Lacy I-cord-point Snowflake
Original pattern by Betsy Lowery, November 7, 2020

See bottom of page 3 for notes about this variation.

Construction Note: The circular increase method used here is adapted from an 8-point bowl base. For a 6-point design that lies flat, I have used two increase rounds in sequence followed by one round worked even (no increases), whereas the 8-point method employs increases on every alternate round.

Recommended materials
  ▪ Sparkly yarn in color choice: white, red, vivid green, gold, silver, *etc.*
  ▪ Set of 4 DPNs, size U.S. 5, 4, or 3 (select needle size appropriate for chosen yarn)
  ▪ Stitch markers, a tied circle of contrasting yarn suggested over plastic marker (7 needed: 6 for Round 8, and a different style to note start of round throughout)
  ▪ Plastic darning needle & scissors
  ▪ Seed beads, optional; sewing needle & thread, optional
  ▪ Twine for hanging loop, optional

Skill level, special techniques, abbreviations
Intermediate skill level:
  ▪ Knitted cast-on
  ▪ Knitting in the round with small work and meticulous precision
  ▪ Knitting into front and back of a stitch (K f/b)
  ▪ Yarnover (y/o)
  ▪ Knit 2 together (K2tog)
  ▪ Loose bind-off using "2 tog" method: knit 2 sts, then insert left needle tip into front side of both loops on right needle and knit them off together

Getting started
Using knitted or alternate cable method, cast on 6 stitches and arrange them on 3 DPNs; join for knitting in the round and place marker to note start/end of round. Long tail cast-on is not recommended because it yields too prominent a center, and the center needs to be as flat and as inconspicuous as possible.

Round 1
Knit all stitches. (6)

Frequently check stitch count before proceeding to a new round.

Round 2
K f/b of every st, around to marker. (12)

Round 3
Repeat previous round. (24)

Round 4
(Y/o, K2tog) around. (24) *Alternate design: knit all stitches in this round if you prefer a circle of holes near edge only of snowflake.*

Round 5
(K3, K f/b) around. (30) If it helps, notice that you are turning every group of 4 stitches into 5.

Round 6
(K4, K f/b) around. (36) (turning every set of 5 sts into a set of 6)

Round 7
(Y/o, K2tog) around. (36)

Round 8
With 6 stitch markers at hand (preferably, tied-yarn loops), (K5, PLACE MARKER, K f/b) around to original starting marker. (42)

BIND-OFF with i-cord loop at each point of snowflake
First, a final beading option as you work the i-cords during the bind-off round: cut enough working yarn to be sure you can complete the bind-off – maybe as much as 36". Use a needle small enough to go through each of 6 beads but large enough to thread your yarn tail through the needle's eye. (That's a tricky balance! Sometimes it works to tightly tie a knot around the yarn with strong sewing thread, then run the threaded needle through bead openings.) Keep the beads down away from where you are working until you slide each one up and place it as you wrap the left needle, per instructions below. If NOT using beads for the bind-off round, it is not necessary to cut working yarn away at this point.

A second style option: work bind-off round with contrasting color (CC) yarn to make a distinct outline around the snowflake. Change to CC at this point and cut original working yarn away with a tail long enough for working in. Caution: I found that the border of contrast actually looked better on the "wrong side" of the ornament. If you have no objection to how the back side of your work looks, consider making it the front side now, and weave yarn ends in on the "front," accordingly. Refer to above photo of snowflake worked in Vanna Glamour yarn in gold and copper shades.

Determine how many stitches you will work in each i-cord. Recommended number: 7. **If using beads**: When you are counting to 7 during the instructions below, at stitch 4 slide a single bead up and into place as you form that stitch. **If not using beads,** an even number of i-cord stitches will work fine. Recommended: 6 for a modest loop at each point of the snowflake; 7 for a medium loop; 8 for a larger loop.

During the bind-off round, the six stitches you identified by a marker preceding each of them, as you worked Round 8, will be knitted multiple times to form a one-stitch i-cord (basically a "chain stitch," but formed with knitting needles, not with a crochet hook). Here's how:

Begin loose bind-off by knitting two sts. Now, insert left needle tip into the front of both stitches (from bottom, up) and knit them off the right needle as one. Knit another stitch from left needle, and repeat the "2 tog" maneuver just described. Continue in this manner until you reach the first marker. <u>This is the first point of your snowflake and it is where you will work the first i-cord</u>. Remove the marker and knit the stitch. You now have 2 sts on right needle. Work these off together in the established bind-off manner. Now, *slide the one stitch straight across to the left needle and prepare to count carefully as you work the i-cord.*

Knit the stitch, counting "ONE." *Be sure to fully disengage the left needle point, else you may automatically slide into "knitted cast-on" mode, adding another loop. That's not what you want here.* Slide the stitch back across to the left needle and knit it again, counting "TWO." Repeat up to the predetermined number of loops for your i-cord. After you have counted your last number, perhaps it is "SEVEN," keep that stitch on the right needle. Knit another stitch from the left needle, then knit into the front loops of both together, in the established bind-off manner. You have now attached the end of your i-cord, forming a loop at the snowflake's point. Continue binding off around to the next marker and repeat i-cord instructions, etc., all the way around, setting unneeded DPNs aside as they become empty of loops.

Once you have knitted the final i-cord and the stitch to its left, knitting them off together, you should have one loop remaining on the right needle. Cut working yarn away with a tail long enough for weaving in. Thread end into a plastic needle and run needle tip through loop to secure it. Tighten up into a knot, then use needle to secure i-cord loop so it mimics the position of the previous loops. Weave yarn in on wrong side of ornament and trim away.

<u>Finishing</u>
Advised: use starting yarn tail in plastic needle to draw up the original 6 cast-on stitches into a tight center without a hole. This should improve the center's flatness.

<u>Blocking</u>
Wet blocking will smarten up the shape and the flatness of your snowflake. Natural fibers like wool tend to block well. Otherwise, try placing the ornament face-down under a heavy book or vase for a couple of days. Better to do this before sewing afterthought beads on.

<u>Optional add-on bead embellishment</u>
If you decided not to work any beads into the ornament along the way, you still have the option of using sewing thread to attach a single bead, or a tiny cluster of seed beads, in the center of the snowflake and/or within each i-cord loop. Choose beads of a delicate size, else they will be overpowering for this ornament's delicate, sparkly, lacy look.

<u>Hanging loop</u>
Using one of the i-cord loops as a convenient hole, attach a knotted hanging loop made from project yarn, another yarn, or jute twine. Or, fashion hanging loop from the final yarn end to avoid having to weave it in. For the slanty (spiral) look in the white model pictured at right, place your markers in Round 8 *between* the f & b instead of *before* that maneuver.

Advanced design option: three i-cords at each point

Once you are comfortable making the 6-, 7-, or 8- stitch i-cord on the indicated stitch during the bind-off round, on your next project try working a 4-stitch i-cord into each stitch *either side of* that larger i-cord loop. This will give your snowflake a more ornate and visible embellishment at each point. Just follow the same process and start your first smaller i-cord on the stitch *before* the marker. For the models shown after this fashion, I worked 4 loops in each smaller i-cord and 7 in the center loop.

You are welcome to share this pattern with friends, giving credit to Betsy Lowery, designer, and website longtailandshorttales.wordpress.com. Follow me at the_knitting_hour on Instagram!