



Evis Shell Pattern Vest

A patchwork knitting classic for advanced shell knitters



Introduction

The beautiful four-colored shell pattern is ideal for a warming vest, only you have to be a little bit of a math genius to construct fitting armholes and graceful necklines. Anybody who knows the basics of shell knitting very well can figure that out, but for all the others I have written these instructions with lots of pictures. This vest is a project for someone who has some experience with modular patchwork knitting, not for an absolute beginner. Start with my instructions on Basic Shell Knitting, also available as a download [here](#). Once you know your way around half and whole shells, picking up stitches and doing increases and decreases and all that, you'll be ready to go for Evis Vest!

What's so special about this vest: the colors!

If you take a close look, you can see that no two shells are of exactly the same color:



That is so because I've been knitting this with all kinds of odds and ends of leftover yarn. To avoid loud and clashing colors, I have chosen a quiet dark brown yarn for the garter stitch rows. Brown has a soothing optical effect and serves as a nice frame for the many other colors. The almost white yarn I used for the bottom of the shells is also the same throughout the whole vest. At the colorful upper halves of the shells, I really got into using many shades of colors! But not without doing some thinking first. I used many shades of red, from orange to bright red to brick red, dark red and burgundy. For the second color group, I chose green, preferably teal and moss green, as you can see in the next picture:



This color combination is no coincidence, after all I'm painter, too, and know quite a lot about color theory. Red and green are so-called complementary colors, they are opposite to each other in the color circle and make a very harmonious combination. Complementary colors make each other shine brighter! Between red and green on the color circle there is brown as a tertiary color, therefore it is ideal as a soothing background. And the creamy white adds highlights and makes the whole knitting look fresh and airy. A pure bright white would have been much too harsh, therefore I chose a softer, almost beige tone.

Everybody who wants to knit this vest should stick to the color combination and never, ever knit in contrasting colors like blue or yellow, that would destroy the whole color harmony. It



is possible to achieve lovely combinations with other colors, too, but that's quite a science in itself. Go looking in your stash for matching tones, I bet you'll find lots of matching colors!

The Size

The finished vest is a comfortable size L (German 44/46). The bust size is about 120 cm (47"), so it fits over a generous chest, or you can wear a pullover under it on very cold days.

The Material

You need about 500 gram mixed yarns in the colors I mentioned above, about half of it in brown and crème. I used two strands of 4-ply sock yarn, but also some 8-ply yarn. 6-ply I combined with two strands of thin machine knitting yarn to bring it to the appropriate thickness. I knitted relatively tight with a 5 mm needle. If you knit very loosely, you should use a thinner needle, because otherwise the shells can go out of form..

Gauge

One finished shell should be approx. 20 cm wide and 13 cm high. You really can tell this only after you have knitted a few rows of shells, because at the beginning of the piece, the shells tend to stretch out to a wider measure. Because of that, stick to the recommended material and knit tightly, then the vest will fit.

The beginning: the first row of shells

We need 6 shells for the width, that fits for a bust size of ca. 120 cm. Let's take a look at the whole vest, especially at the lower border:



In the middle of the front I started with two half shells, that makes a nicely finished edge. For the rest of the bottom we need 5 more shells, in order to get the width of 6 shells. So, knit two half shells and 5 whole shells in green.

Straight on until you reach the armhole

Now for the fun part: work 5 rows of shells, keep adding half shells at the left and right borders to achieve a straight edge. I knitted a few more green shells on the front, as you can see in the next photo. All other shells are knitted in shades of red.



The Armhole

In the 6th row of shells, you have to work a shortened shell at the line where the side seams would be. I have laid this out flat for the photo:



For the shortened shell, you bind off all stitches after the second red row, that's all.

Diminished shells for the armhole

In order to make the armholes fit, you have to knit two slightly diminished shells at both sides of the armhole. Pick up stitches from the 6th row of shells, the usual 16 stitches from the regular shell, only 12 stitches from the shortened shell. The diminished shell is marked with the number 7 on this photo:



You have to cheat a little doing the decreases at the red rows and at the top of the diminished shells, but that should be no problem for a knitter with a little experience. Work mirror images of the diminished shells to both sides of the armhole.

The Front Neckline

Starting at the armhole, the two front pieces and the back of the vest are finished separately. You can see in the next photo how the rows 8, 9, and 10 are knitted and how to place the whole and half shells. After the 10th row of shells, work a flattened top shell for a straight top edge at the shoulder.





The Neckline at the Back

For this, you leave out the middle shell of the 10th row of shells, that's all.



The Shoulder

For a straight top edge, you have to work flattened shells on each piece. You can see in the next photo how the flattened shells of the front and back meet.



Finishing

Because the armholes fitted nicely, I finished them with merely 4 rows of garter stitch and bound off loosely. Tip: use a needle twice the size of the one you knitted with for the bind-off, in order to achieve an elastic and fitting edge.

The front edges, I also finished with 4 rows of garter stitch and made button holes in one edge.



I finished the neckline with 2 rows of garter stitch in brown, 2 rows stockinette in white and 2 more rows of garter stitch in brown. This makes a very nicely curved V-edge.



Final Comment

Well, now our patchwork vest is finished. I admit, it takes a little bit of attention while knitting, and for the different increases and decreases you have to calculate a little bit. But the very beautiful pattern and the vibrant colors make a unique piece that deserves the appellation Wearable Art.



Happy knitting!

Yours,
Evi a.k.a. inselisch