
Mosaic Knitting: How to Make Placemats with Edie Eckman

Chapter 1 - Mosaic Knitting

Overview

- Hi, I'm Edie Eckman. I'm a knit and crochet designer and I love to do mosaic knitting. Mosaic knitting is a type of slip stitch knitting that allows you to use only one color per row, but enables you to do 2 color or more patterning. You can go on autopilot on every other row so your only paying attention on right side rows. Mosaic knitting may seem a little bit tricky to learn, but I'll walk you through the basics of doing a little squares pattern, fretted band pattern, a lattice pattern and a Jerusalem Cross. Once you have those basics down, you'll be able to accomplish any mosaic pattern.

Materials

- In the class materials, I've provided the pattern for two placemats. For the placemats, I used Cascade Ultra Pima cotton, which is a sport weight cotton, and appropriate needles. However, for the class demonstration, I'm going to be using a worsted weight wool and mohair blend, Lamb's Pride from Brown Sheep. I have several colors here. The main thing when choosing yarns for mosaic knitting is to make sure that you have highly contrasting yarn. So, generally speaking, a light color and a dark color. You'll see that I have the white, and then I have highly contrasting jewel tones to go with the white, I'll be using the white throughout. And needle sizes US eight, or five millimeter. Gauge doesn't really matter for demonstration purposes, you just want a nice, comfortable fabric that's not too loose or too tight. So we're just practicing with the worsted weight yarn. You'll also want to print out your pattern and your chart so you can follow along, and you'll need scissors and a tapestry needle later for weaving in your ends.

Mosaic Knitting Patterns and Techniques

Intro to reading charts, selecting yarns and Little Squares pattern

- Refer to the Little Squares chart in your class materials. Before we look at the chart itself, let me show you a couple of swatches I did in two different colors of yarn. Here, you can see I used the purple yarn as my dark color, and the white yarn as my light color, and the contrast shows up very well. However, when I used the gray yarn as my light color, it's a little more subtle. The colors don't pop as well. So, when you're choosing yarn, you may decide that you want a more highly contrasting yarn or a more sophisticated color palette. Mosaic charts are different from ordinary knitting charts. You may be used to reading, say, a fair isle chart or an intarsia chart for color, but a mosaic chart is slightly different. Mosaic charts are done in black and white. That doesn't mean you're using black yarn or white yarn, but you will be designating one of your yarns as a light color and one as a dark color. To begin with, it's easiest to understand if your light color is actually the lighter color and your dark color is actually the darker color, although we'll be switching that up in a later lesson. When you look at the chart, you'll notice that every other row starts with a black or white, so dark or light. The charts always start with a dark square. That means the first stitch that you'll knit of the chart is your dark color. You carry only one yarn at a time. You're going to do a dark stitch and then, you don't have a light yarn in your hand, so you're going to be slipping the

colors that you don't have in your hand. If you're going to knit one with the dark, then slip one, then knit three, then slip one, knit three, slip one. Now I've come to the repeat line. I keep repeating these eight stitches over and over depending on how many stitches I have, until I get to the last five stitches where I'll be doing knit three, slip one, knit one. This will make a lot more sense when we have it in our hands, but I have to explain all of this to you ahead of time, and then we'll work it together. Now, one thing you'll notice is that row two is the same row as row one. We're basically working in the same row of the chart in the other direction, but this time I'm going to be knitting the colors that I see, that I have in my hand, and slipping the other color, but I don't really have to pay attention to the chart because I'm just reading my work. I'm working the dark colors and slipping the light colors, and I'll be slipping the stitches with my working yarn on the wrong side. Again, it will make more sense to you. When we get to a right side row, the next right side row, I'm changing to my light color. I drop my dark color, pick up my light color, and I'll knit two, then slip one, because now I'm slipping the dark colors and knitting the light colors. So it's slip one, knit one, slip one, knit one, and so on, as many times as I need to get to my last five stitches. Slip one, knit one, slip one, knit two. On the wrong side row, I'll just knit the stitches in the color that I have and slip the other ones. I mentioned that every mosaic chart starts with a black square or the black color stitch, but first you have to do one row, or at least one row, of your light color, and I'll explain why in a minute. But I have cast on here a multiple of eight plus seven, because that's what my chart says. There are eight stitches within the repeat, and then seven stitches outside of the repeat. So, a multiple of eight, eight plus eight, plus seven. We can cast on any multiple of eight plus seven with a long tail cast on, and then I knit one wrong side row. So now I have one garter ridge here before I start my chart. I'm knitting the first stitch, and notice I'm just leaving a long tail here, a tail that I can leave in, and I've dropped my light color yarn, because I'm going to need that in a few minutes. I knit the first stitch and then I'm going to slip the second stitch because that is a white stitch on my chart. I slip purlwise, as if I'm going to purl, slip it off. Now notice my yarn isn't back, it's on the wrong side. It will be on the wrong side throughout. Then knit three black stitches or dark stitches. Then slip one. Then knit three. Slip one purlwise. Now I'm going to do another repeat of my eight-stitch repeat. Knit three. Slip one. Knit three. Slip one. Now I'm at my last five stitches, So I knit three, slip one, and knit one. The last stitch of the row is always in the color yarn that I'm working with. Now it's time to turn around and work a wrong side row. I'm working garter stitch. So, garter stitch-based mosaic means we knit every row. I can work stockinette stitch mosaic which means I would be purling every wrong side row, but we're doing just garter stitch now, so I'm going to knit the first stitch, and I don't have to follow the chart now because I'm going to work each stitch in the color as it appears. Here I have a white stitch, so I'm going to slip that. However, because I'm knitting, my yarn is in the back, or in this case, the right side, so I need to bring the yarn to the front before I can slip that stitch purlwise. To knit, I need to bring it to the back, then I'll knit three stitches. Let me show you that again. I need to slip this stitch. I need to bring the yarn to the front. Slip the stitch purlwise, and then bring it to the back in order to knit. Let me show you what that looks like if I'm holding the yarn in my right hand. Here I'm at a slip stitch. I need to bring the yarn forward or to the wrong side, if you will. Slip the stitch and then bring it back to the right side before I knit. Three. So I'm just doing each color as it appears. I'm not having to follow my chart. I'm bringing them between the needles. Make sure that you're slipping between... Bringing the yarn forward between the needles, not over the needles. You don't want an unintentional yarn over. Work that all the way across. Ending with knit three, bring the yarn to the wrong side. Slip one, and knit one. I've finished rows one and two, and it's time to start row three. Row three begins with the

white, so I drop the purple and pick up the white. It begins with a knit two, because I have two white stitches on my chart. I start doing my repeat, which is... Now I'm at a black stitch, so I slip that one, then knit because it's a white stitch. Slip, knit, slip, knit. I don't have to bring my yarn forward and back because my yarn is already in the back, it's already on the wrong side as I work this row. This one's pretty fast because it's just knit one, slip one all the way across. It ends with another white knit stitch, because I'm using white. I turn, and on the way back, I knit the white stitches and slip the purple stitches. Rows five and six are exactly like rows one and two, so go ahead and do those two, and then stop and take a look and make sure that you are indeed getting a row of little squares just like this. If yours doesn't look like this, chances are that you messed up when you were doing the slipping, and that you were not slipping with the yarn on the wrong side. If that's the case, go back. There's not a way to fix it, you're gonna have to rip out a row, and make sure that you are slipping with your yarn on the wrong side. So, that means bringing it to the front when you're working a wrong side row. Then, when we get to row seven, we can breathe easy, because rows seven and eight are just knitting with the light color yarn. You know how to do that. Row eight is just another easy knit row, so you can relax a little bit. Row nine begins with a knit three in the dark color, and then a slip one and knit three. You're doing that all the across, you're just offsetting your squares. Let me show you something a little tricky about that slip one purlwise. You can slip one purlwise like this, and that's fine, but sometimes I find it easier to slip one purlwise through the back loop. It's actually the same thing. Whether I slip one purlwise through the front loop or slip one purlwise through the back loop, it's exactly the same. So if it seems easier for you to slip through the back loop, that's fine and I actually find it's easier on the wrong side rows, I tend to do that. I'm working all the way across. Knit three, slip one, then it ends with knit three. Then, wrong side row is just work as shown. I'll knit three, bring my yarn forward, and here's where sometimes when my yarn is in the front and I'm holding the yarn in my left hand, I find it easier to slip one through the back loop, and that's just absolutely fine. I'm not twisting my stitch. That's the main thing. You don't want to change your stitch mount as you slip. By the time you've finished one repeat of the chart, you should be getting the hang of this pattern. It's pretty symmetrical, so you can see the pattern develop, and hopefully you can just continue to work over and over, working rows one through 16 for as long as you like. Maybe make a coaster or your own place mat. We'll be incorporating this pattern into our place mat pattern. You can see that the squares are offset from each other, and you always want to end with a series of a knit two rows, so a garter stitch ridge in your light color, so that it's symmetrical top and bottom as well. You're going to want to end your pattern with either row eight or row 16.

How to change stitch multiples

^- One feature of mosaic patterns ^is you don't absolutely have to have ^the exact right stitch multiple as you do ^for many types of knitting patterns. ^Let me show you what I mean by that. ^The little squares pattern is ^a multiple of eight plus seven. ^But I have here 14 stitches, ^which is not a multiple of eight plus seven. ^It's a multiple of eight plus six. ^But it doesn't really matter ^if I'm not concerned about centering the pattern. ^I can work the pattern without worrying about the multiple. ^I knit the first stitch, ^and then I start working across row one. ^So slip one, knit three. ^Slip one, knit three. ^Slip one, now that's my first eight stitch repeat. ^So I'm going to go back to the beginning ^of my eight stitch repeat. ^With knit three, ^oh but look, I only have one stitch left. ^I just stop there, ^and knit the last stitch with the color that I'm holding. ^So even though, in the pattern, ^the next stitch is a white stitch, ^I'm going to knit it with dark. ^Because remember the first

^and last stitch of every single row ^is worked in the color that I'm holding. ^So I'm going to knit that dark stitch, ^then I'll turn, ^and I don't have to worry about reading the wrong side row, ^because I'm just going to read my knitting, ^I'm going to knit my purple stitches, or my dark stitches, ^and slip my light stitches, ^just as I've done on all my other wrong side rows. ^So you'll see here I have the knit one, slip one, ^and knit three, slip one, but at the end, ^I end with four purple knit stitches. ^Because this stitch and this stitch ^have to be in the same color. ^So now I'm ready to begin row three, with my light color. ^And I just begin the chart as written. ^With a knit two, then begin my eight stitch repeat, ^which is slip one, knit one, ^slip one, knit one across. ^But it ends with slip one, ^and then knit one in my white color. ^On the way back, I'm going to knit the white ones, ^and slip the purple ones with the yarn on the front. ^And I end with knit two, because that's what I see. ^See, you can see although my squares aren't going to be ^symmetrically placed left to right, ^I can work without having the exact right stitch multiple. ^If I don't care about centering my pattern. ^The place mat in your class materials, ^uses this feature of mosaic patterns ^to help you understand it even more. ^When you're working the little squares pattern, ^in your place mat, ^it will not have the exact same multiple ^as shown in your chart.

Reversing lights and darks

- Refer to the fretted band pattern in your class materials. Let's look at the chart. You can see that it's kind of hard to tell from the chart what the overall pattern is going to look like, because we're only seeing a little piece of it, but when you take multiple repeats of the chart, you can see that we get sort of a Greek key design going, and it's a fretted band. To begin, start by casting on, long tail cast on, a multiple of six plus two, so I have cast on twenty-six stitches, which is a multiple of six, plus two. Then rows one and two are simply knit rows. So I have cast on and done my one wrong side row with my light yarn. Remember I said we're always starting by casting on with our light yarn and working one wrong side row, knit row, and it's time to pick up and work my rows one and two with my dark yarn. So this is just another non-having-to-think row, just a knit row, two knit rows actually, right side row and a wrong side row in the dark color. Now it's time to start doing some pattern rows. On the chart, you can see a knit one with my white and then one, two, three, four, five, so a total of six. I drop my dark color, pick up my light color. There's my first stitch, which is outside my repeats, and then I have five stitches inside the repeat line. One, two, three, four, five, then slip one dark, and I do that six stitch repeat across. So, knit five, slip one. End with slip one and then knit my last stitch in white. On the way back, I'm just going to knit the white stitches, and slip the dark stitches with my yarn in the front. We're on the wrong side. This is a pattern that's pretty easy to mess up as I know from the many times I had to rip out and try again. You really do have to pay attention. Maybe not on this row, but on the subsequent rows, you have to pay attention to the stitch pattern. At the beginning of row five, I have a dark knit, and then a slip one, then knit three. Then, slip one, knit one, here we go again, slip one, knit three. That's the beginning of my next six stitch repeat. Slip one, knit one, another six stitch repeat. Slip one, knit three, slip one, ending with knit two. Then just work the stitches as they appear on the wrong side row. At the end of row twelve of the fretted band pattern, you'll notice that it doesn't look quite complete. You've gotten up until the top of the white stitches, the top of this band, but you really need another set of dark rows to complete it. So finish the fretted band pattern by working rows one and two again. Or in other words, one garter stitch ridge to complete the fretted band. Now if you're working the fretting band over and over and over again, in the same colors, you could just keep working without repeating rows one and two, but because it doesn't look quite finished, you want to repeat them,

and I mentioned before that dark doesn't necessarily mean dark, and light doesn't necessarily mean light. You can reverse your colors and use your lighter colored yarn to represent the dark squares on your chart and your darker colored yarn to represent the white squares on your chart. So, you get a positive and negative effect with your knitting. Let's do the fretted band again, but this time, we're going to reverse the colors, and use the darker color as the white squares. I finished the previous repeat of the fretted band by working rows one and two again to complete that one repeat. Now, I'm going to start again using my light color as my dark color. So my white represents the dark squares and I'm working rows one and two, which again is just knit rows. On row three, we have to pay attention. Row three on the chart, begins with a white square, but because we're using the dark color yarn as our white squares, we're going to knit with the dark yarn, and it begins with knit six. Slip one, then knit five. Slip one, knit five. Then slip one of our quote, unquote, dark, and knit. Go ahead and keep working this way to the end of row twelve with your colors reversed, then work rows one and two again so that you complete that band. What you get then is a reversed pattern as you see here on the swatch. Then if you like, you can switch the colors back, with the dark being the dark, and the light being the light, and complete your pattern. So you get three repeats of your fretted band, but you have the positive, negative effect showing in the center one.

Lattice pattern

Take a look at the lattice chart in your class materials. Let's see what's going on here. You'll notice that it's a repeat of 12 plus three. So you'll want to cast on a repeat of 12 plus three. I have 27 stitches. This is a pattern that works best if you have at least two repeats of twelve because, as you can see, it's really hard to see what's going on. It's hard to see that this chart is going to turn into this fabric. And one thing you can do if you're looking at a mosaic chart and you're not quite sure what it's going to look like is you can print this out and actually kind of cut and paste the pieces next to each other to see how it's going to look as an overall pattern before you ever start knitting. Then, you're going to want to cast on and work your one wrong-side row in your light color because our chart starts with a dark color. ^Why don't we work that one wrong-side row first? Here's why: Now that you've done a few mosaic charts you start to see a pattern develop. ^When I work this first row, ^I need to slip that one white stitch. If I haven't worked a light-colored row below, there's nothing to slip. ^In other words, if I had just cast on ^with my dark color, for example, ^there would be no way to slip a light-colored stitch. ^So I have to do a setup row. My wrong-side row creates the ability for me to slip that light color up on row one. Row one begins with a dark stitch and a slip stitch followed by 11 dark stitches. ^Then a slip stitch and another 11 ^because we're repeating our 12 stitches again. ^Slip one and knit the last stitch. Go ahead and work your wrong-side row, knitting the brown stitches and slipping the light stitches. ^Row three begins with four light stitches. ^And then we do slip one, knit one. ^Slip one, knit one. ^Slip one, knit one. ^Slip one. ^This is one that's a little tricky when you get started. ^You have to really pay attention to the chart ^but after awhile you can see the pattern develop. ^So I've done one, two, three. That's the end of my 12-stitch repeat. Then I start again with one, two on the 12-stitch repeat. ^Then knit four to the end. At this point, hopefully you're getting comfortable reading the chart and you can do the remainder of the rows by yourself. I'm a big proponent of understanding what the pattern does so that I'm not stuck reading the chart. This one's a little complex, but my thought process as I work through it is this: ^I can see that I'm making diamond-shaped patterns. ^So sometimes my brown or my dark stitches are headed out ^and sometimes they're headed in. ^And of course, they're offset this way. ^So I can see as I work the first few rows ^that this pattern is headed up in this direction. ^So I know when I

begin the next series on the pattern ^that I'm just going to have two brown stitches here ^and it's going to be headed up toward the point ^of my diamond or my pyramid. ^At the same time, I'm going to have to start filling in ^here with the bottom of the last diamond. Now I know that I'm still going to have to refer to my chart fairly frequently, but I also need to read my knitting because it's easy to get mixed up which row you're on and sometimes if you're not paying attention to your knitting as well, you won't find a mistake. It's harder to fix a mistake if you don't catch it right away. ^Beginning with row five, I knit three dark stitches ^and slip one. ^And now I can see that I need to complete my bar ^across these stitches to make those little squares. ^So that's going to be all the way across all these stitches. ^And then I'm going to slip one and knit three. ^Now, the knit three on the chart ^is knit two and then knit one, ^but that's the bottom of my next diamond ^that's about to start. ^Then slip one and then I'm going to work that bar ^all the way across to make the top of my little squares. ^As I said, this is the way I think of it in my head ^as I'm knitting. ^You may have a different way of thinking about it. ^And then I'm going to slip one and end with knit three. ^So I am following the chart, ^but I'm also trying to see how I'm creating a pattern and establishing a new diamond as I go. Wrong-side rows are simply knit the stitches as they appear and slip the stitches in the other color. The beginning of row seven is two white stitches and then slip a dark stitch. Now I'm going to knit three, and when I knit three with the white and then slip one with the dark, you can see my tiers start appearing here. I have one tier of squares and now it goes in and I'm starting another tier. So I'm going to knit one, slip one. Knit one, slip one. And then knit three. Now here's the bottom of the next diamond starting and I know I need to put a white stitch in there because I need to make that little grid, if you will. So I slip one, knit one. Slip one, knit three. Slip one, knit one. Slip one, knit one. Knit three. Then slip one, knit two. And there you can see that one diamond is starting going in this direction and then this is the top of two diamonds here. As you come to the end of your chart pattern, you may want to think about, again, repeating rows one and two again. Take a look at this swatch. ^It started with rows one and two ^with the brown and that long bar there. But you see when I end, I ended the pattern, I have two rows of white. But I ended the chart just exactly as it shows with row 24, and I think maybe it would look better if I had ended with row two. So if I had repeated row one and two so that I had another long bar here, that would just make the top and the bottom more symmetrical as well. So think about that. You may want to finish with rows one and two to make your pattern symmetrical top and bottom.

Jerusalem Cross pattern

- At this point hopefully you're really feeling comfortable reading the chart patterns. The Jerusalem Cross pattern looks pretty tricky, but it's not as tricky as it might seem. I've cast on a multiple of 12 plus three and I've worked my one wrong side row plus rows one and two and I'd like to talk about my mental process when I'm working some of the other rows. For one thing, sometimes I'll use a piece of white paper to cover up the rows that I haven't worked yet. It doesn't do me any good to cover up the rows I've already worked because I want to see what I'm doing now and how it relates to the previous row. So I've done rows one and two and now I'm going to do row three and here's what I'd like you to look at. Within the 12 stitch repeat, you can see you're going to have three white stitches and a dark, then five, then a dark and if you look it's one, two, three, four, five so you're gonna have five lights again. So the repeat once you get it established is really slip one, knit five, slip one, knit five, slip one, knit five, and so on across and you'll be ending with a knit four. I start with a knit four which is a knit one plus the first three stitches in my 12 stitch repeat. Then slip one, knit five. Slip one, knit five. Slip one, knit five. Then slip one and it ends with knit four. So as I go across,

I'm doing slip one, knit five, slip one, knit five with something different at the beginning and the end of the rows and of course on the way back it's the same thing. I get my row started and then I do slip one, knit five. Slip one, knit five. All the way across, ending with slip one, knit four. At the beginning of row five, I'm going to have a similar thing going on. Look at my chart. Here I'm going to start with a dark color and I'll do slip one, knit five. Slip one, knit five. I find it so much easier to have this pattern in my head. It makes it more likely that I will do the row without making a mistake if I can set it up in my head and think about a pattern rather than having to follow the chart. The Jerusalem Cross pattern has a cross here. You can see it's surrounded by the dark so it's outlined by the dark and the center is light. You can also see that there are little connections. Can you see that the cross is connected by these stitches here both on the sides and at the top of one cross, so up here at the top of the cross you're working right into the next cross, so as you're working vertical repeats, you'll have that little connection going there to start the next one. However, when you are finishing your last repeat at the top you may want to leave off rows 23 and 24 so that you don't end up with those two little dark stitches. That's what I did here so it finishes off smoothly and doesn't look like I'm intending to do another repeat on the top.

Wrap-Up and Variations

- You have four mosaic patterns under your belt. Now it's time to make the place mats. You'll cast on with the light color and work the threaded band pattern, which is a multiple of six plus two. Then move on to the little squares pattern. Remember, the little squares pattern is a multiple of eight plus seven, which doesn't work exactly with our cast on number. That's alright. We're not concerned about this little squares being the exact same multiple. We just work til the end of the row and then knit the last stitch of the row, as I showed you in an earlier lesson. Once you've done the little squares pattern over and over and over again, it's time to finish with another series of threaded band and two final rows in the light color when you bind off. For the other place mat, you're going to begin by working two repeats of the Jerusalem cross pattern. Then switch to the lattice pattern for the center portion. Then switch back to the Jerusalem cross. Of course, you can switch up the patterns any way you like. You can do one of each type of pattern across, because the stitch, multiples don't matter that much. Chances are that your gauge is not going to change much between one mosaic pattern and another. If you choose, you can mix them up. Mix and match to your heart's desire. Let's take a look at some of the other options you have when you're working with mosaic patterns. I mentioned earlier that you can work in garter stitch, as we have done. Or you can work in stockinette stitch. Here's a little squares pattern worked in garter stitch, but then look at how very, very different it looks when you work it in stockinette stitch. You can see that the garter stitch version are really our squares. The elongated stitches of stockinette stitch, make it an entirely different shape. It becomes a rectangle and a little bit of a strange rectangle at best. It's a little more, it's a little heavier on the top with the silver stitches than it is at the bottom. You never really know how a pattern is going to translate from garter stitch mosaic to stockinette stitch mosaic until you try it. There can be some big surprises along the way. Sometimes you get very interesting optical effects. Other times, it's not such a happy compromise to do stockinette stitch. I urge you to try both when you're trying a new pattern. Another option is to make projects that are garments. Here is a swatch work back and forth. These became mitts. Just fingerless mitts from a swatch work back and forth with loads of garter stitch in between. Then the matching hat was knit in the round. You can work mosaic stitch in the round, but what do you know about garter stitch in the round? Garter stitch in the round requires that you knit one row, then purl one row. So you're

pearling every other row. Don't forget, when you are pearling those rows and you're slipping stitches, that you have to slip the stitch with the yarn in the back or on the wrong side. The yarn is always on the wrong side when you're working in the round. On pearl rows, you'll have to move it back to slip the stitch and then move it forward again to pearl the next stitch. Mosaic knitting has lots of applications. You know the basics, so go have fun with it.