

Both simple and intriguing, this afghan offers the ease of garter-stitch for beginners as well as the interest of turned corners for more seasoned knitters...producing a snug and beautiful blanket for all concerned.



Although this version of the blanket is knitted in two colors (pale and medium grey), try it in a solid shade to enhance the natural design of the ridges and corners...or, what about a patchwork using four colors—one for each section?

# the great garter stitch

Garter stitch. . .to some knitters, this texture is inextricably associated with kindergarten knitting or Girl Scout squares. We hope to liberate you from that limited vision, and help you to see the multifaceted beauty of the stitch. Some distinct advantages of garter stitch:

- An equal number of stitches and ridges magically results in a perfect square.
- It is totally reversible.
- Its edges are noncurling, so they require no borders.
- The finished fabric—especially when worked in different directions—produces a fascinating play of light and shadow giving an automatic "design" to your work.
- An ideal stitch for the sometimes less than even product from a beginning handspinner, it more or less equalizes the lumps and thin spots.
- It offers total ease of execution: nothing but soothing knitting.

The following blanket was designed by Elizabeth in 1962, at the beginning of her Garter Stitch Period, which encompassed a series of extraordinary garments. The design was conceived specifically with Sheepstow in mind: a super-thick, lightly twisted four-ply wool, custom-spun for us in our attempt to produce a commercial yarn that approached the natural

beauty of handspun Cowichan wool. The finished afghan is thick, snug, soft and eminently comforting, with the neutral undyed wool shades fitting well into any color scheme. Although you would have to wash it more frequently, imagine a luxurious version in solid cream.

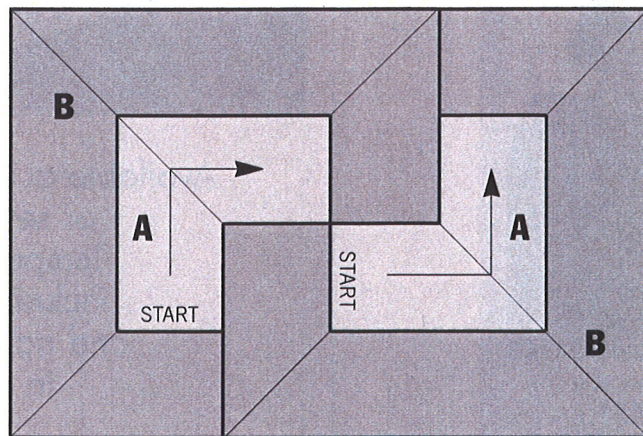
Because of the squareness of the garter stitch, it is a snap to alter the size of the finished blanket to fit

any sofa or bed by adding to, or subtracting from the base number of stitches. The entire blanket is all knit, and provides the added excitement of turning eight corners.

## Blanket pattern

### GAUGE

2¼-2½ sts to 1"/2.5cm (for once fit is not a major consideration).



Elizabeth's blanket is composed of two inner "A" pieces and two outer "B" pieces. The design is based on a square 24 stitches wide and 24 ridges (48 rows) high. By varying the number of stitches and ridges, larger or smaller sizes may easily be achieved. The finishing touch, after joining the four sections, is an applied I-cord edging.

### MATERIALS

- 16 4oz/112g skeins of "Sheepstow" from Bartlett yarns. [See yarn buying guide, page 117] (If you wish to make a bi-colored blanket, 5 skeins of one color for sections A plus the I-cord trim, 11 skeins of another for sections B).
- 24"/60cm circular needle (for ease in working back and forth) of a size necessary for you to obtain wanted gauge; anywhere from size 10½ to 15 (6.5 to 10mm).
- 1oz/28g of a finer, more firmly spun matching wool for sewing up.

### SIZE

Approx. 42"x 64"/106cm x 162cm figured on a base number of 24 sts and 24 ridges.

### NOTES

2 rows = 1 ridge. Slip all first stitches purlwise wyif (or: slip first stitch knitwise, p last st) for a handsome braided selvage. Splice in each new skein of wool to obviate the need to darn in ends; on a reversible item such as this, there is nowhere to hide. If the diagonal line of holes bothers you, you may employ the wrapping technique of short rows at each turn to eliminate them.

### Piece A (make 2)

With color A, cast on 24 sts (base number). Work 24 ridges (48 rows).



Now turn a corner as follows:  
 K23, turn, work back (just leave the 24th st on the needle).  
 K22, turn, work back.  
 K21, turn, work back.  
 K20, turn, work back, etc., until only 2 sts remain.  
 K2, turn, work back, now. . .  
 K3, turn, work back.  
 K4, turn, work back.  
 K5, turn, work back, etc. . . picking up the orphan stitches, one at a time, until all 24 sts have been knitted.  
 Work 24 ridges. Bind off loosely.

#### **Piece B** (make 2)

With color B, cast on 24 sts. Work 24 ridges. Turn corner (as above), work 48 ridges (96 rows), turn corner in the same direction, working 48 ridges, turn corner in the same direction, work 24 ridges. Bind off loosely.

With a blunt sewing-up needle, assemble the four pieces neatly with the finer more firmly-spun matching wool (twisted together with the Sheepdown if you like; retwist every 5 to 10 sts). Consistency is the watchword as you unite ridge to ridge: there is no right or wrong; just stick to whatever part of the selvage you decide to sew into. You may want to

wash and block the blanket before adding the border. This will allow the fabric to settle into its final dimensions.

#### **I-cord edging**

With a smaller size needle, pick up 1 st for each ridge along the outer selvage (work about 20 sts at a time). On the blanket-size needle, with color A, cast on 2 sts, (invisibly if you wish for perfection), and immediately transfer them to the pick-up needle. Because we are applying a contrasting color cord, we will work Joyce Williams' variation of Elizabeth's Applied I-cord as follows: \*K1, slip 1, yo, k1 (picked up st), pass 2 threads over (being the 2nd cord st and the yo). Replace 2 sts to lefthand needle, and repeat from\*. (If your edging is the same color as the blanket, you may eliminate the yo.) To turn the sharpish corner, you need a bit of extra fabric to swing around the point: work to corner stitch (k2 cord sts and replace them to lefthand needle; attach cord to corner stitch as usual. K2, replace to lefthand needle). Onward to next corner. When you arrive back where you started, unite (weave or sew) the last cord sts to the first.

Now—curl up under the beautiful thing and take a nap. ■

### **knit tip**

#### **SHORT ROWS**

##### **WRAPPING STITCHES AND HIDING WRAPS**

**When working partial rows, called short rows, you can make a smooth transition and prevent holes by wrapping the yarn around the stitch where the turning takes place. When all the short rows are complete and you are ready to work across the entire row, the wrap on those stitches must be hidden.**

##### **A KNIT STITCH**

- **Before turning the work and with the yarn held in back, slip the next stitch on the lefthand needle purlwise.**
- **Move the yarn between the needles to the front of the work.**
- **Slip the slipped stitch back to the lefthand needle.**
- **Turn the work, bringing the yarn between the needles to the proper position to knit or purl.**
- **To hide the wrap: Insert the righthand needle under the wrap and then knitwise into the wrapped stitch. Knit both together.**

##### **A PURL STITCH**

- **Before turning the work and with the yarn held in front, slip the next stitch on the lefthand needle purlwise.**
- **Move the yarn between the needles to the back of the work.**
- **Slip the slipped stitch back to the lefthand needle.**
- **Turn the work, bringing the yarn between the needles to the proper position to knit or purl.**
- **To hide the wrap: Insert the righthand needle from behind into the back loop of the wrap stitch and place it on the lefthand needle. Purl it together with the stitch on the needle.**

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