



Creative Necklines

with Fiona Ellis

Instructions

Creating a Focal Point

We can manipulate the first thing a viewer will notice about us by creating a point for the eye to stop or to be drawn to. So whenever we are choosing clothing we need to bear in mind which parts of us we would like draw attention to and which not. Mostly I believe that the most interesting thing about all of us is what we think and say so it makes sense to draw the eye towards the face rather than say our derriere (unless you have a wonderful derriere of course).

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Creating a focal point

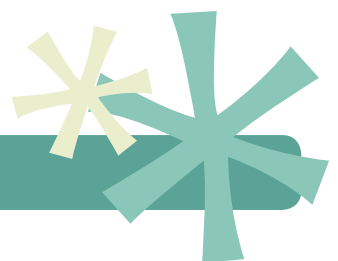
The design principle that is at play here is the fact that the eye is always drawn to the point where most change is taking place (which often manifests itself as the one stitch that you make a mistake always stands out like a sore thumb) as it is different to all the other that surround it.

The change could be in color, line, texture, rhythm or shape. Examples: light and dark, matte and shiny, rough and smooth.

Also think about how we wear jewelry to decorate an outfit.

Draw the eye toward the neckline

- Cable patterns largely draw vertical lines automatically causing the eye to run up and down the piece.
- We can choose lines that create arrow shapes where the tip is towards the face.
- We can make changes in the patterning where you might wear a brooch (between or just below the collar bone).
- We can select necklines like boat or V-necklines that open up the neck, exposing the skin.





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Necklines: More than Neatening

Suitable Neckline Stitches

Cable patterns cause compression in the fabric and reduce the elasticity so it isn't really a great idea to have an all over cable pattern unless you are going to include an opening at some point in the neckline.

I have found that rib patterns are a great way to balance out the compression of the cables. Rib is a super stretchy fabric, expanding when pulling over the head and rebounding to sit snugly once the garment is on. The added bonus of rib is that it mimics the visual appearance of cable cords so both patterns sit well together - I think of them coming from the same family.

I also look for a small element of the patterning to repeat on the neckline to re-enforce the design details and to avoid adding a whole other element.

Necklines: Hand knitting vs. commercial practices

Most commercially made garments are made by the cut-and-sew method. Each piece of the garment is cut from a length of fabric and then is seamed together. So when it comes to the

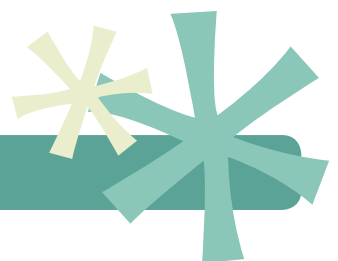
neckline there is already a cut edge and a break in the patterning.

As hand knitters we are already engaging in couture practices found in boutiques (and also harkening back to an age of elegance). We should continue this attention right into the details, edges, neatening and of course the neckline treatment. It's what makes our work stand out as beautiful custom hand-work rather than the thrown together pieces we find so often in main stream stores. Rather than break into the patterning we can allow it to run into or around neckline or even become the main feature of the garment

When picking up stitches

In order to have the patterning move into the neckline without interruption it is sometimes necessary not to be too rigid in following rules. The method for picking up and knitting that you already use will still be the same, but when it comes to when and where to pick up you have to be a little flexible. If the instructions require a certain number of stitches to be picked up in an area and choosing them to work with the

Next →





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patterning count throws that off you can always compensate in another area of the neckline.

For example if you need 2 knits (for a cord) and 4 purl sts (between cords) but picking up 5 sts total is either called for or possible you can increase a stitch in the purl section and then remove one stitch somewhere else.

You are aiming for something that looks good overall. If you only pick up 89 sts when 90 are called for nobody will be able to tell (probably not even the knitting police)...and if they are that close to your knitting they should be focused on something other than your knitting!

Abbreviations



Knit on RS rows, purl on WS rows.



Purl on RS rows, knit on WS rows.

These symbols can be confusing as they mean different things on RS & WS rows. They are forming Reverse St st.



C2B: Knit into next 2 sts at though to work a k2tog & draw up loop, leave on left needle, knit into first stitch once more and allow both stitches to slide off left needle.



T3B: Slip next st onto cable needle and hold at back of work, k2 from left needle, purl st from cable needle.

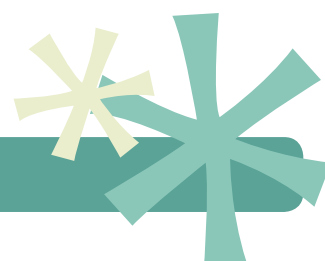


T3F: Slip next 2 sts onto cable needle and hold at front of work, p1 from left needle, k2 from cable needle.



C4B: Slip next 2 sts onto cable needle and hold at back of work, k2 from left needle, k2 from cable needle.

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End





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Instructions

Necklines: More than Neatening

Chart 111.1

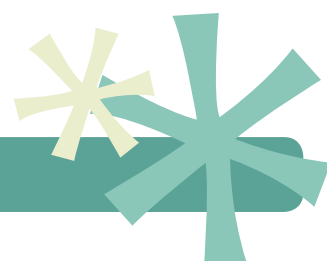
	31	30	29	28	27	26	25	24	23	22	21	20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
4	—	—	—					—	—	—											—	—	—			—	—			—	—	
	—	—	—					—	—	—			—	—	—				—		—		—			—	—			—	—	3
2	—	—	—					—	—	—											—	—	—			—	—			—	—	
	—	—	—					—	—	—			—	—	—				—		—		—			—	—			—	—	1

Row 1: P2, k2, p2, k2, p1, k1, p1, k1, p1, k3, p3, k2, p3, k4, p3.

Row 2: K3, p4, k3, p10, k3, p2, k2, p2, k2.

Row 3: P2, k2, p2, k2, p1, k1, p1, k1, p1, k3, p3, k2, p3, k4, p3.

Row 4: K3, p4, k3, p10, k3, p2, k2, p2, k2.





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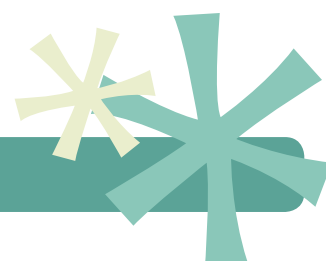
Instructions

Necklines: More than Neatening

Chart 111.2

	24	23	22	21	20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
12	—	—					—	—									—	—					—	—	
	—	—			Y	K	—	—									—	—	X		X		—	—	11
10	—	—					—	—									—	—					—	—	
	—	—		Y	K		—	—	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	—	—					—	—	9
8	—	—					—	—									—	—					—	—	
	—	—	Y	K			—	—									—	—	X		X		—	—	7
6	—	—					—	—									—	—					—	—	
	—	—			Y	K	—	—	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	—	—					—	—	5
4	—	—					—	—									—	—					—	—	
	—	—		Y	K		—	—			X	X	X	X	X	X	—	—	X		X		—	—	3
2	—	—					—	—									—	—					—	—	
	—	—	Y	K			—	—	—	—							—	—					—	—	1

- Row 1: P2, k4, p4, k4, p4, k2, C2B, p2.
 Row 2: K2, p4, k4, p4, k4, p4, k2.
 Row 3: P2, C4B, p4, C4B, p4, k1, C2B, k1, p2.
 Row 4: K2, p4, k4, p4, k4, p4, k2.
 Row 5: P2, k4, p2, T4B, T4F, p2, C2B, k2, p2.
 Row 6: K2, p4, k2, p2, k4, p2, k2, p4, k2.
 Row 7: P2, C4B, p2, k2, p4, k2, p2, k2, C2B, p2.
 Row 8: K2, p4, k2, p2, k4, p2, k2, p4, k2.
 Row 9: P2, k4, p2, T2F, T4B, p2, k1, C2B, k1, p2.
 Row 10: K2, p4, k2, p8, k2, p4, k2.
 Row 11: P2, C4B, p2, k8, p2, C2B, k2, p2.
 Row 12: K2, p4, k2, p8, k2, p4, k2.





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Running Cables into the Neckline

Ensure the correct pattern row is at the neckline

To have a cable pattern run continuously into the neckline it is usually required that a specific row is worked right before any shaping takes place. But sometimes we wish to change the length of the garment to accommodate size or when changing to a yarn that produces a different row gauge than in the instructions.

- To achieve this we need to know our row gauge.
- Then we need to know how long the piece needs to be.
- Then we can calculate the number of rows that will be worked. Number of rows per inch x length.
- We can then divide this number by the pattern repeat to see if we will arrive at the correct row in the pattern at the neckline.
- If it doesn't work out we need to adjust the pattern row that we work first at the hem. The adjustment can be done 1 of 2 ways: adding extra rows before working row 1 of pattern OR subtracting rows- that is beginning on a higher row.

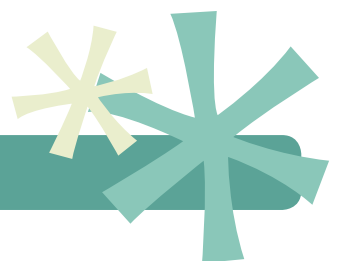
Keep stitches live

Most often stitches at the center front of a garment are placed on a stitch holder to be worked later. But stitches for the back neckline may be bound off. In order to have live stitches available for the patterning to run continuously into the neckline instead of binding off we can simply slip them onto a stitch holder in the same way as for the front.

We can also keep more stitches live on the sides of the neckline. This is done by working short rows instead of binding off or decreasing stitches.

A word of warning

There is a reason that stitches are often bound off at the neckline – it is to give stability, in the same way as seaming does to the body of a garment. So if you just disregard this you may end up with a neckline that stretches too much and drags away from the neck. You can compensate for this by making a smaller tighter neckline. But a much easier fix is to run a crochet chain around the neckline on the wrong side at the point that the pick-up row would have been. The chain does not stretch but will be invisible from the public side of the garment.





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Following the Neckline

Moving the pattern around the neckline

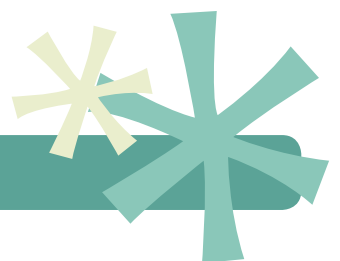
Framing the face can be simple- just have the patterning follow the shape of the neckline rather than just stopping when it reaches that point and it is relatively simple to modify pattern instructions.

Looking at a V-neck line shape

- Firstly you need to look at the patterning that is placed at the center front or either side of the center front on the garment. If it's a large pattern you may wish to select a smaller component of the overall pattern. The method works best with small-scale patterns - say a max of 10-12 wide (depending on gauge).

- Once you have selected which part will be framing the neckline place markers to indicate the beginning of the full repeat.
- Now take a look at the pattern instructions and see how the neckline is shaped.
- Following the shaping instructions simply work them just before the marker rather than at the edge of the piece. For the stitches following the marker continue working in pattern that is already established. There will be no change in the stitch count given in the instructions.

This method can also be used along a raglan sleeve shaping and it very effective when the pattern is a cable as it draws an arrow shape directing the focus towards the face.



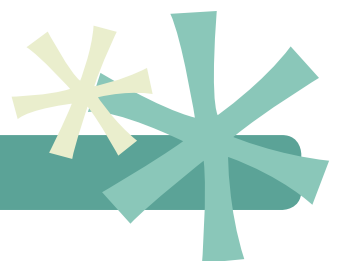
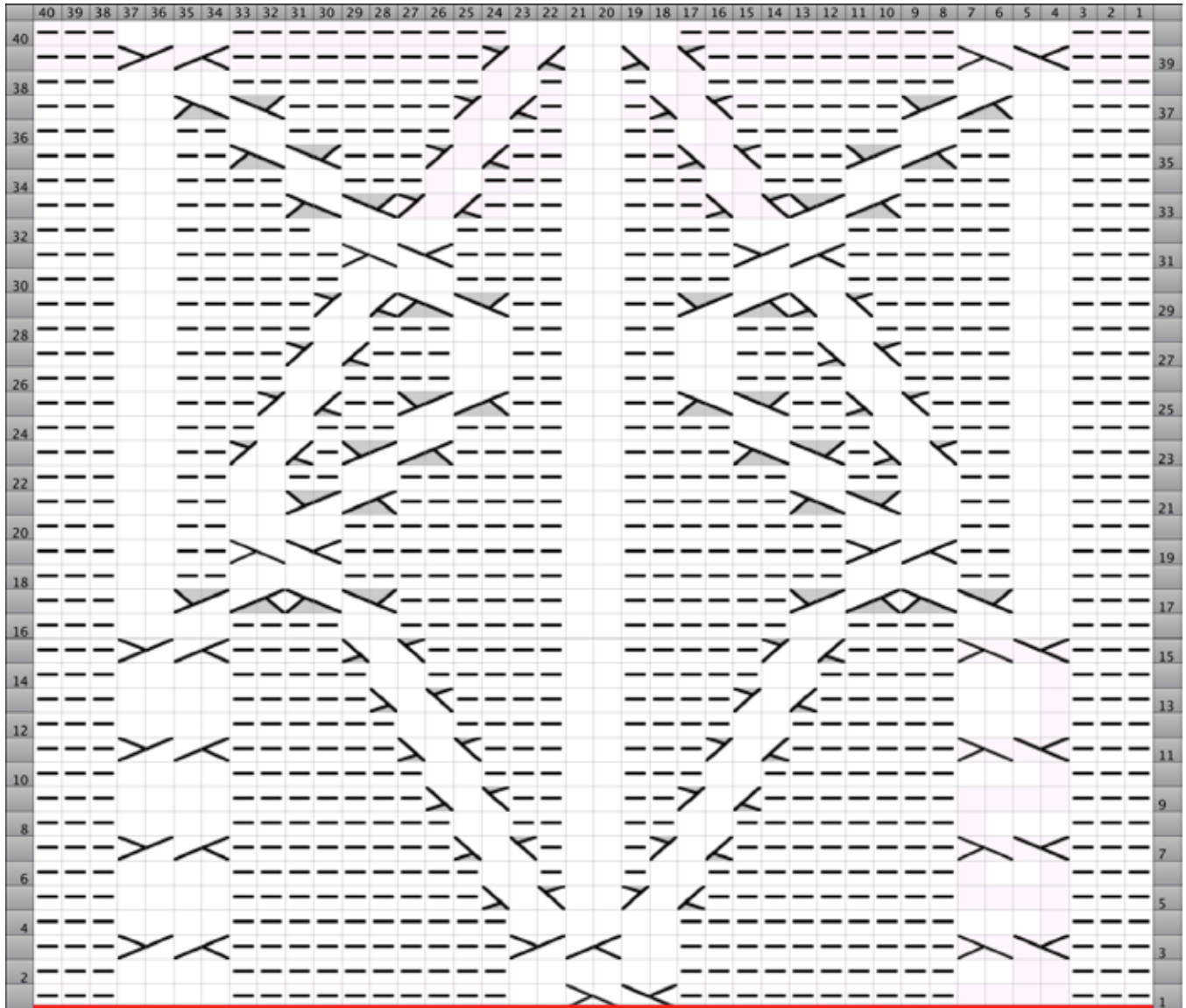


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Instructions

Following the Neckline



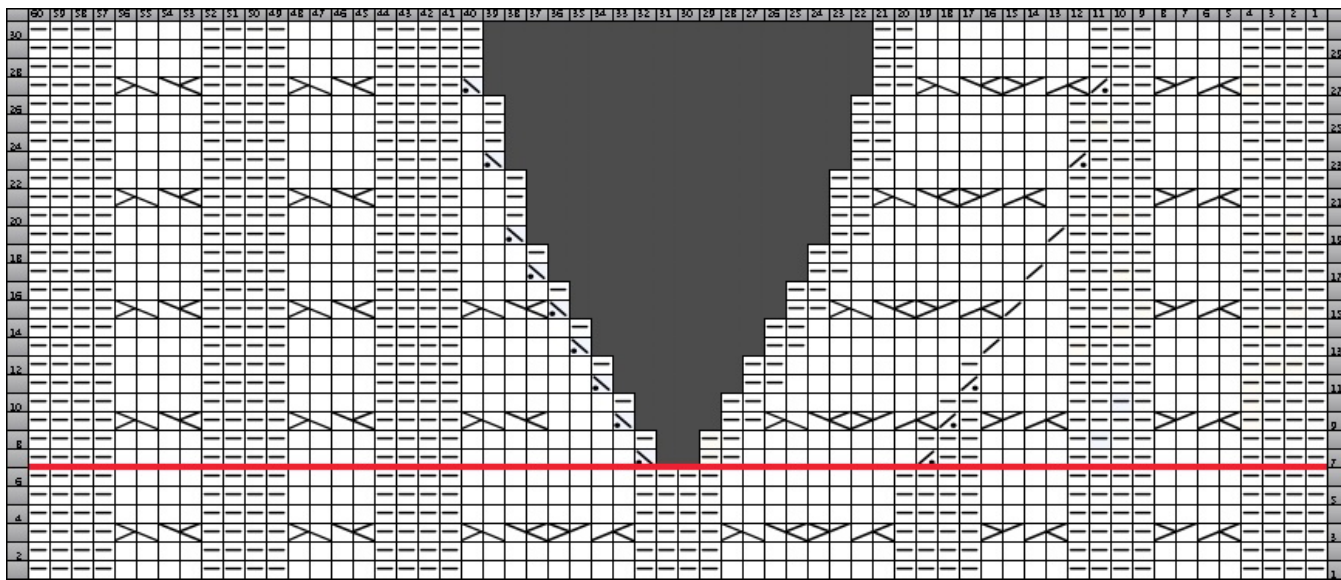


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Following the Neckline



Row 1: (P4, k4) twice, (p4, k8) twice, (p4, k4) twice, p4.

Row 2: (K4, p4) twice, (k4, p8) twice, (k4, p4) twice, k4.

Row 3: (P4, C4B) twice, (p4, C4B, C4F) twice, (p4, C4F) twice, p4.

Row 4: Rep row 2.

Rows 5 & 6: Rep rows 1 & 2.

Rep rows 1-6 for patt.

Divide for V-neck shaping:

Work each side separately.

Row 7: 1st side LHS: (P4, k4) twice, p2, p2tog, k8, p2. Join 2nd ball of yarn for 2nd side RHS: P2tog tbl, k8, (p4, k4) twice, p4.

Row 8: RHS: (K4, p4) twice, k4, p8, k1. LHS: K2, p8, k3, (p4, k4) twice.

Row 9: LHS: (P4, C4B) twice, p1, p2tog, C4B, C4F, p2. RHS: P2tog tbl, k3, (C4F, p4) three times.

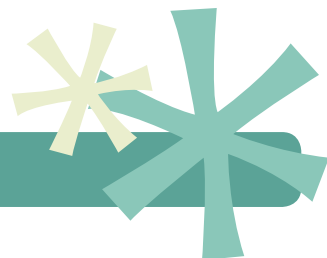
Row 10: RHS: (K4, p4) twice, k4, p7, k1. LHS: K2, p8, k2, (p4, k4) twice.

Row 11: LHS: (P4, k4) twice, p2tog, k8, p2. RHS: P2tog tbl, k6, (p4, k4) twice, p4.

Row 12: RHS: (K4, p4) twice, k4, p6, k1. LHS: K2, p8, k1, (p4, k4) twice.

Row 13: LHS: P4, k4, p4, k3, k2tog, k8, p2. RHS: P2tog tbl, k5, (p4, k4) twice, p4.

Next →





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Following the Neckline

Row 14: RHS: (K4, p4) twice, k4, p5, k1. LHS: K2, p12, k4, p4, k4.
Row 15: LHS: P4, C4B, p4, k2, k2tog, C4B, C4F, p2. RHS: P2tog tbl, (C4F, p4) three times.
Row 16: RHS: (K4, p4) three times, k1. LHS: K2, p11, k4, p4, k4.
Row 17: LHS: P4, k4, p4, k1, k2tog, k8, p2. RHS: P2tog tbl, k3, (p4, k4) twice, p4.
Row 18: RHS: (K4, p4) twice, k4, p3, k1. LHS: K2, p10, k4, p4, k4.
Row 19: LHS: P4, k4, p4, k2tog, k8, p2. RHS: P2tog tbl, k2, (p4, k4) twice, p4.
Row 20: RHS: (K4, p4) twice, k4, p2, k1. LHS: K2, p9, k4, p4, k4.
Row 21: LHS: P4, C4B, p4, k1, C4B, C4F, p2. RHS: P1, k2, (p4, C4F) twice, p4.
Row 22: RHS: (K4, p4) twice, k4, p2, k1. LHS: K2, p9, k4, p4, k4.
Row 23: LHS: P4, k4, p3, p2tog, k8, p2. RHS: P2tog tbl, k1, (p4, k4) twice, p4.
Row 24: RHS: (K4, p4) twice, k4, p1, k1. LHS: K2, p8, k4, p4, k4.
Row 25: LHS: P4, k4, p4, k8, p2. RHS: P1, k1, (p4, k4) twice, p4.
Row 26: RHS: (K4, p4) twice, k4, p1, k1. LHS: K2, p8, k4, p4, k4.
Row 27: LHS: P4, C4B, p2, p2tog, C4B, C4F, p2. RHS: P2tog tbl, (p4, C4F) twice, p4.
Row 28: RHS: (K4, p4) twice, k5. LHS: K2, p8, k3, p4, k4.
Row 29: LHS: P4, k4, p3, k8, p2. RHS: P5, (k4, p4) twice.
Row 30: RHS: (K4, p4) twice, k5. LHS: K2, p8, k3, p4, k4.

..... End





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Neat Additions

Openings and fastenings

Because of the compression of the fabric caused when you cross stitches (when working a cable) it causes the elasticity to be diminished. So if you wish to include cable patterning in a neckline it makes sense to work some kind of opening to allow for greater stretch when putting the garment on over the head.

- Side slits
- Center front opening
- Key-hole opening

Making an I-cord

I-cords are made using a pair of double pointed needles (dpn's). Cast on the required number of sts and knit them.

Do not turn the needle. Simply slide the sts to the opposite end of needle, pull the yarn across the back of the sts and knit them once more. Repeat from * to

* until desired length.

A strand will be produced on the WS, but as you work you will see that each end of the rows will curl towards each other to form a tube and enclose this strand.

Creative ways to use an I-cord

I always like to think of I-cords as cables that are not yet set in the fabric. So I love the way they look spilling out of cable patterns. I like to line up I-cords with cords in the fabric to enhance that effect.

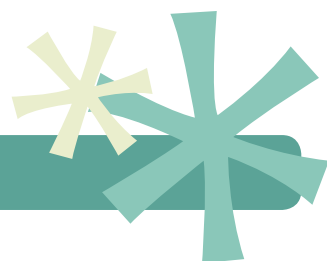
Ideas to consider:

- Thread I-cords through the fabric to create a textured edging.
- Thread I-cords through eyelets in "shoe-lace" patterns.
- Tie knots in the cords for added interest.
- I-cord to make button loops

I-cord frogging / buttonhole loops

I-cords can also be sewn onto knit fabric to form frogging and decorative buttonhole loops. They can also be knotted to make matching ball buttons.

Next →





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Neat Additions

How to attach I-cord to an ending

To attach an I-cord to a knitted piece first pick up the desired number of sts along the edge you wish to join it to. Arrange these sts so that the needle is pointing towards the starting point for attaching the I-cord.

Using dpn's cast on 4 sts for I-cord, knit 1 row, slide sts to end of needle. K3, 1 st rem, work it tog with 1st on needle of picked-up sts. Continue in this way knitting last st of I-cord tog with a picked-up st every second row.

To make a buttonhole loop simply work a few rows without attaching the cord to the garment.

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End

