

Stripes, Rings & Spots: Adding Color to Nåbinding

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Are you looking to add some design excitement to your nåbinding projects? You might consider adding a colored fringe, or adding some embroidery. Both of these techniques were used in period. It was equally common to add color within the nåbinding stitches. It is easy to add a second or even third color to your projects, no matter what stitch you are using. Here are some artifacts that include stripes or spots:



Horizontal Stripes

Two color stripes are the easiest to make. If you start from the cuff or brim of your piece, begin by creating a caterpillar long enough for your project and join it into a ring. Stitch just a few stitches with that color beyond the join. Now you are ready to add color 2. Thread the second color onto a second needle. Create a new stitch in the next loop of the ring with color 2 and pull it fairly tight. Make the next stitch a bit looser, until you match the stitch tension of the ring (about 3-4 stitches will do it), continuing around the ring until you come near the end of color 1.

Pick up the color 1 yarn and stitch onto the color 2 loops, continuing around until you get close to the end of color 2. Continue around in this manner, alternating between colors until your piece is complete.

To make a 3 color stripe, begin as for a 2 color stripe. After you have added color 2, move over a few stitches (8-10) and begin color 3 in the same way you began color 2. Continue around, alternating colors as needed.



When using 3 colors, be sure to skip enough stitches to make a gentle slope where the stripes begin. If you start too close it makes an awkward jog.

If you are beginning your piece from the toe, fingertip or crown, the concept is the same. Make the first round with color 1. Add color 2 or 3 after a few more stitches.



3-color stripes, Oslo stitch

Rings

Begin with a caterpillar and join it into a ring. Add a few more stitches to make the ring stable. As you are making the last stitch, **STOP** before bringing the needle back through the thumb loop. Using a second needle with the second color, bring the needle from the back, under the thumb loop (following the path the first needle would have taken). Make a stitch with the second color. Make a second stitch, **STOPPING** before bringing the needle back through the thumb loop. Drop that yarn, and pick up needle one to complete the stitch.



Drape the yarn on needle 2 over your index finger. As you are making stitches with needle 1, pick up the yarn on needle 2 along with your loops, before passing your needle under the thumb loop. This will capture the unused yarn within the stitch and put it in the correct position for when you are ready to change colors. Make as many stitches as you want with color 1. When you are ready to make another ring, stop using color 1, and complete the last stitch with color 2.



ring made of 2 stitches



rings, Finnish stitch



spots, Mammen stitch

Spots

Spots are equally easy to make. Begin with a caterpillar and join it into a ring. Add a few more stitches to make the ring stable. As you are making the last stitch, **STOP** before bringing the needle back through the thumb loop. Using a second needle with the second color, bring the needle from the back, under the thumb loop (following the path the first needle would have taken). Make a stitch with the second color. Make as many stitches with color 2 as you like (the spots in the green mitten are 6 stitches each). When you are ready to go back to color 1, stop before passing under the thumb loop and complete the stitch with color 1. Make as many stitches as you like with color 1, generally a few more than the size of the spot. Repeat, adding spots as often as you like. The green mitten has one row with spots, followed by one plain row, to make space between the spots.

Vertical Stripes

Vertical stripes are as easy as spots. Decide how many stitches you want for each stripe. Create the appropriately sized caterpillar. After you make the first row of spots, every following row will have equally sized spots directly above the ones below. Change threads back and forth in the same manner as for spots.



stripes, Russian stitch

Remember that nålbinding spirals, and the amount of spiral differs depending on stitch. For perfectly vertical stitches you may need to offset the color change by a stitch.

When you are making spots, rings or vertical stripes, the finished look of your piece will vary depending on the stitch you use. Rings make it easy to see the stitch structure and thread path. Big spots can be made by making the spots more than one row tall. Some stitches have smooth edges (Russian), others are jagged (Oslo). Use that to your advantage. You can vary the shape of vertical stripes by changing the number of stitches in the spots on each row. For example, row one has spots that are 7 stitches; row two has spots that are 5 stitches, row three has spots that are 3 stitches; row four has spots that are 7 stitches, etc. Get out your yarn and play!