TRANSCRIPT

Purl Stitch

The purl stitch, just like with the knit stitch, you'll begin with all of your stitches on the left hand needle, and we'll be working them one at a time to move them to the right hand needle. To work the purl stitch, make sure that you are first holding your working yarn at the front of your work. Then you take the tip of your right hand needle and you slip it into the stitch on the left hand needle from the right side of the loop to the front of the left hand needle. This is opposite from the knit stitch, where you take the needle, tip into the stitch from the left side and move it behind the left hand needle. To enter the needle purl wise, you take the needle tip from the right side of the loop and push it until it is in front of your left hand needle. Then you wrap your yarn around that right hand needle tip, counter clockwise, and then pull that yarn back through the stitch and onto the right hand needle.

So continue to work your purl stitches in this way, holding your yarn at the front of your work, slipping the needle, tip into the stitch, wrapping your yarn counter clockwise, and then pulling up a new stitch. When I enter my needle into this stitch it often feels like I'm moving the needle from the back of my work up and out towards the front of my work. If it helps with conceptualizing these directions and movements in Chinese, the knit stitch is actually called the down stitch and the purl stitch is called the upstitch and it refers to how your right needle enters the stitch. When you are knitting a knit stitch, it feels like your needle is pointed down and away from you. And when you're knitting a purl stitch, it feels like the needle tip is up and pointed towards you. So I'll show you the purl stitch a few more times again, holding my yarn in the front. I'm going to enter my needle tip from the right side into the stitch. It's coming out the left side of that stitch and it is, my right hand needle is in front of my left hand needle, then I wrap the yarn counterclockwise, move that needle back and pull off the stitch.

Now to do the ribbing. You'll have to switch between knits and purl stitches. This means that when you switch stitches, you'll have to change where your working yarn is positioned. If you are purling, the working yarn is held in the front. When you switch to the knit stitch, you will need to move your working yarn in between the two needle tips and move it to the back. Then you're ready to work the knit stitches. So if I move along the row in this way, I have purled five stitches and I'm going to move my yarn to the back so that I can knit five stitches. And then when I'm ready to purl, again, I have to move my yarn back to the front of my work so that I can purl. Now, when I turn my work over I can see these are my knit stitches. So these are the ones that I going to knit next, the bumps here, those are the ones that are going to purl next. And these ones are the ones that I'm going to knit again. So I'm going to knit my five stitches and now I have to move my yarn to the front. Now, when you do this and make sure that you don't accidentally create an extra loop by just moving the yarn to the front, it needs to move between the needle tips each time in order so that you don't accidentally create an extra loop on your needle and end up with an extra stitch. If you do accidentally create an extra stitch, when you finally discover that, you can just let go of that while you're knitting, you won't run or anything like that, you can just let go of that extra stitch. And the excess yarn will sort of migrate itself back into the fabric. So we'll undo that and get rid of that extra stitch move my yarn to the front, like so.

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In teaching people to knit, I generally say that there are two basic stitches. You need to learn: the knit stitch and the purl stitch. And depending on how you apply them, it can produce a stockinette fabric, which creates a beautiful, smooth surface of V-shaped stitches on one side. And then these horizontal looking bumps on the other side. In order to create the stockinette fabric, we work knit stitches all the way across on one row. And then we turn our work and we purl all the other stitches on the other row. So the alternating knit stitches and purl stitches produce this fabric. In the cowl here. It means we're doing ribbing, which means that we knit a few stitches and in this case five stitches, and then we purl five stitches. And that effectively sets us up to see five stitches of smooth stockinette, then five stitches of horizontal bumps. And then when these two fabric textures alternate, you'll also notice that the stockinette side pushes forward while the purl side recedes backwards. And then in combination it produces this sort of rippled fabric effect, it draws the fabric in and makes it stretchy.

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