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# Don't Fear the Garter Bar!

Embrace it! And practice makes perfect....

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# What is the Garter Bar?

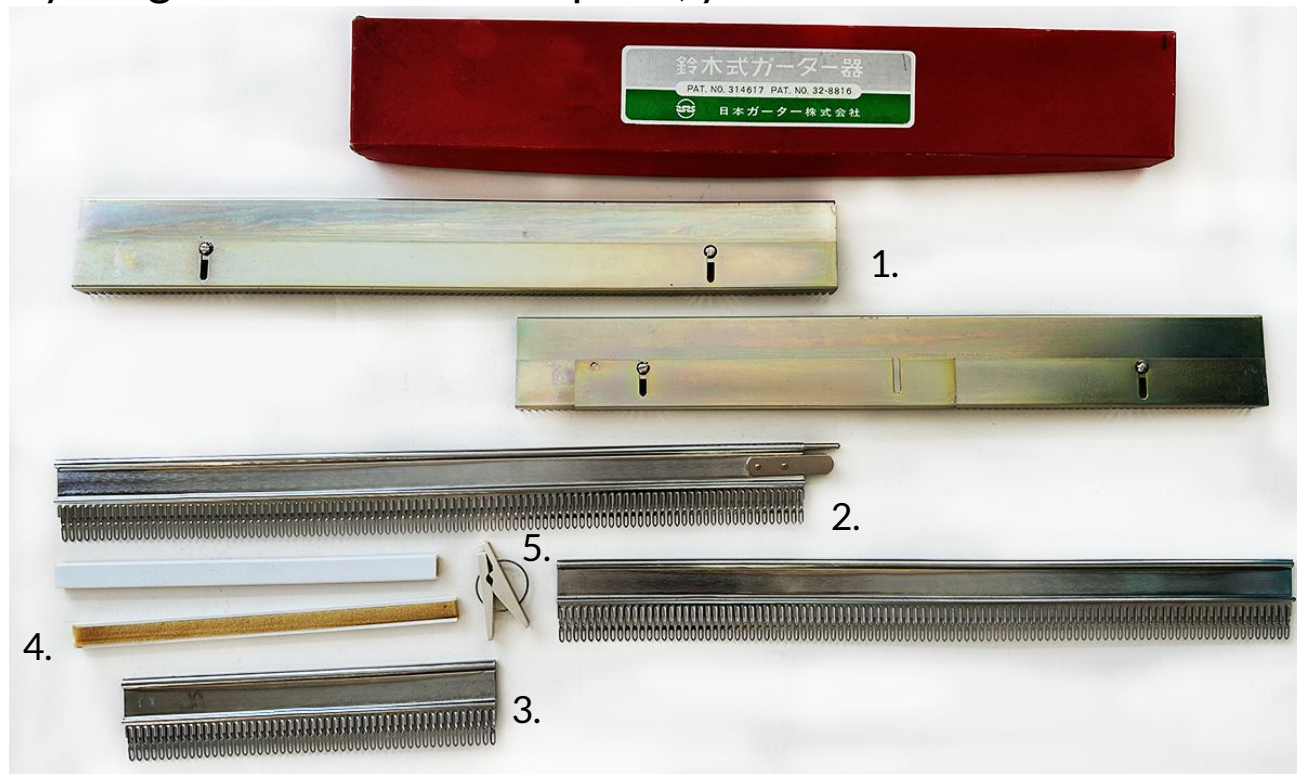
It is a bar with with a series of prongs (“needles”) that allows you to take all the stitches off your needlebed at one time. You may choose to do this for a number of reasons, a few of which include:

1. To flip your knitting and create a purl ridge
2. To increase/decrease stitches evenly within a given row
3. To help shape a neckline
4. To put a naughty project in a time out

Garter bars are specific to your machine gauge. Standard gauge garter bars (4.5mm spacing) are readily available. Mid-gauge (6, 6.5, and 7mm spacing) and Bulky (9mm spacing) are much less common, and rather expensive. Lucky you if you happen to have one in your MK tool stash!

# What's in the Box?

If your garter bar set is complete, you will have:



1. Needle stoppers  
(x2, each 100 needles long)
2. 100 needle length garter bar (x2 - one with a connecting unit)
3. 50 needle length garter bar
4. Foam backed plastic strips, used for vertical pattern weaving
5. Plastic clips to secure the foam backed strips when vertical weaving

\*Description and image is the 4.5mm garter bar set.

# — **One Bar!** Two Distinct Sides.

(look closely)

## **Note:**

It is very important to learn the difference between the two sides.



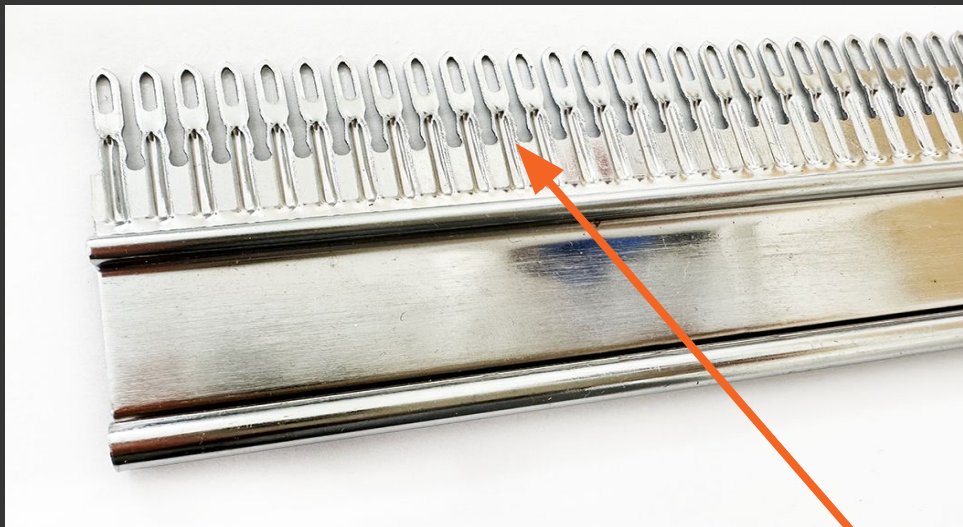
# Side One:



Convex bumps or ridges.

The Long Ridge is on the  
BOTTOM of the Bar.

# Side Two:



Concave Grooves  
("Needle Grooves").



The Long Ridge is on the  
TOP of the Bar.

# How Do You Use the Darned Thing Anyway?!

If you are new to using the garter bar, start by using the adjustable needle stoppers included with the garter bar. The needle stopper allows you to fix your needles into Holding Position (pulling the needles all the way forward), preventing the needles from moving as you transfer stitches to your garter bar. To better familiarize yourself with the needle stopper, set it up **WITHOUT** any knitting on your machine.

## → Pull 100 Needles all the Way Forward

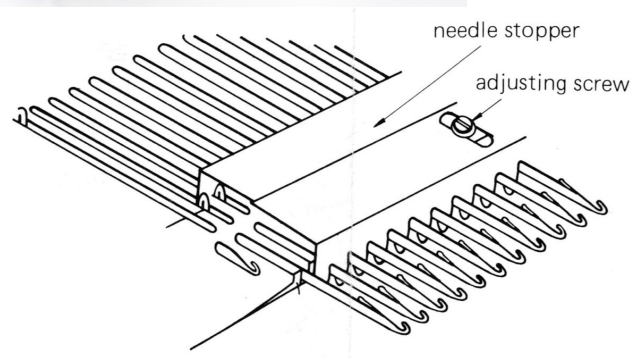
This is the length of one needle stopper piece.

## → Position the Needle Stopper

The needle butts should be under the back edge of the needle stopper, while the "teeth" of the needle stopper should sit in front of the gate pegs.

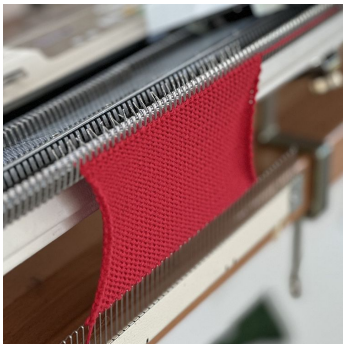
## → Adjust the Needle Stopper

Loosen the adjusting screws as needed to fine tune the needle stopper so it fits snugly over the needle butts and the gate pegs. This will prevent the needles from moving. Once the fit is good, tighten the screws. (This is likely a one time adjustment - go ahead and set your second needle stopper piece.)

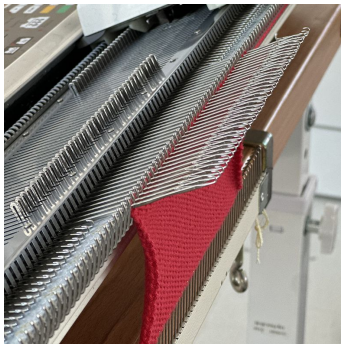




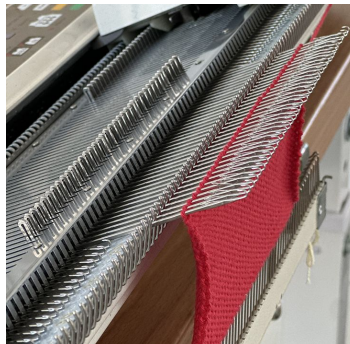
# Let's Practice with Knitting



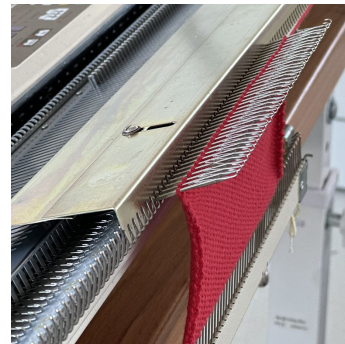
1. Knit a 40 stitch wide swatch, by about 40 rows.



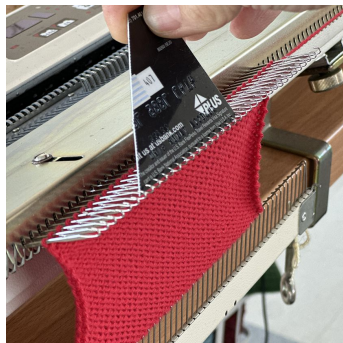
2. Pull the needles out to holding position.



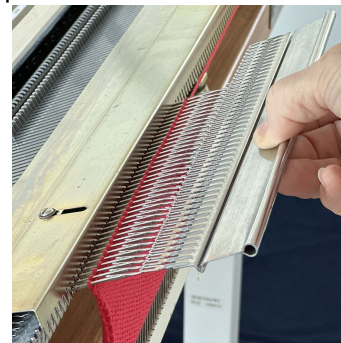
3. Pull the knitting a bit forward, away from the gate pegs.



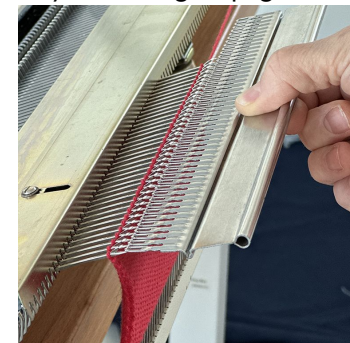
4. Put needle stoppers in place to lock the needles into position.



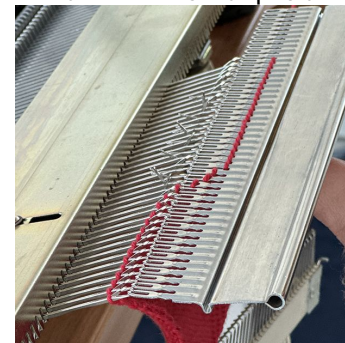
5. Run a credit card "tool" (or similar) across the needles to open all the latches. *\*Double check that they are all open.*



6. Hook the eyelets of the 50 stitch garter bar onto the 40 open needle hooks. Keep hold of the garter bar (pulling it towards you slightly) and hold it parallel with the needles.



7. With your other hand, pull down and forward on your knitting, sliding the knitting along the needles, towards the garter bar. This motion will close the latches.



8. Starting on one end, pull the knitting to slide off the needles onto the garter bar.

# Live Stitches are on the Garter Bar!



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# Creating a Purl Ridge (aka Garter Row)

Get ready to flip your work!

## Note:

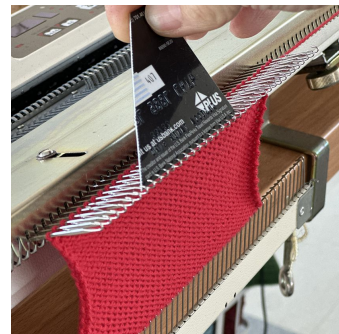
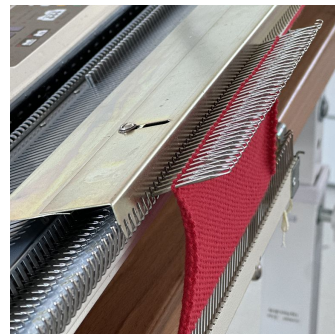
This is probably the primary function of the Garter Bar, hence the name!



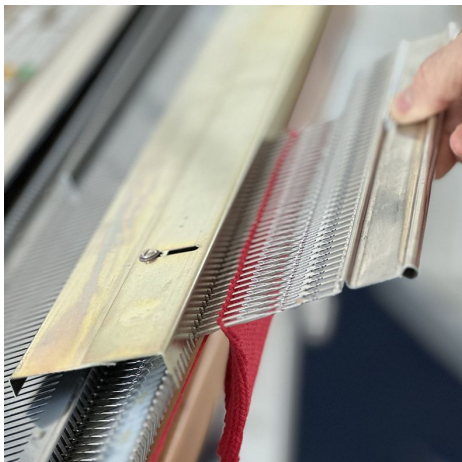
# Knit a Purl Ridge

Start as you did with the previous sample (with a few modifications):

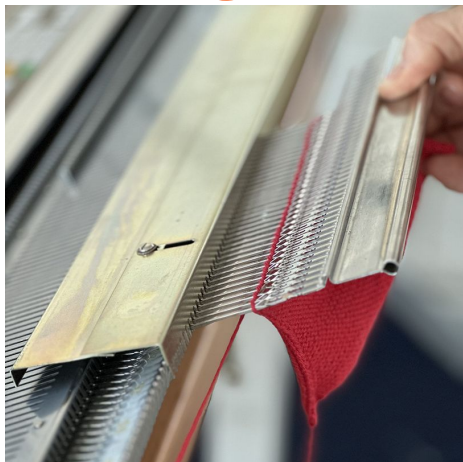
1. Knit a 40 stitch wide swatch, by about 40 rows.
2. Set the carriage to slip and move the carriage to the opposite side. This “free pass” positions your carriage on the correct side of the needle bed for when you resume knitting. Disengage slip.
3. Remove yarn from the carriage, and place the yarn behind the knitting.
4. Pull the needles out to holding position.
5. Pull the knitting a bit forward, away from the gate pegs.
6. Position the needle stoppers in place to lock the needles.
7. Run a credit card “tool” (or similar) across the needles to open all the latches.



# Knit a Purl Ridge (continued)

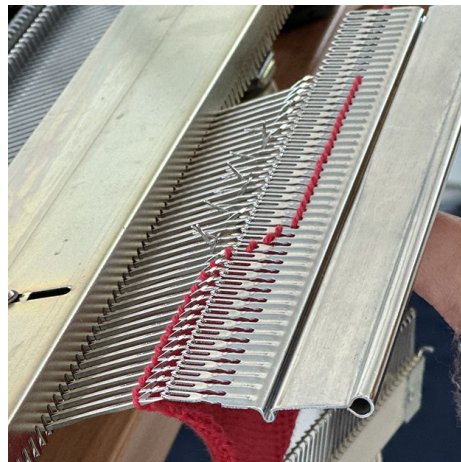


8. Hook the eyelets of the 50 stitch garter bar with the concave grooves and long ridge UP onto the 40 open needle hooks. Keep hold of the garter bar (pulling it towards you slightly) and hold it parallel with the needles.

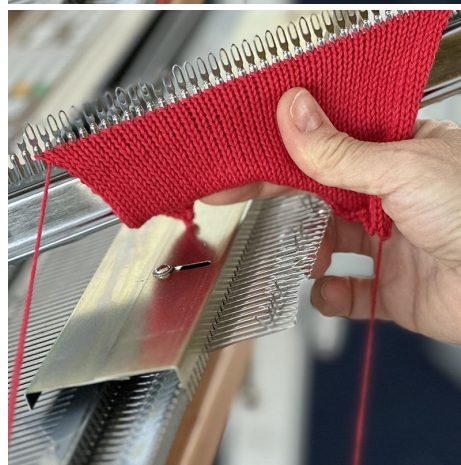


9. With your other hand, grab hold of your knitting and pull down and towards you, sliding the knitting along the needles, towards the garter bar. This motion will close the latches.

*Alternatively, I prefer to use the credit card "tool" to close those latches before transferring knitting to the garter bar to avoid any mishaps.*



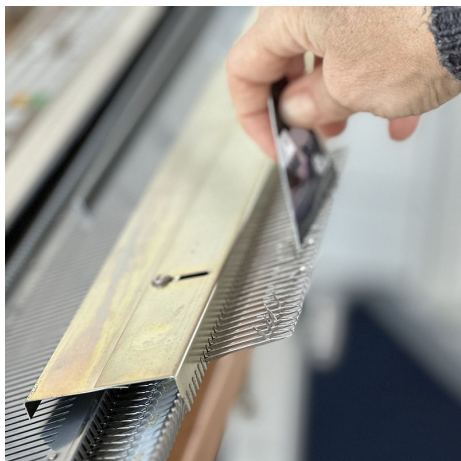
10. Starting on one end, pull the knitting towards you to slide off the needles onto the garter bar. Make sure the knitting is all the way on the garter bar before removing.



VOILA!

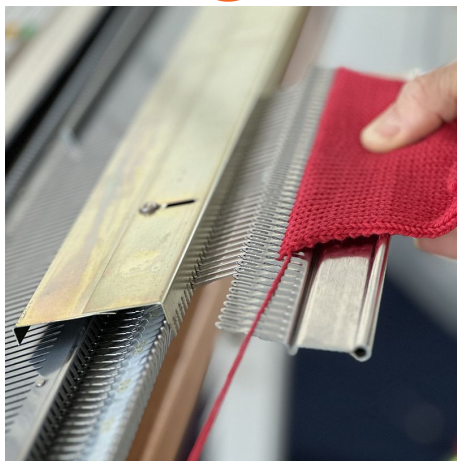


# Knit a Purl Ridge (continued)

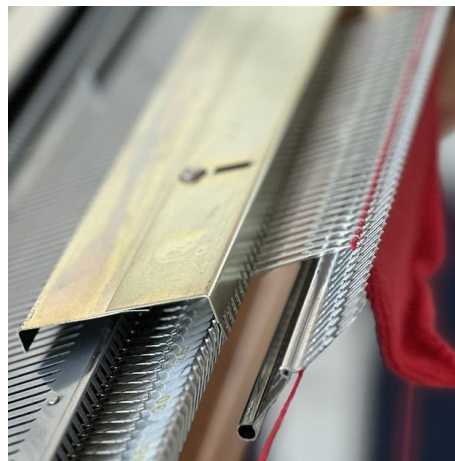


11. With the needle stopper still in place, run a credit card “tool” (or similar) across the needles to open all the latches.

*\*Double check that they are all open.*

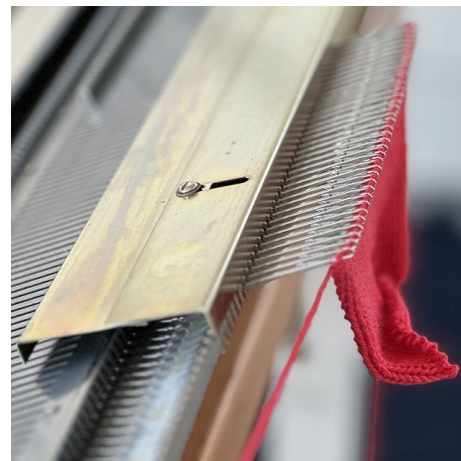


12. Flip the entire garter bar over. Position the garter bar above the open needles, aligning the garter bar needles with the machine needles. Note that the long ridge is now on the BOTTOM. Carefully (with a steady hand and a slight pressure towards you) place the garter bar down, on top of the needle hooks, with the hooks catching in the needle grooves of the garter bar.



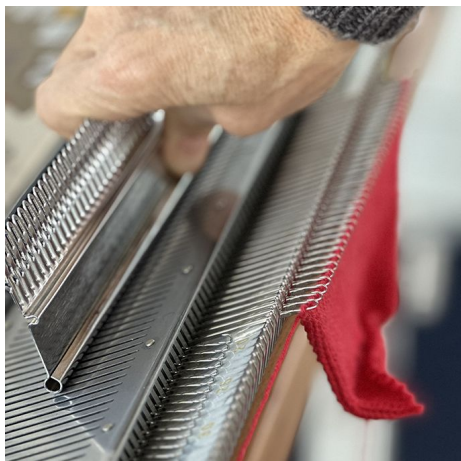
13. Roll the garter bar down slightly, towards you and check to see if the stitches from the garter bar have been caught in the open needle hooks. (If not, roll the garter bar back and start with step 11, to ensure latches are open. PERSEVERE!) If you miss a few stitches, simply pick them up with a transfer tool.

Pull the garter bar down and back at an angle to remove.



14. MARVEL at your flipped knitting, sitting neatly in the needle hooks!

# Knit a Purl Ridge (continued)



15. Remove the needle stopper and use the edge of the garter bar to push all needles back to working position.

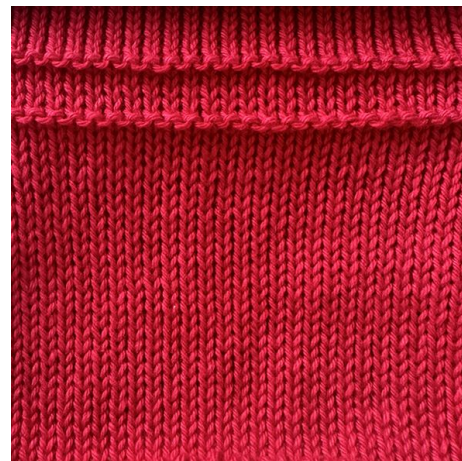


*Needles are all back in working position, with stitches in the hooks. Pick up any stray, dropped stitches as needed.*



16. Knit one row with your main carriage and check out that glorious purl ridge!

*Depending on your design intent (how are you using purl stitches in your work?), you may need to start the flipping process over again so that the purl side of your knitting is facing you again. If so, begin with step 2 (free pass you carriage across) and end with step 16.*



**WOW!!**

- ➔ **Two purl ridges created with the garter bar!**
- ➔ **With some practice, it's VERY FAST and efficient!**
- ➔ **No waste yarn required!**

# Additional Uses:

## → Holding Stitches

For one side of a neckline while completing the other

## → Joining Shoulders

Skip the scrap yarn

## → Setting a Picot Row for a Turned Hem

Quickly transfer stitches to EON

## → Increasing/Decreasing Evenly Across a Row

Quicker than multiple passes of a transfer tool

## → Creating Vertical Darts

Easily move blocks of stitches

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# Vertical Pattern Knitting

## (Weaving with the Garter Bar)

aka “Embroidery Knitting”

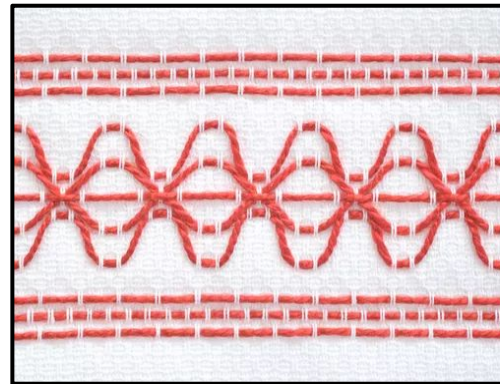
### Note:

No Garter Bar? No problem! Stay tuned for other tools you can use.

# Create Visual Interest on the Purl Side

This technique doesn't require much effort or practice to master. As an added bonus, the purl side of your knitting becomes the right side, so take pleasure in finally seeing what you knit, as you knit!

Some have likened the visual effect of this technique to Swedish Weaving (aka Huck Weaving or Huck Embroidery). In Swedish Weaving, one would use huck cloth and a needle with thread to create surface embroidery that takes on the appearance of weaving that only appears on one side of the fabric as the needle never pierces through to the back.



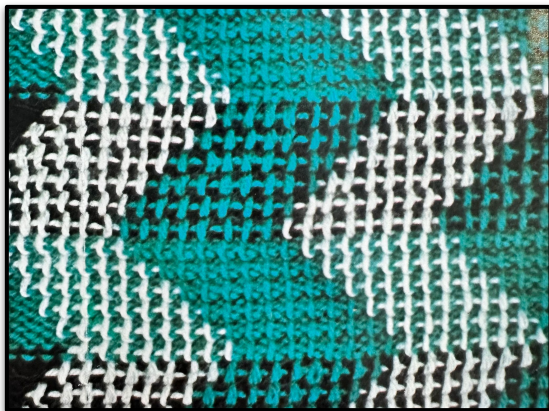
*Swedish Embroidery*

You will find that vertical weaving on your machine offers an excellent use of scrap yarns. You can also incorporate yarns not suitable to your machine gauge (bulky, textured yarns). You can even use ribbons or thin strips of fabric or leather for this technique.

Vertical weaving works on the most basic of machines - you don't need punchcards, electronics, or any patterning capability at all. Get ready to create incredible multi-colored patterning using a simple technique! Part of the magic with this weaving technique is that the pattern travels up and down, versus the typical side to side movement.



# A Few Examples of Vertical Weaving



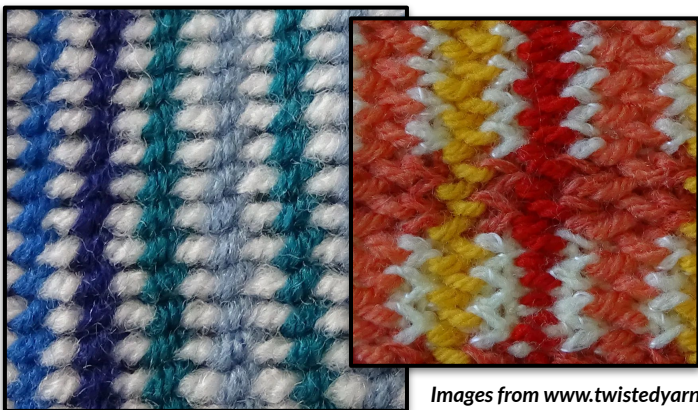
*Image from Suzuki Garter Bar Instruction Sheet*



*Photo from Designing Knitted Textiles by Florence Spurling  
Vertical Weaving with Ribbons*



*Vertical Weaving by Bill King  
Using Novelty Yarns*

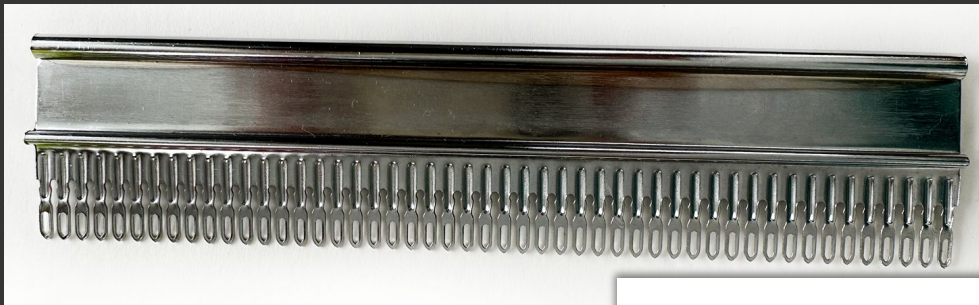


*Images from [www.twistedyarns.com](http://www.twistedyarns.com)*

# Supplies:



**Base Yarn**



**50 Stitch Garter Bar Piece\***  
(plus plastic strip & a couple clips)



**Assorted Weaving Yarns**



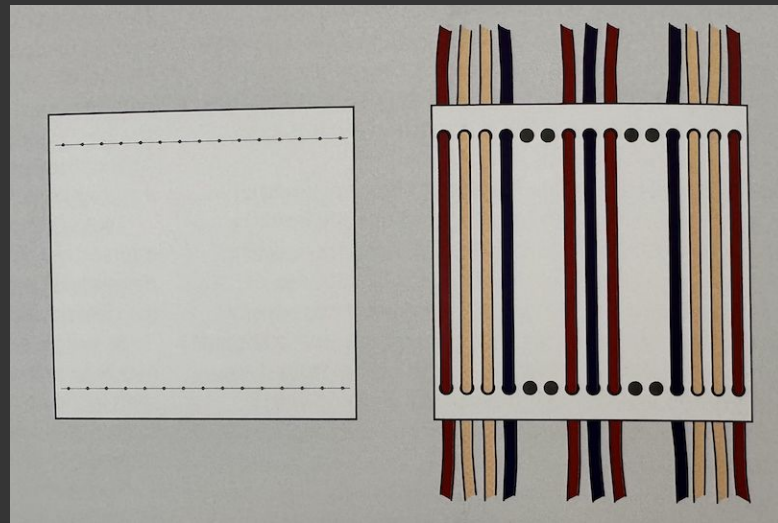
# No Garter Bar?

## No Problem!



### **An Adjustable 7 Prong Transfer Tool**

*Pick the correct gauge for your machine so the spacing is correct.*



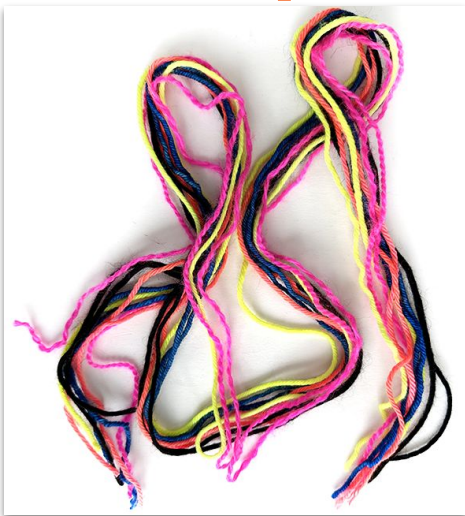
### **Make Yourself a Cardboard Yarn Guide**

*The distance between the holes should match your machine gauge.*

*As suggested by Florence Spurling in her book *Designing Knitted Textiles**



# Set Up for Weaving



1. Cut a series of weaving yarns. A good rule of thumb is to plan the length of your finished weaving and multiply that by five. Each strand will be folded in half and used as 2 strands in the design.

*I cut my lengths 54" each.*



2. Use your latch tool to thread the folded yarn through the eyes of the garter bar, with the yarn ends laying over the side of the bar with the horizontal ridge.

*I will center 15 weaving yarns, and space them every third needle.*



3. Place the foam backed plastic strip over the yarn ends and secure with clips at either end.

This will help stabilize your weaving yarns while also providing even tension.

Alternatively, use a plastic ruler, or a small strip of cardboard.



4. Knit with main yarn until you are ready to introduce the weaving yarns. (*I knit 6 rows.*)

To set the first row and anchor the weaving yarns, pull all the needles forward to UWP or HP. Hang the loops from the back side of the garter bar directly on the corresponding needles.

# Continue Weaving



5. Knit 2 rows with your main carriage to anchor the weaving yarns.



6. I planned my weaving arrangement so that I could easily select the needles using a needle pusher. In this instance, I am using the 1x2 pusher to bring forward the needles I plan to weave (every 3rd needle).



7. Bring the garter bar towards you and lift up, maintaining an even tension on your yarns. In this example, I am bringing the garter bar up on the left side and over the top of the selected needles, bringing it down on the right side of the needles. The garter bar will hold a nice tension on the weaving yarns.



8. Knit 2 rows to anchor the weaving yarns.



# Experiment!



I started by moving my weaving yarns to the right every 2 rows to create the diagonal line. Eventually, I changed directions, and started traveling to the left. If I kept going back and forth, I would have created a repeating zigzag or chevron pattern.



I had read that this technique works to create loop knitting. I held a dowel in place, over the weaving yarns, before raising my garter bar to loop them over the needles. I wanted a consistent tension on the dowel so I hung small ribber weights on either end.



I left the dowel in place and knit 4 rows. I then removed the weights and dowel, and repeated the process to form the next set of loops.





- A: 1. Anchor the yarn loops, K2R; 2. Selected needles one to the right - used needle pusher to pull every 3rd needle to HP, lifted GB up and over needles to the right; K2R. Repeated 4x; 3. Selected needles one to the left, and lifted GB up and over needles to the left, K2R. Repeated Approx 7x
- B: Same as section A, but pulled 2 needles to HP, and draped yarns over. 2 rows in between each, repeated approx 4x
- C: Yarn loops as pictured previously. I staggered the needles every 4th row, left then right and back again
- D: Same as "A" section, but with 4 rows in between, as opposed to 4.
- E: Only ONE row in between each woven section, weaving needles jog right then left and back again. Moving needles over by 3

Reverse side, I simply pulled the ends through to the backside and cut. Normally you would weave then in - I think they'd be pretty easy to hide on the woven side.

# Things to Remember:

## → **Knit with Main Tension +2**

Vertical weaving creates a denser, firmer fabric with less stretch. Opening up your tension will help counteract this.

## → **Do NOT Thread the Weaving Yarns Through Every Needle of the Garter Bar**

For your own sanity, only thread through every OTHER needle, or every third.

## → **Maintain Even Weaving Yarns**

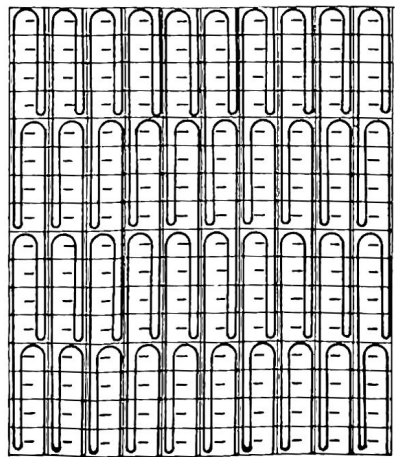
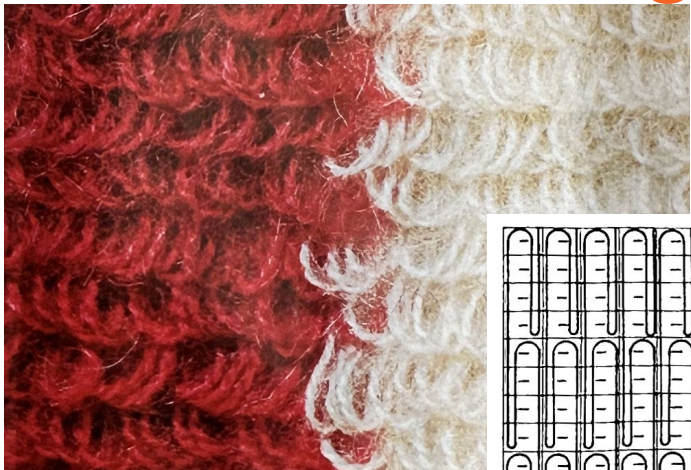
Periodically you may need to adjust your yarns threaded through the garter bar so they stay even.

## → **Periodically Adjust the Weaving Yarns**

Keep all strands even and allow 4-6" of yarn between the needles and garter bar eyelets at all times.



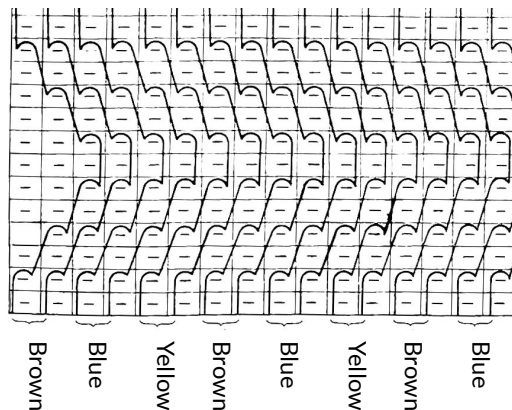
# Vertical Weaving Charts



Transfer weaving yarns over top the needles from the left to right side of the needle, leaving a loop. Knit 4 rows. Repeat, transferring the yarns over the same needles, but from right to left this time.



The Background Yarn is White



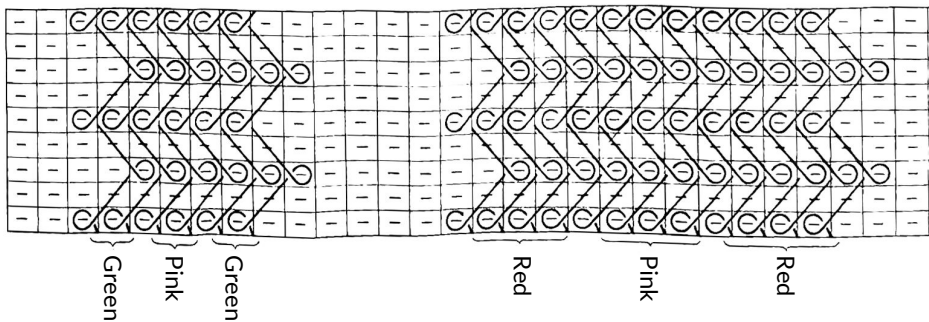
Every other row, progressively move weaving yarns to the right, over top the needles and knit 2 rows. Repeat in the opposite direction.

(Again, I would recommend threading the garter bar EON, especially with bulky yarns.)

# Vertical Weaving Charts



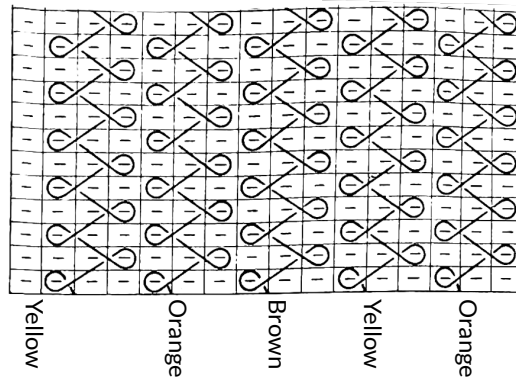
The Background Yarn is White



Every 2nd row, weaving yarns are transferred to the right, and then back to the left. The weaving yarns are e-wrapped around the needles. Again, I would recommend threading the garter bar EON, especially with bulky yarns.



The Background Yarn is White



Every row, weaving yarns are transferred to the right, and then back to the left, skipping a needle. The weaving yarns are e-wrapped around the needles.

# Things to Try:

## → **Vary the Width of Your Weaving**

Try utilizing the width of your fabric or keep motifs isolated.

## → **E-Wrap the Weaving Yarns**

This can create more texture. Bring the yarn from under, up, and over, instead of simply laying the yarns over.

## → **Further Manipulate the Weaving Yarns**

Try to create fringe and loops.

## → **Vary the Number of Knit Rows in Between Weaving**

The visual effects can vary quite a bit depending on how many rows you knit in between the weaving.

## → **Introduce New Yarns Periodically**

Doing so will heighten the visual interest.

## → **Lay the Weaving Yarn Over Two or More Needles**

The visual effects will surprise you.



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**Come on, baby (don't fear the garter bar)**  
**Baby, take my hand (don't fear the garter bar)**  
**We'll be able to fly (don't fear the garter bar)**  
**Baby, I'm your tool**  
**La, la, la, la, la**  
**La, la, la, la, la**

[Click For Music](#)