This is a continuation from Balancing Stitch Patterns: Part 1 – Horizontal Balance which was published in the Spring 2015 issue. Part 1 discussed the terms “multiple” and “repeat” as well as how to balance stitch patterns across a fabric horizontally.

Part 2 discusses balancing stitch patterns vertically on the fabric.

In Level 1 of the Master Knitting Program Swatch 16 tests the knitter’s ability to balance a pattern vertically. The stitch pattern is given along with directions for balancing the pattern.

In Level 2, lace Swatches 10-11, cable Swatches 12-13 and buttonhole Swatch 17 require that the knitter provide swatches and patterns that are balanced horizontally and vertically.

Level 3 has many opportunities for the knitter to show expertise in balancing patterns horizontally and vertically in the swatches and also in the culminating hat and sweater projects.

First we will look at the opportunities for balancing a basic cable pattern vertically.

A note about cable crossings and how they appear on the fabric. In row 5 of this stitch pattern you will work the cable crossing by rearranging the order of the stitches and then knitting across those rearranged stitches. This creates a row of knitting with the cable crossing directly below the just knit stitches.

On the chart it appears that there are only 3 rows of knitting after the cable crossing, but on the fabric – that cable crossing row looks like a knit row with the cable just below. So to visually balance the cable on the fabric you have to consider that cable crossing row as a knit row.

In the chart labeled Six Stitch Cable, the stitch pattern, the stitch pattern multiple is 8 + 2 stitches. The repeat is 8 rows. You can see that the cable is centered within the repeat. If your fabric has a row count that is evenly divisible by 8, this stitch pattern would be centered within the fabric vertically. This chart also assumes that you want the cable crossing a few rows from the top and bottom of the fabric.

If the row count is not evenly divisible by 8, then you will need to manipulate the placement of the cable crossing to maintain a vertically balanced look in the fabric.

In Chart A we are assuming that your row count is divisible by 8 with 2 rows left over. If we just add the two rows to the top of the fabric it would create an unbalanced look to the fabric as seen here.

If we move one of the two rows to the bottom of the repeat we would end up with a balanced pattern on the fabric. Notice that you will also need to change the first row to a wrong side row in order to keep the cable crossing on a right side row. Also note that the cable crossing is no longer centered within the repeat. That is OK.

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You can move the cable crossing up or down in the repeat to create your desired effect. The examples assume that the cable design is symmetrical from top to bottom.

There will be times when you may want to balance a pattern that is not vertically symmetrical. Charts C and D explore balancing opportunities for this type of pattern. In Chart C, you can see that the yarnovers and decreases create a directional pattern like an inverted V. If your fabric has a row count evenly divisible by 8 (the row count for one repeat of this pattern) then this stitch pattern would fit perfectly.

But again, what if your fabric is divisible by 8 with leftover rows? Chart D is an example of how to balance this pattern when there are extra rows. We will assume there are two extra rows.

You can see that there are two extra rows here. One was added at the top and one at the bottom. Then the red box indicating the repeat rows was moved down one row. Notice that row 1 is now a right side row in order to keep all of the shaping within the right side rows. This would not matter if this were worked in the round, as all rows would be right side rows.

You can see from the above examples that symmetrical or asymmetrical stitch patterns can be balanced vertically using the same techniques. These techniques can be used for most stitch patterns.

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