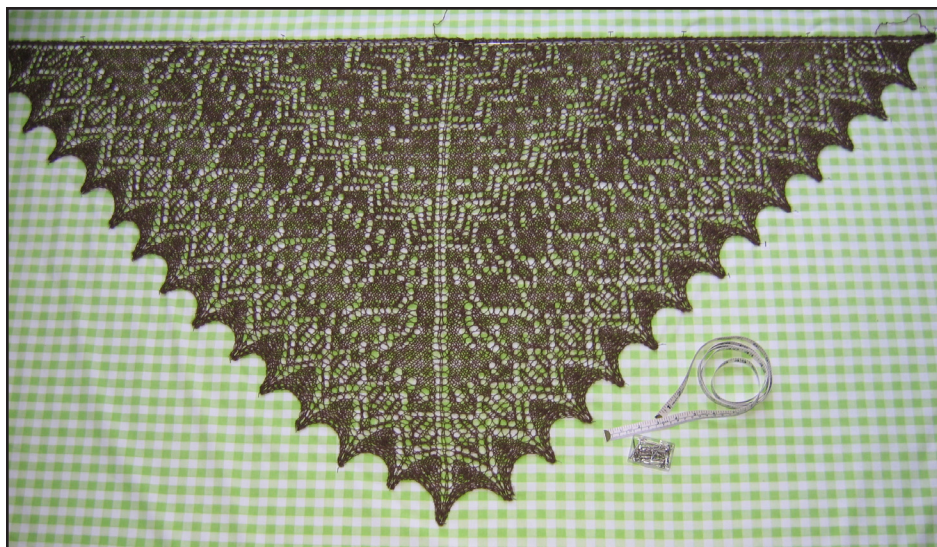


Evelyn Clark Designs . . .

Blocking Lace Shawls

Blocking is the step that reveals the beauty of lace; so once the shawl is off the needles, don't procrastinate.

How much the lace is stretched during blocking is a personal choice. Some shawls can be made quite a bit larger—garter stitch lace can grow by a third—and some will not stretch much. (I find that woven yarns stretch much less than plied yarns.) Regardless of how tightly it is blocked, the shawl usually will relax a bit after it is unpinned.



Wild West Lace Shawl blocked with wires along top edge. Remember to trim yarn ends after blocking.

Wet Blocking

I prefer to wet block unless the unblocked shawl already is the desired size. Then it simply can be steam blocked: Lay flat, smooth into shape, pin out edging, and steam, leaving it in place until thoroughly dry.

Supplies

For wet blocking, these supplies are helpful

- Small basin for water
- Soap appropriate for fiber
- Terry cloth towel
- Blocking wires
- Rustproof pins
- Tape measure

Also necessary is a flat surface where the shawl can be pinned and left to dry. If you don't have a carpeted area, you can create a blocking surface with insulation board. I like to use a sheet with a gingham or plaid pattern for a grid to cover the blocking area. (Thrift shops are a good source for the sheet.)

Blocking a Triangle

After weaving in yarn ends, wait to trim them after blocking. Then follow these steps

1. Soak in water (with soap, if desired) for 20 minutes or longer to saturate fiber.

2. Rinse in water the same temperature, and wrap in a towel to blot out as much water as possible.
3. If using blocking wires, run along top edge of triangle. Since wires are about 36" (91.5cm) long, usually two will be required, so overlap them at the center.
4. Smooth into shape on a flat surface.
5. Pin center top of triangle. Smooth out one side, pin corner point, and measure; pin other corner the same distance; then pin bottom point the same distance.
6. Pin across top edge.
7. Pull out and pin each edging scallop.
8. Leave in place until thoroughly dry.
9. Trim yarn ends.

Blocking Other Shapes

Use the same basic supplies and process to block squares, circles, or half-circles. For squares, start by pinning the corners equal distances apart. For circles, pin the center; then pin out half, quarter, and eighth segments an equal distance. Smooth stitches between segments into a circular shape and pin. For half circles, begin pinning the same as for a triangle; then pin out quarter segments. Smooth stitches between segments into a semi-circular shape, and pin.