

# MACHINE *Knit* AMERICA

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# DOES YOUR WEIGHT AFFECT YOUR PROFITS?

Sharon Nani continues here series on Knitting for Profit.

This is the third in a series of articles written to give you a better understanding of basic elements that are necessary to become a "profitable" knitter. Two elements that I will discuss this time, are the effects of weight and stitch size.

Most machine knitters are aware of the fact that they run into "trouble" quickly, if they do not use the appropriate weight (system) correctly, for their specific machine. Notice, I used a new phrase: "weight system."

Every knitting machine must have a way of holding the yarn in the hooks or on the latch needles. There are two weight systems that serve this purpose. One is the "pull down" system. This would include any type of cast on combs, weights that hang on the comb or heel grips (edge weights) that hang on the fabric. These items pull the yarn down into the hooks of the needles (on the needles) by the gravity of their weight. All knitting machines can use this pull down system. The other system is a "push down" one. This is incorporated into the Passap knitting machine and is known as the "strippers." As the lock passes over the needles in working position, the stripper pushes the yarn down into the hook of the needle. Simultaneously, the needle comes forward to receive new yarn. Therefore, the yarn is held on the needle the entire time that the needle is in action.

**SPECIAL NOTE:** If you do have a dropped stitch in the middle of the row, it could be caused by scratches on your stripper (sinker plate). The scratches could have been caused if you "jammed" your lock when you used too small of a stitch size for the yarn. Other reasons for dropping of stitches would be too large a stitch size for that yarn, an improper stitch construction for that yarn, or improper use of the weight system.

Understanding the purpose of the weight system, shows you the importance of learning to use it properly.

1. If you wish to use an exaggerated (too large) a stitch size for the effect of your design, use more weight.

2. If you find that your edge stitches are "tight," and you know that your yarn flow is properly set, add heel grips (edge weights) under the edge stitches.

**Special note:** this also applies to V-Necks or any "edge".

3. If you knit an "unbalanced fabric" such as "blister" you must use the push down and the pull down weight system to knit it with ease.

4. If you knit lace, be careful not to use too much weight. This causes the improper transfer of stitches which results in dropped stitches.

5. If your fabric knits unevenly on the opposite side seams, you must adjust your weights. Use less weight on the long side or more weight on the short side.

So as you see from the above comments, the use of weights must be experimental with the yarn and stitch construction that you are using. You must meet an even balance. Too much or too little weight could be a problem. Only you can determine the correct amount by patience and taking the time to experiment.

## EFFECT OF EDGE SPRINGS

Only Passap has edge springs. (Machines that use the "pull down weight system" should use heel grips under the edge stitches.)

1. The most obvious purpose of the edge springs is to keep the latches closed on the edge needles in working position. This helps prevent the dropping of the edge stitches that are due to uneven rhythm in knitting or the pattern construction.

2. The edge springs are also part of the braking system of the tension system. The take up spring wire would naturally pull hardest at the end of the row, therefore on the edge stitches. It is the pur-

pose of the edge springs to counteract this pull by pushing down on the edge needle. This balances the action of the wire pulling the needle upward.

Notice, if you do not use your edge spring (edge weights), the edge needles will rise upward into the channel, between the two beds, when you are knitting. This puts the needles in a wrong position so that they can be hit by the stripper (sinker plate), possibly causing damage to the needle or stripper. On the other hand, sometimes due to the yarn you are using, you cannot get away from this slight pulling up action. Then you must compensate by using edge weights (sometimes called heel grips) on your knitting edges to help pull these stitches down. Heel grips come with the Passap U-100 accessory. You may also special order heel grips from your dealer.

## EFFECT OF STITCH SIZE

### A. TOO SMALL

1. If the stitch size is too small for the yarn or yarn/pattern combination, you will be able to knit only one row with ease. On the next row the old stitches will not come off the needles to form new stitches. Also, there will not be enough ease in the yarn to allow the stripper to press the old stitches far enough down below the head of the needle so that the stripper blade can also go below the needle.

Therefore, the blade is too high in the needle bed channel. The needles hit the stripper blade when they try to come upward to receive the new yarn to form the new stitch. Thus, the lock will jam. The stripper blade (sinker plate) and needle could be damaged. You can use fine sand paper to smooth the scratches which result from these jams.

2. If the stitch size is only slightly too small, the lock will not jam, but occasionally stitches will not knit off the needles, causing slipped or dropped stitches. In this case, use more weight.

### B. TOO LARGE

1. If the stitch size is too large, the stitches will rise out of the head of the

hook of the needle causing dropped stitches within the knitting.

2. These large stitches could also rise and tangle on parts of the stripper (sinker plate) or lock (carriage) causing the lock to jam or tear your knitting.

a. You can use these exaggerated stitch sizes if you use the cast on combs with weights. They will pull these large

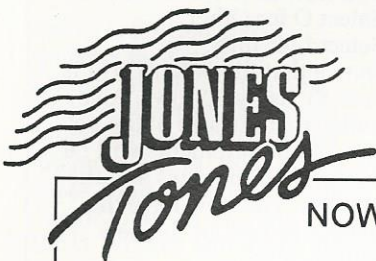
stitches down into the heads of the latch needle and prevent the stitches from dropping.

**C. OTHER**

Any other stitch size that works is personal taste for the effect and drape that you are trying to create.

The yarn flow, use of weights, and stitch size all work together to help you

knit with ease. When you understand how to correct and adjust for any problems that arise from these three elements, you will be ready to tackle the technical aspects of fabric and garment construction. In the next issue, I will discuss my "first aid guide" for machine knitters.



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