

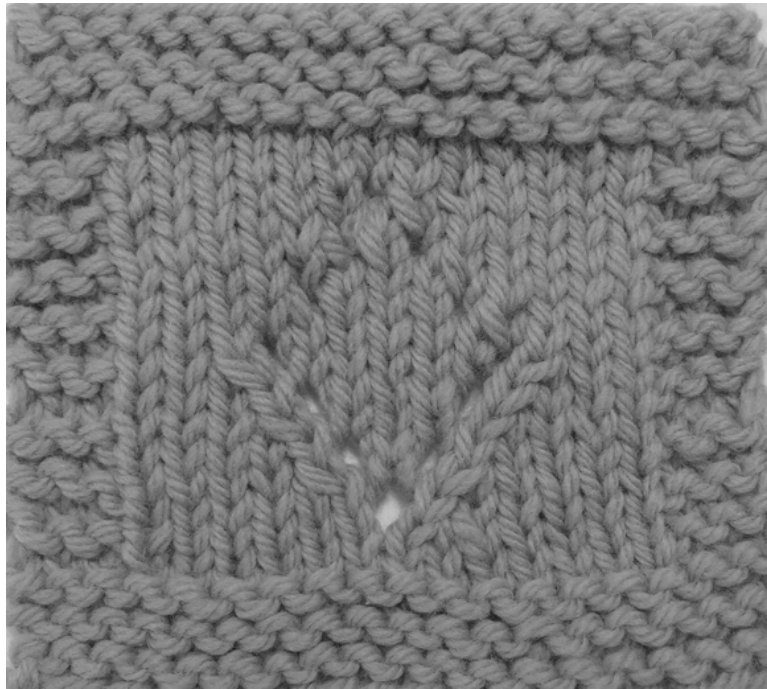
Appendix J

LACE DIAMOND DETAILS

Maybe it's just me, but the easy lace project (project 3 in part one's "Decreases + Yarnovers = Lace") doesn't look that great. Yes, there are yarnovers in a diamond shape, but some of the fine details are unappealing.¹

Revisiting the Easy Lace Diamond Project

Let's scrutinize the project picture (even better, make the project for yourself).



Only Half of the Decreases Are Noticeable

The decreases on the two lower sides of the diamond are prominent, but there's no corresponding prominence on the two upper sides.

Or if we want the decreases to not be noticeable, then we haven't achieved that effect either.

¹ As I noted in that chapter, I wrote this appendix long before I bought Susanna E. Lewis's *Knitted Lace*. She takes all of this same information to the uttermost end of each topic.

The Holes Look Different

The yarnovers on the bottom half are pretty large, since they have just two twisted strands of yarn separating them from one another.

The yarnovers in the top half are separated with weird-looking stitches, which mostly fill up the yarnovers.

The Top Yarnover Is Crooked

The top yarnover leans to the left. Perhaps one of the other three decrease/positioning combinations (yo–K2tog, SSK–yo, and yo–SSK) would look better.

The yarnover at the bottom point isn't as bad, but maybe we should try some different techniques to see what looks best.

What Can We Do?

Can we pretty up the sampler?

I'd like to tell you that after I completed the easy lace diamond, I immediately sat down and got scientific, making a swatch with all possible combinations of yarnovers and single decreases to form diagonal lines of yarnovers, but, like so many knitters, I hate swatching.

So instead, I kept frogging back the lace rows and tweaking the chart, trying to determine the proper decrease to use in each spot to get rid of all the ugliness I saw in the original sampler. I think I got up to version O or P before I gave it up.

Only **then** did I draw up a chart and make a full swatch with every combination.

The Chart and Swatch of All the Possibilities

How many different ways could we work yarnovers and decreases to make diagonal lines?

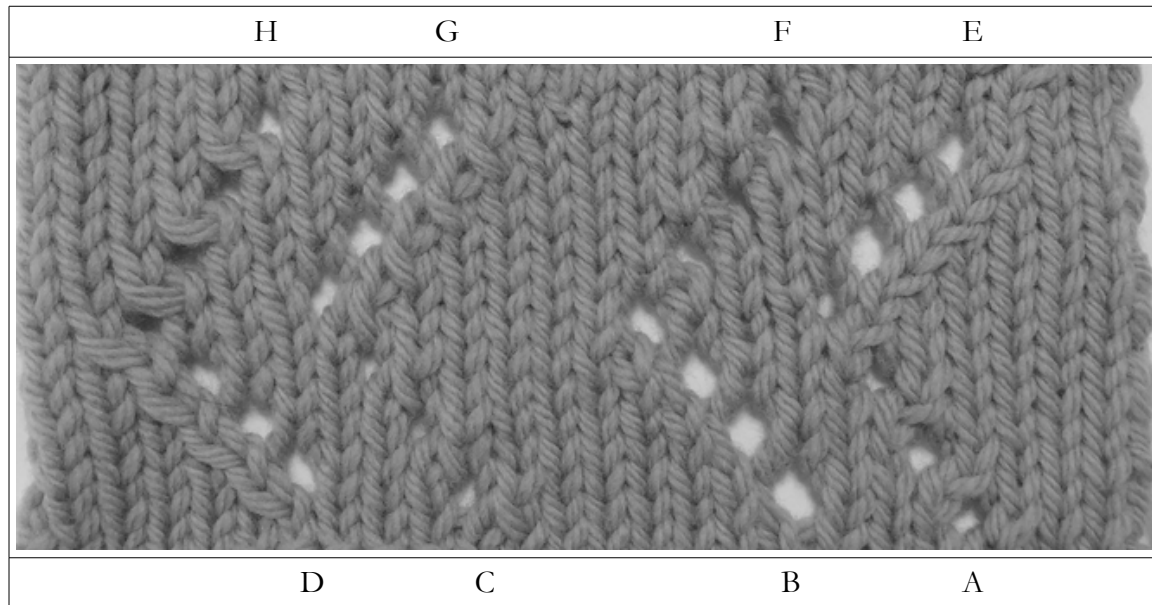
- ☞ We want yarnover lines that slant two directions: left and right.
- ☞ We have decreases that slant two directions: left and right.
- ☞ We can put the decreases in two places: before or after the yarnovers.

Since we have two options for each of three different things, we have two times two times two combinations, which means we need to swatch eight possibilities.

The following chart shows left- and right-leaning diagonal lines formed by yarnovers, and each line puts one of the decreases on one side of the yarnovers. Since the private-side rows don't have lace action, this chart is for easy lace.

The symbol key is straightforward.

The resulting swatch with its eight lines of yarnovers is very informative.



Let's talk about the results as they apply to trying to form a diamond with yarnovers.

The Bottom of the Diamond

Lines A, C, F, and H have yarnovers separated by stitches with varying degrees of messiness. Only lines B, D, E, and G have yarnovers separated by two strands of yarn twisted together, which allows the largest possible openings.

Lines D and E have prominent decrease lines, but the decreases next to lines B and G are less obvious, especially line B, which is made with K2togs. Line G is made with SSKs, which tend to look a bit looser than their K2tog counterparts before washing, blocking, and several wearings.

Only the **bottom** half of a diamond can have prominent decreases on the **outside** of the V. That's clear from lines D and E. Line D is the one we want for the bottom left, and line E is what we want for the bottom right. These two lines formed the bottom of the easy lace diamond in part one's lace chapter.

The Top of the Diamond

Note that the eight lines show that we cannot get prominent decreases on the **outside** of an **inverted V**. That means we simply cannot make a diamond with prominent decreases on the **outside** of **all four** edges. For inverted Vs, we can only get prominent decrease lines on the **inside**.

Neither can we get a centered yarnover at the top of the diamond by using a K2tog or an SSK/SKP, no matter which side of the yarnover we put either decrease on. Fortunately, there is a different knitting operation we can use here (which of course is also the top of an upside-down V).

These results are for worsted weight yarn at five stitches per inch. Many lace projects are made with much thinner yarn on bigger needles, relatively speaking. These effects may not be as apparent in laceweight yarn as they are in worsted weight, so more swatching would be in order.

Almost-Symmetrical Easy Lace Diamonds

We now know enough about how decreases and yarnovers mix and match to state how to make two different versions of easy lace diamonds. Whichever way we choose for the two lines in the lower half, we copy that line to its parallel counterpart on the upper half.

If we want to emphasize the decrease lines, then we need to use line D on the bottom left and on the upper right. We need line E on the bottom right to mirror-image line D on the bottom left, and line E must also be used on the upper left. The chart on the left shows this version of the diamond.

If we want to use line B for the lower-left side of the diamond, then we also use it for the upper-right yarnover line. Since we need line G on the lower right to mirror-image line B on the lower left, we also use line G on the upper left. These selections will give us a diamond that minimizes the decreases, as shown in the chart on the right.

Prominent Decreases		Minimized Decreases
	13	
	11	
	9	
	7	
	5	
	3	
	1	


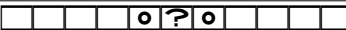


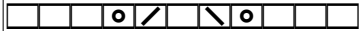
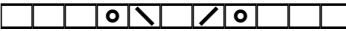
We can compare these results with those we saw in part one's "Decreases." There we learned that if we point the decreases **at** the edge of a shaped fabric, we'll hardly see them. We also learned that if the slant of the decreases runs **parallel** to the edge of the fabric, they'll be very noticeable. We see the same effect here: pointing the slant of the decrease **at** the line of yarnovers makes them invisible; running their slant **parallel** to the line of yarnovers makes them prominent.

Note that both versions have issues, represented by missing stitch symbols, on rows eleven and row thirteen. Let's take them in turn.

The Final Two-Yarnover Row

Note that whether we want the decrease lines to be prominent or minimized, we have to do the decreases for the bottom half of the diamond on the **outside** of the yarnover lines, and we have to do the decreases for the top half of the diamond on the **inside** of the yarnover lines. But on the last row that has two yarnovers (row eleven in our diamonds with four yarnovers on each edge), there are only three stitches between those two yarnovers. We don't have four stitches to do both decreases with.

Oh, sorry, from the chart above, it actually looks like we have only one stitch between the yarnovers, not three. Let's look at rows nine and eleven with the private-side row between them.

Prominent Decreases		Minimized Decreases
	1 1	
	1 0	
	9	
KJTIHGFEDCBA		KJTIHGFEDCBA

In part one's "Decreases," we said that a knitting chart really shows the **results** of various knitting operations, like a knit, a purl, a yarnover, a K2tog, an SSK, and a cable crossing. Here we can see the truth of that statement in action.

On row eleven, we work stitches A through D, then make the yarnover. At that point, we need to do something with stitches E through G, follow that something with the second yarnover, then work stitches H through K to finish the row.

Did you catch it? We have to do something with the **three** stitches between the yarnovers we made on row nine. We only have three stitches, and we need to decrease two of them away. A K2tog and an SSK/SKP would require **four** stitches.

Can we turn three stitches into one? We sure can. On row eleven, instead of trying to do a K2tog and an SSK (in either order) on four stitches we don't have, we instead do a double decrease, which turns the three stitches we do have into just one stitch.

We have several choices for the double decrease, as we saw in part one's "Decreases." But the one we'll use here is the centered double decrease, an S2KP, whose resulting one stitch will stand straight up. And it doesn't even matter whether we want the decreases to be prominent or not. We use the same double decrease for either case.

So now rows nine and eleven now look like this:

Prominent Decreases		Minimized Decreases
	1 1	
	9	

With certain yarns at certain gauges, we may get a better result in the S2KP if we just slip the third stitch purlwise instead of actually knitting it. (But we have to slip it separately from the first two, which we slip together knitwise as though we were starting a K2tog.)²

Only One Row Left

We have just the very top row left to finish off our two easy lace diamonds made with cunningly positioned yarnovers and decreases (single **and** double, thank you very much!).

Let's look at the tops of the diamonds again.

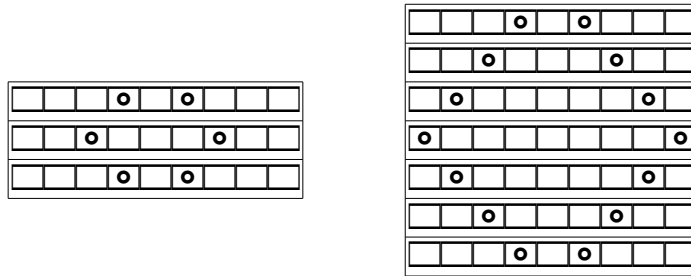
Prominent Decreases		Minimized Decreases
	1 3	
	1 1	
	9	

We already know from the swatch at the beginning of the appendix that if we do a single decrease, whether a K2tog or an SSK/SKP, on either side of that top, supposed-to-be centered yarnover, the yarnover won't, in fact, be centered.

A Quick Trip to the Past

In the book *Victorian Lace Today*, which re-creates patterns from books published in the nineteenth century, there is only one pattern (pages 68–69) that tries to cross diagonal lines of yarnovers, and it does so with a K2tog–yo. The rest of the projects with diagonal lines of yarnovers don't have single yarnovers for the top and bottom points of the diamonds. Instead, there are actually pairs of yarnovers separated with a single stitch, whether the diamonds are small or large.

² Slipping the third stitch instead of knitting it means that it will be slightly shorter, which will help the top yarnover, made in the next public-side row, look a bit bigger. Again, this effect occurs in worsted weight yarn at five stitches per inch. In laceweight yarn on biggish needles, it may not matter as much—or at all.



Could that shape be common simply because no one had figured out how to make two diagonal lines meet symmetrically in a single yarnover? Maybe. This difficulty means that we can't make a truly symmetrical diamond either, since the top and bottom points of a diamond are just the rows where the two diagonal lines cross.

Back to the Present

Amy Detjen figured out the solution for symmetrically crossed diagonal lines of yarnovers (which also lets us have a diamond with a nicely centered top yarnover) in a shawl she contributed to *A Gathering of Lace*, edited by Meg Swansen. Since she was crossing diagonal lines of yarnovers throughout the shawl, she was bothered by the asymmetrical look she got from trying to do a single decrease on either side of the yarnover. When her library of knitting books gave her no solution, she talked to friends about it and eventually figured out a solution, which she calls a *centered eyelet*.

If you don't have access to the book, you can find instructions, drawings, photos, and videos by searching for "centered eyelet" on the Internet.³

We Need One More Step








The chart now needs to show the explicit private-side row fourteen as a reminder to work the final step of the centered eyelet. When we work the next row, we have to work that center stitch in the row below to pull the horizontal strand up and out of the yarnover. (That statement will make much more sense when you get there in needles and yarn.)

	Prominent Decreases									
1 4	<table><tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>↓</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr></table>					↓				
				↓						
	<table><tr><td></td><td></td><td>/</td><td>○</td><td>\</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr></table>			/	○	\				1 3
		/	○	\						
	<table><tr><td></td><td></td><td>○</td><td>Λ</td><td>○</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr></table>			○	Λ	○				1 1
		○	Λ	○						
	<table><tr><td></td><td></td><td>○</td><td>/</td><td>\</td><td>○</td><td></td><td></td></tr></table>			○	/	\	○			9
		○	/	\	○					

	Minimized Decreases								
1 4					↓				
				/	○	\			1 3
				○	Λ	○			1 1
				○	\	/	○		9

³ Once we've worked it once or twice, we realize that the centered eyelet is really an SKP-yo-K2tog worked on three stitches. The middle stitch is used as both the knitted stitch in the SKP **and** as the first stitch in the K2tog. That's why the middle stitch must stay on the source needle while we pass the slipped stitch over the one made from the middle stitch.

The symbol key for these partial charts is extensive.

	Knit on RS, purl on WS
	Yarnover
	K2tog
	SSK (or SKP)
	S2KP (could just slip third st P-wise) ⁴
	Centered eyelet
	Knit (on the RS) or purl (on the WS) in the row below

The Other Three Points of the Diamond

Now that we've got the top yarnover of the diamond nicely centered and finished off, let's look at the options for the other three points.

The Bottom Point

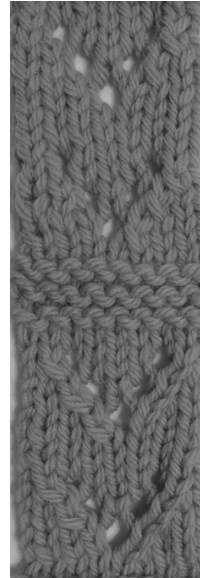
Let's check all possible combinations of single decreases and yarnovers, and since the centered eyelet worked so well for the top point, it may be good for the bottom point also.

Option A: A Single Decrease and a Yarnover

In the chart, rows one through eleven use prominent decreases, and rows thirteen through twenty-three use minimized decreases. Note that the chart doesn't show the garter stitch in the middle of the swatch.

⁴ If we simply slip the third stitch of the S2KP, we need to be careful when we work the next row that the yarnovers stay on each side of the slipped stitch, because they will want to slide across it.

□ / ○ □ □ □ ○ \ □	23
□ □ / ○ □ ○ \ □	21
□ □ □ / ○ □ □ □	19
□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □	
□ / ○ □ □ □ ○ \ □	17
□ □ / ○ □ ○ \ □	15
□ □ □ □ ○ \ □ □	13
□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □	
□ \ ○ □ □ □ ○ / □	11
□ □ \ ○ □ ○ / □	9
□ □ □ \ ○ □ □ □	7
□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □	
□ \ ○ □ □ □ ○ / □	5
□ □ \ ○ □ ○ / □	3
□ □ □ □ ○ / □ □	1



From this swatch, row nineteen seems best for minimized decreases. Either row one or row seven might be acceptable if we want prominent decreases.

Option B: Centered Eyelet

Rows one through five show prominent decreases, and rows seven through eleven show minimized decreases. Note that the chart shows the private-side rows only above the centered eyelets, with the down-arrow symbols as reminders to purl in the row below, which will pull the strand up and out of the yarnover.




	□ / ○ □ □ □ ○ \ □	11
	□ □ / ○ □ ○ \ □	9
8	□ □ □ □ ↓ □ □ □	
	□ □ □ / ○ \ □ □ □	7
	□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □	
	□ \ ○ □ □ □ ○ / □	5
	□ □ \ ○ □ ○ / □	3
2	□ □ □ □ ↓ □ □ □	
	□ □ □ / ○ \ □ □ □	1



Neither of these options looks very good. We'll each need to decide which of the six total bottom-point possibilities (four with single decreases, two with the centered eyelet) to use for both prominent and minimized decreases.

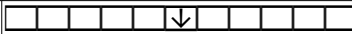
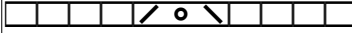

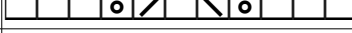
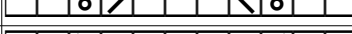
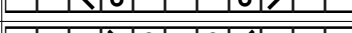
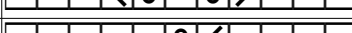
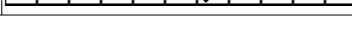
The Left and Right Points

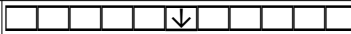
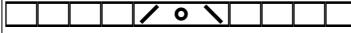

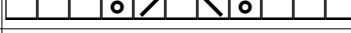
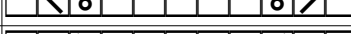
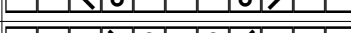
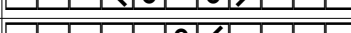

The last thing we have to check is whether the center row of the diamond, the one with the left and right points, should have the decreases on the outside of the diamond or on the inside. The next two pairs of charts show all four possibilities using this symbol key:

	S2KP: sl 2 tog K-wise, K1, pass 2 sl sts over (or sl third st P-wise)
	Centered eyelet
	Knit (on the RS) or purl (on the WS) in the row below

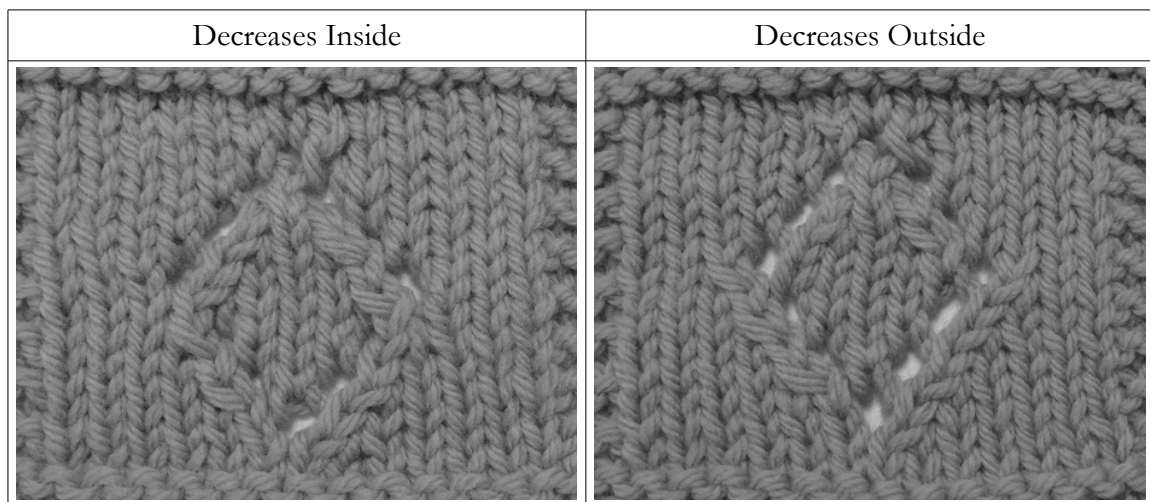
Prominent Decreases

The only difference in the charts is the placement of the decreases on row seven.

	Row 7 Decs Inside	
1 4		
		1 3
		1 1
		9
		7
		5
		3
		1

	Row 7 Decs Outside	
1 4		
		1 3
		1 1
		9
		7
		5
		3
		1

Let's see what these charts look like in yarn.



If we're making the decrease lines prominent, having the decreases inside the yarnovers

in the center row means that the stitches between the yarnovers actually connect the decrease lines in the lower and upper halves of the diamond. That effect might be wanted in some projects but not in others.

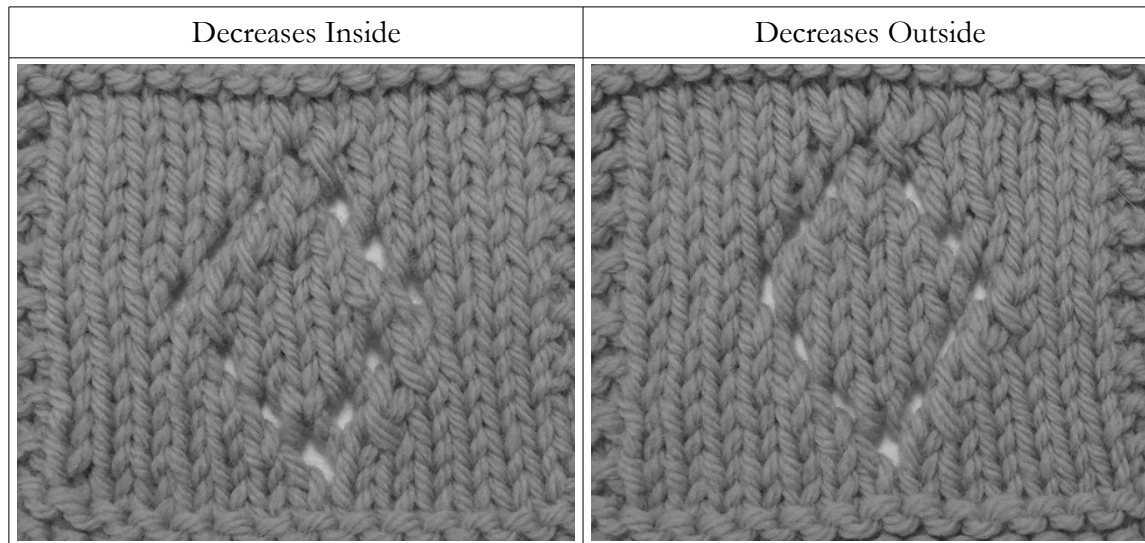
Minimized Decreases

Again, the only difference in the two charts and swatches is the placement of the decreases next to the yarnovers in row seven.

	Row 7 Decs Inside										
1 4					↓						
				/	o	\					1 3
				o	^	o					1 1
				o	\	/	o				9
				o	\	/	o				7
				/	o		o	\			5
				/	o		o	\			3
				/	o						1

	Row 7 Decs Outside										
1 4					↓						
				/	o	\					1 3
				o	^	o					1 1
				o	\	/	o				9
				/	o		o	\			7
				/	o		o	\			5
				/	o		o	\			3
				/	o						1

The swatches show that the decreases are indeed minimized along all four edges of the diamond.








When the center row's decreases are on the inside of the diamond, they make full stitches between the yarnovers, which doesn't look good when we minimize the decreases. So if we want to emphasize the yarnovers while minimizing the decreases, we want the diamond's center row to have the decreases on the **outside** of the yarnovers.

Hard Lace: Lace Action on All Rows

Having gone through all that pain for easy lace, I didn't want to repeat it for hard lace. Instead, I went straight to swatching all eight permutations, working decreases and yarnovers on both the public side and private side.⁵

H	G	F	E	
				27
				25
				23
				21
				19
				17
				15
D	C	B	A	

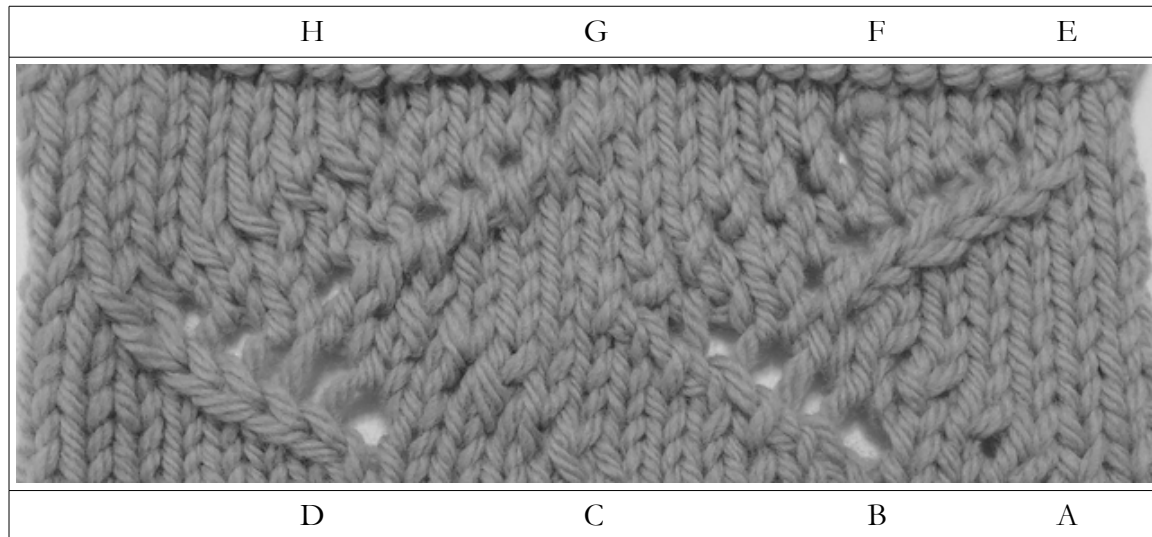
The symbol key adds instructions for the decrease symbols on private-side rows.

	Knit on RS, purl on WS
	Yarnover
	Make 1 (by any method)
	K2tog on RS, P2tog on WS
	SSK/SKP on RS, SSP/SPP on WS

Evaluating the Hard Lace Swatch

The hard lace swatch looks almost the same as the easy lace, with some subtle differences.

⁵ The chart starts with row fifteen because it's the top half of the chart whose bottom half had the easy lace combinations.



- ☞ All the issues of the decrease lines' prominence or near invisibility remain the same as in easy lace.
- ☞ In the places where the easy lace combinations have a pair of twisted yarn strands between the yarnovers, hard lace has only a single strand.⁶
- ☞ Where easy lace had smaller holes because messy stitches separated the yarnovers, hard lace magnifies that effect so much that the holes are to all intents invisible.

Again, these results reflect a swatch made with worsted yarn at five stitches per inch. It's true that the minimized decreases are more visible than in the easy lace swatch, but they're not nearly so apparent as the prominent decrease lines next to them. Results in laceweight yarn with biggish needles might be quite different, so swatching would again be in order.

Using the Results

These hard lace results were used for the hard lace diamond projects (projects 4 and 5) in part one's lace chapter. As noted there, hard lace charts can in some circumstances be used to work easy lace versions by considering each charted row to be a public-side row and working the private-side rows as either all knits (for garter-based lace) or all purls (for stock-inette-based lace).

One other issue is that some knitters may find it difficult to work the centered eyelet in hard lace. Because the first and last "stitches" of the three are actually yarnovers, not regular stitches, the strands can be a little skittish and hard to manipulate.

⁶ Susanna E. Lewis points out in her book that the number of strands of yarn between yarnovers tells us whether the pattern is easy lace or hard lace.