Linen Stitch has become one of the most popular stitch patterns in knitting. It is a relatively easy stitch pattern to work, is versatile, and can be worked in one or multiple colors. The end result on the knit side looks exactly like a woven linen fabric. The purl side of the fabric resembles Seed Stitch and being able to use the purl side as the public side makes it even more versatile. Using solid or variegated yarn, one or more colors, or even changing colors every row or every two rows makes the basic Linen Stitch pattern very unique and interesting.

Linen Stitch is a combination of knits, purls, and slipped stitches. When working on the knit/public side, the stitches are slipped with the yarn in front and when working on the purl/private side, they are slipped with the yarn in back. It is basically a two-stitch pattern where
the slipped stitches alternate with the knit or the purl stitches.

Linen Stitch results in a fabric that does not curl and therefore is excellent for jackets, vests, scarves, and shawls. It can also be used for home decor items such as placemats, pillows, and table runners. There are abundant knitting patterns available for these items, or you can experiment and try your own design.

Linen Stitch is also known by other names such as Fabric Stitch and Woven Stitch. There is also a variation called the Half Linen Stitch where slipped stitches are worked only on the knit rows and purl side rows are simply purled across. Both the Linen Stitch and the Half Linen Stitch can be worked flat or in the round. The two pillow patterns that accompany this article use both the Linen Stitch and the Half Linen Stitch patterns. And, to show the versatility and reversibility of these stitch patterns, both the knit sides and the purl sides are highlighted.

**Slipped Stitches in Linen Stitch**
A “slipped” stitch is made by simply slipping a stitch from the left knitting needle to the right needle without working the stitch. Unless directed otherwise by the pattern, this stitch is slipped as if to purl, which will result in a stitch that is not twisted at the base. The working yarn is brought to the front (WYIF) or to the back of the work (WYIB) before the stitch is slipped. The working yarn is then brought across the slipped stitch forming a bar across the slipped stitch. The next stitch, when working the Linen Stitch pattern, is then either knit or purled. In Linen Stitch, the bar across the slipped stitch is always on the knit or public side of the work, whether you are working a knit row or a purl row, or working in the round. And this bar (slipped stitch) is offset by one stitch every row. The combination of the placement of the bar and worked stitches makes the knitted fabric resemble the weave of linen fabric.

Figure 1 shows an example of the knit side of Linen Stitch. This sample was done in a solid color to highlight the stitch pattern. When Linen Stitch is worked in a solid color, the beauty and texture of the actual fabric can be seen.

Figure 2 shows the same Linen Stitch swatch, but this time the purl side is highlighted. This side of the fabric shows how closely it resembles the Seed Stitch pattern.

**Slip Stitch vs. Mosaic Pattern**
The Linen Stitch pattern is a Slip Stitch pattern and not a Mosaic pattern. There is often a misunderstanding that Slip Stitch and Mosaic patterns are the same. They are similar in that Mosaic patterns are all Slip Stitch patterns.

However, all Slip Stitch patterns are not Mosaic patterns. In Mosaic patterns, the working yarn is always held to the private side when stitches are slipped. In Slip Stitch patterns the working yarn can be held either to the public/front or to the private/back sides when the stitches are slipped. Again, in Linen Stitch, the bars from the working yarn across the slipped stitches are always to the public side.

**Tension**
When working Linen Stitch, overall tension is very important. Because slipped stitches are involved, the knitter may need to pay a bit of attention to the pattern so that the stitches are slipped evenly and are the same tension throughout. However, this usually becomes second nature after a few rows, and the pattern becomes easy to work and maintain without too much thinking involved!

Slipped stitches will pull the fabric vertically and the “bars,” or stranded yarn across the slipped stitches, will pull the fabric horizontally. If the working yarn is too loose across the slipped stitch, the previous stitch can become enlarged because the yarn can work its way into the previous stitch. And, if the working yarn is pulled too tightly across the slipped stitch, the fabric can pucker. The goal is to have the bars across all stitches be of the same size and tension. This will ensure that the resultant fabric is even and “squared” and no pulling or puckering has occurred. Gauge should always be measured in the Linen Stitch pattern, as the gauge of slipped stitch patterns can be quite different from that of Stockinette Stitch gauge.

Refer to the excellent Stitch Anatomy article on Slip Stitches by Molly Ferrante, *Cast On*, February-April 2010, for more information on Slip Stitch technique.

**Color in Linen Stitch**
Using a solid color, multiple solid colors, or variegated yarn can illustrate the versatility of this stitch pattern. As shown in Figures 1 and 2, using a solid color will enhance the stitch pattern and show off the beauty and texture of the pattern.

Figures 3 and 4 show both the public and private sides of the Linen Stitch pattern where solid color yarns have been used but different colors are used every two or more rows. This combination also enhances the stitch pattern and texture, but the addition of color and striping adds further interest.

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Figures 5 and 6 are examples of the public and private sides of Linen Stitch worked in one variegated yarn. You can see that the look of this fabric is completely different from previous examples, demonstrating the versatility of Linen Stitch. And finally, Figures 7 and 8 show three different variegated yarns worked into one design. Again, this looks very different from the previous color samples. There are many color and design possibilities for Linen Stitch!

Half Linen Stitch
In traditional Linen Stitch, every row or round has slipped stitches, which is a two-row pattern. In Half Linen Stitch the pattern is four rows/rounds. Rows or rounds 1 and 3 incorporate the slipped stitches and rows 2 and 4 are simply purled or, when worked in the round, knit. Figures 9 and 10 show examples of both sides of the half linen stitch done in one color and in Figures 11 and 12 two colors are used with the color changing every two rows. Again, many different designs can be created with a variety of yarns and color combinations.

The two pillow patterns that accompany this article are done in both Linen Stitch and Half Linen Stitch. If you choose to make your own pillows, experiment with different colors and combinations. That’s the fun of this stitch pattern!

A special thank you to Master Hand Knitting Committee Co-Chairs, Suzanne Bryan and Sharon Levering, for their editing assistance.

References
looking chunky pillow that is popular in home décor today. The solid color also shows the texture of the linen stitch fabric. In addition, both the knit and purl sides of linen stitch are interesting! To illustrate the reversibility and versatility of this stitch pattern, one side of the pillow uses the knit side of the pattern as the public side while the other side of the pillow uses the purl side as the public side.

Special Abbreviations:
wyif = with yarn in front
wyib = with yarn in back

Stitch Pattern:
Linen Stitch for an odd number of stitches (multiple of 2+1)
Row 1 (RS): K1, *sl 1 wyif, k1; rep from *.
Row 2 (WS): P2, *sl 1 wyib, p1; rep from * to last stitch, p1.
Rep Rows 1 and 2 for stitch pattern.

Pillow Front and Back (Make 2)
With yarn held doubled, CO 31 sts. Continuing with yarn held double, work the two-row Linen Stitch pattern for 12”, ending on a WS row. BO in pattern on RS.

Finishing
Pieces should not need blocking but may require a light steaming to even out the sts. Weave in all yarn tails. Because you are using the knit side of one piece and the purl side of the other as the public sides, make certain yarn tails are woven into the correct side so they are not visible on the front. On the piece where the knit side of the linen stitch is public, the yarn tails should be woven into the purl side. Where the purl side becomes the public side, the tails should be woven into the knit side.

Place the knit side and purl side of the two pieces together aligning the cast on edges. Using a single strand of yarn, seam three sides of the pillow. Insert the pillow form and seam the final side.

Reference
Finished Measurements:
12” x 16” (30 x 40cm)

Materials and Equipment:
Schoppel ZAUBERBALL STARKE 6 (437yds/400m, 5.29oz/150g, 75% Virgin Wool, 25% Nylon):
1 skein #2170 Blaser Schimmer (Color A)
Knit Picks WOOL OF THE ANDES SPORT (137yds/125m, 1.76oz/50g, 100% Wool): 2 skeins #25269 White (Color B)
Size 5 (3.75mm) needles or size needed to obtain gauge
12” x 16” pillow form

Gauge:
In Half Linen Stitch pattern after blocking, 20 sts & 21 rows = 4”/10cm. To save time, take time to check gauge.

DESIGNER NOTE: The Half Linen Stitch is also known as the Double Woven Stitch and is worked with two colors for this project. Color A is used for Rows 1 and 2, and Color B is used for Rows 3 and 4. Both the public and non-public sides of this stitch pattern are interesting! To illustrate the reversibility and versatility of this stitch pattern, the knit side of the Half Linen Stitch is used for the pillow front while the purl side of the stitch is used for the pillow back.

Special Abbreviations:
wyif = with yarn in front

Stitch Pattern:
Half Linen (Double Woven) Stitch for an odd number of stitches (multiple of 2 + 1)
Row 1 (RS): K1, *sl 1 wyif, k1; rep from *. Row 2 (WS): Purl.
Row 3: K2, *sl 1 wyif, k1; rep from * to last stitch, k1.
Row 4: Purl.
Repeat Rows 1-4 for stitch pattern.

Pillow Front and Back (Make 2)

Finishing
Pieces should be blocked to pillow measurements. Or, you can choose to do a light steaming to even out the stitches. The pieces will be stretched to fit the pillow form so if they are slightly small it is not a problem. Weave in all yarn tails. Because the knit side of Half Linen Stitch is used for the front of the pillow and the purl side of the stitch used for the back, yarn tails must be woven in correctly so they are not visible on the front. On the piece where the knit side is public, the yarn tails should be woven into the purl side and where the purl side becomes the public side, the tails should be woven into the knit side.

Place the knit side of one piece and the purl side of the other piece together aligning the cast on edges. This will ensure that the front will show the knit side of the linen stitch and the back of the pillow will have the purl side showing. Seam three sides of the pillow, then insert the pillow form and seam the final side.

Reference