



# THE WOOLLY PURL

notes about knitting

Spring 2021

## WELCOME TO the WOOLLY PURL

I taught myself to knit when I was 11 years old, from an old Klutz Kraft kit, with bamboo knitting needles (which I still have) and a horribly scratchy blue yarn (which I also still—unfortunately—have). Now approaching (unofficially) ten years since my foray into the world of knitting and making, I thought it was the perfect time to establish a little nook for myself in this community.

Over the years, I fiddled around with a few projects, a crude coin purse, a simple garter scarf, dishcloths. But it was about a year ago that I really launched myself into the craft, attempting larger and more complex projects like sweaters and textured hats.

Which brings me to where I am now, in the midst of a major project and trying to organize the myriad future project ideas swimming around my head.

I hope you find the projects and perspectives in this little newsletter engaging and relevant to your crafting endeavors! It's lovely to welcome you to the first issue of the Woolly Purl.

Happy knitting

Emily



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*The Favo Sweater*
- \* A Knitter's Perspective:  
*Why I Knit*
- \* Knitting Gifts
- \* Favorite New Technique:  
*German-twisted Cast On*

## PROJECT PROGRESS

# The favo sweater

This pattern simply spoke to me. Its intriguing cables and stitches drew me in, enticed me. The design looked challenging, exciting, new. As a rather intermediate knitter, I wasn't sure if I could do it, but I certainly knew I wanted to.

So nearly three months after first seeing that pattern, I purchased it, and a month after that, I cast on.

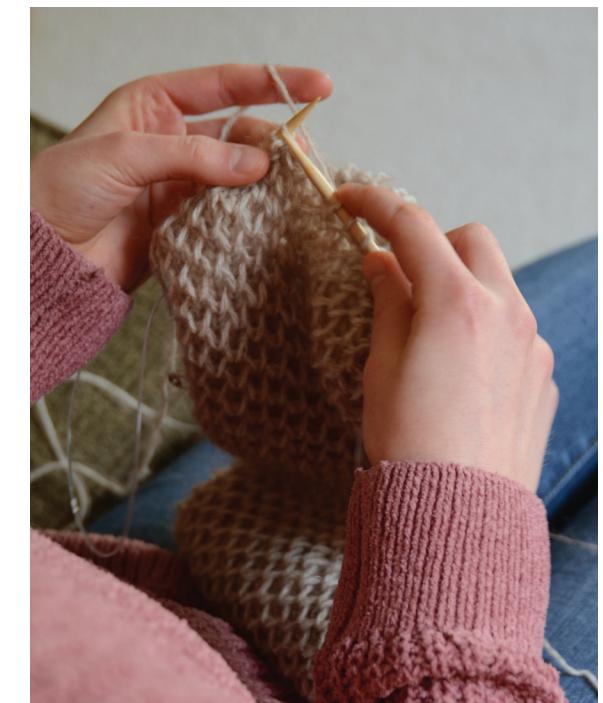
The *Favo Sweater* is a pattern by Lærke, a lovely Danish knitwear designer behind the business Fiber Tales. The word *favo* means "honeycomb" in Italian, the name inspired by the honeycomb brioche stitch on the sleeves and sides of the sweater. I had never seen this stitch before, so elegant and eye-catching, with a raised, interlocking texture. After a few rows, it becomes surprisingly simple and makes for a truly unique appearance. I actually found that all of the different stitches are quite intuitive after a couple of repeats.

The whole project has taken on such special meaning to me. The yarn was a birthday gift from my parents, and the Snældan wool shipped all the way from the Faroe Islands. Having Danish heritage myself, I particularly love that connection with the yarn. It really does make the project so much more personal.

I love the feel of the wool and mohair in my hands as I work the stitches. I love the sheepy smell of lanolin in the fabric as it drapes from my needles. I love the easy memorization of the various stiches and the tallying of row repeats as I work.

So while I would love to finish the project and have a cozy new sweater to wear, I am trying to enjoy every stitch. The other day I realized that I am creating more than simply a sweater, but rather a weave of memories. I'm knitting a story, and right now, I'm stalling to savor the ending. \*

article & photos by Emily Tracy



## SNAELDAN yarn spotlight

This unique yarn, known as *nappað tógv*, is produced in the Faroe Islands at the family-owned Snældan mill. A blend of Faroese wool and Falklands merino wool, the yarn maintains a rustic yet soft quality, rich with natural lanolin. It comes in a variety of shades, but its natural palette of creams, charcoals, and browns is especially beautiful. Visit <https://snaldan.fo/> for more information.

## A KNITTER'S PERSPECTIVE

# why I knit

*My Aunt Alice, although she denies it, is a very talented knitter. I always love hearing the perspectives and stories of other knitters, so I asked her why she enjoyed the craft. This is what she wrote.*

I love the way the yarn and needles feel in my hands. It is as if they were made to be together, my hands and the knitting. Knitting is so pleasurable, relaxing and rewarding. I also like creating knitted items such as handmade gifts for others.

With some projects, like cotton dishcloths, I don't have to look at my work and that leaves me free to enjoy the scenery on the car rides to our mountain cabin. I can also visit or watch television while knitting, and I like being able to do two things at once. Being productive is also an important part of knitting for me.

I don't consider myself a "true" knitter as I have only done a few sweaters, lots of dishcloths, pot holders, dish towels

and one knitted afghan with ribbon woven into the holes. I have two sisters who have done many, many knitted things and have been a great help to me. I would like to make a pair of socks sometime and have some very old cashmere yarn for that. \*

by Alice Tracy



## Q & A

*with Aunt Alice*

**FAVORITE YARN?** Red Heart Classic yarn Mexican variegated

**FAVORITE NEEDLES?** Boye metal needles (the old ones). I like the sound and feel

**FIRST KNIT PROJECT?** Spool knitting and making projects from the tube, such as a small rug or coasters

**FAVORITE PROJECT?** Dishcloths because they are easy!

**ENGLISH OR CONTINENTAL?** English. I tried continental and liked it also but my hands are trained for English

**CABLES OR COLORWORK?** I used to think that cables must be so hard, but my sister showed me and they were easy

**IN THE ROUND OR FLAT?** Flat because I like the feel of longer needles in my hands

**KNIT FOR YOURSELF OR OTHERS?** I like knitting for both





*Photo by Eva Elias from Pexels*

# Knitting gifts

*It's true. Not a lot of young people knit today. Which is why when you find out that a friend of yours also knits, you appreciate them even more than you did before. My friend Helen is the ultimate crafter—she creates more things than anyone else I know. Here's her take on knitting for others.*

I started my knitting adventures when I was in 2<sup>nd</sup> grade, after my friend brought a knitted book bag to school that was crafted by her grandma. Back then, my little mind was absolutely

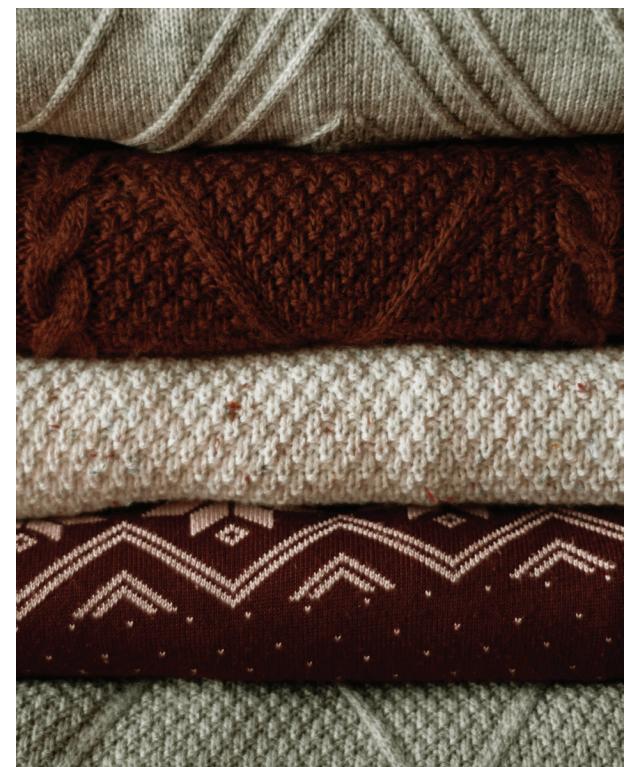
blown away, and I knew that this was something I wanted to do, too! That same day I came racing home to my mom and grandma and told them that I needed to learn how to knit, and needed

to learn now! I still remember my first ball of knitting yarn, its thickness, and vibrant multi-colored shades of fuchsia and lavender.

Twelve years later, and I'm still going at the craft with the same enthusiasm I had when I was first starting. Most of the time when I knit now, it is usually made as a gift for someone. Whenever I start a knitting gift project, I always go into it with a sense of gratitude that I am able to make a unique gift for someone with my skills. Honestly, it feels like an honor to be able to dedicate the time, patience, and effort into making a meaningful gift for someone. Something that can't be found anywhere else or exactly replicated the way it was originally.

While working on the gifts, I make sure that every stitch that I make is done with the highest quality possible, checking and going back to fix anything (if necessary) so that every stitch is virtually identical to the next. Not only does this create a final product that looks good and fits the person uniformly, but it also reflects the care and respect that I put into the piece as well. More recently, I have taken a break from knitting for gifts, and have actually started a project where I turn plastic grocery bags into plastic yarn that I then use to knit reusable tote bags. It might be a little different from what I am used to doing but the same mindset of striving for high quality and making every stitch with fine care still applies. \*

by Helen Fita



*Photos T to B: Emily Tracy, Zoë on Unsplash, Anastasia Zhenina on Unsplash*

## FAVORITE NEW TECHNIQUE

# German-twisted cast on

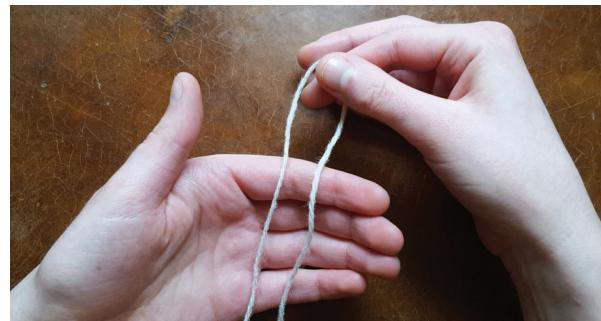
If you've never heard of this super-stretchy and extraordinarily versatile cast-on method, you're in for a treat. Perfect for hat brims, sleeve cuffs, sweater hems, and more, the German-twisted (also known as the Old Norwegian) cast on is a longtail cast-on method that gives the edge of your work a refined look while allowing a bit of stretch. Learn how it's done using this guide.



**1** Measure out the approximate length of yarn needed for the tail. Wrap the yarn 5 times around your needle. This length equals approximately the length of yarn used in 5 stitches. Fold that length of yarn on itself repeatedly until you reach the required number of stitches to cast on for your project. Then add another 12–18 inches for insurance.



**2** With your right hand, pinch the yarn at this approximated length and fold it over on itself.



**3** Still pinching the yarn with your right hand, drape the folded-over strands along your left ring and pinky fingers.



**4** Close your left ring and pinky fingers around the yarn.



**5** Holding the yarn secure with your left ring and pinky fingers, use your index finger and thumb to spread open the loop of yarn. Make this strand taught across your fingers while holding the yarn secure with your ring and pinky fingers.

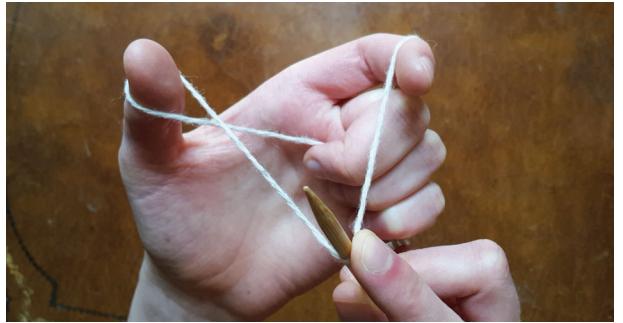


**6** Pick up one of your needles with your right hand, and place the needle under the strand running across your left index finger and thumb.

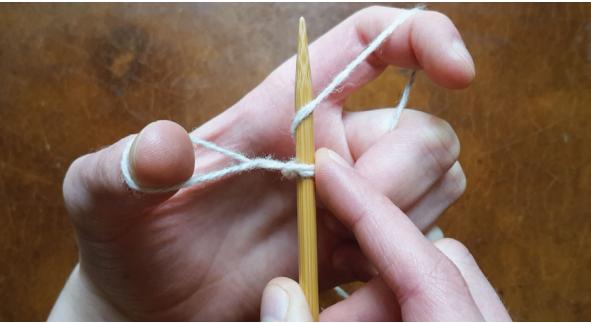


**7** With your right index finger, hold the yarn against the needle.





**8** Turn your left hand (holding the yarn) palm upwards toward your face. Still securing the yarn against the needle with your right index finger, pull your needle slightly toward your person. You should see the yarn make a sort of "Y" shape.



**9** Tilt the needle tip toward the left. Scoop it underneath both strands of yarn that make up the left branch of the "Y" and up so it points toward the sky.



**10** Bring the needle down into the triangle-shaped hole that the yarn makes around the thumb and twist the needle so it points upward once more.



**11** Then in a counter-clockwise rotation, bring the needle behind the single strand of yarn forming the right branch of the "Y" around the index finger. Point the needle upwards again.



**12** Without moving the rest of the left hand, rotate the thumb in toward the center of the palm and down, opening the triangle of yarn on the left branch of the "Y" once more.



**13** Insert your needle down into that hole and bring it to face upwards again.





All photos in this guide taken by Emily Tracy

**15** With your left thumb, pick up the strand of yarn you just dropped so that your hand shape returns to its “Y” position from Step 8.

Repeat Steps 9–16 until you complete the required number of cast-on stitches that you need for your project.

*Note: the first cast-on you make will count as two stitches. Count each loop on your needle as one stitch, and make sure you recount your cast-on stitches before continuing on with your next row.*

What's a favorite new technique that you've recently discovered? Let me know at [WoollyPurl@email.com](mailto:WoollyPurl@email.com) and your top tips could be in the next issue of the Woolly Purl!

# The woolly purl

The Woolly Purl is a newsletter designed and created by Emily Tracy for personal and academic use only. All authors and photographers have been given appropriate attribution. A special thanks goes to Audrey Tracy for creating this Woolly Purl art at right. And an extra special thanks goes to Alice Tracy and Helen Fita for contributing their knitting insights and making this first issue much more exciting. \*

The Woolly Purl, 2021.



Artwork  
created by Audrey Tracy