

everyday

simple
sophisticated
knitted
garments

Lace

heather
zoppetti



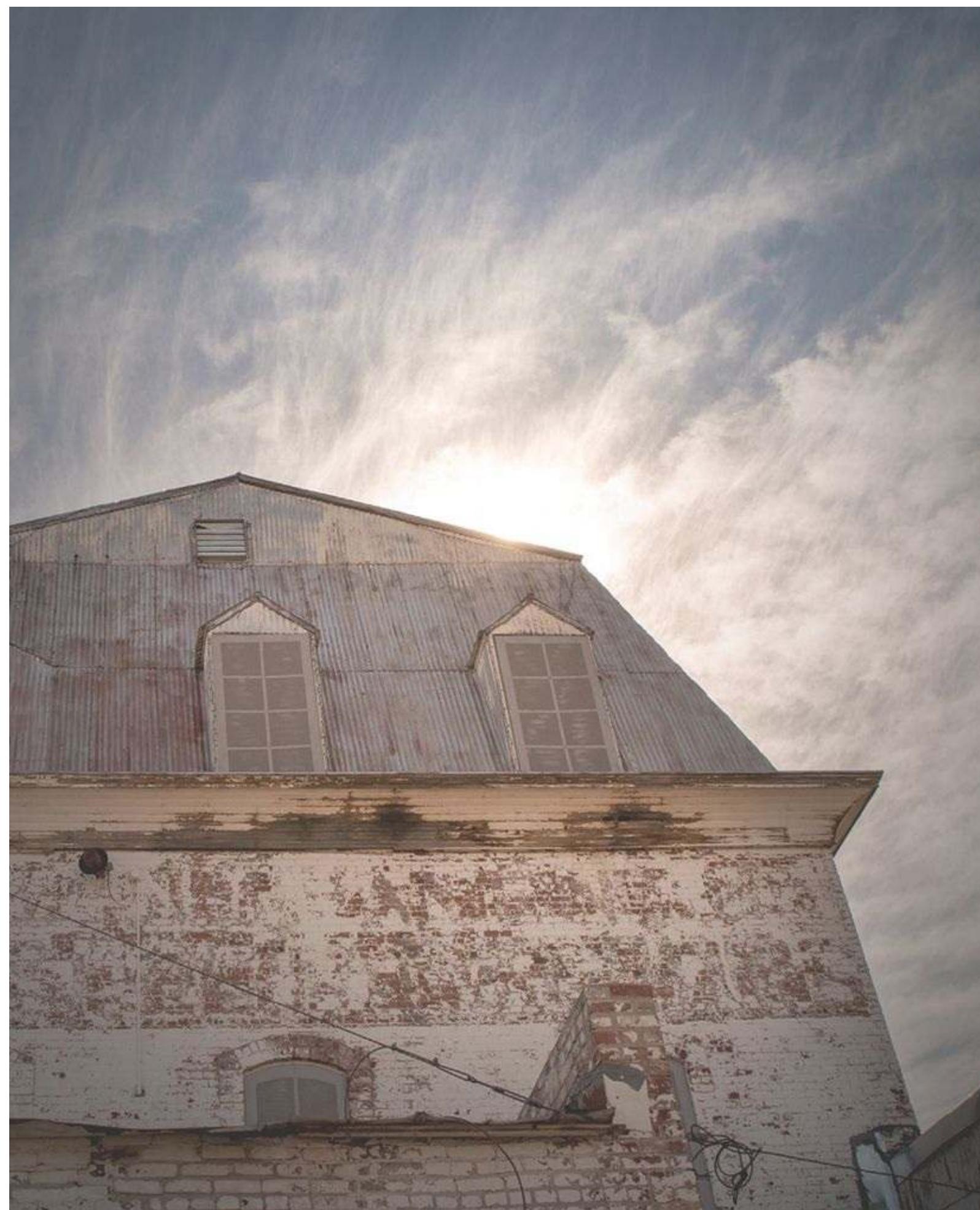
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CONTENTS

Introduction

Chapter 1: Lace-Knitting Essentials

Chapter 2: Warm

Christiana Headband

Millersville Blouse

Pequea Shell

Ephrata Camisole

Manor Ridge Shrug

Conestoga Tunic

Chapter 3: Transitional

Narvon Wrap

Kirkwood Vest

Terre Hill Tunic

Swatara Socks

Millway Socks

Strasburg Arm Warmers

Chapter 4: Cold

Akron Cowl

Salunga Beret

Murrell Hat

Bellefont Cardigan

Engleside Cowl-Neck Pullover

Manheim Fitted Pullover

Glossary

Sources for Yarn

Copyright



Introduction

*In college, when the Internet was young and Ravelry didn't exist, I started knitting. Along with my roommate, I bought those *I Can't Believe I'm ...* booklets, cheap yarn, and long aluminum needles. During episodes of *Survivor*, I taught myself to cast on, to knit, and to purl. From there my hobby turned into an obsession: I wanted to knit everything, and I was fearless. My first projects included a basketweave scarf, a lace baby blanket, and a pair of socks. I didn't have anyone to tell me that these things were difficult, so they weren't.*

*As many do, I fell in love with lace at the very first stitch. I loved the way that just a few special stitches created breathtakingly beautiful patterns. It was only natural that I turned to lace when I started to design on my own. My popular Dahlia Cardigan (*Interweave Knits*, Fall 2011) celebrates my love of lace.*

In recent years, lace shawls and lace-trimmed shawlettes have become wildly popular among knitters, especially those new to lace knitting. Although they're fun and knit up relatively quickly, I find that I rarely wear them. To me, they're a bit too fancy for everyday wear, and I pull them out only for special occasions or events where I know that my workmanship will be appreciated.

The projects in this book support my belief that lace should be liberated from its confinement to shawls and be incorporated into everyday garments and accessories. A bit of lace—be it a simple trim, a narrow panel, or an interesting edging—can bring sophisticated femininity to a wardrobe without overwhelming fussiness. To this end, I've relied on simple construction techniques that highlight the beauty of the lace patterns. The result is a collection of timeless classics that will hold their appeal year after year.

This book is divided into three sections based on the seasons—warm, transitional, and cold. Garments in the warm section include delicate knitted lace that's light and airy. The transitional section is filled with projects designed for the spring and fall months when simple layers and classic designs are most welcome. Thicker yarns, striking sweaters, and toasty accessories that focus on warmth and comfort complete the cold section. In short, you can enjoy a bit of lace every day of the year.

*With knitters of all skill levels in mind, the projects in this book range from beginner to intermediate. The simplest patterns are a great introduction to lace knitting, and the more advanced projects will challenge experienced lace knitters. Wherever you fit in the spectrum, I hope that you'll find projects you'll want to knit and wear every day in *Everyday Lace!**

Lace-Knitting Essentials

Lace is my favorite knitting technique—I find lace patterns fun to design and fun to knit.

Very simply, lace is created by yarnovers, which create intentional holes in the knitting. To help define the yarnovers and to maintain a constant stitch count (and therefore width of fabric), every yarnover is typically paired with some type of decrease. The sequence and type of yarnovers and decreases can create a wide array of patterns.

To make the most of your lace knitting, you'll want to choose the right tools, become adept at reading charted patterns, and be diligent about blocking.

Tools

Although you can use the same tools that you use for general knitting, you'll find things go more smoothly if you choose those that are particularly suited for lace patterns.

In most cases, you'll want to choose a **natural-fiber yarn** that can be blocked after the knitting is complete. Synthetic yarns do not stretch the same as natural fibers and will not hold the shape produced by blocking. Garments made from these yarns will always look the same as when they came off the needles. For the best results, be sure to use a yarn that contains a large percentage of natural fibers such as wool, silk, or cotton.

There are literally hundreds of **knitting needles** on the market today; how do you choose which to use for lace knitting? Like many tools, there are several tradeoffs to consider. Bamboo, plastic, and wooden needles have more surface texture that will help prevent the stitches from jumping off the needles. Bamboo and plastic have a softness that allows them to flex, which can be beneficial to arthritic hands. Metal needles can be tricky for slick yarns, such as cotton or linen, but they often have sharper points that make easy work of the various types of decreases involved with lace patterns. If you're new to lace knitting, you might find bamboo or wood needles with sharp points the ideal combination.

Stitch markers can help you keep track of different sections in the knitting, and many of the projects in this book call for their use. However, you may find that placing a marker after every repeat of a lace pattern can lead to headaches. Not only will your progress be slowed by slipping multiple markers every row, but some patterns, such as the Manor Ridge Body Chart, require that double decreases are worked on the last stitch of one repeat and the first stitch of the next repeat. You'll have to temporarily remove the marker to perform the double decrease, then return it in the proper place afterward. You may find it easier to use just two markers—one to mark the stitches before the beginning of the first pattern repeat and another to mark the stitches after the end of the last pattern repeat.

If you plan to follow a chart, you'll find that placing **highlighter tape** on the working row of a chart will help you keep your place. Simply move the tape from row to row as you knit.

Row counters are nice for keeping track of which row in a pattern was last completed. There are many varieties of row counters, including those that sit on the table, attach to your knitting needles, and even electronic apps for smart phones!

Blocking wires and T-pins are essential for revealing the full beauty of lace patterns, which have to be stretched while wet to fully open the holes created by the yarnovers.

Although you can block your projects on the floor or a spare bed, **blocking mats** are good investments. Modular foam mats and boards made specifically for knitting are available at most yarn shops. Most are marked with grid lines that are helpful when blocking to certain measurements. You can purchase similar foam mats that are typically larger and without grids (but cheaper) at home improvement stores. Blocking mats are an advantage because once the knitting is pinned in place, the mat can be moved to another room or even stand upright against a wall.

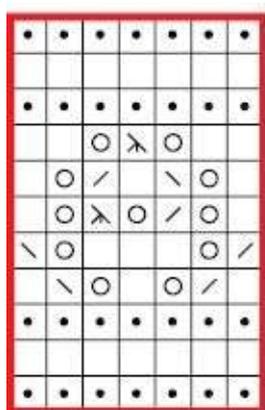
Charts

When it comes to knitting lace patterns, the power of charts is unquestionable. Charts graphically present the stitch manipulations in such a way that the symbols on the chart mimic the appearance of the right side of the completed knitting.

Once you understand how the symbols relate to the knitted stitches, you'll find that charts are easier to follow than row-by-row instructions and that errors are easier to detect. For example, yarnovers, which form intentional holes in the fabric, are represented by open circles on the chart. Decreases, which cause the stitches to lean to the left or right in the knitting, are represented by left- or right-leaning slanted lines on the chart. Although most of the symbols are intuitive once you're familiar with them, every chart is accompanied by a key that defines how to work the stitch represented by each symbol.

In general, each cell on a chart represents one stitch. Charts are read from bottom to top and from right to left for right-side rows and from left to right for wrong-side rows. Typically, odd-numbered rows are right-side rows and are numbered along the right edge of the chart, indicating that these rows are worked from right to left. Wrong-side rows are often not labeled—you need to remember that they're worked from left to right. It's important to note that some chart symbols represent stitches that are worked differently on right- and wrong-side rows. For example, a purl stitch is denoted by a single dot when viewed from the right side, but the same appearance is achieved by knitting a stitch on a wrong-side row. Be sure to check the key for stitches that are worked differently on right- and wrong-side rows. For projects worked in rounds, every round is considered a right-side row, so every row of the chart is read from right to left.

Millersville



7-st repeat

- knit on RS rows and all rnds; purl on WS rows
- purl on RS rows and all rnds; knit on WS rows
- yo
- k2tog on RS rows and all rnds; p2tog on WS rows
- ssk on RS rows and all rnds; p2tog tbl on WS rows
- sl 1, k2tog, pss0
- pattern repeat

A chart is a visual representation of the completed knitting.

Many new lace knitters struggle with reading the repeat boxes on charts. These boxes, typically outlined in red, are used to condense a chart into the smallest possible representation of the fabric. If

the repeat box extends across the entire width of the chart, simply work from edge to edge (from right to left for right-side rows and from left to right for wrong-side rows) the necessary number of times to the end of the stitches on your needles. If the repeat box sits in the center of the chart, work the stitches to the right edge of the box (for right-side rows), then work the group of stitches within the box as many times as instructed or until the number of stitches remaining on your needles matches the number of stitches to the left of the repeat box, then work the stitches to the left of the repeat box.

Because a chart represents the knitting, you can compare your knitting to the chart to make sure you haven't made any mistakes. If yarnover symbols form diagonal lines in the chart, they should do the same in your knitting. If diagonal decrease lines come together in a point in the chart, the same should happen in your knitting. If your knitting doesn't look the same as the chart, you've likely made a mistake. In such cases, rip back to the place where your knitting matches the chart (this is where [lifelines](#) come in handy), then proceed again.

If you're intimidated by the amount of information represented by a chart, narrow your view to focus on just the row at hand. Use a Post-it note, highlighter tape, or magnet board to hide the rows above the one you're currently working. This will help your eye focus on the chart row that coordinates to the row you're knitting and, by hiding what has yet to be worked, you'll only see the rows that have already been worked, which will correspond to the rows that have already been knitted.

Lifelines

Lifelines are simply lengths of smooth contrasting thread that are drawn through an entire row of stitches that is known to have no mistakes. The lifelines don't affect the knitting, but they do allow you to rip back to a lifeline row without fear of dropping stitches, which can easily happen when yarnovers are involved.

To insert a lifeline, thread a tapestry needle with a smooth yarn lighter in weight than the project yarn. Sewing thread or unwaxed dental floss both work well.

Examine the stitches on the needle to ensure that there are no mistakes. You may find it helpful to count the stitches in each pattern repeat. Draw the tapestry needle purlwise through every stitch on the needle, skipping any stitch markers you come to. Cut the lifeline thread, leaving a tail about 4" (10 cm) hanging at each end of the row. Work the next row in pattern, being careful not to catch the lifeline thread in the stitches, then continue in the pattern until you want to add another lifeline or until you make a mistake that requires ripping out the knitting.

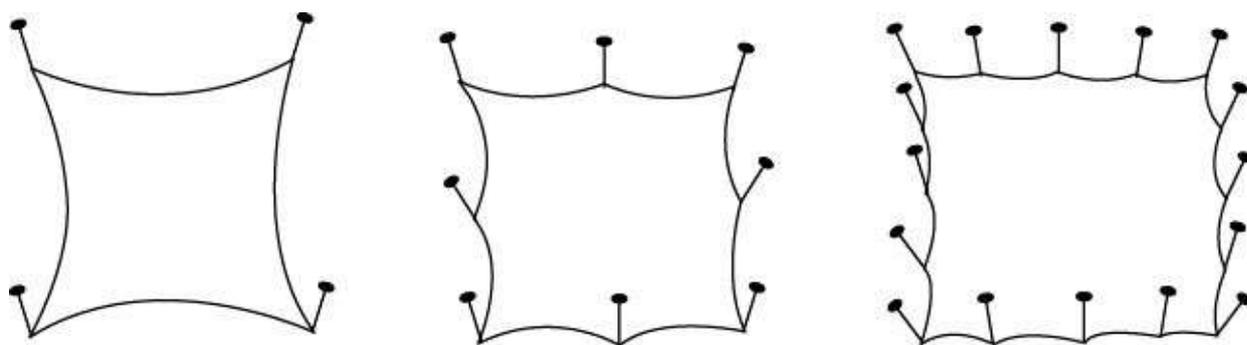
If you find you've made a mistake and need to rip out, remove the working needle, then carefully pull the working yarn to ravel the knitting until you reach the lifeline. Following the path of the lifeline exactly, insert the needle purlwise (from right to left) through each stitch. Leave the lifeline in place in case it's needed again and resume knitting.

Blocking

After you spend hours knitting a beautiful lace garment or accessory, you'll want to block it to stretch and open the stitches to reveal their hidden beauty. To prepare a piece for blocking, begin by soaking it for fifteen to twenty minutes in a basin filled with warm water with a bit of wool wash. I like to use rinse-free soaps such as Soak or Euclan. You can substitute a mild shampoo, but keep in mind that doing so will require rinsing.

Drain the water from the basin and rinse, if necessary. To avoid felting, be sure that the rinse water is the same temperature as the water used for soaking. Gently squeeze out the water, then roll the piece in a towel or spin it in a salad spinner to extract as much excess water as possible. Take care not to twist or wring the knitted piece to ensure against unintentional felting or breaking delicate threads.

Using rustproof T-pins and blocking wires, carefully pin the damp piece to a clean flat surface, adjusting the pins and wires as necessary to achieve the desired shape and measurements. I recommend using a blocking mat, but carpet, towels, and non-water beds work just as well. If you're blocking a large piece, first pin the key points to measurements, then pin the smaller sections in between.



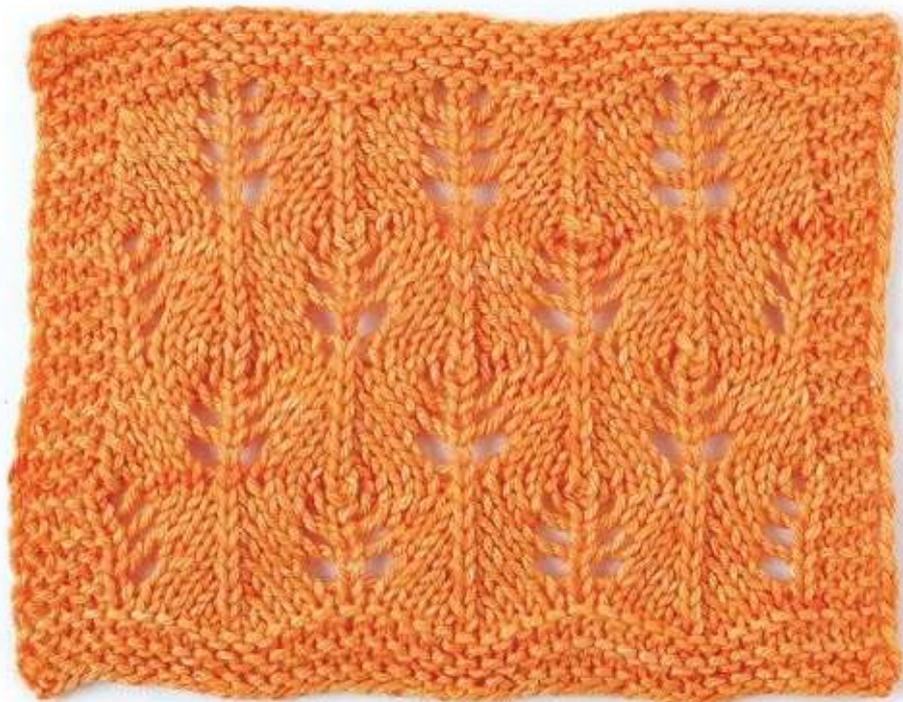
Pin key measurements first and then place additional pins in smaller and smaller sections.

Be patient and wait for the piece to air-dry completely before removing the pins and wires. Depending on the temperature and the humidity, this will take about 24 hours.

Once thoroughly dried, remove the pins and wires, weave in the loose ends, and complete any required finishing.



Before blocking, the fabric has a wrinkled look, and lace patterns are difficult to see.



After blocking, the fabric opens up and smoothes to reveal the lace pattern.

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