

Fyberduck's Recommended Reads

KNITTING:

Basics:

- *The Complete Book of Knitting* (Abbey) - written in the '60's, it has the best written knitting instructions I've found - with illustrations. It's out of print, but can be found in thrift stores and online.
- *Vogue Knitting* (by Vogue) - Vogue is always *in vogue*, but their knitting books are simple and well written. I wouldn't say it's as good as Abbey's, but it IS easier to find and a modern standard.
- ...*Yarn Requirements* (Budd) - nifty, waterproof, pamphlet that tells you all the yardage you'll need for most garments for every size. I think they should add an *accoutrement* section, but it's still good.
- *Stitch'n'Bit* (Stroller) - yes, it's a little too trendy; and yes, it's the reason you can't find your favorite yarn in stock and 13-yr-olds get in your way at your LYS. But, it also has clear and concise instructions for teaching yourself. The patterns are sometimes atrociously wrong, but the basics are solid.

Simple (modifiable) pattern books:

- *The Knitter's Handy Book of Sweater Patterns*(Budd) - this is my sweater BIBLE, 'nuff said. It has 5 different sweaters in 6 gauges from toddler to Hulk-size. Get it, and enshrine it with your treasured knitting books. (Note: I used this book as the base for my wrap sweater, my Inverness raglan, and numerous other projects)
- *The Knitter's Handy Book of Patterns* (Budd) - the precursor to the Book of Sweater Patterns. Really fantastic for basic patterns for socks, mittens, gloves, etc. The caps leave a little to be desired, but I'm weird and I know it.
- *Baby Knits for Beginners* (Bliss) - great baby knits. Simple, elegant, and easy to clean, too.
- *Vogue Knitting* (yes, again) - the basics of designing, knitting, and caring for your own sweater are all covered. Heck, I learned single and double crochet from the edge finishing section - there's something for everyone in this book.

Stitchionaries/ Specialized Reads:

- *The Art of Shetland Lace* (Don) - just drool, you know you want to. It's a classic, and hard to find, but it has a short history on Shetland lace and pages of traditional stitch patterns, and about a dozen lace project patterns. Learn the basics of YO's and dec'ing before touching this one, guys.
- *Vogue's Knitting Stitchionary* - this book nearly gave me heart palpitations when I found it. It's really rare for me to find a stitch pattern I don't recognise - but, the editors of Vogue managed it, on page after page in this really cool stitchionary. Be wary, this one is for intermediate and up knitters.
- *Traditional Knitted Lace Shawls* (Waterman) - this one leaves me speechless sometimes. It's so simply written and covers all the necessities of lace knitting, it's amazing. This book doesn't get half the coverage it deserves - it's 10x better than *A Gathering of Lace* in my opinion. Look through it, and tell me you're not impressed. You need to know some lace basics to use this one, but it's very adaptable, and wonderful to look through.
- *Knitting On The Edge* (Epstein) - this one is popular for a reason. It's got tons of unusual patterns than can be incorporated into knitting patterns not just as borders. It's a bit pricey, but worth the cost in my opinion (my friends certainly borrow it often enough).
- *Knitting Over the Edge* (Epstein) - the fabulous sequel to above. It covers even more unusual and fantastic borders and embellishments - from intarsia to knotted cables. My favorite two sections are the colour works

and floral sections. (This is another one that gets lent out more often than I'd like)

- *Traditional Knitting Patterns* (Norbury) - I can't describe how much I love this book. It has traditional patterns from across Europe. It covers colourwork, lace, and (my fav) Fishermen's port patterns. I used the Inverness port pattern for [my Inverness Raglan](#).
- *A Treasury of Knitting Patterns* (Walker) - 1st in the immortal series of books on traditional and modern knitting patterns: lace, cables, knit and purl, etc. A great resource for designers.
- *A Second Treasury of Knitting Patterns* (Walker).
- *A Third Treasury of Knitting Patterns/ Charted Knitting Designs* (Walker).
- *A Fourth Treasury of Knitting Patterns* (Walker).
- *Knitting Lace* (Abbey) - a good, basic lace book.
- *Heirloom Knitting* (Miller) - this one is for the adventurous or ambitious knitter. Traditional cobweb lace shawls, christening gowls, etc., designed by the author. Also provides chapters on Shetland lace patterns, writing patterns, and blocking fine lace.

Knit-pathy:

- *Knitticisms* (Cornell) - stories, retro prints, and weird taglines. This one always cheers me up when my knitting is misbehaving.
- *The Yarn Harlot* (Pearl-McPhee) - the good, the bad, the ugly. Stephanie shares all and makes you feel normal.
- *At Knit's End* (Pearl-McPhee) - more stories and memorable quotes from Stephanie.
- *Knitting Rules* (Pearl-McPhee) - a new [favorite](#) for a reason. If you like the Harlot's blog, you'll like this. I love quirky knitters.
- *Casts Off* (Pearl-McPhee) - navigating the Land of Knitting.

Inspirational:

- *Inspired Cable Knits* (Ellis) - too glamorous not to mention. The patterns can be a bit daunting, but the finished projects are worth looking at, if only for eye-candy.
- *Scarf Style* (Interweave Press) - another popular read. Again, for a reason. While some of the patterns are too simple, some are interesting enough to consider, like the famous [Lady Elenor entrelac stole](#).
- *Lace Style* (Interweave Press) - simple lace, elaborate lace, lace to cater to every taste.
- *Knitting Nature* (Gaughn, Gowdy) - beautiful, inspirational projects. Alas, this book has quite the list of errata - so consider carefully before knitting one of it's projects.
- *The Twisted Sisters Sock Workbook* (Vogel) - my first introduction to dual painted fair isle patterns. The pictures are amazing, even if the directions leave you confused at times. It's also a great spinning inspiration source.

SPINNING:

I'm going to assume you know how to spin, 'cuz I only have a couple of favorite spinning books. Most are painfully simplistic, and self-evident, so I don't bother. But, here are some useful ones:

- *In Sheep's Clothing* (Fournier) - want to know more about sheep breeds? This is the source for you. Educational without being mind-numbing, and it's specifically geared towards a handspinner's interests.
- *Spinning Designer Yarns* (Varney) - I taught myself boucle, curl, cabled, feather, cage, and beaded yarns using this book. Heck, I taught a workshop with it. It's a wonderful reference.
- *Colour in Spinning* (Menz) - great tips and tricks for dyeing, blending, and combing your own vibrant fibers.
- *Linen: Handspinning and Weaving* (Baines) - this is the best resource I have found for learning to spin flax, and learning the history behind this unsung fiber. It may be hard to find, but if you get a chance to read it, do so.

WEAVING:

- *Mastering Weave Structures* (Alderman) - great reference at a high price. But, worth it. The pictures alone are inspiration enough. It also makes a great coffee table book.
- *Handwoven Laces* (Muller) - I bought this when I first learned lace weaving, and still love it. It covers 4, 8, 12, and 16 shaft laces - drafting to weaving to finishing projects.
- *8-Shaft Patterns* (Strickler) - I love this book. I bought it when I first learned to weave, and I still reference it on weaving patterns and drafts. Need an overshot pattern? Curious about lace possibilities? Check this book.

SEWING:

- *The Medieval Tailor's Assistant* (Thursfield) - this book is one of the jewels in my collection. I rarely lend it out, and covet it to the extreme. It covers the history of garment construction from 1200 to 1450 in Europe. It also covers, step-by-step, the processes for making kirtles, gowns, mantles, accessories, etc. It's also a wonderful coffee table book.
- *A History of Costume* (Kohler) - while it's listed as a history book (cue klaxon), it's not too great for that. But, it's wonderful for accurate (to a point) patterns for making historical garments - from the ancient Egyptians to Victorian corsets.
- *Corsets and Crinolines* (Waugh) - speaking of ladies' undergarments... this is a great reference for the evolution of that incomprehensible garment, the corset. It covers reconstruction and other tidbits as well.

TEXTILE HISTORY/ ARCHAEOLOGY:

(well, I am a history freak)

- *Women's Work: The First 20,000 Years* (Barber) - commonly touted by American scholars as the end-all of textile archaeology, it IS a good comprehensive book. Unfortunately, it was written in the 70's and is out-dated by modern finds. I myself have seen pieces that contradict several of Barber's general claims. But, it remains a good basic history book and reference to textile techniques and technology.
- *The Mummies of Urumchi* (Barber) - this one is much better as to accuracy. Printed in the last decade, it focuses on the strange burials in Urumchi, China; along the traditional Silk Route. It has fantastic colour plates and is worth looking through.
- *Prehistoric Textiles* (Barber) - basically the same value as *Women's Work*. It's a good read, and intended to be read by archaeologists.
- *Roman Textiles* (Wild) - this is my prime Roman textile source. Hard to find (believe me), I had to get mine from Dr Wild himself - but, it's worth the effort, if you're interested in Roman textiles.
- *The Roman Textile Industry* (et al) - this was a tribute to Dr Wild by his grad students. It has a collection of essays on various aspects of the Roman textile industry. Recently published and well-edited, I use this book a lot and recommend it for interest value alone. You do need to have some basic archaeology and fibers knowledge to understand it.
- *Sheep and Man* (Ryde) - a history of the domestication of sheep and goats. It's enormous and has enough info to melt your brain; but, you'll never be ignorant about sheep breeds, their origins, or the effects of wool on the textile industry again.
- *World Textiles* (Shoeser) - a great little reference on world textile history. Everything from the Bronze Age to Chinese silk, to Etruscan sprang. I use it frequently, but do regret its brevity.
- *The Warp-Weighted Loom* (Hoffman) - the Greco-Roman and Nordic standard is covered thoroughly. This book is used by both academics and fiber artists alike. It has everything from history to construction.

- *Old-Time Tools and Toys of Needlework* (Whiting) - ever wonder how old scissors are? Where the thimble dates to? This is a fantastic source for information on the history of fiber tools we now take for granted. Even though it was written in the '70's, it remains accurate as far as I know and it's also a fun read.
- *Costume History and Style* (Russell) - while a bit dated, this text has a long history of use by costume historians. I have referenced it many a time. It also includes in each chapter (divided by culture and period) notable events of the time period and place, helping you put the clothing and fashion in context.
- *A History of Hand Knitting* (Rutt) - this is a great resource on the history of handknitting. It has pictures and graphs of the earliest knitted objects and how they were made; then it continues on up to the modern era. I love some of the colourwork patterns in it - griffons, lions, etc.

Now, I admit I don't own *all* of these (most, not all). Some of them I can't get my hands on permanently, and have resigned myself to repeated loans from local libraries. All I am suggesting is you give these goodies a look, and see if any of the catch your eye.

I also don't tend to favor books like, "Knit One" or the "Knitting Handbook" because after a month or two of knitting, the book is useless to its owner. Buy something that you can use for a very long time, if not eternity - why waste money meant to be spent on your stash?