



CRISTARIA SHRUG

Tutorial version— for personal use only

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Named for a pearl mussel that produces freshwater pearls, the Cristaria shrug is a quick, pretty knit shrug that complements casual summer looks or formal ensembles alike. Add beads or pearls for a piece that is truly your own!



Materials:

- 100 g Cascade Ultra Pima or similar
- US 10 circular needles, 20" or longer
- About 25 freshwater pearls (optional)
- About 25 head pins (optional)

Stitch abbreviations:

- yo— yarn over
- k2tog— knit 2 stitches together

Directions & Hints:

Cast on 108 stitches, leaving at least a 12" tail. This will seem longer than it needs to be, but don't fret! Take a look at the picture to the right. Imagine taking your straight cast-on edge & bending it into the wavy bottom edge of the shrug. That's why your finished piece won't be anywhere near as wide as it seems now.

- Row 1: knit across
- Row 2: purl across

Here comes the exciting part: the lace row. This sequence of increases & decreases is what turns a fairly ordinary stitch pattern into something visually interesting (and, in this case, wavy!). During each repeat, you are going to decrease a total of 6 times (the k2tog stitches) and increase a total of 6 times (the yarn overs). So, even though you're subtracting stitches in some places & adding them in others, your total stitch count at the end of each row should always be the same (108, to be precise).

- Row 3: k2tog 3 times, *k1, yo* 6 times, k2tog 3 times. Place stitch marker. Repeat across row 5 more times. Phew! Take a step back & congratulate yourself— you just finished the tricky part & I bet it looks like a rat's nest, doesn't it? Just remember: you're taking a wavy row & straightening it out onto your needle, so it really *should* look a bit confused.

- Row 4: knit across

And that’s really all there is to it! You’ll repeat those 4 rows about 14 more times, depending on how big around you’d like your armholes. To finish, bind off & break yarn, leaving at least a 12” tail.

Diving in Deeper:

The lace row sure does have a lot of counting— wouldn’t it be a lot easier to use more markers?

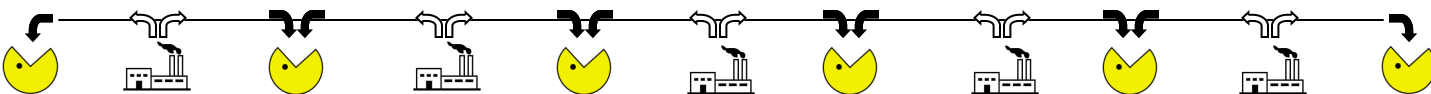
A tempting proposition, no? Normally, I prefer to use markers like big red flags to remind me when it’s time to change stitches. In this pattern, though, the markers are smack dab in the middle of a bunch of k2togs! There is method to my madness (well, this time, at least...). This is an atypical lace pattern in that the increases are all bundled together & the decreases are all bundled together. A more regular (rectangular) pattern usually peppers them across the row in pairs. Because of this, if you plunk down markers willy-nilly, they will actually migrate across the row & mess you up! So, the short answer is that markers are only useful to a point on this pattern. Think of them more as error correction tools— if you end up with anything other than 18 stitches between markers, you know something has gone wrong in that section.

The “short answer?” That didn’t seem very short at all. Out of morbid curiosity, what was the long answer?

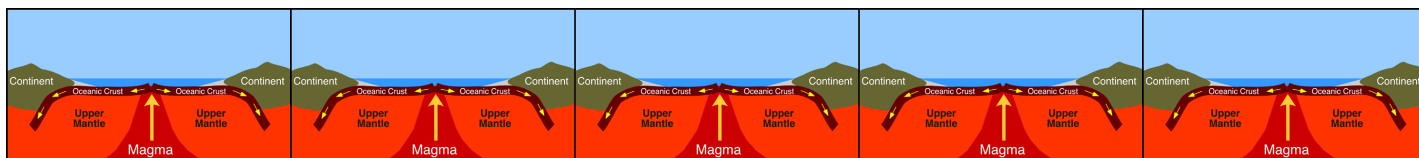
Plate tectonics!

Excuse me?

No, really! The stitch markers show you the center of a double-sided stitch “subduction” zone— basically a stitch gobbler. It’s like the stitch markers are hovering over very aggressive black holes that pull stitches in & make them disappear. Conversely, in the middle of each increase section (right after the 3rd yarn over, to be precise) is a “mid-ocean ridge” of stitches— a place where new stitches bubble up to the surface & spread out. If you placed a stitch marker at each of these spots, you could imagine them hovering over tiny stitch factories, creating new stitches & pumping them outward. The whole row would look something like this:



Which, to me, looks a whole lot like this:



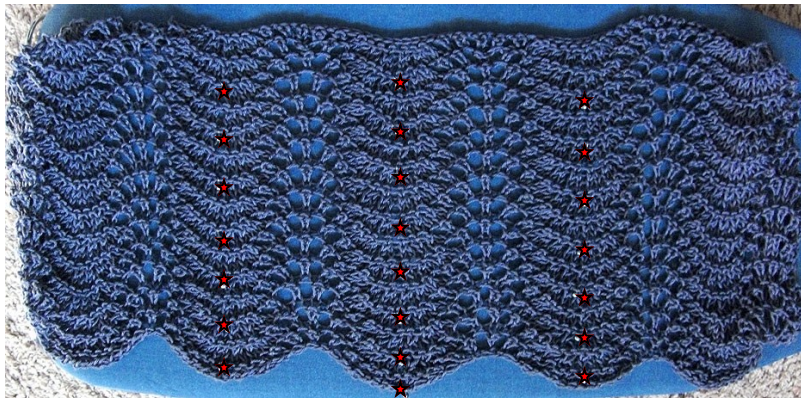
Wow, this is really getting out of hand. Anything else you've been dying to get off your chest?

Well, since you asked... The idea for how & where to use stitch markers (as a way to catch & isolate mistakes instead of to tell you when to change stitches) came from the mathematical basis for error-correcting code.

Also the function $y(x) = 2.5 \cos(2\pi x/13)$, with x & y in centimeters, describes each row of this pattern. Wheel!

Finishing:

String a single freshwater pearl onto each of about 25 head pins. Trim pin ends & bend into loops. Attach pins at the bottom of the center 3 columns of the pattern or use whatever your fancy.



soft U-shaped rows of stitches (see picture), arrangement strikes

