

MACHINE *Knit* AMERICA

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THE WOE OF YARN FLOW

Part two of Sharon Nani's series on Knitting for Profit.

Efficient, confident knitters can be profitable knitters. Therefore, all of us need to have full control of machine basics before concentrating on fabrication and design.

In the last issue of *Machine Knit America*, I discussed the importance of understanding and observation as related to the proper setting of the tension disc. This issue, I will continue with the topic of how other factors affect yarn flow.

It is important that the yarn flows off the cone or rework ball properly. If the yarn is not flowing off the cone or ball properly, the result would be the same as too tight of a tension disc setting. See Part 1 of this series in *Machine Knit America: Vol. 2: Issue 6*. The major difference would be that the flow could be jerky, resulting in an unevenly knit row. If this were only a minor problem, it might go undetected until you examined your work later, only to find a flaw in your knitting that looked like a group of stitches knit at a tighter stitch size. If you observe this happening, examine the row of stitches. Again look at the uniformity of the size of the hole at the bottom of the stitch underneath the head of the latch needle. If you see a tight spot (smaller holes) UNRAVEL. This will always flaw your knitting.

Other facts and helpful hints are:

a. Some yarns tend to slide down the cone of yarn and could catch on the bottom of a cone, causing a jerk. Remedy: put the cone in a plastic bag, inserting the bag under and into the cone forming a plastic pocket around the cone of yarn. This is a very common problem with slippery yarn such as rayon and metallic yarns.

b. Balls of rework yarn must be wound loosely and should not be bouncing around when you are knitting. If I must use yarn that has been rework into a ball, I take the yarn from the outside of the rework ball, instead of pulling it from the center. This treats it more like a cone. It is always more efficient to knit from a cone when possible.

c. Old or improperly stored yarn could come off the cone in a jerky fashion because it has the tendency to cling to

itself. You could rewind it, running it through wax to improve the flow. If this yarn has also become weakened, and if you are determined to use it anyway, I would recommend that you combine it with another yarn to stabilize or strengthen the fabric that you construct.

d. If you are using more than one cone of yarn, arrange the cones so that they will not tangle together, causing an interruption in yarn flow. You could even create more guides for your yarn to flow through. For example: add a "funnel of an empty paper towel holder" taped to the bottom of a yarn guide [or to the back of your table]. This would prevent static electricity from tangling yarns that were placed close to each other.

Another area to be considered is the proper flow of yarn through the tension system. This is where the "textures" of yarn come into play.

a. Some yarns may have to be waxed to help them flow more efficiently, such as: rayon, cotton, or country silk.

This would also include yarns that are made by blending any of these fibers, such as: woolray, or cottonray. Use your paraffin device. If you do more volume knitting, you can use a cube of paraffin wax. Make a hole in the cube large enough for the yarn to go through with enough ease so

as not to bind it in any way. Fasten the wax to a yarn guide [can be secured at the back of the knitting table]. You need to wax the yarn when you feel it 'grinding as sandpaper' as you knit the row.

b. Some need less tension applied: such as mohair where the fiber itself creates tension as it flows through the various points of the tension system. If the loosest setting on the disc is still too tight, you should tape your disc open. The yarn lies in the disc slot for some tension, but the pressure from the spring is not applied.

c. If you apply less tension, such as in mohair or a delicate yarn that breaks more easily, such as angora, you should watch your knitting edges for loops. You may have to become part of the take up wire. Pull up slightly on the yarn above the eyelet [sinker plate] to get rid of any slack yarn before knitting the next row.

Adjust the tension system to compensate for the different "thickness" of yarns.

a. Thin yarns such as thread, iridescents, and one end of a 2/24 yarn usually requires more tension than the disc gives on the tightest setting. Therefore, you create more tension by:

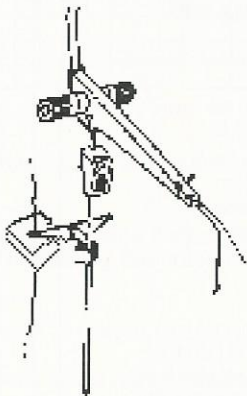
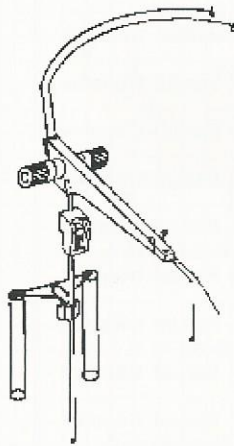
1. wrapping the yarn once around the disc, then thread through the system as normal, or

2. If you do this kind of knitting, it may benefit you to jerry-rig another type of tension disc to your mast. Then, the yarn can flow through two discs. Keep the discs in the same flow of traffic line.

b. Thick yarn: see yarn textures above: sections b. and c. (Same as less tension applied.)

SPECIAL NOTES:

1. A general rule of thumb is: if you are using more than one end of the same yarn (example: two ends (strands) of a 2/24), thread them through the same tension system together as if they were one strand of yarn (exception: if you are trying to tweed two different colors, you should run it through a "tweeding box." I will discuss this in a future issue). If the yarns are of a different consistency, such as one end of cotton with one end of rayon, thread them each through their separate tension systems and join them



KNITTING FOR PROFIT

at the feeding eyelet [sinker plate].

2. Also remember that the distance that you clear the locks over the needles in working position affect your yarn flow system and edge stitches. I like to clear my needles by approximately two inches. If you go too far past your knitting, the take up spring tension wire will not have enough "pull up strength" left to take up the slack yarn when you get back to the knitting. This results in loops or dropped stitches. Not clearing far enough could result in dropped stitches, tight edges or the pushers going out of position and faulting your pattern.

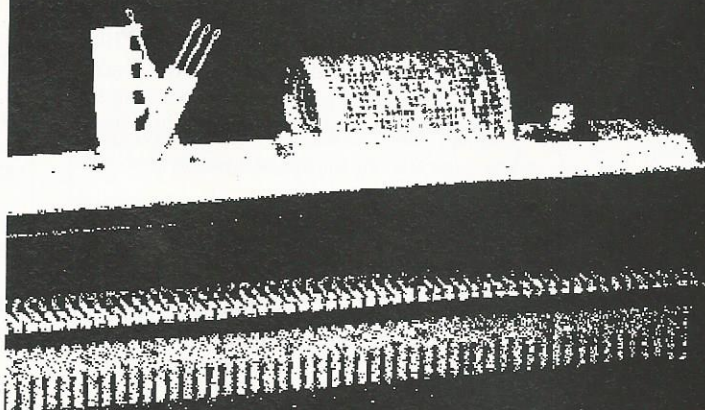
It is a good practice to simulate the problems discussed in these articles. When you gain the confidence that goes with understanding "why" you have any of these yarn flow problems, you will become a more efficient knitter. An efficient knitter can be a profitable knitter. Next issue, I will discuss how stitch size and weights effect the fabric that you construct.

KRÜH KNITS

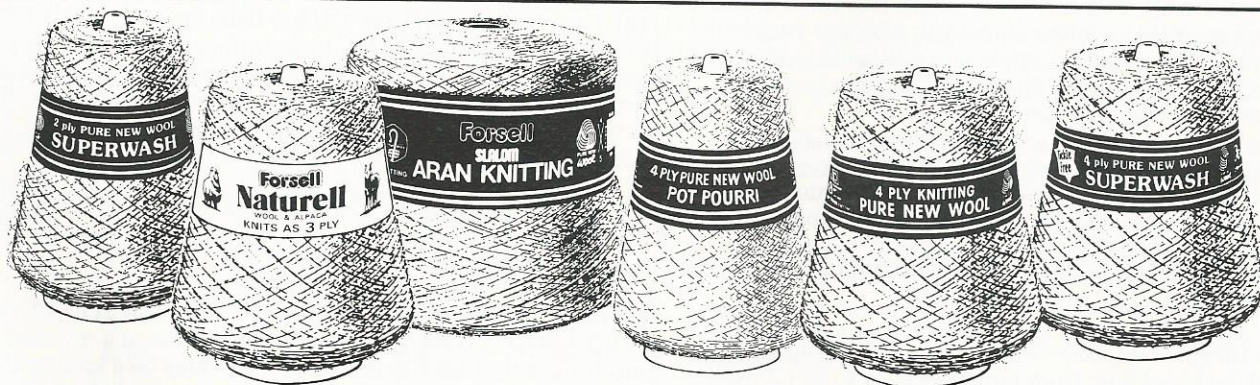
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