INTARSIA KNITTING

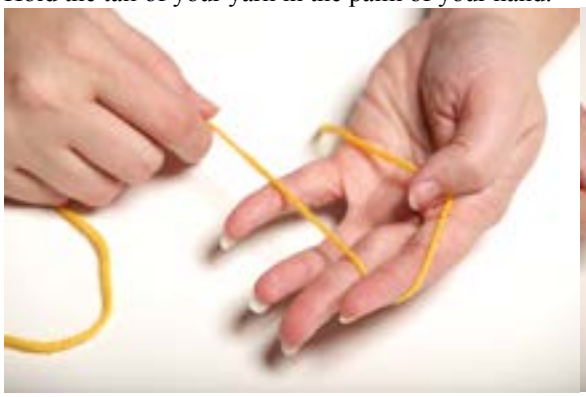
Notes and How- to by Alissa Barton of Knitting Fairy

"The word "intarsia" (in-*tar*-zha) comes from the Italian *intarsio*, or inlaying. In knitting, the term refers to the integration of isolated blocks of color into a project." – DIY Knitty Gritty Episode 108 "Introduction to Intarsia"

Intarsia is a style of knitting that creates pictures using color in your knitting. Each area of the picture is a separate piece of yarn. The whole trick of Intarsia is working it without leaving holes and carefully weaving in your tails (of which there are many, get over it!) so they do not distort the finished fabric.

There are lots of gadgets on the market to use to wind up your small pieces of yarn. Don't bother! For small pieces (under 3 yds) just let them hang as individual threads. Longer pieces can be wound into a yarn butterfly.

Hold the tail of your yarn in the palm of your hand.





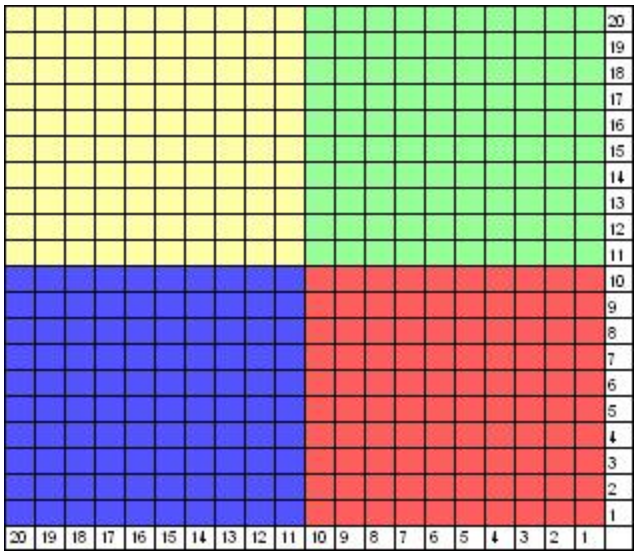
Wrap the main part of the yarn around your fingers in a figure 8 shape.
Tightly wrap the end of the main yarn around the waist of the figure 8 and tuck the end into one of the wraps.



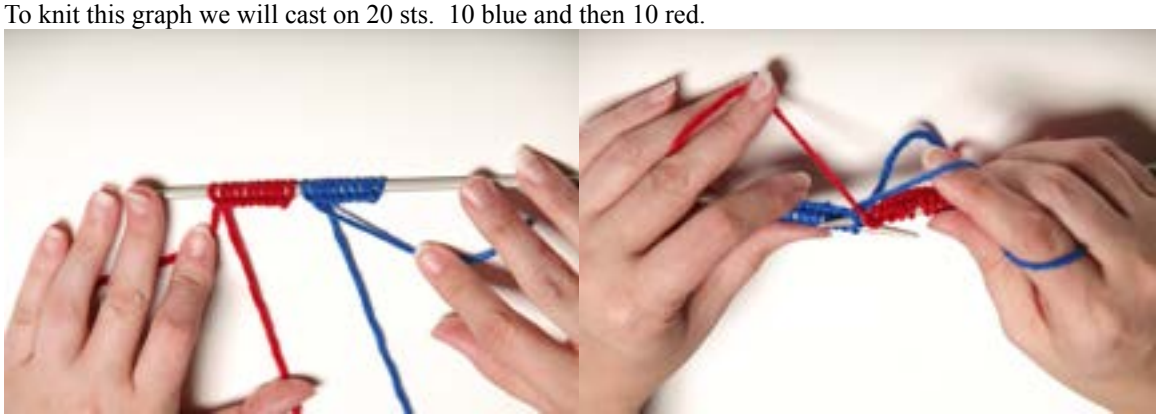
Now, pulling on the palm end of the yarn will slowly release more length while you work.

The next thing you need to know to work Intarsia successfully is how to read charts. Intarsia is almost always knitted flat. Right side rows are read from right to left. Wrong side rows are read from left to right. Start working the charts at the bottom right hand corner unless otherwise directed. (things knitted from the top down might be read differently, for example)

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To knit this graph we will cast on 20 sts. 10 blue and then 10 red.



We are going to knit this sample in stockinette stitch. Our first row is a right side row, so starting at the bottom right hand corner and reading the chart across to the left, we will knit 10 red squares and then we are going to twist the blue yarn with the red by bringing the red over the blue and knitting one stitch in blue.

Now, give both colors a little tug to tighten up the interchange. Continue with blue and knit across the row.

Coming back on the purl side, the interchange of color will take place on the side facing you, but the actual changing of color happens the exact same way. Twist the red yarn with the blue by bringing the blue over the red and knitting one stitch in red and then tugging both yarns to tighten them. Finish the row by purling with the red.

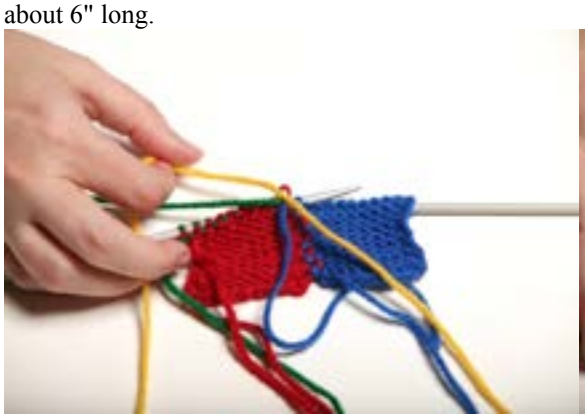
Work the rest of the first 10 rows, changing colors between the 10th and 11th st on every row.

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When you begin row 11, cut the red and blue yarns leaving a 6" tail and start by knitting across the first 10 sts with green.

Now, pick up the yellow and tie a single knot around the red yarn, very close the last stitch. Leave the tail about 6" long.




Knit the first yellow stitch and tighten everything again. Continue across with the yellow. Turn and work back on row 12 just like before, using the new colors. Finish the chart through row 20. Bind off loosely.

Did you get any holes between your colors? You might have missed twisting correctly at that point. All is not lost. You can close that little gap up when you weave the tails in.

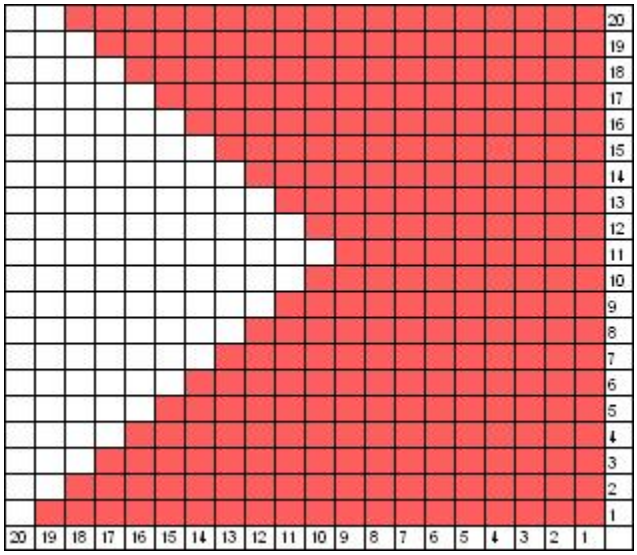
Are your interchanges sloppy looking? Turn the work over. See those odd little half circle lines? Those are your color changes. Take the tip of your needle or a crochet hook and carefully pull slightly on each of these, both sides. Now, turn it back over and look. Better?

How would you estimate how much yarn to leave for each of these areas? I don't like to run short, so I try to leave an inch for each stitch. These are 10 sts by 10 rows each, so that would be about 100 inches (slightly over 8 feet or less than 3 yards) of yarn per section. I use this trick before starting any intasia pattern. I measure out my yarns, or at least write into each section how many stitches are in each piece.

Let's try a moving line.

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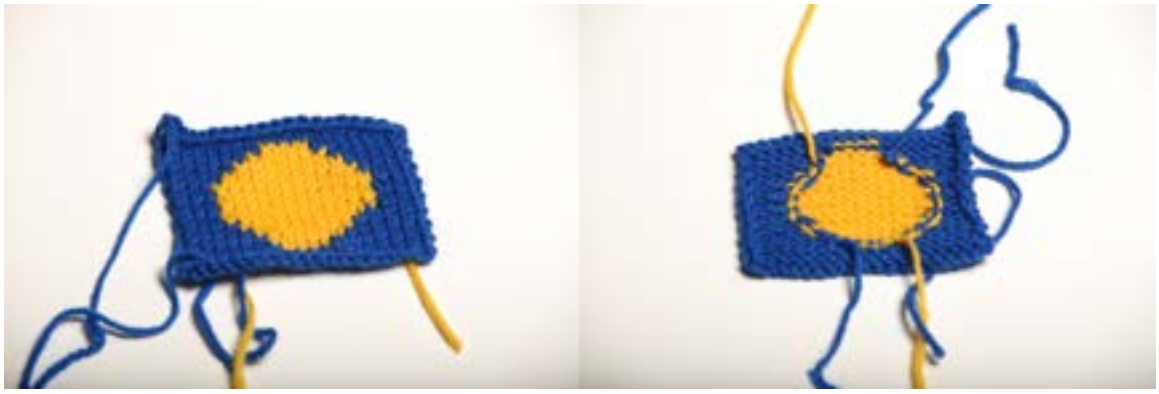


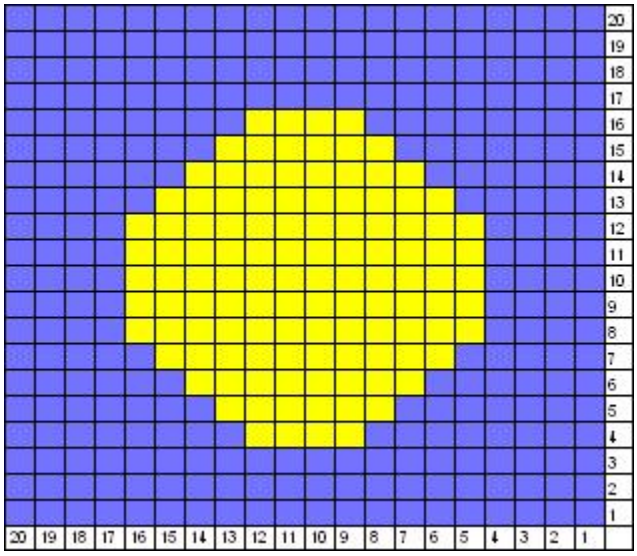
This will be worked the same as the previous chart, except that our colors won't travel straight up or down. You need to pull the yarn over to it's new start/end location after every row. Moving it a stitch or two would be just fine, but more than 3 sts and you should start a new piece of yarn.

Notice how stitch 10 in the 11th row pulls funny? That is because we forced that yarn to change directions. Stitches are shaped not by the needles, but by the stitches around them. This one was getting mixed messages! It started out being told "Go right, Go right!" and then suddenly the message changed to "Left, left left!!!" We could have fixed that a couple of different ways. The easiest way is to add a new piece of yarn where the direction changed. Change both colors! The other solution is somewhat less elegant in appearance but good enough for quick and dirty fixes. When you knitted the 8th red stitch, you could twist the white around it, thus anchoring it out to the right and giving it a tiny space behind the red to get used to it's new position in life. The gap is still there, really. But now it is hidden. The downsides to this are twofold. First, there might be the tiniest bit of white that shows through your red section. The second being that it might pull a bit on that stitch when worn, causing a small dimple in your knitting.

Now, let's get a little more complicated. Let's center our motif:

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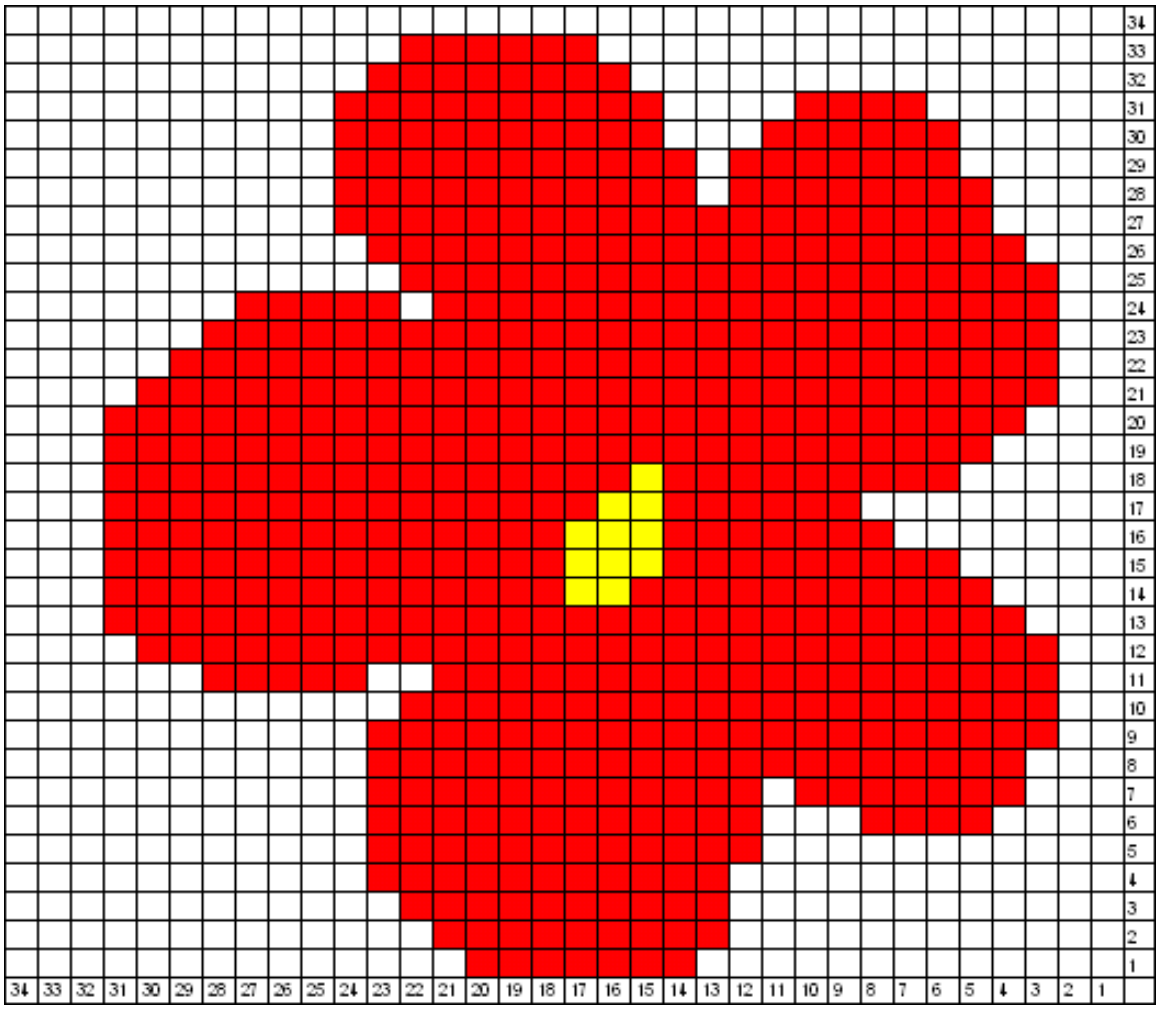




Your first three rows are solid color. On row 4 you will need to add a butterfly of yarn for the yellow spot and the other edge of the blue. Purl the first 8 sts in blue, tie a strand of yellow around this blue and purl one stitch. Pull both yarns tight. Purl three more yellow stitches, tie in the other blue, purl one blue and pull both tight. Purl to end. Because of the straight sections on the side of the dot you will not experience the same pulling as on the arrow.

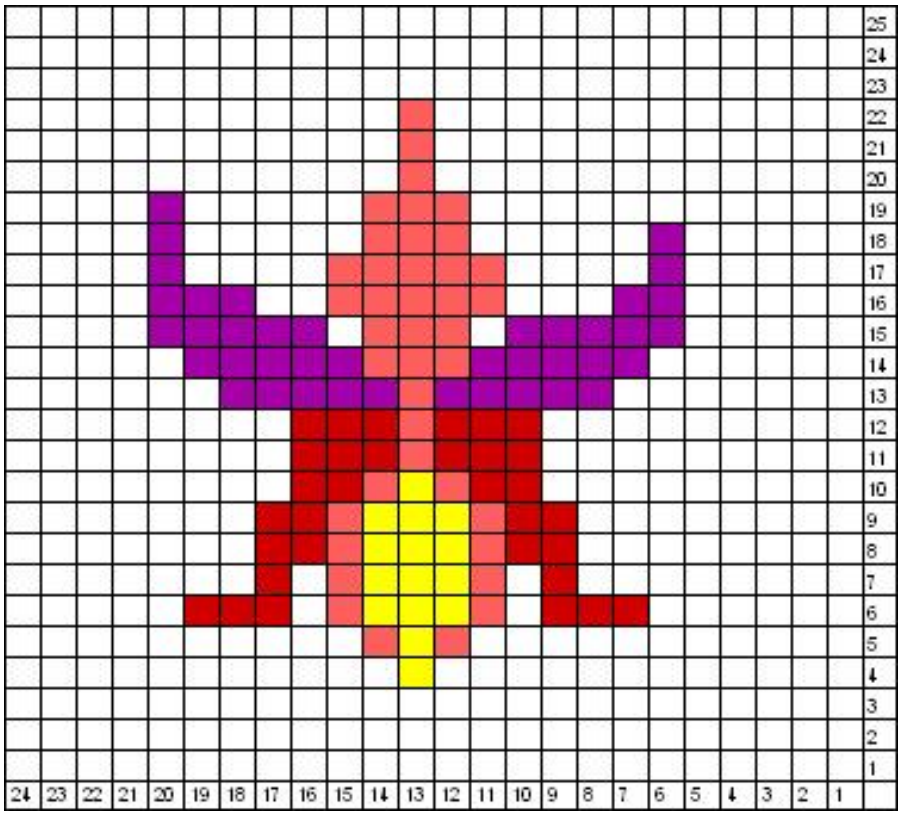
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Even more threads would be needed to make something like this:



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And this:



The Knitting Fairy on Weaving in ends.

Weaving in ends is important, don't skimp! I would say that at least 50% of the repairs I have to do on handknitted and crocheted items are caused by dealing with ends poorly.

Of course, the worst thing you could possibly do is to just cut them off at the surface. Even if you knot the ends together first they will eventually come undone if the garment or item gets any kind of wear at all, which we hope it does. Once that happens, there is nothing there to grab ahold of and use to fix the hole. The only option at that point is to patch the hole as best you can.

There is this myth out there that you should never tie knots in your knitting. Pish! There are plenty of good reasons to tie knots in your knitting, it just depends on the circumstances. Me, I am basically insecure and I always assume that my work is going to come undone. I knot EVERYTHING I can. Then, I weave in the ends. Some yarns don't really require knots. Usually, anything wool should be fine if you splice it carefully. Me, I knot.

While I am knitting and need to add in yarn, I tie a loose square knot in the ends to hold them in place. When the garment is finished but before I block it, I gently untie those knots and adjust the tension of the stitches. Then, I retie the knots and weave the ends in. If it is in or near a seam I will weave the tails into the seam every time. But, what if you don't have a seam nearby? Now what?

I try to weave in my ends where ever there is a "visual" break in the knitting. By that I mean anyplace where the knitting changes. Either where it moves from one kind of stitch into another, where colors

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change or along some kind of line. Since the eye is already seeing a break in the surface at that point it won't notice the extra bulk of tails as much. Tricky, huh?

When all else fails and I need to weave in ends in the middle of a smooth piece of knitting (usually right smack DAB in the middle) I use this nifty technique. I take my tapestry needle and go along the backs of the stitches at a 45 degree angle, picking up just one ply of each stitch. Then, I come back along the same angle but over a bit and come back down through a single ply of each stitch beside it. Work the other end in the opposite direction the same style. This nifty butterfly of yarn will be totally invisible on the right side! Even when you do it in another color. The key is to not pull the second pass very tight. Notice that the top of the "U" is still above the work? That will keep it from distorting the right side surface.







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