

Semi-Swedish Hat



My husband is one of those hard-to-knit for guys, so when we saw a hat he liked in a yarn store in Sweden, I wanted to make it for him – or at least, something similar. Unfortunately they didn't have the pattern for the hat, just a stitch chart for the box pattern section. There was clearly some unusual technique going on with the brim, which was thicker and stiffer than the rest. So I took a couple of pictures and then turned to the web, where I eventually decided it was probably tvåändsstickning, Swedish twined knitting, in which two yarns are twisted at every stitch.

There are articles on tvåändsstickning at [http://www.knitty.com/ISSUEwinter05/FEA](http://www.knitty.com/ISSUEwinter05/FEATwin05TT.html)

[Twin05TT.html](http://www.knitty.com/ISSUEwinter05/FEATwin05TT.html) and

<http://knittingincolor.blogspot.com/2004/01/im-typing-up-this-blog-entry-while.html>

and more explanation in Knitty's Larus and Ardea pattern (at <http://knitty.com/ISSUEwinter08/PATTLarusardea.php>) explaining some of the stitch patterns that use this technique; I've used plain twined knitting, twined purl, and crook stitch in this hat. However, this isn't exactly purist tvåändsstickning; I've used two colors instead of one and have interspersed a few plain rows to get the pattern I wanted.

Tvåändsstickning is great for making a warm dense fabric, but I warn you it is slow. So a practical way to use the technique is just to make the brim out of tvåändsstickning, to keep your ears warm. Once past the brim, the hat switches to normal stranded colorwork. It's actually pretty cool to look at the inside, where the two techniques show plainly.



Guide to Abbreviations:

CO: cast on

MC: main color

CC: contrasting color

P: purl

K: knit

K2tog: knit two together

PM: place marker

M1: make 1 stitch

Materials

Yarn note:

I bought this yarn in Sweden, and it had no tags or information. It is quite rough, with a few bits of grass or brush, and I'm fairly sure that both the light and the dark shades are undyed. It is about a DK or sport weight – I measured it at 11-12 wpi. I used size 3 needles in order to get a dense fabric that would keep out wind and cold.

MC is light gray, CC is dark gray

Possible substitutions:

Rowan's Purelife British Sheep Breed's DK Undyed or their Scottish Tweed 4-ply Shepherd's Own or Cascade Eco Alpaca have the right texture if you want a heavier yarn, though depending on gauge you'll need to adjust the pattern by removing one or more repeats.

Needles: Two circs in US size 3 (3.25mm) or size to get gauge

I knitted most of the hat on two circs, but if you prefer you can use one 20" (50 cm) circ and then go to two circs or DPNs for the decreases, or use the Magic Loop method.

Notions:

One stitch marker (if using a single circ or Magic Loop)

Scrap of fleece fabric, if desired for lining

Gauge: 29 sts / 4" or 10 cm; row gauge is not too important

Sizing:

The finished hat measures about 20" (50 cm); while the gauge on the rest of the hat is about 29 sts/4", the brim gauge is about 26 sts /4", probably stretched a bit by the lining. I was making it for a 20" head; since both the fleece and the knitting stretch, it fits my 21" head snugly but comfortably. If you're making this for a head much larger than that, I would either use a larger gauge or add a pattern repeat. (Every added 8 sts

gives you one repeat of the box pattern and about an inch in the hat.

Pattern / Technique notes:

Cast-on: I have used a two stranded cast-on technique, which is simpler than the three-stranded CO sometimes used with tvåändsstickning and which gives a pretty spiral along the edge. Simple tie the two strands together at one end with an overhand knot, then proceed as you would for a normal long-tail cast-on.

Tvåändsstickning techniques:

Twined purl: Bring both strands to front, then alternate colors: purl one stitch with MC, then one with CC, each time bringing up the new color from *under* the previous color. This twists the yarns at each stitch.

Twined knit: Bring both strands to back, then alternate colors: knit one stitch with MC, then one with CC, each time bringing up the new color from *under* the previous color. This twists the yarns at each stitch.

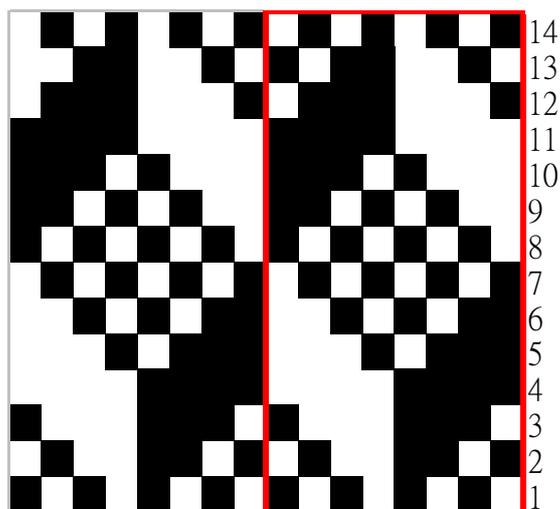
Untwisting: Both twined knit and twined purl twist the yarns around each other and must be untwisted periodically. Since the hat is a fairly small project, the easiest way I found to do this was to hold both yarn balls, holding the yarn so it can't feed out, and let the hat itself dangle, untwisting the yarns. (I was most of the way through the tvåändsstickning section before I realized that this was much easier than skewering the yarn balls with DPNs and letting them hang to untwist. I pass my hard-won experience on in hopes of saving you trouble!)

Crook stitch: Bring one color to the front and leave the other in back. Purl the front strand, then drop it, leaving it in front, and knit the back strand, leaving it in back. Continue around, alternating between purling front strand and knitting back strand. Crook stitch does not twist the yarn.

Color management: In case anyone else knitting this pattern is also new at working with multiple colors - this was my first colorwork project. Since I normally knit Continental, what made sense for me was to carry the MC as normal in my left hand and knit English with the CC in my right hand. You could also carry both yarns in one hand, using your fingers to keep them separated. (For the stranded section and crook rows – for the twined knit and purl you just have to let go and grab new yarn every stitch, which is why it's so slow.)

Brim note: There is one place on the brim where there are two plain knitted rows together; you may find that the brim wants to curl up at this point. Blocking will mostly fix the problem; sewing in a fleece lining will permanently cure it. When worn the hat's own stretch will eliminate the curl. However if it really bothers you and you don't want a lining, you could carry the contrasting color along, not knitting it but twisting the yarns at each stitch. Or make one row purl instead of knit (this will look a little different, obviously).

Box chart:



Directions:

CO 136, using the two-stranded cast-on described above, with wrap CC (charcoal) around finger and MC (natural) around thumb. Makes a nice two-color twist along the edge. PM (if using a single circ) and join in the round.

Brim:

R1: K 1 row in CC.

R2: Twined purl row

R3: K 1 row in CC.

R4: Twined purl row.

R5: K 1 row in MC.

R6: K 1 row twined knitting.

R7: K1 row in MC

R8: K 1 row twined knitting

R9: Crook row, with P in CC and K in MC.

R10: K 1 row twined knitting (Note: on this and following twined rows, line the colors up so that the CC is over the purled st in the crook row.)

R11: Crook row, with P in CC and K in MC.

R12: K 1 row twined knitting

R13: K 1 row in MC.

R14: K 1 row twined knitting.

R15: K1 row in MC

R16: K1 row in CC

R17: Twined purl row, alternating colors.

R18: K 1 row in CC.

R19: Twined purl row.

Begin Box Pattern (17 repeats of pattern). Knit to about 7" (18 cm) or so from beginning of brim, finishing with row 12 of pattern.

Decreases:

Row 1: K2 CC, K2tog MC, K2tog CC, K2 MC around

Row 2: K1 CC, K2tog MC, K2tog CC, K1 MC around

Row 3: K around, alternating colors

Row 4: K2tog around in CC

Row 5: K around in CC

Row 6: K2tog around in MC

Row 7, 8: K around in CC

Break yarn, thread both colors through needle, thread through all rem sts and pull tight.

Weave in ends.

Finishing:

You may find the brim section wants to curl up. Blocking will go a long way to counteract this (I used a couple of water glasses turned upside down to weight down the brim while blocking.) However, if you really want to solve the problem for good, or if the yarn used is itchy, you can sew in a fleece hatband lining. There are some excellent directions at <http://techknitting.blogspot.com/2008/04/how-to-line-hat-headband-style-with.html>.

