Beginners How to... Lace

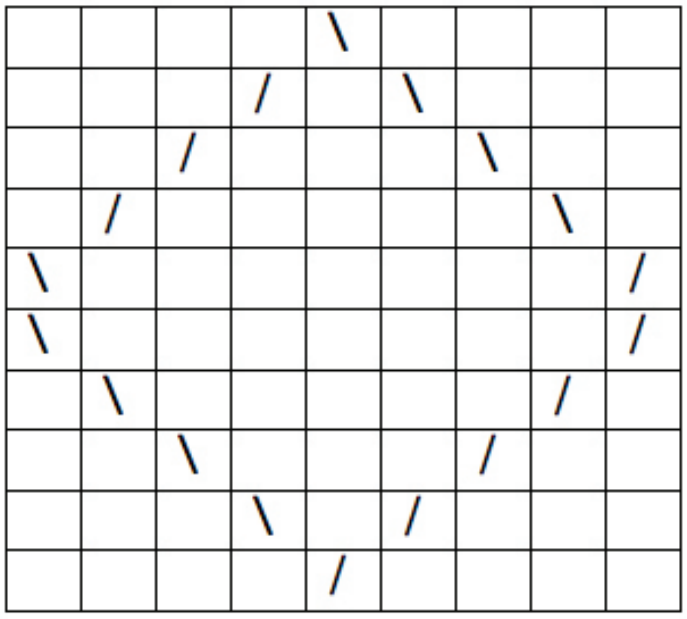
by Lidia Higson RO Co-ordinator

LACE

Lace is a decorative open stitch pattern. There are several types of lace, which can be produced on most machines.

TRANSFER LACE

This is the simplest of laces. This is knitted by manually transferring a stitch to its adjacent needle leaving the empty needle in work and knitting one or two rows. You can do this at random or follow a chart like this one (see right).



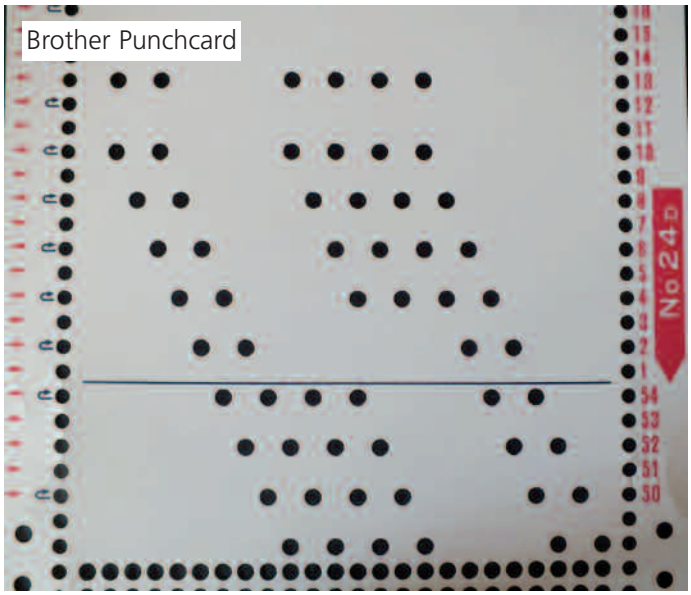
/ = transfer stitch to the right.
\ = transfer stitch to the left.
Knit two rows between transfers.

Other laces are knitted by using a punchcard and separate carriage to transfer the stitches for you.

BROTHER MACHINES use a separate carriage to transfer the stitches onto the adjacent needles. The Brother lace carriage has two positions, 'N' which is for normal lace where the carriage transfers the whole stitch to its adjacent needle, and 'F' is for fine lace where the carriage does not transfer the whole stitch to the adjacent needle but part of the stitch remains on its original needle. This looks like a small tuck stitch.



Manual Transfer Lace



Brother Punchcard

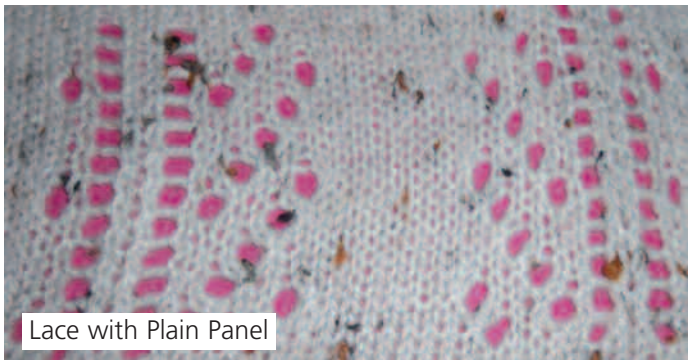
The lace carriage reads the punchcards and brings the needles to upper working position (UWP), before transferring the stitch on the next pass. It does not knit that row, only transfers stitches; the row counter is operated by the main carriage. You may need to move the lace carriage several times before knitting two rows. The lace carriage always ends on the left hand side with all stitches back in 'B' or work position (WP). Extension bars are provided which fit on either end of the needle bed. Whichever carriage is not working rests on the extension bars.

The punchcards show row numbers on the right and red direction arrows on the left, you will also see a blue arrow that goes back on itself. When the card is locked on row 1 the arrow is pointing to the right. The lace carriage is placed on the left and the knitting carriage on the right. Move the lace carriage across the needles, this sets the pattern, unlock the card and follow the direction of the arrows until all needles are in WP and the lace carriage on the left. You will see that you are at the blue arrow position. Now knit two rows. Sometimes you might find a number there, such as 4, this means knit 4 rows. On the electronic machines the number of rows to be knitted in between will be shown in the row window. You can make a wider band of plain knitting in between repeats by knitting more rows.

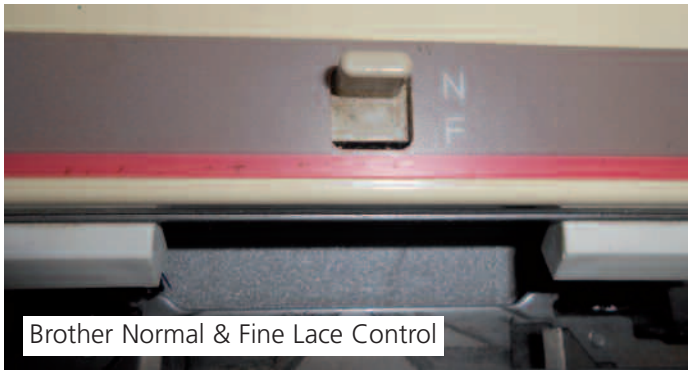
If the end needles come to 'UWP' position then push them back to work before moving the lace carriage to ensure the stitches are not lost.

The lace carriage also has pink or orange cams which can be placed on the needle bed to give plain knitting in between the lace or they are also useful for putting on the edge to ensure the end stitches are always knitted plain.

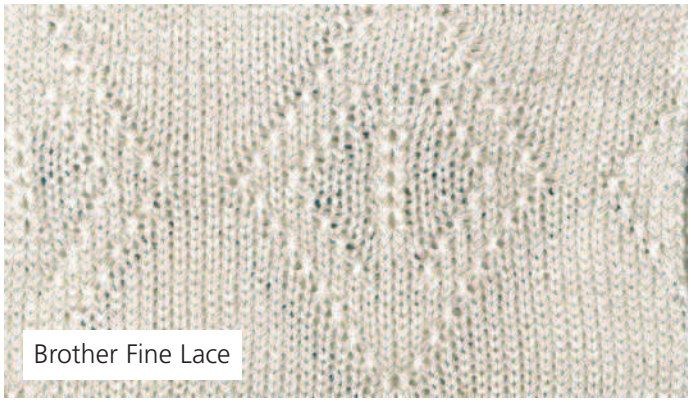

Brother Pink Cams


Lace with Plain Panel

FINE LACE Set the lace carriage to 'F'. The cards usually have a slightly narrower arrow. Some cards do both normal and fine lace, so by watching the arrows you can change the carriage setting as needed



Brother Normal & Fine Lace Control

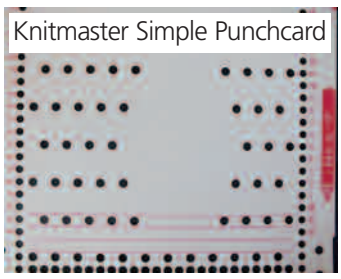

Brother Fine Lace

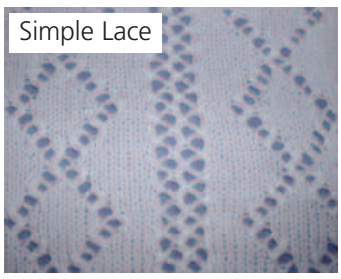
SHAPING A GARMENT Needles cannot be put to hold position when using the lace carriage, so the stitches have to be knitted back to 'A' or non working position (NWP) with the cast on cord or waste yarn (WY), then when needed gently pull the stitches back to work by pulling the cord or WY.

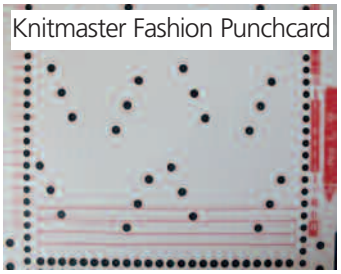
KNITMASTER/SILVER REED has a lace carriage that transfers and knits the row at the same time. The lace punchcards have numbers in red on the right side and red direction arrows on the left. In the basic set cards 1-8 have only arrows and row numbers. They also have an 'A' and 'B' side. Look at row one on each side. The direction arrow points to the left on side 'A' and to the right on side 'B'.

To set for working lace, Carriage at left (CAL), lock card on row 1, side 'A', set controls as in manual, that is card locked, side levers forward, yarn in carriage. Knit one row left to right. Set the edge pins at the last two working needles, unlock card, side levers back. The carriage should move in the direction of the arrows. If you are using the 'B' side of your card start on row one with CAR. The edge pins ensure that the two edge stitches are knitted and not transferred, so giving a neater edge.

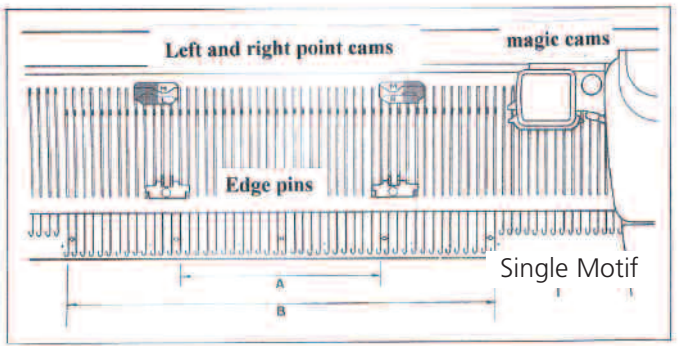
Cards 9 and 10 only have one side. These are for fashion lace. Like the other cards they have red direction arrows on the left, but on the right side some numbers are blocked in red. Again you follow the direction of the arrows with your carriage, but when you come to the blocks of numbers, you will need to take the yarn out of the carriage, set the carriage to ⌒ and pass the carriage over the marked pattern rows finishing with the CAR. During this the carriage does not knit but transfers stitches to their adjacent needles, nor does the row counter operate. Replace the yarn in the feeder, set the carriage at ⋀ and follow the single number rows, these are counted.


Knitmaster Simple Punchcard


Simple Lace


Knitmaster Fashion Punchcard


Fashion Lace

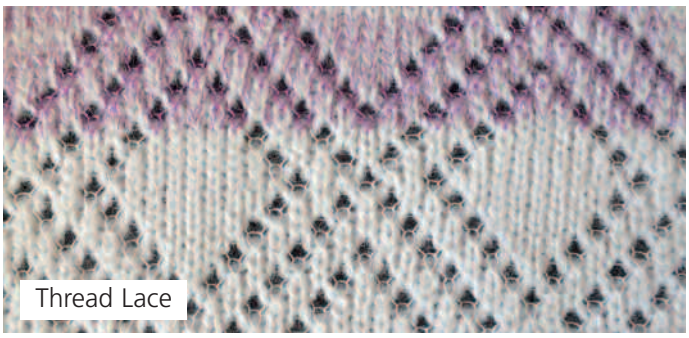


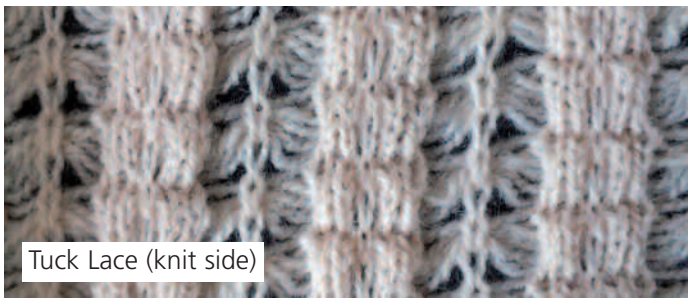
SINGLE MOTIF On Brother machines this is usually done by manual transfer. On Knitmaster attach the grey single motif cams to the lace carriage. Take the edge pins and place them on needles 13 and 14 each side of '0'. Take the left and right point cams and place them so that they are adjacent to the edge pins, that is needles 14 and 15. After the motif has been knitted, remove the magic cams, point cams and edge pins.

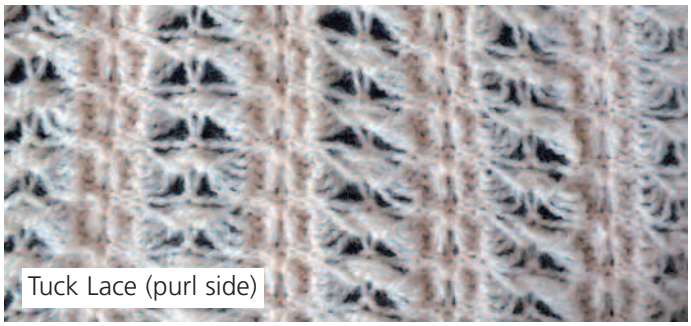
Some lace can be knitted by both makes of machine.

PUNCH LACE OR THREAD LACE This is a Knitmaster technique but can also be worked on the Brother 894 standard gauge, 260 chunky and the electronic machines. All Knitmaster punchcard and electronic machines have this facility. The main knitting carriage is used for this.

Combinations of thick and self-coloured very fine yarn produce a lace effect pattern. The thicker yarn goes in feeder 1 and the finer in feeder 2.


Thread Lace


Tuck Lace (knit side)


Tuck Lace (purl side)

The punched areas of the card knit in the finer yarn in feeder 2 and the blank areas knit with both yarns together. There are no floats in this technique and the lace effect is made by the fine yarn. Set the carriage to 'L' for knitmaster and for Brother push both centre buttons in.

TUCK LACE is worked with the main carriage and is a combination of tuck and stitches out of work which give a lace effect. On Brother machines you need to take the end needle selection cam out of work. Turn the cam underneath your carriage to (-). On electronic machines, work on KC II setting. If you leave the end needle selection 'on', when the carriage gets to a space it will think that the pattern is at the beginning of a row and will not tuck.

Unless you have a pattern for 'tuck lace' experiment using your tuck cards from your basic set. Knitmaster card 3 is a good card to start.

SAMPLE 1 WY 60 sts. Knit a few rows. Knit 1 row with MY. Transfer the first stitch left of '0' to its adjacent needle and every 4th one. Lock card on row 1. Brother KC knit 1 row to set needles, unlock card, push tuck buttons in and continue knitting. Knitmaster memorise card, unlock, set for tuck and continue knitting.

SAMPLE 2 as sample 1 but transfer the first stitch right of centre '0' and then every 4th needle.

TIPS WHEN KNITTING LACE

1. Hang more weights than usual.
2. If dropping stitches and you have the ribber attached, cover the ribber and try hanging the knitting over the front of the ribber.
3. Use the fine knit bar if stitches are dropping.
4. If a problem occurs on the same needle each time change it.
5. If a problem occurs at the same point of the pattern your yarn might be too thick or you may need more weights.
6. You cannot put needles in hold so knit them back to 'A' with cord or WY.
7. Want to knit a picot edge, use card one and transfer using your lace carriage.
8. When using punch/thread lace, after the rib place both yarns into feeder 1 and knit the first row, this stops the rib from folding up and ensures that the first row is of the same thickness as the rest of the knitting. Do this on the last row such as on shoulders and tops of sleeve heads.
9. Use a contrast fine yarn in thread lace to give a different look.