# Bye Bye Boring Garter

Exclusively Designed for MJ Yarns by Matthew Hesson-McInnis

## MJ Yarns: Any and All Yarns

K = Knit.
K1TBL = Knit 1 Through the Back Loop.
K2tog = Knit 2 Together Decrease.
KW = KnitWise.
P = Purl.
PW = PurlWise.
SL = SLip (short for SL1PW: see note on selvedges).
ST(S) = STitch(es).
WYIB = With Yarn In Back.
WYIF = With Yarn In Front.
YO = Yarn Over Increase.

## Gauge

None of the patterns list needle size or gauge, although suggested stitch counts are given for worsted weight (with DK/sport and fingering in parentheses). These stitch counts are intended as a starting point and as an example of the stitch count formulas. Gauge is mostly relevant for scarves in terms of the fabric created. The combination of stitch pattern, fiber content, yarn size, and needle size will determine the degree of firmness or drape of the finished scarf. Adjusting the needle size up or down may also yield better stitch definition to some of the more subtle patterns presented here.

## Slipped Stitch Selvedge

Most of the patterns begin each row with a slipped stitch selvedge (*i.e.*, SL1). Unless otherwise instructed, all slipped stitches will be slipped purlwise. *If the yarn is in the front, leave it there while slipping; if the yarn is in the back, leave it there while slipping.* Once the stitch has been slipped, if the yarn is on the wrong side (e.g., it's in front but you need to knit, or it's in back but you need to purl), then simply move the yarn *between* the two needles to the other side and work the next stitch as you would whenever switching from a knit to a purl or vice versa. Alternatively, one may K the first ST of each row through the back loop and slip the last ST of

Most new knitters will make a garter stitch scarf for their very first project for several reasons: (1) most people find it easier to work knits than to work purls and (2) you don't have to keep track of which row you are on when you set the work down. There are two obvious disadvantages to the garter stitch scarf as a first project: (1) the new knitter doesn't practice the purl stitch and may become biased against it and (2) it's boring as all hell.

Perhaps the advantages of the plain garter stitch scarf as a first project may outweigh disadvantages, but when a second project is being contemplated, by all means, a *second* plain garter stitch scarf option sucks. My purpose here is to create a collection of scarf patterns that are more interesting than plain garter but are still easy to work. Each of these patterns consists of a single row that is repeated (with one exception for *Straight-Laced* that has a couple of rows of garter as a base for firmer top and bottom edges).

## Notes

## Abbreviations

CO = Cast On.

each row as if to purl to create a selvedge edge, which may look better when switching colors on each row.

## Yardage

I can't recall how many times I've been asked how much yarn do I need to make a scarf. The answer depends on the size of yarn, the size of needle, the stitch pattern, the width, and the length of the scarf. The following table gives a *rough* estimate of yardage requirements for various size combinations, but individual mileage may vary, as they say. If you can't buy extra yarn (hey, you can always make a hat to match), weigh the yarn you can buy, record the actual weight (given the relative humidity, the weight can vary from the amount listed on the ball-band), work four inches of length for the scarf, and weigh the remaining yarn again. Divide the total weight of yarn you started with by the amount used to knit four inches, and then multiple by that number by 4 to get the estimated length of your scarf. If you need to buy another skein, at least you'll know it from the start, or else you can make a shorter scarf or rip out what you've knit and make a narrower scarf.

| Gauge | 6"x60" | 8"x60" | 10"x60" |
|---|---|---|---|
| 4.5 sts/inch (worsted) | 300 | 400 | 500 |
| 5.5 sts/inch (DK) | 420 | 560 | 700 |
| 7.0 sts/inch (sock) | 450 | 600 | 750 |

Suggested stitch counts are given for each pattern for worsted (DK, and fingering/sock) when different numbers are used for each weight of yarn. After working a few inches, you may decide to rip back and work more or fewer pattern repeats for a wider or narrower scarf. For each scarf, the formula is provided to adjust the stitch count.

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## 3-Color Garter Scarf



Swatch worked with *Simple Sock* and shown in *Mystic Lagoon*, *Lake Side*, and *Fresh Mowed*.

### Instructions

With Color A, CO 31 (39, 47) — or any number of STS.

Row 1  With Color B, SL1, Knit across.

Row 2  With Color C, SL1, Knit across.

Row 3  With the color "waiting" for you, SL1, Knit across.

Repeat Row 3 to desired length; bind off.

Or CO 400 (500, 600) for a long-row version in which the color stripes run lengthwise (rather than widthwise).

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## Seed Stitch Scarf



Swatch worked with *Simple Sock* and shown in *Joseph*
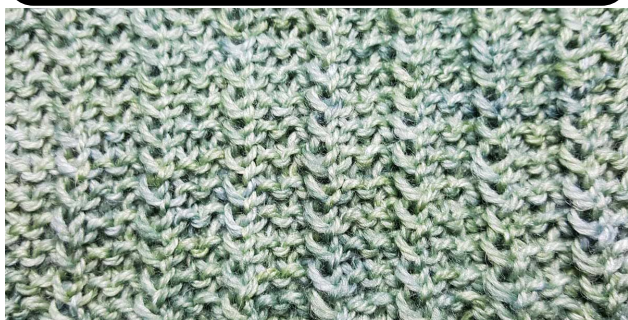
### Instructions

CO 31 (39, 47 — or an odd number of stitches

Row 1  SL1, work (K1, P1) across

Repeat Row 1 to desired length; bind off.

## Pleated Rib Scarf

Swatch worked with *Simple Sock* and shown in *Wisdom*
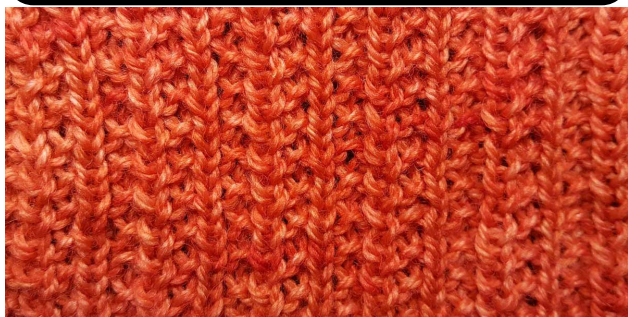
### Instructions

CO 32 (44, 52) sts — or a multiple of 4

Row 1      SL1, work (K2, K1TBL, P1) across, end K3

Repeat Row 1 to desired length; bind off.

## Double Rib Scarf

Swatch worked with *Simple Sock* and shown in *Ying Fa*

### Instructions

CO 36 (42, 48) — or a multiple of 6

Row 1      SL1, K2, work (P1, K1, P1, K3) across, end P1, K1, P1

Repeat Rows 1 to desired length; bind off.

## Straight-Laced Scarf

Swatch worked with *Simple Sock* and shown in *Mystic Lagoon*

### Instructions

CO 28 (36, 44) — or a multiple of 4
Knit 3 rows (to set up the pattern).

Row 1      SL1, K3, work (YO, K2tog, K2) across

Repeat Row 1 to desired length; Knit 3 rows (to wrap up the pattern); bind off.

## Mistake Stitch Rib Scarf



Swatch worked with *Simple Sock* and shown in *No Room*

### Instructions

CO 31 (39, 47) — or a multiple of 4, plus 3

Row 1     Sl1, work (K2, P2) across, end K2

Repeat Row 1 to desired length; bind off.

## Colossal Blunder Stitch Rib Scarf



Swatch worked with *Simple Sock* and shown in *Ether*

### Instructions

CO 36 (50, 64) — or an odd-multiple of 7 +1 (*e.g.,* 5*7+1=36, 7*7+1=50, 9*7+1=64)
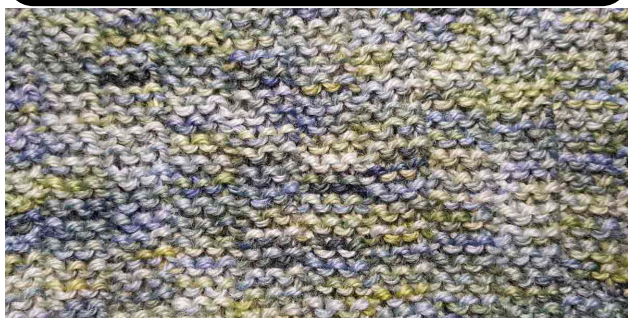
Row 1     SL1, work (K7, P7) across, end K7

Repeat Row 1 to desired length; bind off.
You can also alter this pattern by selecting any desired base-count, which we'll call *X*. Cast on an odd-multiple of *X, plus*1 (note that Row 1 above uses *X* = 7).

Row 1     SL1, work (K*X*, P*X*) across, end K*X*

## 3x3 Staggering Garter Scarf



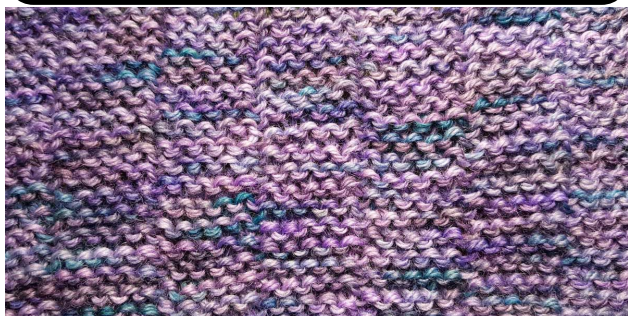Swatch worked with *Simple Sock* and shown in *Lake Side*

### Instructions

CO 33 (39, 45) — or an odd-multiple of 3 (*e.g.,* 11*3, 13*3, 15*3)

Row 1     SL1, K2, work (P3, K3) across

Repeat Row 1 to desired length; bind off.

## 5x5 Staggering Garter Scarf

Swatch worked with *Simple Sock* and shown in *Katelyn*

### Instructions

CO 35 (45, 55) — or an odd-multiple of 5 (*e.g.,* 7*5, 9*5, 11*5)

Row 1     SL1, K4, work (P5, K5) across

Repeat Row 1 to desired length; bind off.

## 7x7 Bi-Color Staggering Garter Scarf

Swatch worked with *Simple Sock* and shown in *Purple Dragon and Lafayette*

### Instructions

CO 35 (49, 63) — or an odd-multiple of 7 (*e.g.,* 5*7, 7*7, 9*7)

Row 1     SL1, K6, work (P7, K7) across.

Repeat Row 1 (changing colors every other row) to desired length; bind off.

## 5x5 Seeds and Stems Scarf

Swatch worked with *Simple Sock* and shown in *Party Punch*
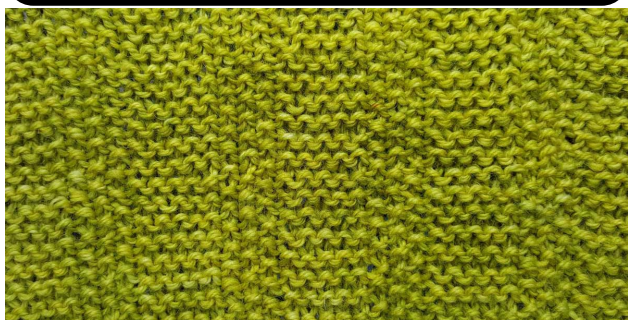
### Instructions

CO 35 (45, 55) — or an odd-multiple of 5 (*e.g.,* 7*5, 9*5, 11*5)

Row 1     SL1, K4 work (P1, K1, P1, K1, P1, K5) across.

Repeat Row 1 to desired length; bind off.

## X-Y-Z Scarf



Swatch worked with *Simple Sock* and shown in *Fresh Mowed*

### Instructions

Pick three integers, $X, Y, \& Z$. You'll alternate working $X$ stitches in one pattern (call it pattern $A$) and $Y$ stitches in another pattern (call it pattern $B$), ending with an group of $X$ stitches worked in pattern $A$. $Z$ represents the number of times you'll alternate between $X$ and $Y$ before ending with $X$ again.

CO $(X + Y) * Z + X$ sts

Row 1      SL1, work $X - 1$ in $A$; work ($Y$ in $B$, $X$ in $A$) across

Repeat Row 1 to desired length; bind off.

Column patterns are worked as follows:

| | |
|---|---|
| Garter | Knit all STS |
| 1x1 Rib | Work an even # of STS as (K1,P1) |
| Seed | Work on odd # of STS as K1, work (P1,K1) across |
| 2x2 Rib | Work a multiple of 4 STS as (K2,P2) across |
| Lace | Work a multiple of 4 STS as (K2,YO,K2tog) across |

Note that adjacent columns of garter must alternate between working all STS as K in one column and all as P in the adjacent column, else the columns will run together.

For example, to alternate columns of 5 sts worked in garter with 3 sts worked in seed 4 times, use the following values:
$X = 5$
$Y = 3$
$Z = 4$
$A = K5$
$B = P1, K1, P1$

Cast on (5+3)*4+5 = 37 sts

Thus, the row pattern is SL1, K4, work (P1, K1, P1, K5) across.

## Further Variations

These patterns are just a starting point; in each of these scarf patterns, there are an *odd* number of columns of stitches that alternate between *two* different stitch patterns. As long as there is an odd number of columns, the single row will build columns of the two different stitch patterns, because each row is reversible. There is no reason we can't extend the design ideas into three or more different stitch patterns; as long as the order of the patterns is *symmetric*, reversing after a middle column, the same patterns will build on top of each other, maintaining the columns. For instance, let A = K5, let B = P1,K1,P1,K1, let C = K7, and let D = P1, K1, P1, K1, P1, K1, P1. Then, work this pattern across all rows:

Row 1      work A B C **D** C B A

Working the patterns in this reversible order across both even and odd rows will build vertical columns of the indicated patterns. Any number of patterns can be combined, so long as there the order reverses in the middle of the scarf.