FREE KNITTING TUTORIAL

How to Purl in Knitting

The purl stitch step by step, knit vs purl, and a welt stitch washcloth to practise · US terms

SKILL LEVEL	PRACTICE	NEEDLES
Beginner	**Washcloth 8 × 8.2 in**	**US 7 (4.5 mm)**
YARN	**STITCHES**	**TIME**
Worsted cotton (#4)	**Knit, purl**	**About 3 hours**

Materials

- Worsted (#4) cotton: about 70 yd
- US 7 (4.5 mm) straight needles, tapestry needle

Abbreviations (US terms)

k	knit	**WS**	wrong side
p	purl	**st(s)**	stitch(es)
RS	right side		

Purl: yarn in front, right needle into the front of the stitch from right to left, wrap counter-clockwise, pull through and slide the old stitch off.

Gauge 18 sts × 24 rows = 4 in in stockinette (assumed typical worsted cotton gauge; washcloths don't need exact gauge).

The purl stitch

1	Bring the yarn to the front between the needles.
2	Insert the right needle into the front of the first stitch, right to left.
3	Wrap the yarn over the top of the right needle and down in front.
4	Push the right needle back through the stitch with the new loop and slide the old stitch off the left needle.

Welt stitch washcloth (8 × 8.2 in)

Cast on	Cast on 36 sts with a long-tail cast on.	**(36)**
Rows 1–4	Knit all sts (garter border).	**(36)**
Rows 5–8	Stockinette band. RS rows: Knit all sts. WS rows: K3, purl to the last 3 sts, k3.	**(36)**
Rows 9–12	Reverse band (the purl ridge). RS rows: K3, purl to the last 3 sts, k3. WS rows: Knit all sts.	**(36)**
Rows 13–48	Repeat the last 8 rows 4 more times, then work the stockinette band once more. You have 6 smooth bands and 5 ridges.	**(36)**
Rows 49–52	Knit all sts (garter border).	**(36)**

Bind off	Bind off knitwise on the next RS row. Weave in the ends.	**(0)**

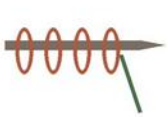
What's exact, what's calculated

Exact	All 52 rows were worked stitch by stitch in our knitting engine: 36 sts on every row, the bands and garter edges checked row by row.
Calculated	Size and yarn come from the gauge (about 2.6 cm of yarn per stitch + 15%).
Assumed	The gauge: typical worsted cotton on US 7. A washcloth can be a little bigger or smaller.

How to Purl in 4 Steps

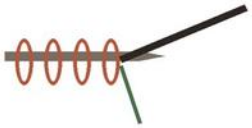
English style (yarn in the right hand) · the mirror image of a knit stitch

1 · Yarn in front



Bring the working yarn to the front, between the needles.

2 · Insert



Put the right needle into the front of the first stitch, from right to left.

3 · Wrap



Wrap the yarn over the top of the right needle and down in front, counter-clockwise.

4 · Pull through



Push the right needle back through the stitch, catching the loop. Slide the old stitch off.

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Knit Stitch vs Purl Stitch

The two stitches are mirror images: master both and you can knit anything

	Knit	Purl
Yarn position	at the back	in front
Needle goes in	from left to right, behind	from right to left, in front
Wrap	counter-clockwise from the back	counter-clockwise over the top
Looks like (on the side facing you)	a V	a bump

Continental purl: hold the yarn in the left hand and flick it down and round the needle tip with your left index finger.

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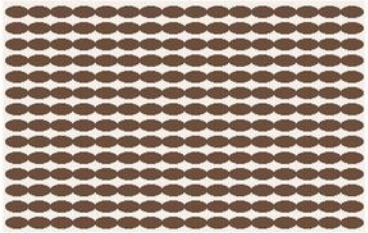
Knit or Purl? What the Fabric Shows

Right sides simulated stitch by stitch: knit = smooth V, purl = little bump



Stockinette

knit RS rows, purl WS rows



Reverse stockinette

the purl side: all bumps



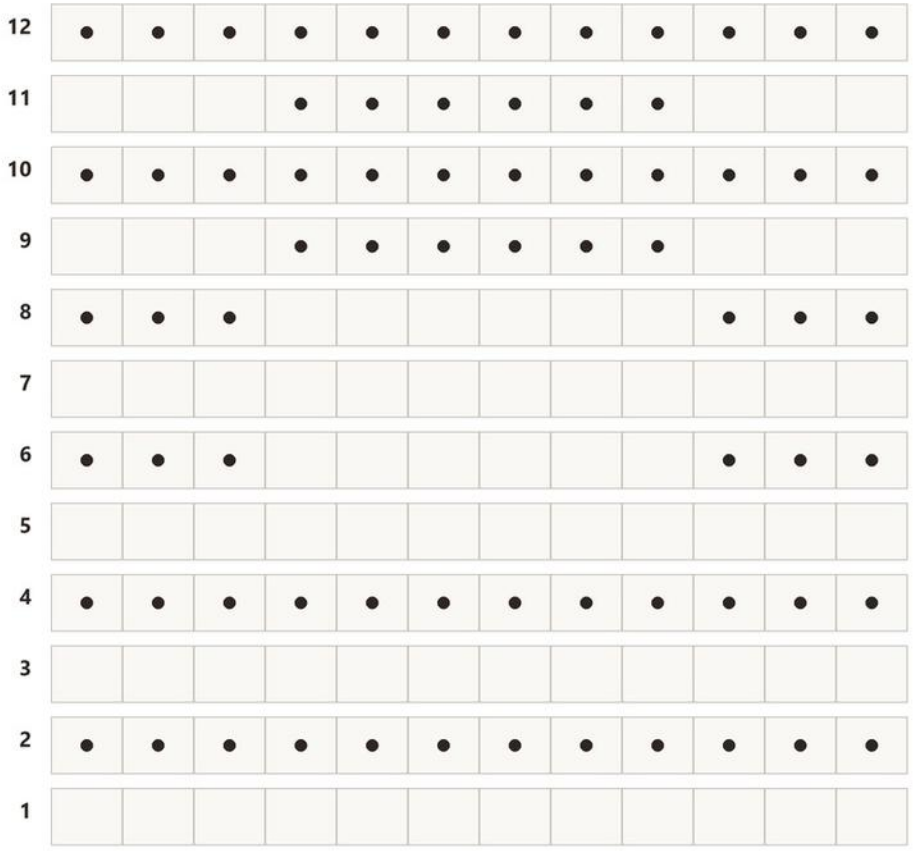
Garter

knit every row: ridges

Every purl stitch is a knit stitch seen from the back. That's why knitting the knits and purling the purls keeps a pattern lined up.

Welt Stitch Washcloth · Chart

Right-side view on a 12-st strip · box = knit on RS, purl on WS · dot = purl on RS, knit on WS



Rows 1–4: garter border. Rows 5–8: smooth band. Rows 9–12: purl ridge. The 3 edge sts are garter on every row.

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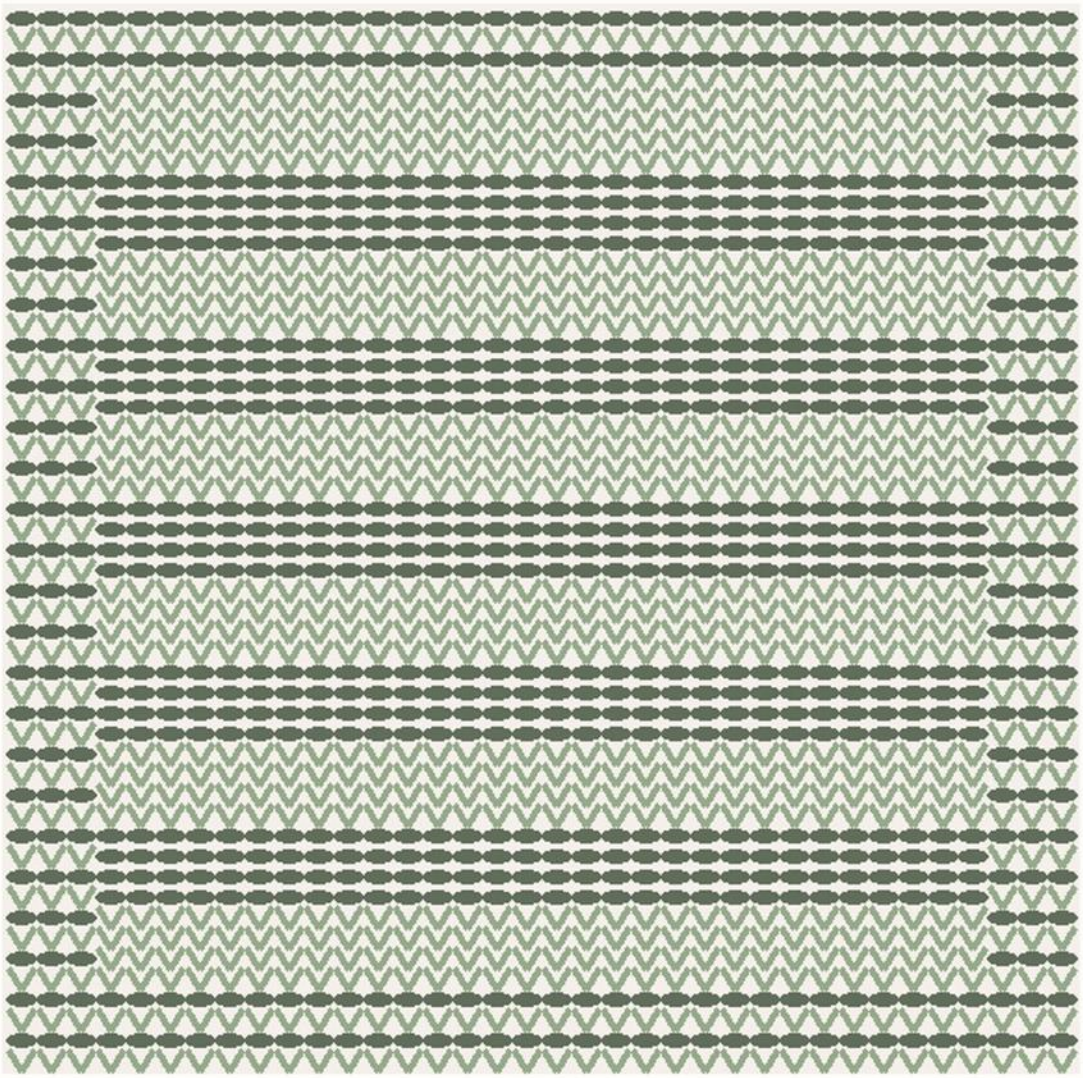
Welt Stitch Washcloth · Simulated Right Side

All 52 rows of 36 sts from the engine: smooth bands, purl ridges and garter edges · about 8 × 8.2 in



The ridges are 4 rows of reverse stockinette: they puff up between the smooth bands.