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KNITTING WORKSHOPS

KNITTING TECHNIQUES

Provisional Cast Ons and Their Many Uses –Provisional cast ons are easily removed and are an important tool for knitters, providing creative flexibility. These can be used as a base for specialized cast ons, to add sections seamlessly at the bottom of your knitting, or to join the top and bottom edge to make a seamless tube. You'll practice five different provisional cast ons to see which you find most effective, and five different implementations: adding a border, making a hem, joining top and bottom edges seamlessly, working from the center out so both ends match in a shawl or scarf and creating a tubular cast on. (3 hours – limited to 20 students)

Reversible Borders - Sometimes you want the inside of your garment to look just as good as the outside: when the front of a cardigan is worn open, when a collar is turned back to form lapels, when you want to create a truly reversible garment, or when you need to enclose cut edges of knitted or handwoven fabrics. Try out three different approaches to borders that create as neat a finish on the inside as on the outside: doubled borders, tubular borders, and bindings. For each of these construction techniques we'll use a different method of picking up stitches and there will be plenty of opportunities to discuss variations and applications to special situations. (3 hours – limited to 20 students)

Bind Offs for All Occasions - Bored using the same old bind off? Does it look too tight or just plain ugly? Learn bind offs to use when shaping or seaming, to make gathers or add fringes, in textured patterns, cables and multiple colors. Fix problems with bind offs that are too tight or too loose and learn to make that last loop look neat. Class provides hand on practice in all these techniques with ample opportunity to ask questions. Be prepared for any terminal knitting situation. (3hrs – limited to 20 students)

Beautiful Bind Offs - Tired of mundane bind offs? Ready to add some interest at the edge of your knitting? Learn to add ruffles at cuff and neck, add lacey or solid edgings, flat or picot hems and casings, points, and rows of eyelets for threading ribbons. Find just the right edge for a fancy garment or spice up a plain one. Hands on practice plus discussion of other decorative options. (3 hrs – limited to 20 students)

Cast On Cornucopia - Still using the same cast on you learned when you started knitting? It's time to explore some of the many different ways to start your knitting. Learn tough cast ons for kids' garments, stretchy ones for cuffs, multicolor cast ons that can add decorative edges to a solid garment or complement complicated color work. Even several easy "provisional" cast ons that can be removed in seconds. (3 hrs – limited to 12 students)

Circular Knitting 5 Ways: An overview of five major approaches to circular knitting: double pointed needles, a single circular needle, two circular needles, magic loop and i-cord. You'll learn to cast on, join the beginning and end of round, work comfortably and bind off all five ways. Along the way, we'll address your individual questions and solve problems like stitches that are too tight or too loose. (3 hours – limited to 15 students)

Helix Knitting – Learn to knit circular stripes with absolutely no jogs--no one will ever find your beginning and end of round. Use as few as two colors, or as many as you like. This technique produces perfect interlocking spirals of each color. Class will cover casting on, shaping, and introduction to both circular needles and double pointed needles. (3 hrs – limited to 20 students)

Fitting Your Knitting - Improve garment fit by using short rows to add bust darts and shoulder shaping. Students will knit a swatch with a bust dart in it, learning to measure, design, and knit the dart. Students will also measure, and calculate, and knit shoulder shaping, and will learn the technique of binding off together (3-needle bind off) to join the shoulder seam. (3 hrs – limited to 20 students)

Dreaded Disasters - Workshop on ways to solve problems with garments. Necklines and armholes too tight or too big, sleeves too short or too long, sweaters that fall off the shoulders, hoods too big or too small, ribbing that sags, collars that curl, garments outgrown before they were finished, dropped stitches, extra stitches and cables twisted the wrong way. Instructor will suggest solutions and improvements. Learn what went wrong, most efficient way to salvage it, how to avoid it in the future. (3 hrs – limited to 20 students)

Two-handed Two-color Knitting - Learn this fast, time-honored method of knitting color patterns without having to drop each color and pick up the next. Students will practice both the Continental and English methods of knitting, allowing them to hold two colors of yarn simultaneously. The technique of knitting steeks and cutting for armholes and neck openings will also be discussed. (3 hrs for 2-handed 2-color knitting. 6 hrs to include hands-on practice with cutting steeks and finishing cut edges – limited to 20 students)

Bring out the Best in your Variegated Yarn - Learn to avoid stripes, highlight desired colors, and emphasize texture. Review a variety of yarns and learn their properties, while knitting swatches to experiment with textured stitches, multiple strands, and stitch count. (3 hrs – limited to 30 students)

Knitting Shapes: Breaking Away from the Ordinary - Students will learn easy guidelines for knitting circles, triangles, mitered squares, pentagons, hexagons, octagons, and other many-sided shapes. Class will also cover how to use these techniques independently to create facecloths, dishcloths, place mats, or rugs; how to incorporate them into the body of garments as shaping; designing shaped borders; using these shapes as building blocks for other fabrics. Techniques to be covered will include single and paired decreases, on both the right and wrong sides of the fabric. (6 hrs – limited to 15 students)

PATTERN STITCHES

The Lazy Knitter's Guide to Pattern Stitches - A whole bag of tricks for those who love to knit and hate to purl! Learn faux ribbing, a substitute for moss stitch, even lace patterns with no purling. Garter ladders, brioche stitch, rose fabric, and tubular knitting will all be taught and swatched. (3 hrs – limited to 30 students)

Slip Stitch Patterns - A survey of the wide variety of pattern stitches created using slipped stitch techniques and just one color at a time, including a brief foray into the mysteries of mosaic knitting. We'll also spend some time on other stitch manipulations used in conjunction with slipped stitches, such as extra wraps, swapping stitch positions and twisting multiple stitches. (3 hrs – limited to 20 students)

The Knitter's Guide to Pattern Stitches – Combines highlights of “The Lazy Knitter’s Guide to Pattern Stitches” and “Slip Stitch Patterns.” Provides an introduction to knitting below, simple lace, and textured slipped stitch patterns, then goes on to explore two- and three-color slipped stitch patterns, slipped stitch patterns incorporating extra wraps to make elongated stitches, and special stitch manipulations (for example cables and multi-strand twists). The class includes swatching of some patterns and demonstrations of others. (3 hrs – limited to 20 students)

Wonderful Woven Stitches - Using your two knitting needles and basic knitting stitches, discover the astonishing fabrics and textures you can create with the technique known as weaving. Create knitting that masquerades as woven fabric, easily combine colors into incredible tweeds, checks and polka dots (using only one color at a time, of course), and show off those hand painted yarns to best advantage. Amaze your knitting friends—some of these fabrics will stump the most experienced of them! (3 hrs – limited to 20 students)

DESIGN AND CREATIVITY

Introducing the Ouroboros Moebius - A new (and very easy) approach to the seamless knitted moebius. No particular cast on, advanced techniques, or special needles are required to make this versatile moebius scarf--you don't even need to know how to purl! You'll make a small sample moebius in class to learn this simplified approach and we'll discuss options for color, texture, and joining that allow for infinite variations, plus how to apply the same approach to constructing other garments. (3 hours – limited to 20 students)

Ouroboros Moebius Design Workshop - A new (and very easy) approach to the seamless knitted moebius. No particular cast on, advanced techniques, or special needles are required to make this versatile moebius scarf--you don't even need to know how to purl! You'll complete a small sample moebius in class to learn this simplified approach and then experiment with options for color, texture, and joining that allow for infinite variations, plus discussion of how to apply the same approach to constructing other garments. You will have the option to begin a full-sized moebius scarf or shawl. (6 hours – limited to 20 students)

Design Your Own Circular Shawl: Hands-on approach to designing circular shawls as you knit. You'll learn how to start from the center, shape your shawl into a circle, square or octagon, add pattern stitches, and finish it off with a decorative bind off or edging. During class, we'll make three sample-sized shawls to practice the techniques and then students will begin work on their own full-sized designs. (6 hours – limited to 12 students)

Mitten Design Workshop/Knit to Fit Mitts - Knit tip-down mittens to fit anyone, in any yarn, without a pattern. You'll knit one or two small mittens in class to learn the basic techniques. Then add stripes, Fair Isle, textured pattern stitches, or cables--the possibilities are endless. These mittens are quick to knit with minimal finishing. You'll be able to knit them for everyone you know! This class is designed to help knitters gain confidence, develop circular knitting and finishing skills, and begin designing on their own. (6 hrs – limited to 15 students)

Sideways Sweaters - Learn construction techniques for knitting sweaters and vests sideways by knitting a small sweater. This allows you to easily add vertical stripes of colors, textured or Fair Isle patterns for a completely different look from conventional sweaters. Students will learn basic garment architecture and will knit a small sample sweater. Students can select design elements (such as pattern stitches or colored stripes) that students can select as desired. Garment finishing and assembly will be discussed, and practiced as time allows. (6 hrs – limited to 12 students)

Garments to Grow In - You invest a lot of time and effort in handknits for kids. Wouldn't you love it if they weren't outgrown right away? Learn how to maximize wearing time by designing garments that grow with children. This course will teach ways to lengthen the life of infant and toddler garments: pattern stitches and finishing options that grow and ornamentation that plans in advance for additions. We'll discuss which garment shapes continue to look good as a child grows and how to modify existing patterns with growth in mind. (3 hrs – limited to 25 students)

Luxury Yarn Workshop - Cotton, silk, mohair and alpaca all present a challenge to knitters, especially if used in a pattern designed for that all-forgiving fiber, wool. Learn proven techniques for insuring success when knitting garments in cotton, mohair, silk, alpaca, novelty yarns or chenille. Class will cover ways to prevent sagging and biasing, sizing borders, alternatives to ribbing, adding other fibers to mitigate the problems with the main fiber, and pattern stitches and seaming techniques to stabilize the fabric. The role of yarn architecture and garment fit will also be covered in detail. Students will take home a better grasp of what the pitfalls are of working with these fibers, and a small arsenal of techniques for dealing with them. Knitters are encouraged to bring a fiber they would like to work with, or a completed garment they are unhappy with, to use as examples. [Note: This can be changed into a full design class, where students plan and begin a sweater]. (3, 6, 9, or 12 hrs. – limited to 30 students)

Fantastic No-Gauge Bags/ Fantastic No-gauge Hats/ Fantastic No-gauge Scarves and Shawls - Get rid of your preconceived ideas about knitting from instructions and create beautiful bags, hats, scarves or shawls. Learn exciting techniques for designing while you knit, without ever making a gauge swatch. Create sophisticated bags that keep their shape, fun hats that really fit, or unique scarves and shawls while embellishing them with beads, cords, tassels or edgings to create a unique personal treasure. These three classes are designed to explore creativity through knitting and are appropriate for adventurous beginners through advanced knitters. Each of the classes may be offered separately. (6 hrs for EACH class – limited to 20 students)

FINISHING TECHNIQUES

Edges and Borders – Perfect borders can be a pain to pick up. Learn how to pick up and complete your borders perfectly every time. During this workshop, you'll work with five types of edges, learning to prepare your edges to make picking up a breeze, several pickup techniques, how to determine exactly the right number of stitches for each border, how to prevent curved borders from flaring, and how to enclose an edge so it looks great inside and out. (3 hrs – limited to 20 students. If you need a shorter class, there are 2-hr and 90-min versions of this one.)

Knitted Collars for Knitted Garments – Practice picking up to make a neat finish on both the inside and the outside of the collar where it meets the neckline. You'll learn to shape straight and circular collars on round-necked sweaters and shawl collars (with and without short-row shaping) on V-necks and cardigans. Best for knitters who have completed one or more sweaters or vests. (can be offered as two 3-hour classes, one on round necks with conventional collars and one on v-necks with shawl collars, or as one 6-hour class on both types of collars – Limited to 20 students).

Embellishing with Color - An exploration of the many ways to add color to the surface and edges of your knitting, including applied I-cord, ruffles, cords and straps, edgings and borders, decorative bind offs and cast ons. (3 hrs – limited to 20 students)

I-cord Intensive - You already know the basic uses of I-cord: ties, strings, mitten thumbs, and edging--now discover i-cord's huge range of uses. Decorative i-cord bind offs give you almost limitless creative options. Used for fringes and braids, i-cord holds up better than loose strands of yarn. Learn easy ways to knit i-cord right onto the surface of your knitting, in straight lines, zigzags and curves, and to sew it on free form. Use i-cord to easily start circular knitting from the center and flat knitting from the edge. (3 hrs – limited to 20 students)

Seaming Without Sewing - Love to knit but hate to seam? Knit beautiful garments, but hate the way they look when they're finished? Finishing can make the difference between "professionally hand crafted" and "home made." If you have sweaters in pieces just waiting to be finished because you find sewing annoying, have trouble seeing to sew, difficulty holding a sewing needle, or just plain hate to sew, this class is for you. Learn to use crochet, binding off, picking up, and knitting on to make perfect seams, plus perfect afterthought pockets and buttonholes. (3 hrs – limited to 20 students)

Finishing Techniques for Handknitters - Learn to complete your knits like the pros. What do you need to decide about finishing before you cast on? When should you bind off, and when can other techniques be used? How can you shape your garment to make finishing easier? What's the best way to join shoulders and sew side seams? How can you pick up stitches and make professional looking borders? This fast paced class is designed to cover all these aspects of finishing and more. (3 hrs – limited to 15 students)

Sew a Fine Seam - Seams can make the difference between “home made” and “hand crafted” in your knitting. Learn to sew perfect seams—side seams, shoulder seams, and armholes. Practice sewn seams in mattress stitch, weaving, and combinations of the two. Learn to knit seams rather than sew them, and add embellishments at the same time. (3 hrs – limited to 20 students)

LECTURES

If You Can Knit a Triangle, You Can Knit Anything – A knitting “travelog” documenting Maggie’s journey through approaches to knitting design over the last 15 years, beginning with a simple envelope bag and arriving at an open-ended method that can be used to design almost anything. Includes a slide show of designs from her personal collection, published patterns and books. (Approximately 45 minutes; time can be adjusted to fit your needs; requires projector with HDMI or VGA connection)

The Making of a Knitting Book – Traces the development of *The Knowledgeable Knitter* from concept to publication, with insights into the process, pitfalls, and satisfactions of writing a lengthy knitting reference book. Includes a slide show. (Approximately 45 minutes; time can be adjusted to fit your needs; requires projector with HDMI or VGA connection)

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Please note that I will be happy to customize my courses somewhat for your particular needs. I also try to be responsive to the expectations and goals of the students in each class, as far as time constraints and the material to be presented allow. Let me know which classes you are interested in and I'll provide detailed outlines of the material I cover, the skill level required, supplies, and homework, to help you make your final decision. While I am somewhat flexible, it is not possible to condense a 3- or 6-hour course into 1 or 2 hours. If you need shorter workshops, please see the separate list of 90-minute mini-workshops.

Teaching fees are assessed per contact hour. Please contact me for my rates. I normally am able to teach two sessions per day (a 3-hour session in the morning and another in the afternoon). Those sponsoring classes are also responsible for paying travel expenses (transportation, baggage, airport parking, food, and lodging). I expect a minimum of two days of teaching for trips that require more than 4 hours of travel time (point of origin is Blacksburg, Virginia). Lodging should be in a hotel. For local classes (under 3-hour drive each way from Blacksburg, Virginia), we can negotiate specific terms on a case by case basis.

Please note that a deposit and contract will be required in order to reserve your dates. The deposit will be fully refundable up to an agreed-upon cancellation date.

Workshops must take place in a formal classroom/meeting room setting. Holding workshops in a private living room, dining room, or in the public area of a store during business hours presents problems that prevent successful teaching and learning.

If am in the area, book signings can usually be arranged without any additional cost.