

Designing With Lace

A knitted lace purse makes an elegant addition to any special outfit. Match or coordinate it to any ensemble in a size to fit your needs.

By **LOIS S. YOUNG**

A simple clutch purse made from a folded rectangle is perhaps the easiest to design and assemble.

Such a rectangle should be taller than it is wide. If you divide the height in fifths, you must have two-fifths for the front of the purse, two-fifths for the back and one-fifth folded over for

the front flap, which will end about halfway down the bag. Therefore, when planning a purse, decide how wide and how high you want your finished bag to be, and then knit a rectangle of the desired width and 2½ times as high as the finished height.

Choosing the Pattern Stitches

Now for the fun part—finding patterns to fill this rectangle. One choice is the selection of two different patterns, one for the flap or its edging, and one for the body of the purse. You might select a large, fancy pattern for the

flap, such as one with a combination of knit and purl areas that gives it a 3-D quality.

Other options for large flap patterns include a Feather and Fan stitch or Crest of the Wave pattern. Patterns for ripple afghans also work well. All of these patterns make a rippled or scalloped edge by alternating areas of increased stitches with areas of decreased ones. When you change from such a pattern to the main pattern, you will probably have to “tame” these ripples so the top inside edge of your purse is straight. The easiest way to do this is to continue the ripple pattern as established but eliminate the increases. Work one or two less decreases per pattern row until you are down to half the original number of decreases; after a few rows, the pattern will even out so it no longer ripples. Inserting a few rows of garter stitch as a transition from the border to main pattern will also help.

It is also possible to use a lace edging for the flap pattern. This edging is worked sideways onto the final edge of the purse piece. In such a case, the rectangle for the purse only needs to be twice as high as the desired height of the purse. When you choose an edging, be sure that half the number of rows in the edging divides evenly into the final number of purse stitches.

To attach a lace edging, cut the yarn for the body of the purse, leaving a 6-inch end. With the right side of the



purse facing you and using a separate double-point needle, cast on the required number of edging stitches. Work the first two stitches (the first purse stitch and the last cast-on stitch) of the first edging row as knit 2 together (k2tog) instead of the slip 1 or knit 1 given in the instructions. Every time you end a wrong-side row, slip the last stitch of the edging with yarn in front. Turn the work. At the beginning of each right-side row, work k2tog on that slipped stitch and the next purse stitch. Bind off when all purse stitches have been attached to the edging.

A nice option is a narrow, scalloped border. These are harder to find, but sometimes can be located in books of antique patterns. Again, you can use a knitted-on narrow edging as an alternative.

Patterns for the body of the purse can be vertical columns of lace or allover patterns. The use of two knit stitches between each lace column gives textural interest and can be helpful in making a transition between the scallops of the border and the lace pattern. The multiple of the border determines the number of fill stitches used between the columns. The combination of the simple border with the very open lace is very appealing. One ridge of garter stitch can also be used where one pattern stops and the other starts.

The opposite combination—a very fancy flap pattern contrasted with

a simple and not-very-open lace on the body of the purse—also has an attractive look. Again stitches can be used between the vertical patterns. Using purl stitches between the knitted lace columns makes the fabric look somewhat like ribbing, with the purl parts receding and the knitted lace parts standing out. There are many small lace patterns that would work for this type of purse. A small allover lace would also look nice.

Lining the Purse

A knitted lace purse will need a lining for stability. I prefer to use a lining and an interlining, so all seams are enclosed and do not show through the lace. For this you will need two rectangles of fabric (something elegant like satin or taffeta is nice), each $\frac{1}{4}$ inch bigger on all sides than the finished purse piece.

Use a $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch seam throughout. Fold the bottom edge of one fabric piece upward two-fifths of the way, having the right sides together (see Figure 1). This will be the lining. Sew the side seams leaving $\frac{1}{4}$ inch unstitched at the top edge of fold-up section. Repeat

with the second piece of fabric for the interlining.

Turn the lining pocket right side out. Fold over the top $\frac{1}{4}$ inch of the fold-up section on the interlining to the outside; fold over the top $\frac{1}{4}$ inch of the fold-up section of the lining to the inside. Press both edges flat. Lay the lining on top of the interlining, having both fold-up sections facing up and with right sides of flaps facing. Sew the flaps together, making sure not to catch the $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch fold overs in the flap seam (see Figure 2). When you turn the flap right side out, you should be able to slip the interlining inside the lining.

All seams will be in between these two pieces and will not show either on the inside or the outside. Catch-stitch the pressed fold-over edges together.

Sew the side seams of the knitted purse and insert the assembled lining into the purse. Sew the lining to the purse along the front edge and around the flap. Sew snaps under the flap and on the front of the purse.

If you like, you can also add a strap. The easiest one is made with I-cord. Using two double-point needles, cast on 3 stitches. Knit 3, *slip the stitches back to the left-hand needle, knit 3. Repeat from * until the strap is about $\frac{1}{3}$ less than the desired length. I-cord stretches considerably, which is the reason for making the strap much shorter than the desired length.

Enjoy your new, elegant evening accessory! ■

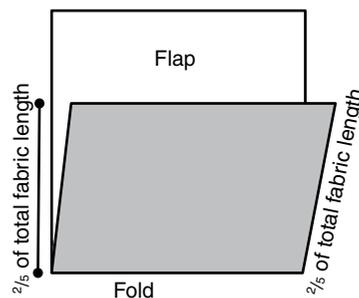


FIGURE 1

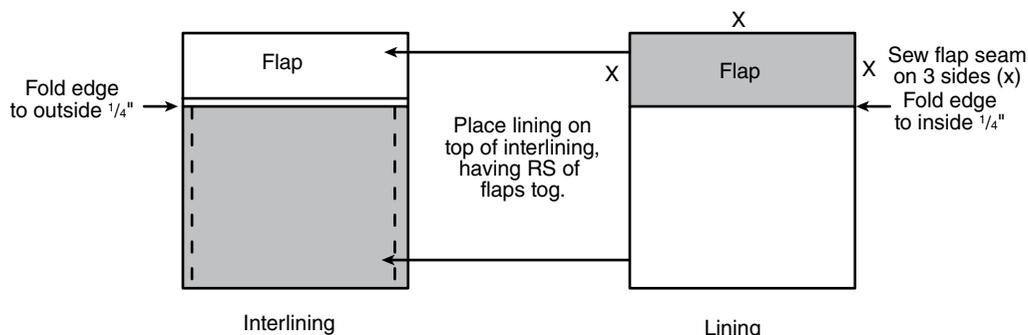


FIGURE 2



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