

## Chapter 13

# COLORWORK

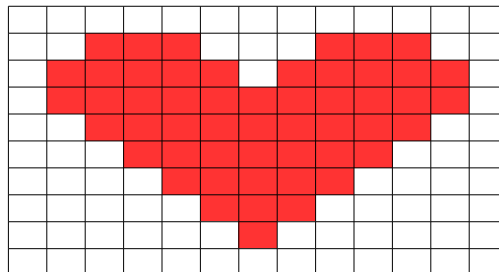
In one sense, colorwork charts can be the simplest kind, because we don't actually have to use any knitting symbols at all.

Creating a proportional grid on paper is described in the chapter "Charting on Paper." If we're charting in the computer, we can use a proportional blank table or a proportional grid of knit symbols as described in the corresponding sections of the appendix "Designing by Charting."

## Coloring Grid Cells

Whether we're charting on paper or with a blank table in the computer, all we have to do is fill each grid cell with the proper color.

Here's the heart motif from the introduction in a proportional grid at five stitches and seven rows per inch.



Note that the heart is more squashed here than in the introduction. That's because the chart in the introduction, made with stitch symbols that are essentially square, was not compressed to show the effect of the row gauge being tighter than the stitch gauge.

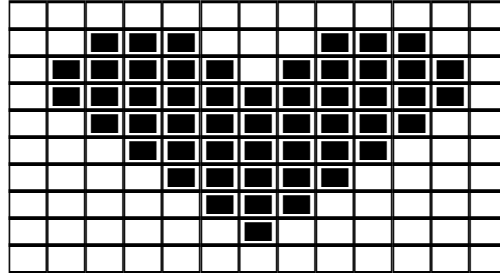
## Using Knitting Symbols

If we don't want to color grid cells, on paper or in the computer, we can use various knitting symbols, especially if we don't have a color printer.

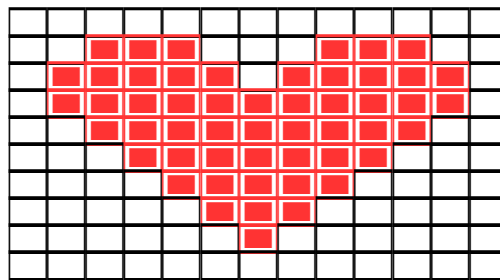
If we do have a color printer, then in some charts we could use all the same symbol but set them to the colors needed; in other charts, we might use several different symbols, and we might need to change some or all of them to different colors.

Note that the next three charts, all made with the knitting font, reflect gauges of five stitches and seven rows per inch.

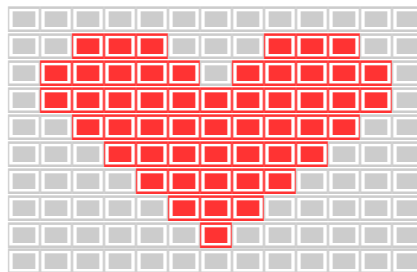
Here the No Stitch symbol is representing the motif color, while the knit stitches represent the background color.



We could change the font color of the No Stitch symbol, either as an extra emphasis or if there were black stitches elsewhere in the chart.

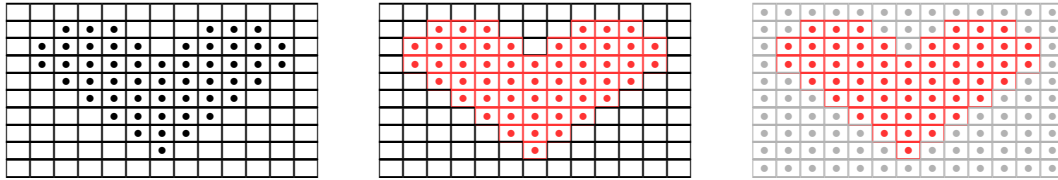


We could also use the No Stitch symbol throughout the chart. The background color's stitch symbols have been made gray, because white symbols would of course not show up on white paper.



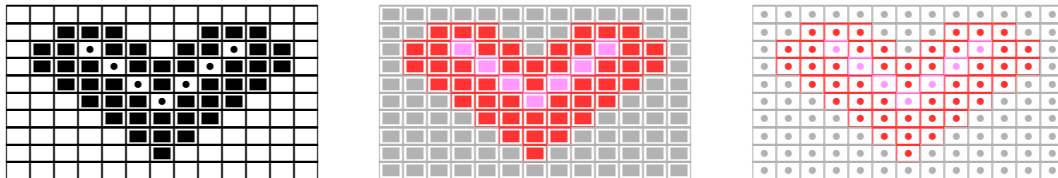
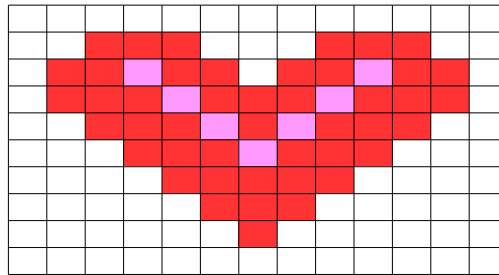
If the No Stitch symbol is too dense, we could use purl symbols instead.

The following charts still reflect gauges of five stitches and seven rows per inch, but they've been compressed by 160% (see the appendix "Designing by Charting") so all three charts fit across the page.



## Multiple Foreground Colors

If we need more than one color for the design, we can use any of the techniques we've already seen.



### *One Other Alternative*

When I originally created the knitting font, I didn't have a color printer. So I added a large variety of geometric symbols that could be used to represent different colors. They still can—if your eyesight is better than mine! They would be impractical for me, especially a large chart which required a very small font size, but they might work quite nicely for you.

See the section “Geometric Shapes” in the knitting font catalog at the end of part four.

## Combining Colors and Symbols

Some types of color knitting require us to do more than simply work public-side knits in different colors. The symbols must represent the colors and various knitting operations.

Let's consider just three techniques.

## ***Bohus***

This technique uses purl stitches to take advantage of the fact that a public-side purl stitch pulls into itself the color of the stitch in the previous row. In this case, TECHknitter’s “**icky dots**” become a design feature.

Chrissy Gardiner’s article “**Texturize Your Colorwork**” at Knitty.com shows a progression of knit and purl combinations worked in two colors.

## ***Traveling Stitches***

Elizabeth Zimmermann’s *Knitter’s Almanac* has a sweater that combines traveling stitches with colorwork in March’s “Difficult Sweater.” It’s the sweater at the top of the circle on the cover of both the 1981 paperback and the 2010 expanded hardback editions.

The foreground stitches travel not only as true two-stitch cables but also by directional decreases in the dark color and corresponding increases in the light color.

## ***Shaped Intarsia***

This technique eliminates the “jaggies” on the edges of a motif.

Let’s see what argyle diamonds look like when worked as shaped intarsia. The chart has decrease and increase symbols in red, which means we work them in the motif color. The symbols in black are worked in the background color.

Argyle diamonds are often only one stitch wide at the top and bottom, but I wanted to use K2togs and SSKs, so I made the top and bottom points two stitches wide. Using a double decrease would allow the top points to be one stitch wide, and a double increase would allow the bottom points to be one stitch wide.



types of increases might have given better results when switching colors at the increase points.

### **Separate Color Changes from Shaping**

We might also get better results if we move the increases and decreases away from the edges of the diamonds so we're not changing colors at the same time we're doing the shaping. Doing so, however, would also make the fabric lean in both the motifs and the background, similar to what we saw in the last two swatches in "Decreases + Yarnovers = Lace."

### **Decrease Positioning**

The bottom diamond has the traditional, expected look with saw-tooth edges. Because it's the way color patterns have mainly been worked throughout the history of knitting, it looks normal to us. It's what we expect.

In the center diamond, the K2togs and SSKs in both the motif and background are positioned such that their slants point at the diamonds' edges, which minimizes their appearance as we saw in "Decreases."

The top diamond has the decreases' slants parallel to the diamond's edges, which makes them prominent (again, see "Decreases").

### **Apparent Motif Size**

The other thing that's obvious from the swatch, but not from the chart, is that the shaped diamonds look smaller than the one worked in the traditional way. That fact would probably need to come into play when we design our own motifs and adapt existing patterns to use shaped intarsia.