

Chapter 330

CREATING YOUR OWN CABLE SYMBOLS

Cables don't have to be made with all knit stitches, and twists don't have to be just knits on top of just purls. To get different looks, we can mix up knits, purls, slip stitches, yarnovers, traveling stitches, and other combinations in the front and/or the back stitches. Since the maximum width of the knitting font's symbols is ten stitches, then if the cable is wider than that, we will have to do something special in the chart to show how to work the cabling row.

With creative knitters like you constantly making up new cables and twists, it's too difficult to add to the knitting font special symbols for all these new designs, and it would be just as difficult for us to find those symbols to put in our charts.

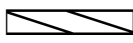
An alternative is to create in our charts a representation of a needed cable by combining basic stitch symbols.

An Example with a Defined Cable Symbol

Let's first work through the technique using an example with an easy cable, a Cable 2/2 Left. Since cables and twists work the stitches out of order, we can number the stitches, then show how they are reordered after the cable. Here are the four stitches we work the cable on.

Stitch positions before cabling	4 3 2 1
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For a Cable 2/2 Left, we put the first two stitches on a cable needle and hold them to the front, knit two stitches from the left needle, then knit the two stitches from the cable needle. So the stitches have been reordered:

Stitch positions after cabling	2 1 4 3
Cable 2/2 Left	
Stitch positions before cabling	4 3 2 1

What happens if we look at just the two rows with the numbered stitches?

Stitch positions after cabling	2 1 4 3
Stitch positions before cabling	4 3 2 1

We can see that the stitches are cabled, because they have been worked out of order.

But what we can't tell from this rearrangement is **which way** they cross. What if we split the stitches into two rows?

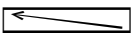

Stitch positions before cabling	4 3
	2 1

Or we could split them into two rows the other way.¹

Stitch positions before cabling	2 1
	4 3

At this point, we will simply have to decide which split we prefer to represent a cable to the left. It's just a representation of how the stitches will be cabled, and it's really completely arbitrary. Some knitters might think the first split, with the first two stitches below the second two, prods them to think of the first two stitches being held in front of the last two. Other knitters will think the second way is the better representation.

If we think of an arrow being drawn on top of the groups, we might draw the arrows this way:

Stitch positions before cabling	4 3 2 1	
Stitch positions before cabling	2 1 4 3	

Since we want a cable to the left, the first arrangement may be better after all, because if we mentally draw an arrow across the two groups of stitches, it moves in the same direction we want the cable to slant.

We could also show the stitches split into two rows with the stitches in the post-cabling order.

Stitch positions after cabling	2 1 4 3
Stitch positions after cabling	4 3 2 1

In total, we wind up with four different options.

¹ These charts use spaces to move the stitches left or right on the two lines within the table cell. We could also use the Left Justified and Right Justified buttons to position them properly.

Stitch positions before cabling	<table border="1"><tr><td>4</td><td>3</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>2</td><td>1</td></tr></table>	4	3		2	1	<table border="1"><tr><td></td><td></td><td>2</td><td>1</td></tr><tr><td>4</td><td>3</td><td></td><td></td></tr></table>			2	1	4	3		
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2	1														
	4	3													
		4	3												
2	1														

Since our brains are all different, we can all figure out which of the four possibilities works best for ourselves.

Now let's apply these ideas to a couple of example cables.

Example 1

What if the middle two stitches in each half of a Cable 4/4 Left were themselves a 1/1 Cable Right?

Triple-Cross Cable

multiple of 8

C2R: put 1 st on cn and hold to back, K1, K1 from cn

Foundation row A and all WS rows: P.

Rows 1, 5, and 7 (RS): * K1, C2R, K1 *, rpt betw *.

Row 3: put 4 sts on cn and hold to front, (K1, C2R, K1)
from L ndl, (K1, C2R, K1) from cn

Rpt rows 1-8 for patt.

The basic chart would be

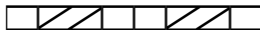
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Since we'll have to do a 4/4 cable on row three, we will already have stitches on the cable needle when we try to make the C2R both times. If we don't have a second cable needle, then we can work the C2Rs in either of two additional ways:

1. Do a K2tog but leave both stitches on the needle, knit the first stitch (by digging through the K2tog to get into it), then drop both stitches from the needle.
2. Knit the second stitch, knit the first stitch, then drop both stitches from the needle.

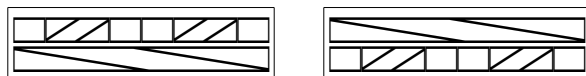
How do we represent the triple cross that occurs on row three? We have to do the same two groups of K1–C2R–K1 as on the other public-side rows



at the same time that we do an ordinary Cable 4/4 Left



If we put both sets of symbols in a single table cell, we could position them in two ways:



which would give us two possibilities for the whole chart:

8		
		7
6		
		5
4		
		3
2		
		1
a		

8		
		7
6		
		5
4		
		3
2		
		1
a		

Since this cable is only eight stitches wide, we can simply add the standard cable symbol to row three.

The knitting font has symbols for cables up to ten stitches wide, so let's look at options when the cable is wider than that.

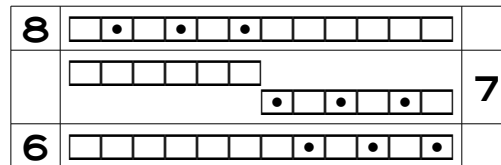
Example 2

What if a twelve-stitch-wide cable was half seed stitch and half stockinette?

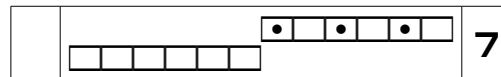
When considered from the public side, eleven rows make the right half of the cable in seed stitch and the left half in stockinette. On eleven other rows, the right half of the cable is stockinette and the left half is seed stitch.

On rows seven and nineteen, we cross the last six stitches over the first six, which swaps the positions of the seed-stitch and stockinette strands while making the cable slant to the right. Since there isn't a predefined symbol for the crossings in this cable, or even a symbol that's twelve stitches wide, we have to use knits and purls, and possibly other symbols, to show us what to do.

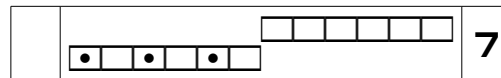
In the first chart, we keep the stitches in the same order as before the cabling, but we split them into two rows to show which stitches are worked in each group.



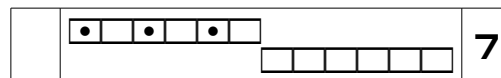
We could raise and lower the groups the other way.



The other way is to show the stitches in two rows in their post-cabling order. Here are the first



and second split-row options.



Let's put all four options together in one place to make it easier to compare them. Remember that we put six stitches on the cable needle and hold them to the back, work six stitches, then work the six stitches from the cable needle. So the finished cable slants to the right with six stitches in front of six stitches.

post-cabling order		
pre-cabling order		

Other Options

We could cheat a bit and do the same type of thing we did in the first example, by using the widest cable symbol available.

8		
		7
6		

We could also put the cable symbol below the stitches.

8		
		7
6		

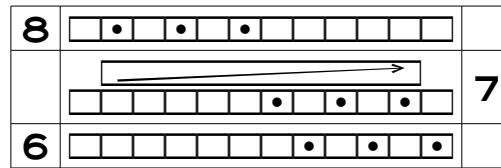
It's true that the cable symbol is only ten stitches wide, but even so, it should be enough to prompt us to do the crossing correctly.

We could use the symbols shown in chapters 160 and 170 that were offered as ways to indicate multiple-stitch decreases and increases.

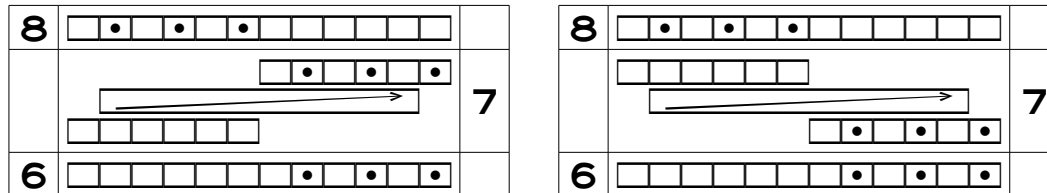
8		
		7
6		

Since the brackets are directional, we can use them to show which group is at the front and which is at the back.

There are also the slanting arrows



which we could combine with the individual knits and purls split into separate rows.



With so many choices, we can play around with the various options to find the one that makes the most sense to us individually.