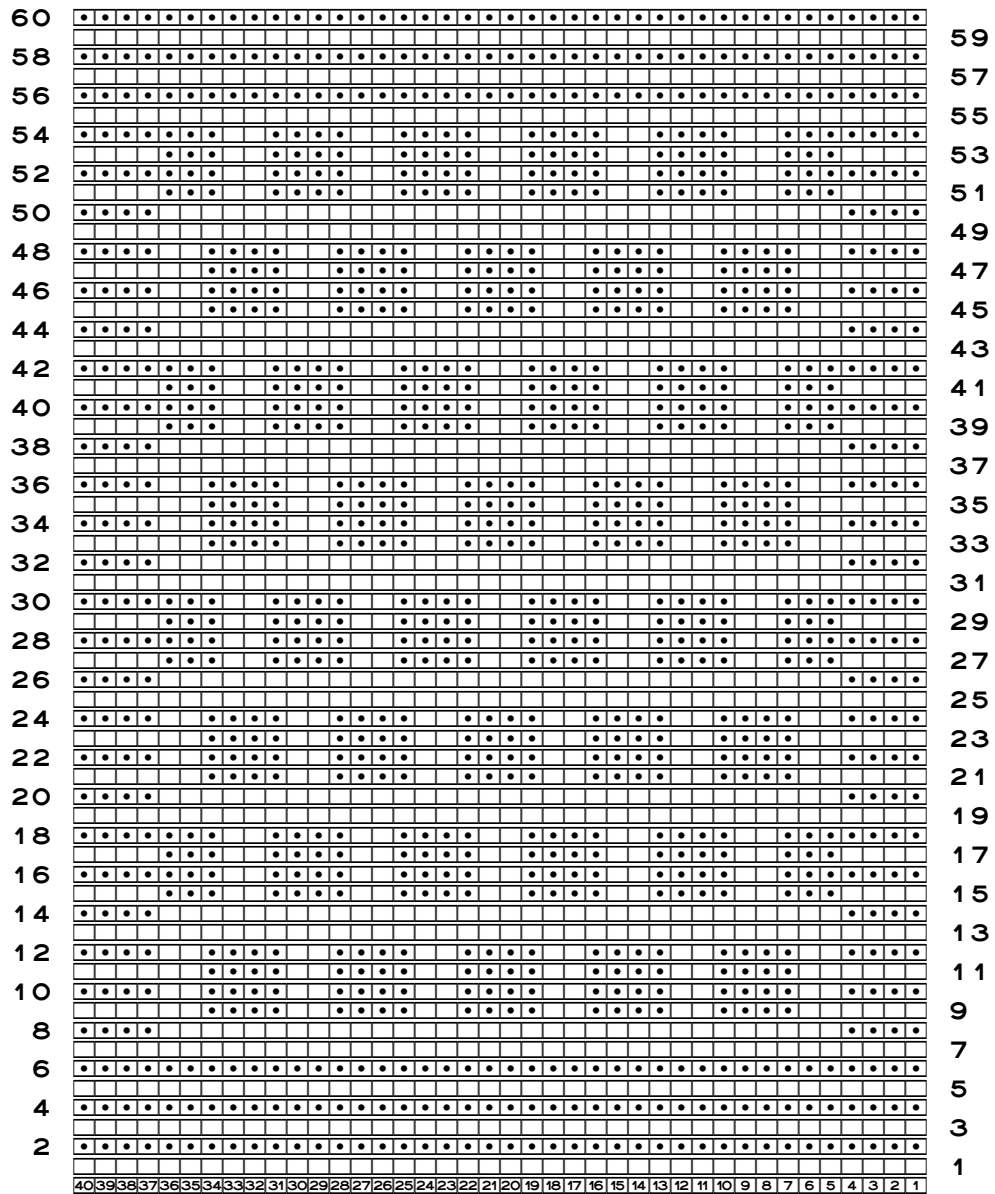


Chapter 230

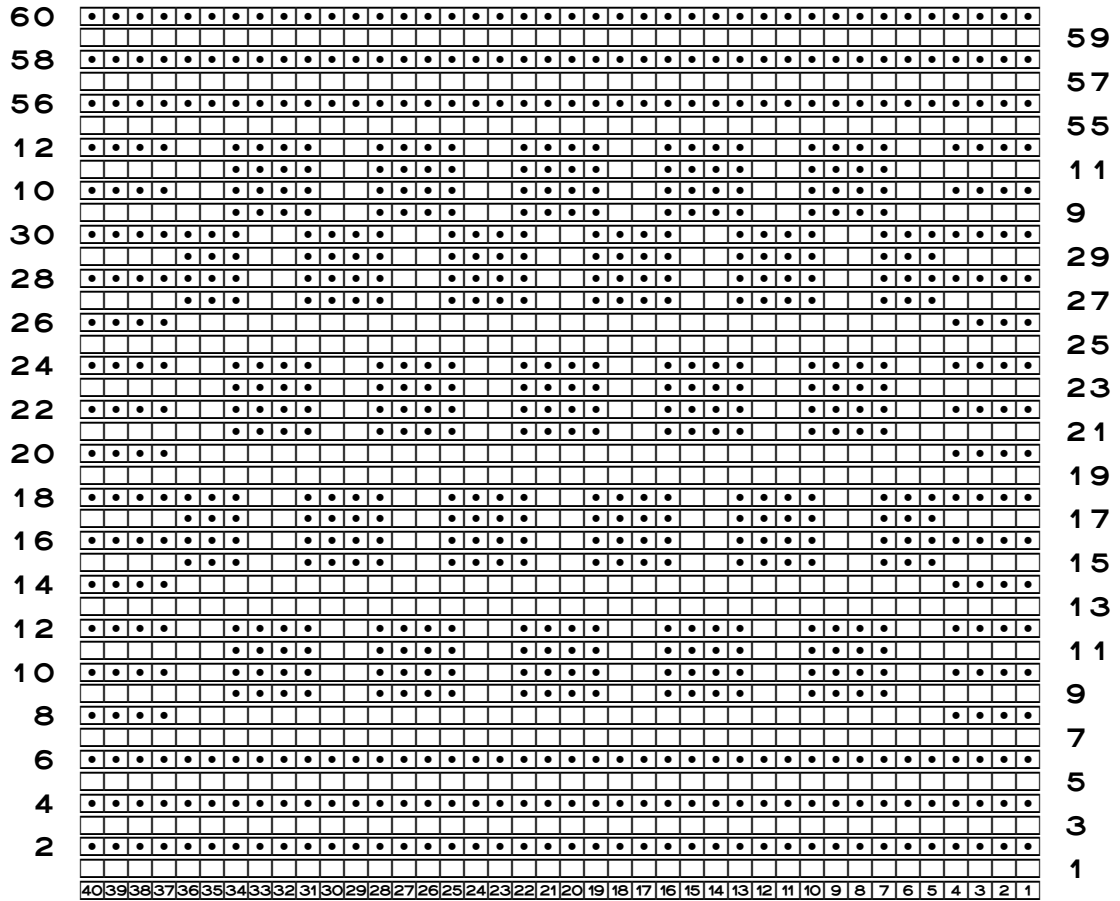
TWEAKING A PATTERN

Sometimes we might want to fiddle with the details of a pattern chart. Since a chart shows us a good representation of what the actual knitting will look like, we can do quite a bit of experimenting before we ever cast on.¹

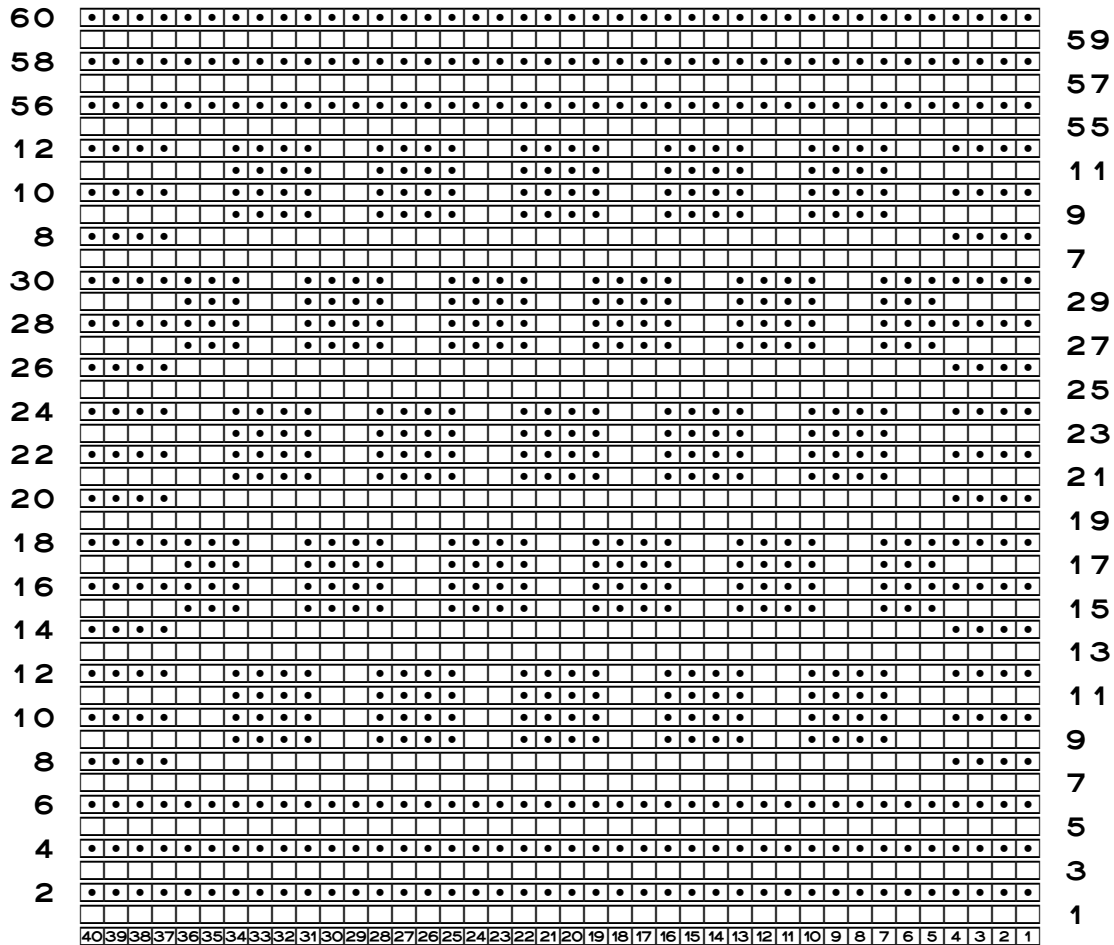
Let's take a critical look at the full chart of all sixty rows of the basket-weave hot pad.



¹ The goal is to avoid frogging and reworking, especially in a grabby yarn or one that otherwise wouldn't respond well to frogging.



Whoops! Now the row of original blocks is directly on top of the row of offset blocks. We better copy in rows seven and eight to put the stockinette stitch between the last two rows of blocks.

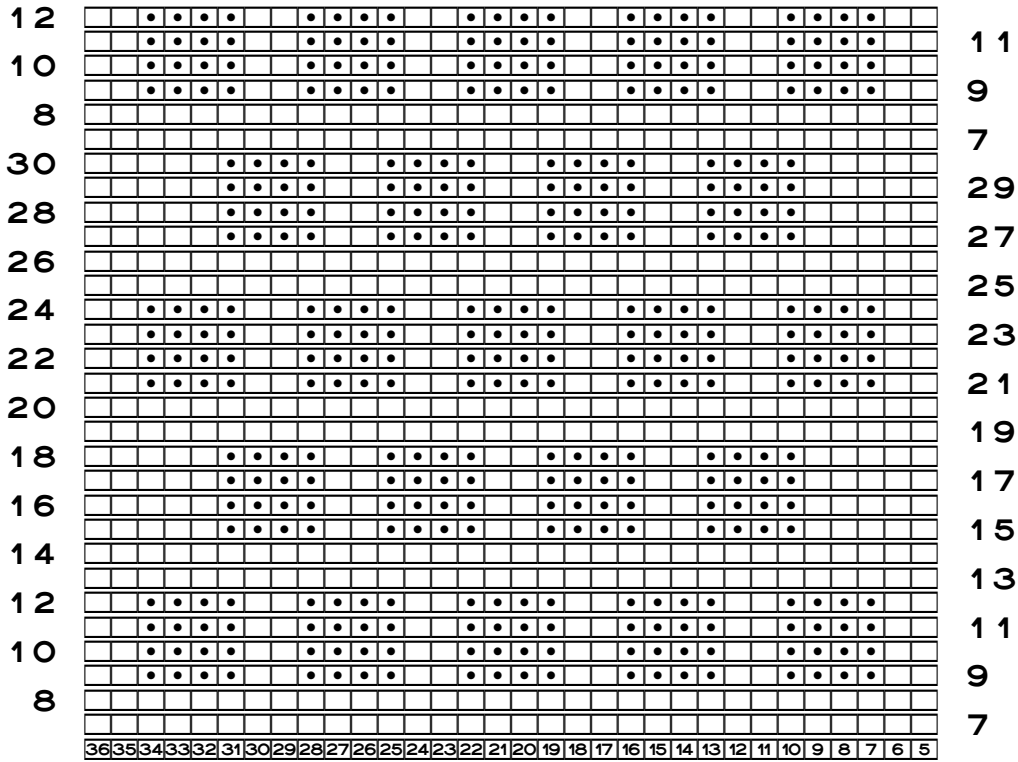


That's better.

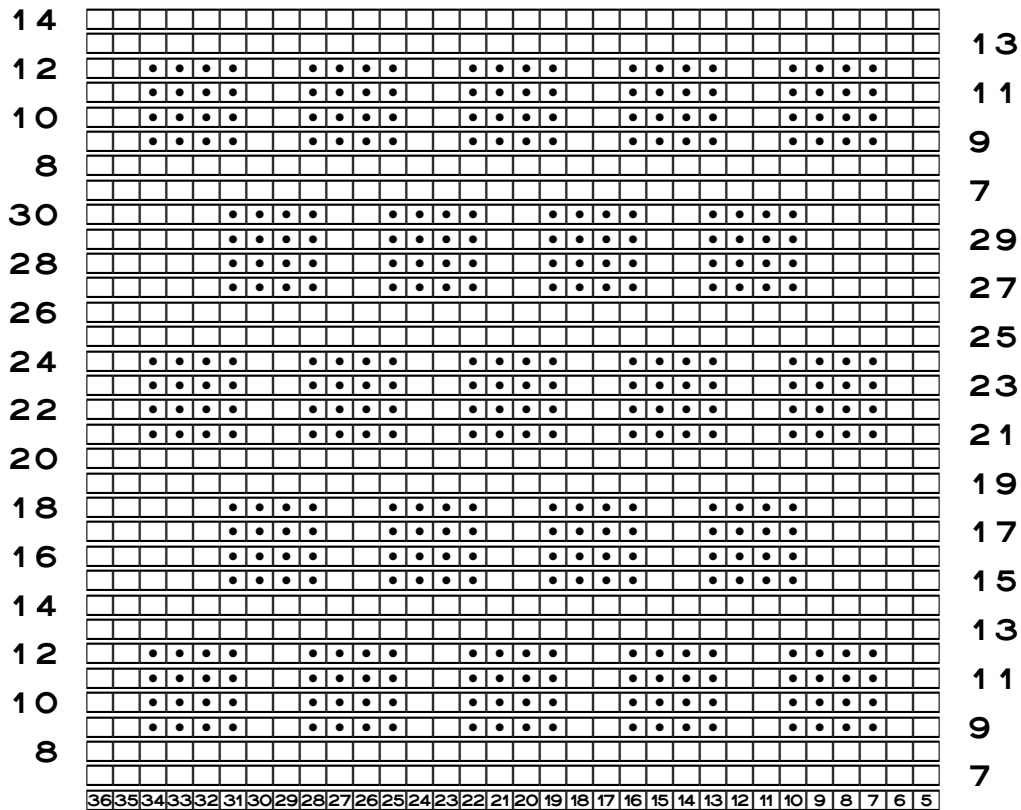
Now, in this shorter version of the chart, we still have only one row of stockinette between the last row of blocks and the top border of garter stitch. In this truncated chart, that row is still labeled row fifty-five.

So far the changes we've made have not disturbed the continuity of the garter-stitch left and right borders where they meet the garter-stitch top border. But we still can't put a second row of stockinette before row fifty-five *and* keep the garter-stitch borders uninterrupted where the top border meets the left and right borders. It just can't be done. Our choice on this issue is the same as it was before.

But we *can* fix the partial blocks that bump into the left and right borders. We'll just select those purl stitches and replace them with knit stitches (stitches five through seven and thirty-four to thirty-six on rows fifteen through eighteen and twenty-seven through thirty).



Since we've eliminated the garter-stitch borders that made it impossible to have two rows of stockinette above the last row of blocks while keeping the top border meshed properly with the left and right borders, let's put two rows of stockinette at the top, since we might want to do, for example, a seed-stitch border. We had copied over rows nine through twelve to repeat the original row of blocks as the last row of blocks, so we'll copy the two rows of stockinette that follow them and paste them in to be the two rows of stockinette to make the top edge mirror-image the bottom edge.



Are We There Yet?

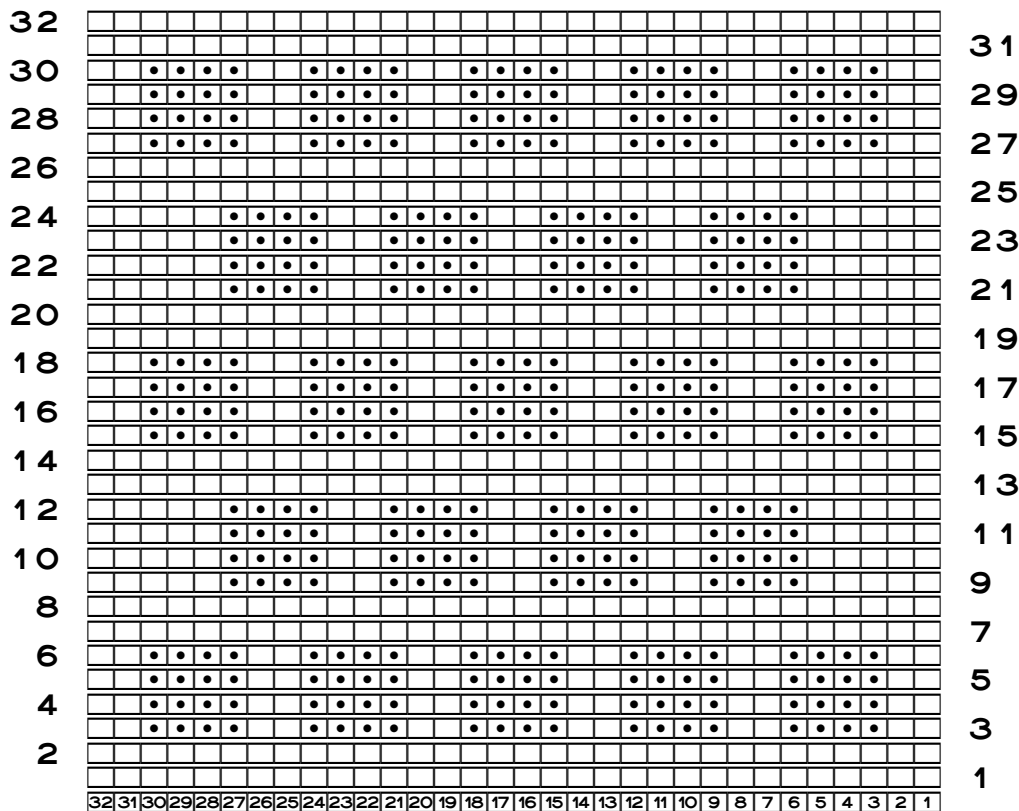
Does this chart now reflect the changes that we wanted to make?

- ☉ One goal was to eliminate the partial blocks that touched the left and right borders. This chart has fixed that problem.
- ☉ Another goal was to have a row of original blocks at the top edge, to match the bottom edge. Repeating at the top of the chart the six rows needed for the row of original blocks has fixed that problem.
- ☉ And finally, since we've eliminated the borders, we have two rows of stockinette at the top of the chart to match the two rows at the bottom of the chart. (And of course, those two rows top and bottom match the two columns of stockinette stitch at left and right.)

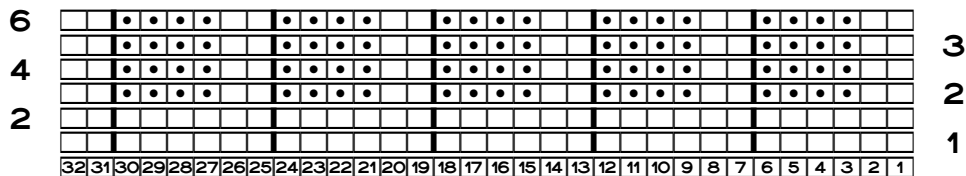
Now that we have the project mini-chart laid out the way we want, let's figure out the new pattern repeat, showing all the plus stitches and plus rows.

Find the Pattern Repeat of Variation #1

First, let's renumber the rows, or we'll have confusion since there are two sets of rows labeled seven through fourteen. Since we're not going to try to force garter-stitch borders, which we already know we can't do with perfect results, we'll renumber both the rows and the stitches starting from one.



Since the row of original blocks (in what used to be chart rows seven through twelve and is now in rows one through six) is identical to the one in chapter 220, we can just use the stitch repeat we already found for those rows.

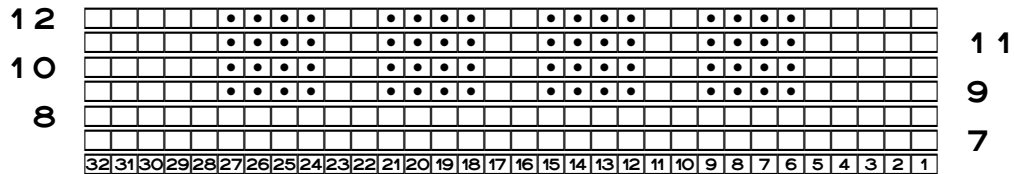


Stitches one through six form the stitch repeat for these first six rows, and stitches

thirty-one and thirty-two form the plus stitches for those rows, making the whole piece symmetrical.

Find the Stitch Repeat in the Row of Offset Blocks

Let's look at the row of offset blocks, which now doesn't match what we had in chapter 220.

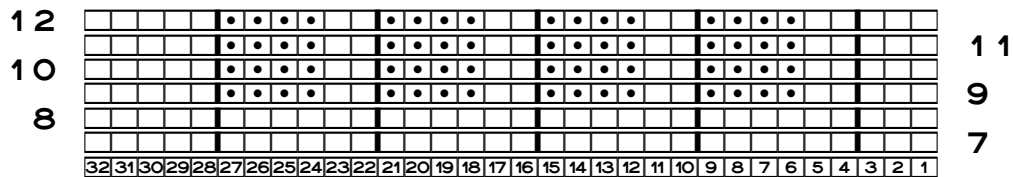


We can see at a glance that we have the same six-by-six groups of stitches forming the purl blocks and the stockinette between them, but we also have those large groups of knit stitches at the beginning and end of each row.

As we had two options in chapter 220, we have the same two options here as well.

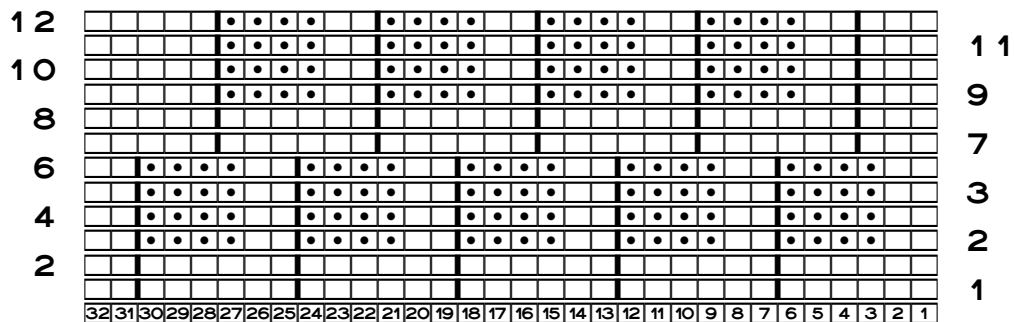
Option 1: Keep the Same “Rubber Stamp”

Some of us will want to put the repeat markers in these places



because this placement will let us use the same “rubber stamp” that we used on the row of original blocks.

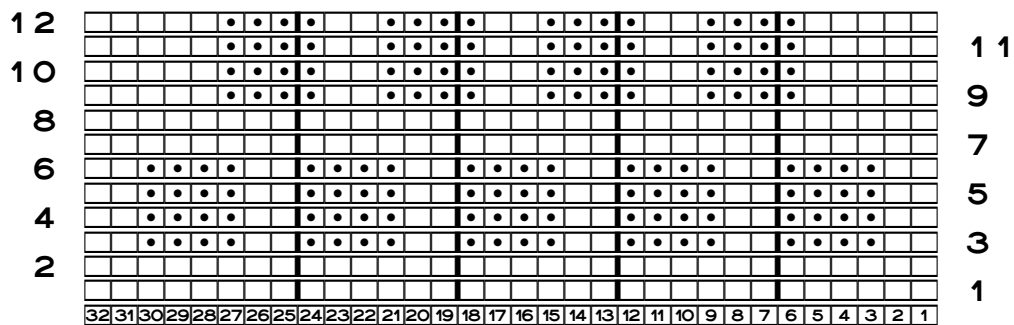
As we saw in chapter 220, if we are putting stitch markers between each pattern repeat, we will have to move them every time we switch from one row of blocks to the other.



Do you see it? We have three groups of stitches that are absolutely identical. They're so identical that we could have thirty or three hundred of them, to make a project that was somewhat wider or a lot wider.

But the stitches that come before and after those three groups... Those two groups of stitches are *all* plus stitches in this new configuration. Remember, we didn't want partial blocks on the rows of offset blocks. So when we changed those purl stitches to knits, that altered what we had to do before the first stitch repeat and after the last stitch repeat on the row of offset blocks.

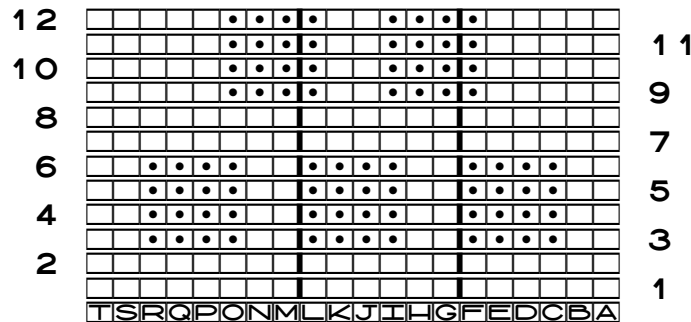
Maybe it will be clearer without one of the repeat markers.



How does this version strike you? The three stitch groups between the four repeat markers are all identical. Since they're all identical, they make up the pattern repeat.

The stitches before the first repeat marker and the stitches after the last repeat marker *both* constitute plus stitches. We must have plus stitches both before *and* after the stitch repeat.

So here's the chart for the stitch repeat, using letters instead of numbers, since we now have fewer than twenty-six stitches.



Stitches G through L form the pattern repeat. You would repeat those six stitches over

Let's double-check. Rows one and thirteen are indeed the same. That means rows two and fourteen, rows three and fifteen, and rows four and sixteen also must be the same.

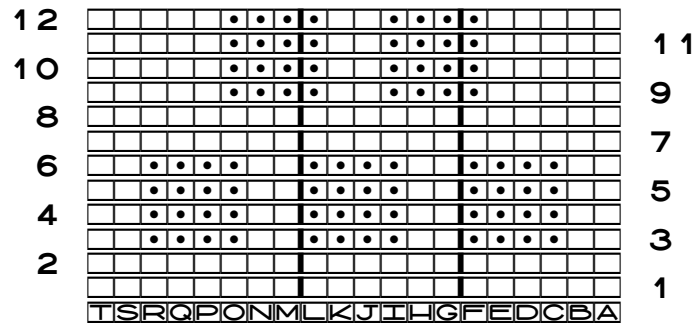
If row thirteen is the same as row one, then row twelve must be the last row of the pattern. So let's see if row... Which row do we have to look at? If row thirteen is where the rows start repeating, which row has to match row twelve? In other words,

Row 1 to row 12 needs to be the same as row 13 to which row?

Twelve minus one is eleven, so add eleven to thirteen to see which row has to be the same as row twelve. Eleven plus thirteen is twenty-four, so we have to see if row twenty-four is the same as row twelve.

Are rows twelve and twenty-four the same? Yes, they are. Both rows show the top edge of the row of offset blocks.

So the row repeat is rows one through twelve, repeated over and over again until the piece is long enough. (Or we're starting to get low on the project's yarn, or we're just tired of this project, or...)



Are We Done Yet?

Suppose we're using the chart above to make our blanket. We're knitting along, working rows one through twelve over and over. But if we stop at row twelve of the pattern and move immediately to the top border, do we get the result we want? Let's look back at the twelve rows of the pattern repeat one more time.

If we go straight from pattern row twelve to the top border, we have missed two things:

- ☉ We end with a row of offset blocks, which we didn't want to do.
- ☉ We don't have two rows of stockinette between the last row of blocks and the top border.

stitch repeat itself (stitches G through L), and the left-edge plus stitches (stitches M through T).

The Terse Stitch-Repeat Description

When we see patterns in a stitch dictionary, the first line usually says something like “multiple of $12 + 3$ ” or even just “ $10 + 2$.”

Now we know that the basket-weave stitch repeat is six stitches wide, so “ $6 +$ ” will be the first part of our terse description. What number do we put after the $+$ for the number of plus stitches?

Since we have two groups of plus stitches, we have to add the number of stitches in both groups together for the second half of the terse description. The first group is six stitches wide; the second is eight.

That means “ $6 + 14$ ” is the terse description of the stitch repeat for this version of the basket-weave pattern.

The Row Repeat and Plus Rows

Rows one through twelve, worked over and over, will give us paired rows of blocks, a row of original blocks and a row of offset blocks.

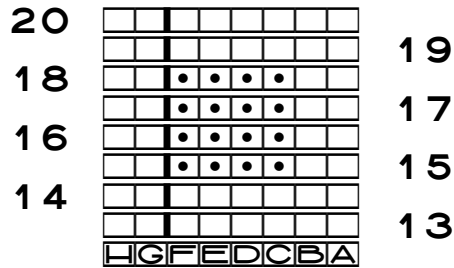
But to make sure that the final row of blocks at the top of the piece is a row of original blocks, we work rows thirteen through twenty just once, after we have worked as many repeats of rows one through twelve as wanted or needed. Rows one through twelve are the row repeat, and rows thirteen through twenty are the plus rows.

This chart happens to have only one set of plus rows. Other patterns may have plus rows both before and after the row repeat, or only before the row repeat.

Even Plus Rows Can Have Stitch Repeats

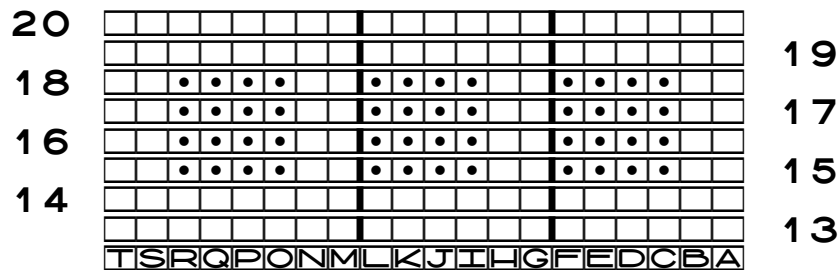
Look back at stitches G through L on rows thirteen through twenty. That group of stitches has to be repeated across the top edge of the piece. Why? Because those stitches make the final row of original blocks, except for the first block and the last block.

If we wanted to, we could have the plus rows as a separate chart with fewer stitches:



According to the rules of interpreting charts, we work stitches A through F over and over across the plus rows, then we work stitches G and H just once, as plus stitches.

Why can we simplify the plus rows this way? If we compare that smaller chart to the section of the chart showing just the plus rows, we can see that stitches A through F on rows thirteen through twenty are the same as stitches G through L and M through R on those rows.



We might not always have this kind of situation, but if it's there, we can feel free to split the chart into different pieces to simplify it. Doing so will often let us use a bigger font size—one more bonus.

Charts for Variation #1

We can actually do the “final” charts two ways.

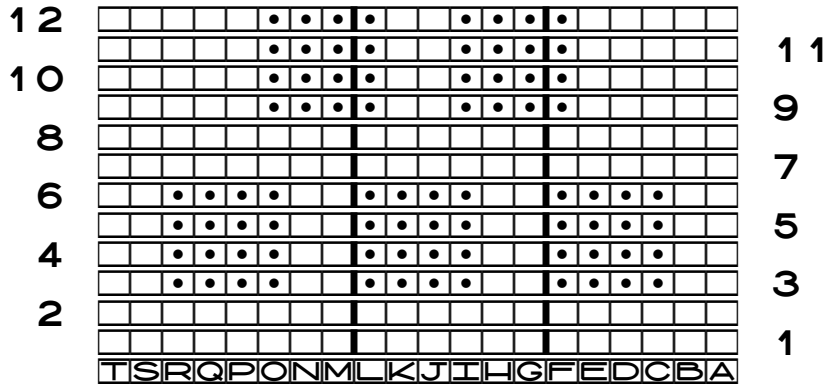
An Extended Version

This layout is more explicit, but it takes up more space.

Basket-Weave Variation Main Pattern Rows

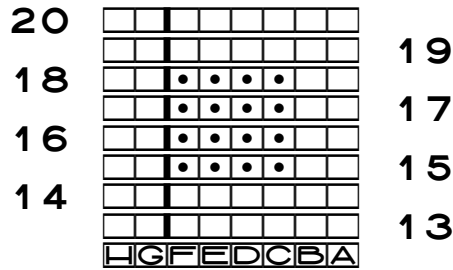
multiple of 6 + 14

Work rows 1–12 as many times as desired.



Basket-Weave Variation Plus Rows

Work rows 13–20 after completing the final set of main pattern rows.



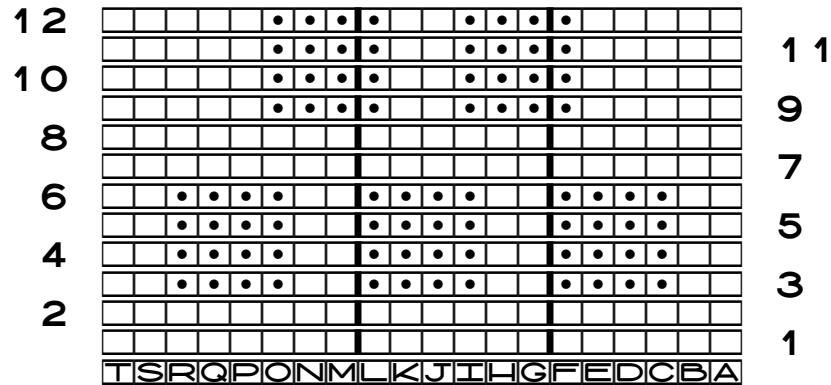
The Most Compact, and Easiest, Version of All

This is a no-brainer (but I still almost missed it—a “forest for the trees” kind of thing!).

Basket-Weave Variation

multiple of 6 + 14

Work rows 1–12 as many times as desired. Then work rows 1–8 once.



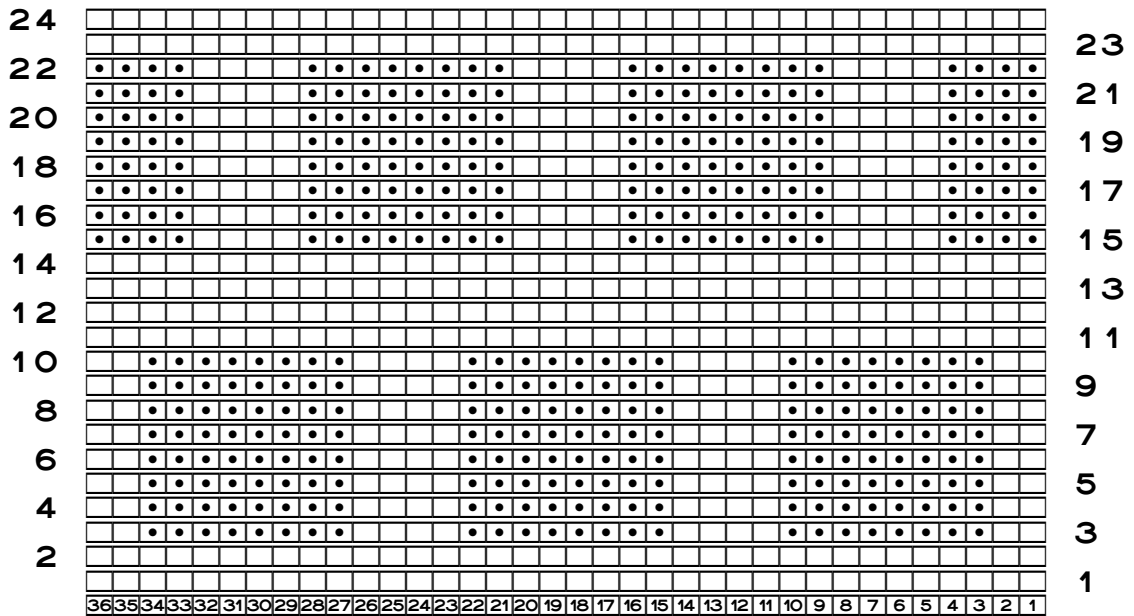
More Ways to Tweak a Pattern Chart

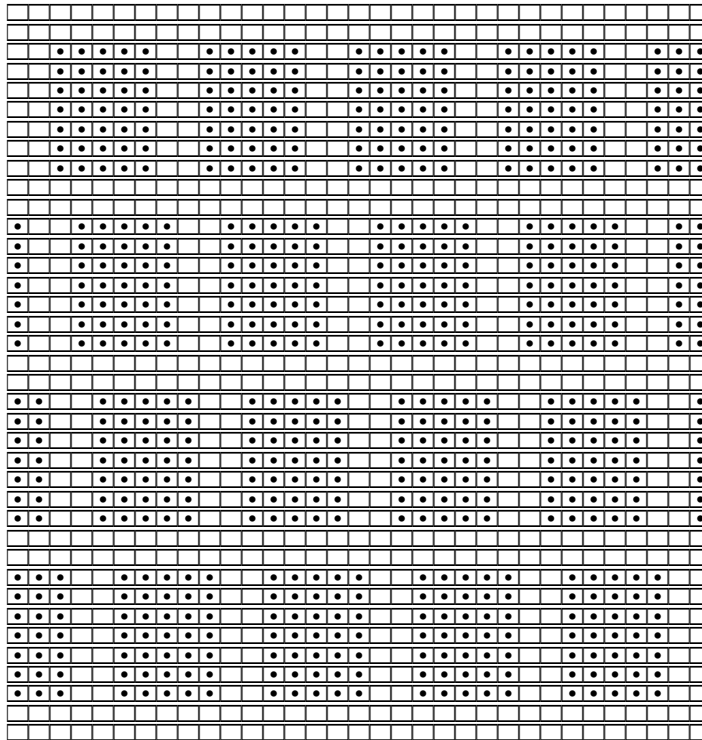
Let's see what other ways we can change the original basket-weave chart.

Variation #2: Make the Purl Blocks Bigger

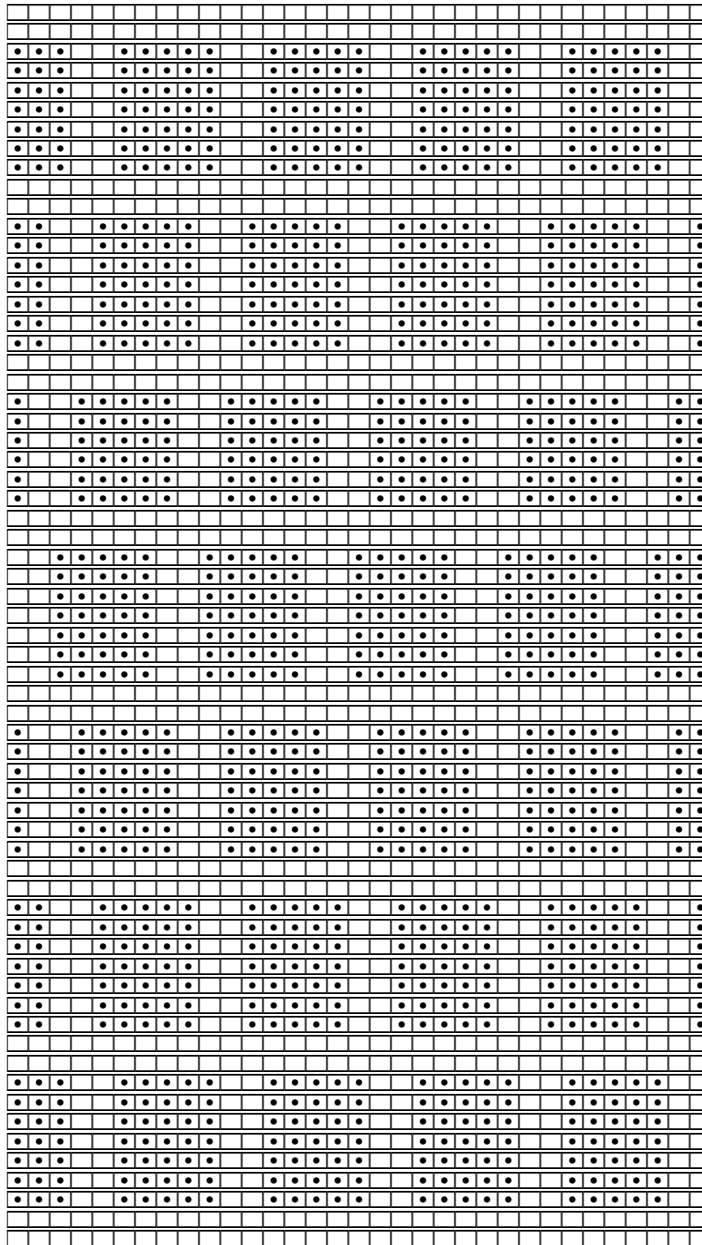
If we want to increase the scale of the basket-weave pattern, so that the blocks were much bigger for a blanket, it's simple to make each purl block both wider and taller. We already saw in the purl-diamond project how to scale a motif's size.

Here's a basic chart with eight-by-eight purl blocks with four stitches and four rows of stockinette between the blocks. As an exercise, figure out both the stitch and row repeat of this enlarged pattern, then check your chart against the Answers.





We could also shift them back and forth to create a herringbone pattern.



With a computer and the knitting font, we can go wild designing new patterns. We can save each one as a separate file and create our own stitch dictionaries, and we can do it all without casting on a single stitch.