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CABLE KNITS

FROM NORDIC LANDS

Beauty and Ingenuity in Over 20 Unique Patterns

IVAR ASPLUND

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PHOTOGRAPHY: TINA AXELSSON
INTERIOR GRAPHICS: MIKAEL ENGBLOM
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CONTACT, PATTERN QUESTIONS, AND MORE KNITTING:
WWW.ASPLUNDKNITS.BLOGSPOT.SE

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CONTENTS

Preface	4
Inspiration	8
Basic Information	33
<i>Pattern Instructions</i>	43
Apéritif Wrist Warmers	44
Twist and Turn Scarf	48
Test Tube Cowl	52
Squiggles Hat	56
Super Wrist Warmers	60
Chain and Horseshoe Hat	64
Reversible Faux Turtle	68
Triple Triangles Shawl	72
Playful Child's Poncho	76
Appearances Can Deceive Sweater	80
Sweater History	86
Crosswise Vest	92
Free and Easy Top	96
Figure Eights Vest	102
X & O Cardigan	106
Wrought Iron Cardigan	112
Arrow Sweater	118
Harmony Cardigan	124
Knitting Techniques	132
Sample Patterns	139
Choosing Materials	151
More about Choosing Materials	152
Yarn Resources	156
Abbreviations and Symbols Key	157
Index	158
Acknowledgments	159

PREFACE



PATERNAL GRANDMOTHER
ANNA-STINA

KNITTING has accompanied me almost my whole life. My paternal grandmother, Anna-Stina, showed me the basics when I was five years old, and even though it's difficult to discern which are actual memories and which are moments I've imagined later on, I dare say I was smitten right away. Because we didn't live near each other, we didn't meet very often during the year. So I had to learn mostly on my own, partly by reading handcrafting books and partly by trial-and-error. Grandmother knitted many garments

for her children and grandchildren, and she mastered several pattern techniques. I was always examining her projects and asking her to explain how she'd made them. I remember, for example, a white sweater with cables that piqued my curiosity—and, as so often happened, she showed me the techniques weren't as complicated as they seemed.

Cables are rewarding, useful, and fun to knit in so many ways and the basic principles aren't complicated. Simply put, a few stitches change places before they're knitted. The options for variations are endless: the number of stitches involved, the number of rows between cable crossing rows, using just knit stitches or a combination of knit and purl... along with the usual knitting decisions about fiber, color, and needle size. (See more about these decisions on pages 33 and 151).

Grandmother once told me about a time when she'd been upset over a sweater she was working on, when she was young. She wasn't satisfied, ripped it out, and started over. The pattern was complicated and had taken a long time to knit, even when it went well—and it had stopped going well. Her mother told her no one needed to know how long it took to knit; they'd only see how nice the result was. I latched onto that idea. and over time I've realized that it can be interpreted two different ways: yes, it can be worth several hours' extra work to be satisfied ... but it's also possible for a pattern to look more complicated than it is. The beauty and complexity of the result won't necessarily tell you anything about how difficult—or how quick!—the work may have been.













SQUIGGLES HAT

SKILL LEVEL INTERMEDIATE

SIZE CHILD (ADULT)

FINISHED MEASUREMENTS

HEAD CIRCUMFERENCE: 17¼-20½
(20½-23¾) IN / 44-52 (52-60) CM

LENGTH: 8 (9½) IN / 20 (24) CM

MATERIALS

YARN:

CYCA #4 (WORSTED, AFGHAN, ARAN)
CASCADE YARNS CASCADE 220 (100%
PERUVIAN HIGHLAND WOOL, 220
YD/201 M / 100 G)

YARN AMOUNT AND COLOR:

100 G COLOR HEATHERS 9488 (9451)

NEEDLES U.S. SIZE 4 (6) / 3½ (4) MM:
SMALL CIRCULAR AND SET OF 5 DPN;
CABLE NEEDLE

NOTIONS 5 STITCH MARKERS

GAUGE

22 (20) STS IN ST ST ON U.S. 4 (6) /
3½ (4) MM NEEDLES = 4 IN / 10 CM.
ADJUST NEEDLE SIZE TO OBTAIN COR-
RECT GAUGE IF NECESSARY.



THE IDEA FOR THIS PATTERN popped up as I was pondering various ways to make it easier to knit cable patterns in the round. One solution is making cables cross on every round. Moving the cables so they only make one sideways step at a time means that the knitting doesn't draw in too much, especially when you do this only five times around. And I love a cable pattern that's a little on the bias!

For this hat, you can follow the same set of instructions, no matter the size because sizing is determined by the needle size.











KNITTING TECHNIQUES

CABLE KNITTING

The basic principle of cable knitting is simple: The stitches change places, and are twisted across the surface of the fabric. A useful tool is a cable needle, available in several styles. To cross a cable, for example, slip two stitches

to the cable needle, hold them in front or in back of the work (depending on which direction the cable will lean), work one or more stitches from the left needle, and then work the stitches on the cable needle.



1. SLIP 2 STS TO CABLE NEEDLE AND HOLD CABLE NEEDLE IN FRONT OF WORK



2. KNIT 2 STS ON LEFT NEEDLE



3. KNIT 2 FROM CABLE NEEDLE



4. THE CABLE CROSS LEANS TO THE LEFT

FINISHING

THREE-NEEDLE BIND-OFF (3-NDL BO)

This is a neat finishing technique that joins two pieces by binding off the stitches of both pieces at the same time. The technique produces different effects depending on how the pieces face each other. For pattern work, I like to have the wrong sides facing out (such as the shoulder

joins for the Wrought Iron Cardigan, see page 115). For a decorative edge, I work with the right sides facing out (as for the Appearances Can Deceive sweater on page 83). You'll need 3 needles for 3-needle bind-off, two to hold the stitches and a third to work with.



1. INSERT THE NEEDLE THROUGH TWO STS, ONE FROM EACH NEEDLE



2. KNIT THESE 2 STS TOGETHER AND SLIP THEM OFF NEEDLE



3. REPEAT STEPS 1 AND 2



4. PASS THE RIGHT STITCH OVER THE LEFT ONE

SAMPLE PATTERNS

ON THE FOLLOWING PAGES, I've collected a number of cable patterns with the idea that the section should function as a step-by-step school, a pattern collection, and a source of inspiration. Below you can see three simple variations of the same cable crossing—the only thing that differentiates them is the number of rows between cable crossings.

A pattern dictionary follows with combinations of two reverse-image cables. Next are pattern shapes that move sideways over a reverse stockinette background, columns that are similar to true cables, various figures against a stockinette background and, finally, comparison of the same patterns with and without twisted stitches.

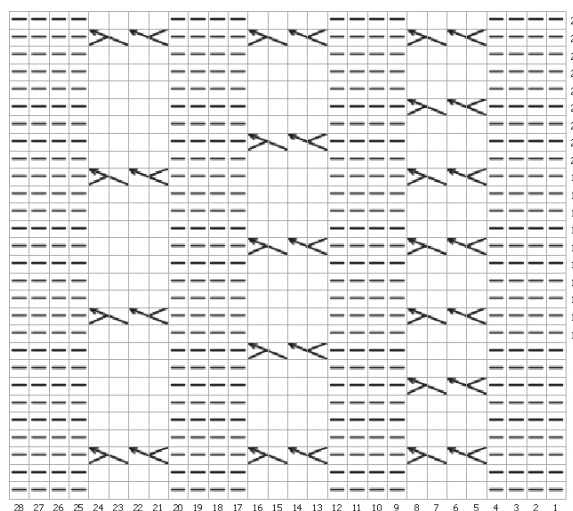
The Symbols Key that explains the symbols on the charts can be found on page 157.

CROSSING CABLES AT DIFFERENT INTERVALS

Many cable patterns are built on stockinette columns over, for example, four stitches, where the stitches change places two by two. If the cables are set against purl stitches, the pattern becomes more obvious and the ribbed effect is enhanced.

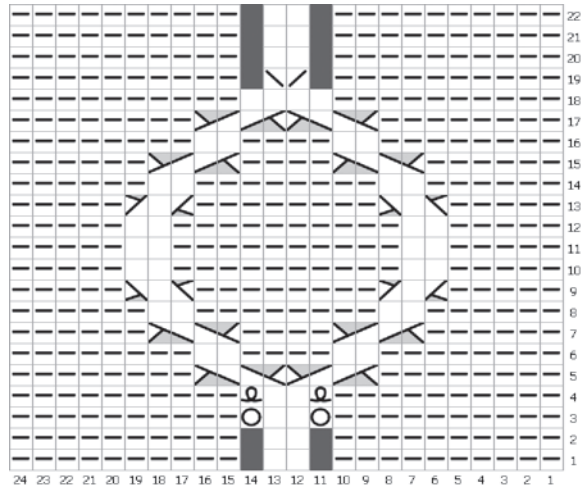


The distance between cable crossing rows influences both the look and the gauge—the more closely the crossings are spaced, the firmer the pattern. Closer crossings also draw the knitting in more, which means it takes more yarn to work a piece with lots of close crossings than a piece of the same size with more distance between crossings.



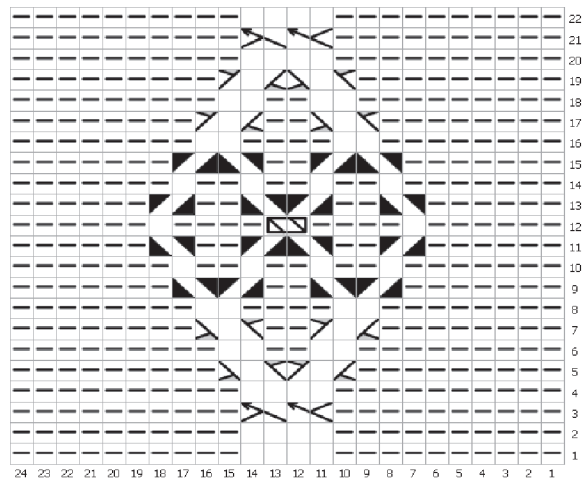
PATTERN 7: CIRCLE

By combining steep and sideways diagonals, you can form a circle. The degree to which the fabric will pull in depends on how many stitches are involved, but it can even out with increases and decreases.



PATTERN 8: DIAMOND

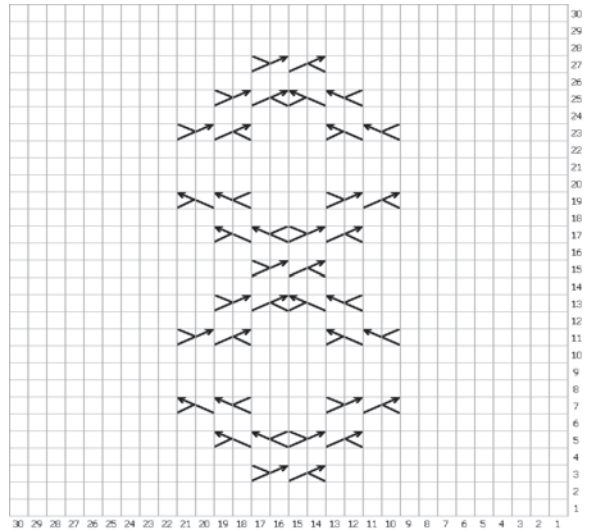
You can also divide a pattern column into several narrower ones. In this pattern, the cable crossings occur in the center, on the wrong side.



PATTERN 15: DIAGONAL LINES (STOCKINETTE BACKGROUND)

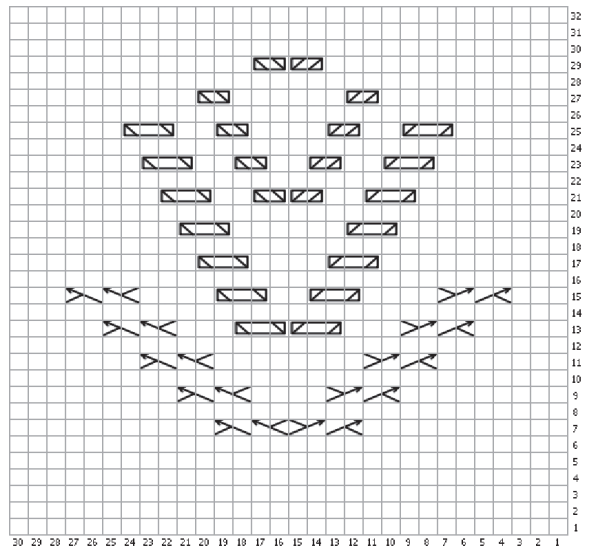
Pattern shapes can pull in the stockinette background so it “ripples.” A smaller and rounder variation can be seen in the Figure Eights vest on page 102.

You can also see on the vest that it’s possible to make a circular form by working half the chart.



PATTERN 16: TREE (STOCKINETTE BACKGROUND)

Why not combine varying wide and long lines into a new pattern shape?







SWEDISH KNITTING

phenom Ivar Asplund learned how to work cabling from his grandmother and was smitten right away—such marvelously intricate designs, and yet at their heart the underlying principles were so simple. A few stitches trading places here and there, and suddenly flowing braids, interwoven figures of eight, or classic x-and-o patterns came to life before his eyes.

In this compelling collection, Asplund invites knitters to join him in exploring the possibilities, combining his grandmother's well-loved lessons in classic and time-tested cable knitting techniques with the elegant simplicity of contemporary Scandinavian design. You'll find over 20 projects, ranging from sweaters, cardigans, and ponchos to scarves, wrist warmers, and hats—for children and adults—that offer an attractive balance of historic and modern elements, as well as superior fit. Step-by-step pattern instructions guide novice cablers through straightforward reversible projects and eye-catching cable repeats; veterans can test their skills on larger, more complex garments with multiple cable panels; and a tutorial section explains the fundamentals of working and combining cables in any design to achieve a variety of striking effects.

IVAR ASPLUND is a skilled knitting instructor and workshop leader, in addition to working in a yarn store. He's loved handcrafting and clothing design as long as he can remember; he learned how to knit when he was five years old, and completed his first knitted garment in middle school—without a pattern.

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