Fair Isle Inside Out
Simple Way to Control Tension in Stranded Colourwork

by Maryna Shevchenko

You know how the fabric may pucker when we work in a Fair Isle or other stranded colour pattern? There is a super simple way to prevent this issue. All we have to do is turn the project inside out.

The puckering happens because the **yarn floats** on the wrong side of the work are **shorter than they should be**. When we turn the work inside out, the floats wrap around the outer side of the fabric that has a **bigger circumference** than the inner side. This small difference is enough to keep the floats from pulling on the fabric.

You can switch to this method at **any stage of knitting your project**, but it is **better** to start working this way in the **first round** of the colour pattern. This will ensure an **even tension** throughout the whole segment worked in the colour pattern.

This simple technique is suitable **only for knitting in the round** but it works well for **all types of knitting needles**. You can use this trick when you knit with **double-pointed needles**, with **two circular needles**, one short circular needle or one long circular needle and the **magic loop** technique.

Here's how it happens **step by step**.

If you are a visual learner, **click here** to watch these steps in a **video tutorial.**

STEP 1

Arrange the needles so that you are **ready to knit the next stitch**. You can do it at the beginning of the round or **anywhere within a round**.
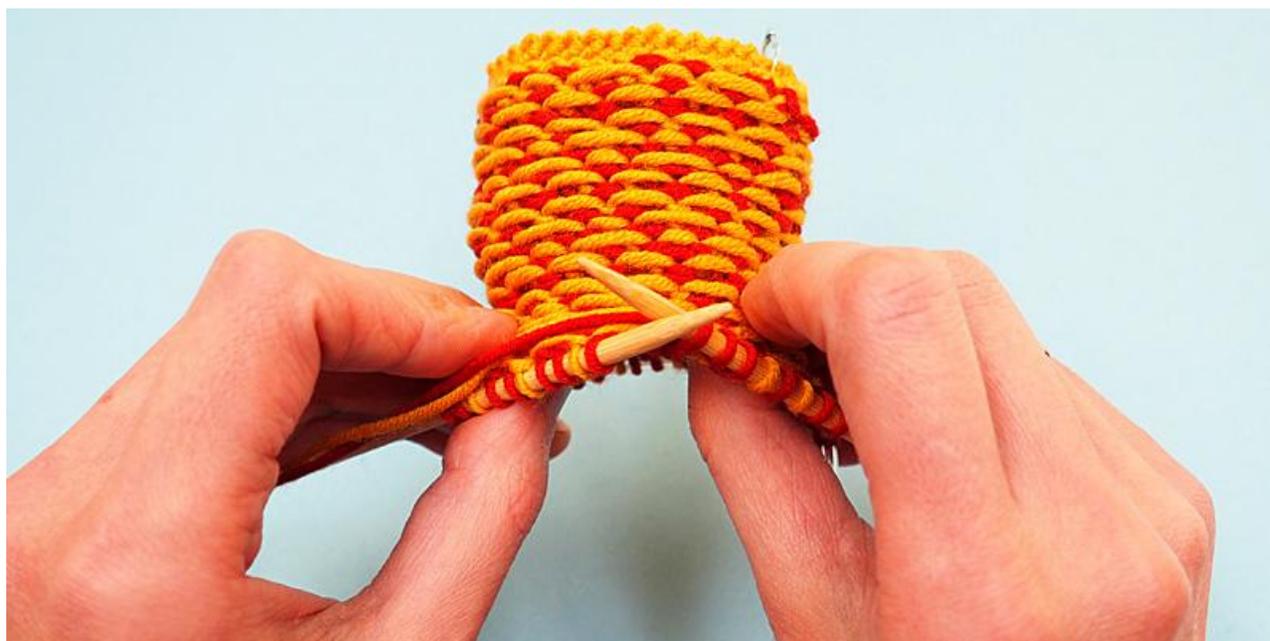

STEP 2

Take the left needle in your left hand and the right needle in your right hand. Use your thumbs to **push the fabric inside the circle** formed by the needles.

Push the fabric **all the way up** to turn the whole project inside out.
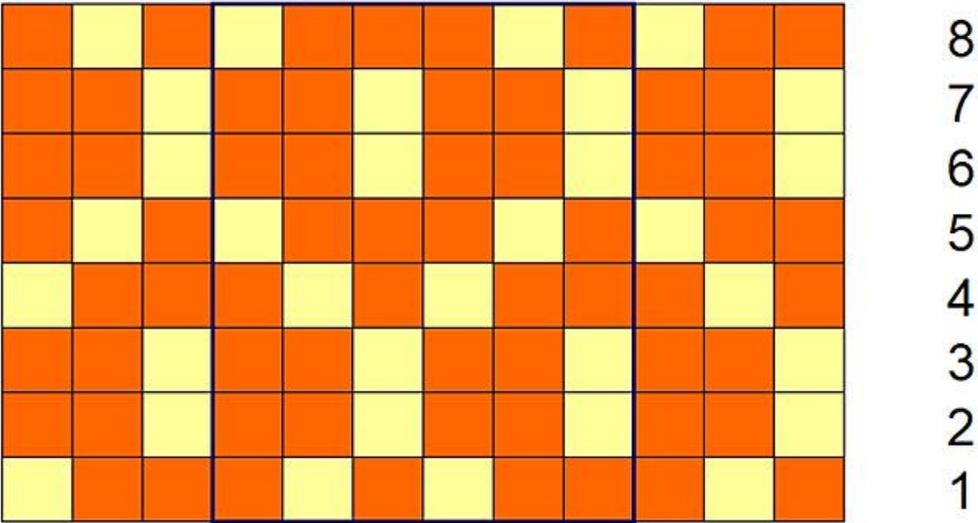

STEP 3

Without letting go of the needles, move your hands so that the project is **hanging down**.

Then **continue to work in the colour pattern** looking at the right side of the fabric at the **father end** of the round.

Here's a **chart** for the **colour pattern that I use** to make the swatch, but, of course, you can choose any Fair Isle or other stranded colour pattern you like.

When we turn the project inside out, the **yarn floats form on the outer side** of the work. Because they are wrapping around the fabric, **the strands are longer** than the strands

carried inside the project. This length is just **enough to keep the fabric relaxed** when we finish the project and turn it back to the right side.

As an added bonus, this simple method also **takes care of the "ladders"** that often form **between the needles**.

The **best part** is – both these issues are controlled **on autopilot**. We don't have to worry about the length of the floats or "ladders" any more. That's what we can call **"Happy Knitting"**.

P.S. *Many thanks to Rita Katz for sharing this clever trick with me in an email. Thank you, Rita!*