wanna just run it underneath like that. That's not actually working under any stitches. That's working behind the stitches. So, I'm just kind of feeling my way in and out through, behind some stitches here, but I don't want it to show, so I have to be careful. So now I've worked under some stitches there. And I'll work back down, maybe under some other stitches. I can't really tell you how to do this. You just have to feel for it. The main thing is not to see the stitches on the right side. So I check. I can see

that one maybe just a little bit, but I think it's going to not show too much. So now I can cut the yarn very close and weave that back in. There's the back of my pillow. You may need to fluff your pillow a little bit and squish it out to the corners to get it nice and smooth, but here is your finished mitered square pillow. Now, you may decide you want to do not the color block pattern or not the stripes pattern. You may wanna do everything all in one color, or each square might be a solid color. Here I've done the pillow back in multiple colors, so you might try that. You can also use mitered squares to, for example, make a scarf. In this scarf, the squares were knit separately and then stitches were picked up and a chevron pattern was made knitting in this direction. So that's a fun thing to do with a garter stitch mitered square that you already know. There can also be other types of mitered squares. This kind of funky hat is made using many different kinds of mitered squares. We have the garter stitch mitered square, but here's one that's seed stitch, here's one with some different stripes, and you can have a variation of stockinette and garter stitch. So there are many more advanced ways you can use mitered squares or mitered rectangles in projects.