TIPS & TECHNIQUES
Studio by WHITE
SPRING 1996 Issue #36

Double Bed Pleated Skirts
by Terri Burns

Pleated skirts are easier to knit than you might expect and quite flattering on most figures. The key, as with all knits, is in the fit. The following guidelines should help you plan and knit box or knife pleated skirts that fit and flatter! Choose "dress yarns" that are firmly twisted. They minimize stretch and show less bagging out when you've been sitting for a while.

First, to determine how many stitches to cast on you need an accurate hip measurement to which you should add 2-3" of ease. Next, measure the width of one pleat then divide the hip measurement (including ease) by the pleat width to determine how many pleats you will need. It is unlikely that you will be able to knit the entire skirt in one piece. So, divide by 2 or more panels. The number of stitches you'll need to cast on is actually determined by the number of stitches in each pleat. If things don't come out evenly, you'll need to round off by adding one more pleat (if there was little ease figured in) or removing one (if there was lots of ease or the pleats are small). Be sure you include seaming stitches on all pieces.

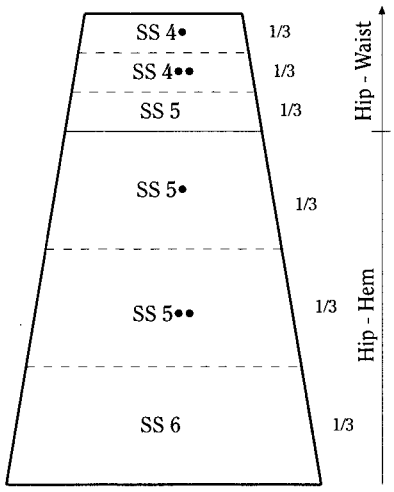
Hip + 2-3" ease (total circumference of skirt) = number of pleats to knit pleat measurement

Number of pleats X stitches per pleat = # stitches to C/O

Now you need the row gauge from your swatch and the finished length of your skirt. Make sure that the swatch has been finished exactly as you plan to finish your skirt panels; including letting it hang for a while to see if it "grows".

Determining the number of rows to knit requires a little more figuring than other skirts because ribber pleats are usually shaped and controlled by modifying the stitch size from beginning to end. Measure the drop from waist to hipline and subtract this from the total length of the skirt.

Divide each of these sections into thirds. Begin knitting at the bottom of the skirt with one full stitch size larger than the main stitch size; then decrease by one dot for the second



The stitch size in this example reduced from 6 to 4•, from hem to waistband, to mold the shape of the skirt.

third and by one dot for the last third of the lower portion of the skirt. Divide the hip to waist length into thirds and knit the first third at the main stitch size, then decrease the stitch size by one dot for each of the next two sections.

If you really want to control the final length of the skirt, it is a good idea to knit the swatch observing the same changes, tagging the edge stitches to show where the stitch size changes. Measure each section and figure each row gauge separately. Divide the lower portion of the skirt by three, then multiply by each of the three row gauges to determine how many rows to knit in each section. You can simply use the gauge for the main stitch size for figuring the entire hip to waistline portion.

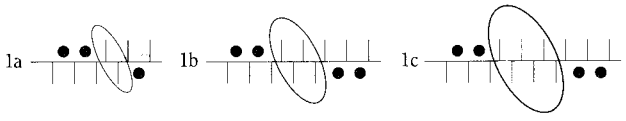
After knitting the skirt panel, transfer all ribber stitches to the main bed and scrap off. Block each panel to size. Rehang the stitches to form pleats, as shown in the diagrams for each type of pleat. Some needles may hold three or more stitches so, when possible, bring needles out to D position and set Russel Levers (I)(I) to knit the first row. Knit twice the width of the waistband and scrap off. Sew the side seams, then stitch the waistband down by hand; or sew one seam and complete the waistband on the DL-1000 Linker or by rehanging on the machine before sewing the second seam.

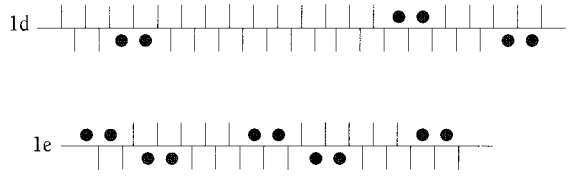
To knit the following examples, cast on for full needle rib with the beds in half pitch as follows: swing ribber bed 1 full position to the right, knit 1 zig-zag row at regular ribbing stitch size (no smaller than 2) then swing the ribber bed back to its original position. Hang comb and weights, knit 1 row. Transfer stitches as shown in specific needle charts and begin knitting. You'll need to experiment a bit with stitch sizes until you get a feel for the yarn and the pleats you are knitting.

Knife Pleats

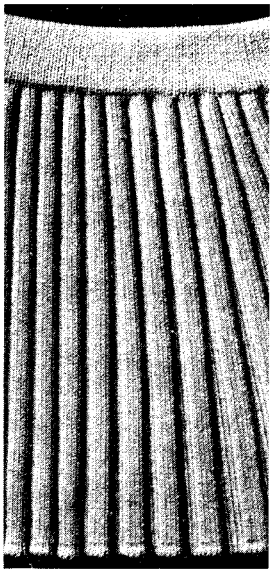
Out of work needles on both beds form the pleat folds; non-working needles on the main bed form the under folds, while non-working needles on the ribber form the outer folds. The examples shown should always knit pleats that turn to the left. When knitting from the bottom up, the non-working needles on the main bed should always be to the left of the non-working needles on the ribber bed. The pleats can be as wide or as narrow as you like, depending on the number of working needles between pairs of non-working needles. Narrow, knife, pleats are formed

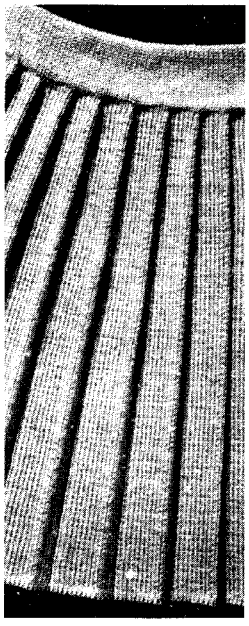
Knife Pleat (Diagrams 1a, 1b, 1c)



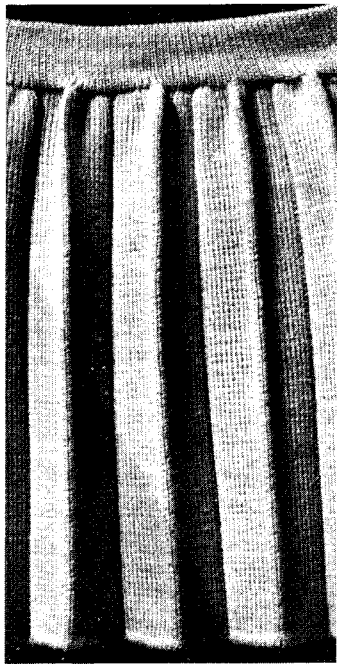


Knife Pleat (Diagrams 1d, 1e)





when there are 1, 2 or 3 pairs of working needles between the non-working needles as shown in diagrams 1a, 1b, 1c. Wider knife edged pleats are formed when more pairs of working needles are placed between the non-working needles as in diagrams 1d and 1e. To avoid thick, bulky pleats, you should use finer yarns and smaller stitch sizes for these pleats.

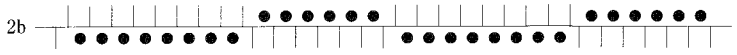


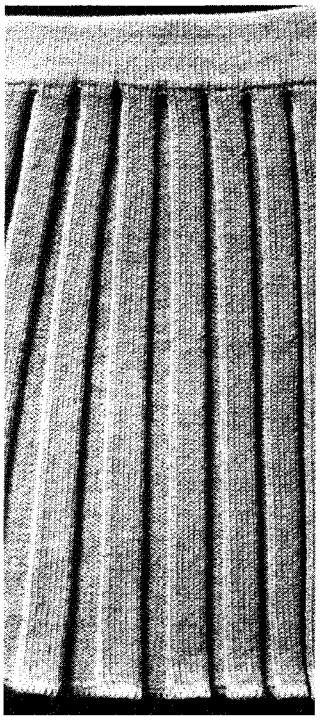
Box Pleats

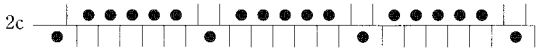
Box pleats are also formed by working and non-working needle arrangements: the non-working needles on one bed correspond to the working needles on the other bed. Please note though, that because the beds are in half pitch, there is actually 1 less needle in non-working position than in working position on the opposite bed.

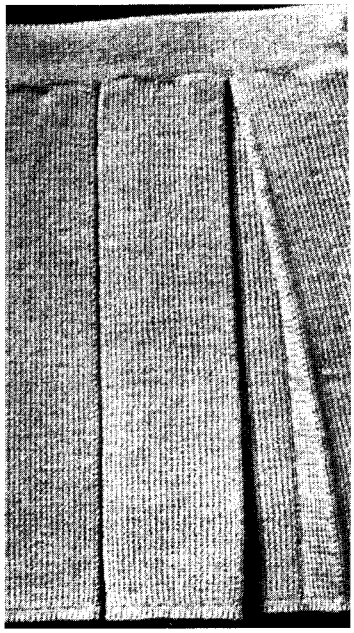
These fabrics are fully reversible so either side can be used as the right side. Once again, the width of the pleat can be varied as shown in diagrams 2a, 2b and 2c. Diagram 3 shows a mock box pleat that gives the illusion of a pleat without the bulk. Once again, the spacing of the non-working needles can be varied for wider or narrower effects.

Box Pleats (Diagrams 2a, 2b, 2c)









Mock Box Pleat (Diagram 3)