

# 40

## Favorite Tips & Techniques

for Knitters of All Levels

From Designers Featured on



knittingdaily TV

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## 1 Read Your Pattern

### Read your pattern before beginning to knit.

Make a photocopy of the pattern (for personal use only) so you can mark it up. First, look at the finished sizes and determine which one is right for you. Use a highlighter and mark all the numbers that are relevant to the size of the finished project (Figure 1). This also gives you a chance to read through the pattern and take note of things like “at the same time” or “begin shaping”.



Figure 1

Use post-it notes to help keep your place. Cover up the row you just finished leaving the row you're working exposed. Move the post-it note down as you knit each row. And if you color code your notes, you can place them under areas you want to call out, such as “at the same time” (Figure 2).

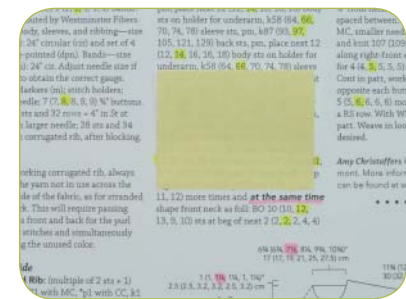


Figure 2

# 2

## Swatching

How many times have you heard: “Make a swatch before your start.” “Check your gauge to guarantee fit.”

### Why Swatch?

*To Guarantee Fit.*

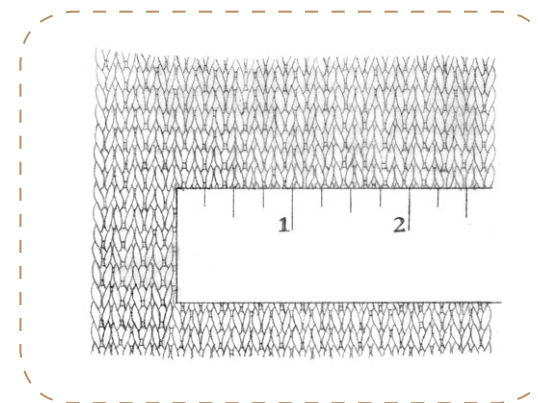
Regardless of how lucky you’ve been in the past, and no matter how tedious it is to put off the real knitting, if you want to ensure that a project will work up to the measurements specified in the pattern, you must work a sample of knitting and compare the gauge you get with the gauge specified. Gauge is simply the number of stitches and rows in a given number of inches of knitting. If your gauge is fewer stitches per inch than the pattern calls for, the finished garment will be too large; if your gauge is more stitches per inch, the finished garment will be too small.

**To measure gauge:** Cast on 30 to 40 stitches, or an equivalent multiple of the pattern stitch given, using the recommended needle size. Work in the specified pattern stitch until the piece measures a little more than 4" (10 cm) from the cast-on edge. (In general, knitting patterns measure gauge over 4 inches [10 cm].) Bind off the stitches loosely. Wash or block the swatch as you would the finished project. Lay the swatch on a flat surface. Place a ruler over the swatch and measure out 4" (10 cm) in width and length; then count the number of stitches and the number of rows (including fractions of stitches and rows—a half-stitch can make a big difference when multiplied by the finished width of the piece!) in the measured 4 inches. Repeat this process two or three times on different areas of the swatch to confirm your initial measurement. If you have more stitches and rows than called for in the instructions, your stitches are too small and you should try again with larger needles; if you have fewer stitches or rows, your stitches are too large and you should try again with smaller needles. Repeat the process until you get the gauge you’re after. Remember that the most important thing is to match the gauge specified in the pattern. You can change needle size, substitute yarns, play around with stitch patterns to your heart’s content—as long as your gauge matches the one specified in the pattern for your project, the dimensions of the finished project will match those of the pattern.

**Note:** Even the most carefully worked swatch can differ in gauge from a large piece of knitting. The cardinal rule is: The larger the swatch, the more accurate it is. Always check the measurements of a project after you’ve worked the first few inches to make sure the gauge of the project is consistent with the gauge of the swatch.

### Tips for Making a Gauge Swatch

- Always work the gauge swatch with the needles you intend to use for the final project. Even needles in the same size, if made from different materials or by different companies, can yield different gauges.
- The gauge in most published patterns is measured after blocking, so be sure to block your swatch (using the same method you will use to block the finished garment) before measuring.
- Use the exact same techniques in a swatch as you will use in the project. For example, if you are working a Fair Isle pattern, and always float the yarns across the back of your work, be sure to float the yarns in the swatch.
- For lace, cable, and color work patterns, try to work a gauge swatch that is at least two full repeats of the pattern both in width and in length. Doing so results in a more accurate measurement of the overall gauge: You will see beforehand how the pattern repeats fit together and whether one part of the pattern draws in (or spreads out) more than the rest.



### 3 Tracking Your Project Needle Size

Take a very long piece of contrasting scrap yarn and tie the exact number of knots to represent the size of your knitting needle. That way, if you remove your needle for use on another project, you will always know what size needle you were working with on the unfinished project (Figure 3).

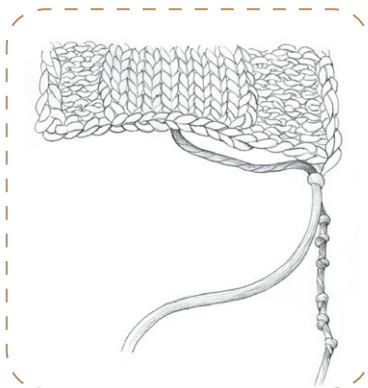


Figure 3

### 4 Joining Yarns

**Joining yarns is an essential technique that every knitter needs to know. You don't want to make a knot in your knitting—you want nice, smooth joins.**

One type of join is to work with two strands of yarn together: the old yarn and the new one. Hold the old and new yarn together so that the tail of the old one overlaps with the tail of the new one creating a continuous yarn (Figure 4). Knit with both strands for about 4 to 5 stitches (Figure 5). Then discontinue knitting with the old strand and continue on with the new one. On the next row, treat the two yarns as one stitch, not two. This join can be used for light- to worsted-weight yarn.



Figure 4



Figure 5

### 5 Weave in Yarn Tails as You Go

Place the needle in the next stitch and, before wrapping it, lay the yarn tail over the working yarn (Figure 6). Now work the next stitch; the tail is now fastened in. Repeat this for a about 1½ to 2 inches making sure to carry the yarn tail loosely to avoid puckering.

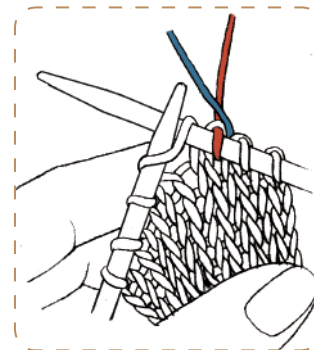


Figure 6

### 6 Tracking Your Cable Rows

Tie some scrap yarn with the cast-on yarn tail when working a cable. Take the scrap yarn and flip it over the needle every four rows—it looks like a running stitch up the project. You will always know what row of the cable you're on as you only have to count four rows. Why do it every four rows? Because so many cables are based on a multiple of four rows (Figure 7).

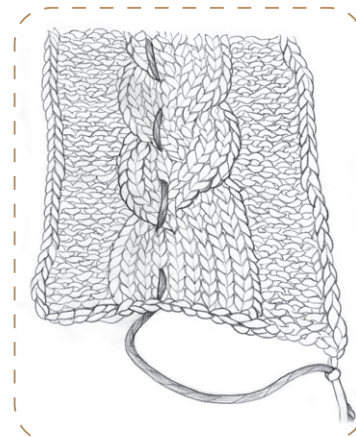


Figure 7

### 7 Picking Up Stitches on a Curve or Angle

Here's a tip for picking up stitches evenly around any curve or straightaway. Take a measuring tape and lay it alongside where you want to pick up stitches. Place a removable stitch marker every inch. Remembering what your stitch gauge is per inch, pick up that many stitches between each marker (Figure 8). For example, if your stitch gauge is 4 sts=inch—you'll pick up 4 stitches between each marker.



Figure 8

### 8 Prevent Twisted Stitches

Get started on the right foot with your knitting, so you can learn to solve the most common mistakes even before they happen.

Prevent twisted stitches by paying attention to *where* and *how* you insert your needle into a stitch. Every stitch has a front leg and a back leg—the front leg being closest to you (Figure 9). A twisted stitch is caused by knitting through the back leg of a stitch. Sometimes a pattern will call for a twisted stitch but the directions will say so. To make a knit stitch, insert the right-hand needle through the front leg of the stitch on your left-hand needle (Figure 10).

To make sure you're not twisting a stitch when purling, insert your needle into the front leg from right to left of the leg, and purl the stitch (Figure 11).

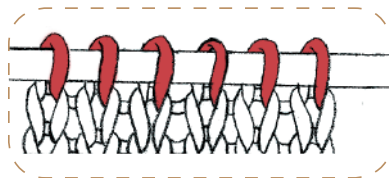


Figure 9

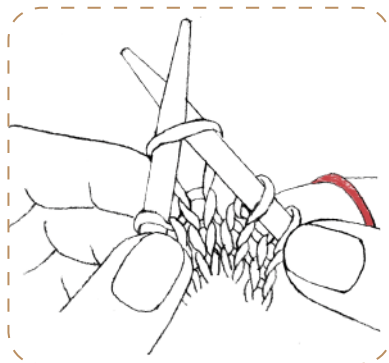


Figure 10

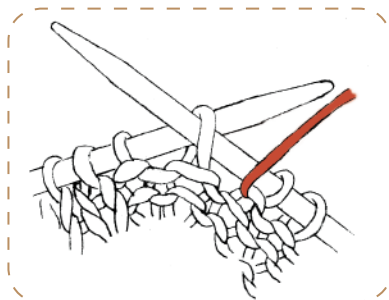


Figure 11

### 9 Fixing an Accidental Yarn Over

Increasing stitches accidentally can also happen—generally due to a stitch that becomes a yarn over when changing from a knit to a purl or a purl to a knit. The stitch then gets worked as a separate stitch (Figure 12 and Figure 13). To prevent this, make sure you move the working yarn to the front or back after working the stitch.

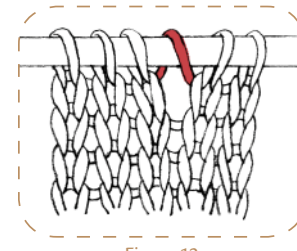


Figure 12

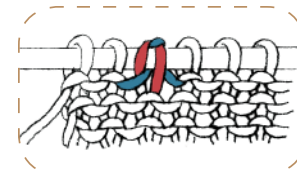


Figure 13

### 10 Fixing a Split Stitch

Irregular stitches and bumps are caused by splitting the yarn (Figure 14). Always make sure you're inserting the needle between the front and back leg of the stitch and not inserting it into the yarn itself.

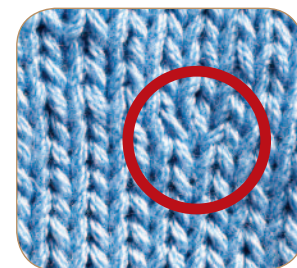


Figure 14

### 11 Fixing a Dropped Stitch

Stitches can be decreased accidentally by dropping a stitch (Figure 15) or knitting two stitches together. To prevent this, pay attention to your knitting—look at your stitches as you work them or feel the next stitch with your finger as you work it.



Figure 15



## 12 Fearless Ripping

What do you do when you made a mistake in your knitting and you need to unknit (a.k.a. tink or frog) a few stitches, or rip out many rows of knitting?

**Here's how to rip out a few stitches in a row without pulling out the whole row:**

If you're in the middle of a row, take the working yarn and hold the needle it's attached to in your right hand. (The working yarn comes off the back of knit stitches and front for purl stitches.) Place the left needle into the stitch right underneath the live stitch on the right needle from front to back (Figure 16). Slip the stitch from right needle to left needle, pulling the working yarn to unknit the stitch (Figure 17).

If you have to rip out many rows, take the knitting off your needle and pull the yarn out of the stitches, row by row, winding the ripped out yarn on a ball winder or a swift as you go.

If you have to rip out the entire piece and the yarn is "crinkled" from the knitting, you can remove those crinkles in a few ways. (This works very well for natural fiber yarns.) Wind the yarn into a skein and secure it firmly in a few places. Wash it according to yarn label instructions; hang it with light weights on the bottom of the skein, and let it dry. The light weights will pull the skein taut. A quicker way to remove crinkles instead of washing is, once you've make a skein, use a steam iron and give the yarn steam bursts, pulling the skein taut as you work your way around the skein. A steaming tea kettle also does the trick in place of an iron. But be careful to keep your hands out of the steam.

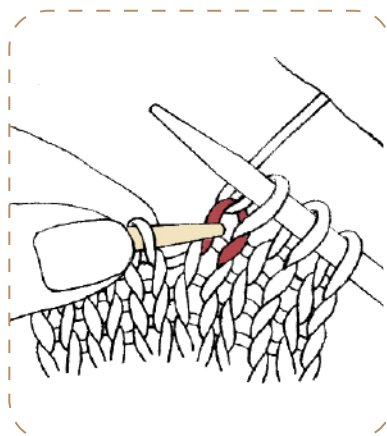


Figure 16

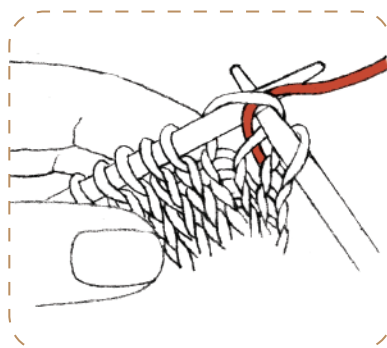


Figure 17

## 13 Ripping Out Rows

**Take the fear out of ripping your knitting without dropping a single stitch.**

See a mistake a few rows back? Use a much smaller-gauge needle than the one you're knitting with and pick up one loop (right leg) of every single stitch straight across the row (Figure 18). Pay attention to the base of the loops as you're doing so to ensure you're in the same row all the way across. Be careful not to pick up extra stitches by splitting stitches. Once all the stitches are picked up, pull out the knitting—all the loops are now on your needle and none have been dropped (Figure 19).



Figure 18



Figure 19

## 14 Swiss Darning

Do you need to fix small holes or weak spots in your knitting? Eunny Jang offers a tutorial on darning knitting using an old-world technique—Swiss darning. If you want your repair to look just like knitting, use this method when you have a hole with no base stitches. Set up a framework of sewing thread—this makes it easier to establish your stitches. Bring the tapestry needle from the back to front at the base of the stitch. Insert the needle from right to left under the sewing thread and back into the stitch from the row below. Continue doing this across the row connecting to the base stitch on the edge. When finished, remove the sewing thread (Figure 20, 21, 22).

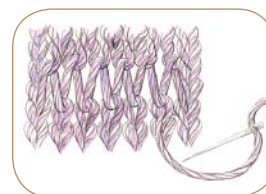


Figure 20

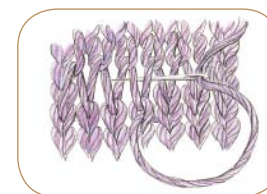


Figure 21

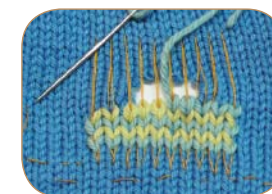


Figure 22

# 15

## Knitting with Many Strands of Yarn

Want to knit chunky and use multi-yarns all at one time? Have a bunch of single skeins, when combined, would knit up into a quick scarf? Eunny Jang recommends placing all your yarns in a bowl together so they don't roll around on the floor. Or put each yarn in an individual bowl so they don't get tangled around each other. Here's a few more.

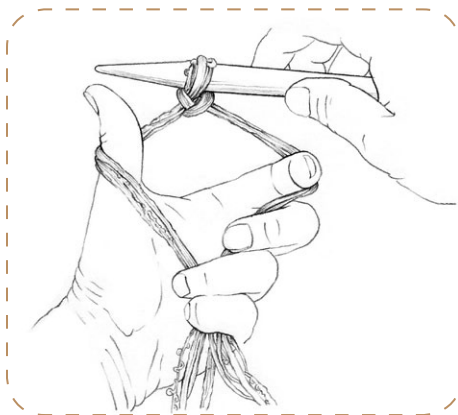


Figure 23: Cast-on using all five yarns at one time, just like a single-stranded yarn.

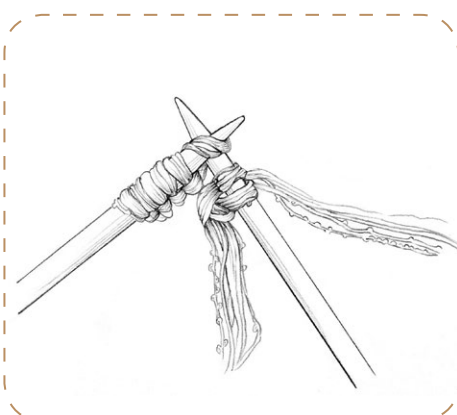


Figure 24: When knitting, be careful not to split the yarns. And knit using all five at one time.

# 16

## Knit Flawless Color Stripes in Ribbing

Wonder how to achieve a crisp even stripe when ribbing? On any given color-change row, knit completely across the row—do not purl. After the color-change row is completed, continue working in ribbing as per pattern. Look at the difference in striping in the sample (Figure 25). The bottom half is knitted in 1×1 rib as normal. The top half (above the line) is knitted the flawless method.



Figure 25

# 17

## Stranding and Knitting Multi-Colors

There are numerous ways to hold your yarns when stranded knitting or Fair Isle knitting. Lisa Myers and Eunny Jang both agree that the most common way is holding a yarn in each hand. It's fast and efficient. Hold one yarn in the right hand and one in the left hand: pick a stitch with your left hand, throw a stitch with your right hand.

### Stranding

When working with two colors in the same row, a background color and a pattern color, the color not in use will be carried or "stranded" loosely across the back of the knitting—Fair Isle patterns are always worked this way. Stranding leaves no sign of the carried colors on the right side of the work.

Stranding is easiest if you knit with both right and left forefingers, working the background color in the right hand and the pattern color in the left hand (Figure 26). While carrying the yarn not in use along the wrong side, be careful not to catch it in with the working yarn and draw it through to the right side where it can be seen. The stranded yarn should lie flat across the back of the fabric. If you strand too tightly, the fabric will pucker. To avoid this, stretch out the group of stitches on the right needle at every color change. This will ensure that the stranded yarn is long enough to accommodate the "give" of the knitted fabric. Blocking the garment after it is finished will allow the strands and stitches to bond. Gently stretch the knitted fabric until it is smooth.

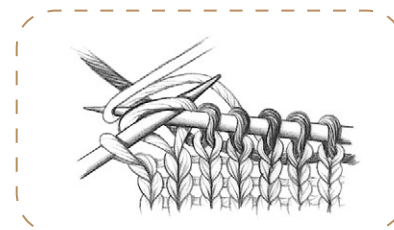


Figure 26: Right hand knits with background color, left hand carries pattern color.

### Stranding Methods

#### Knit rows

Use your left hand to keep the pattern color below the tip of the left needle while your right forefinger brings the background color around the tip of the right needle to knit the stitch (Figure 27). Repeat this until the colors change. Use your left forefinger to bring the pattern yarn around the needle and use the tip of the needle to draw the new stitch through while your right hand keeps the background color away from the needle tip and above the other stitches.

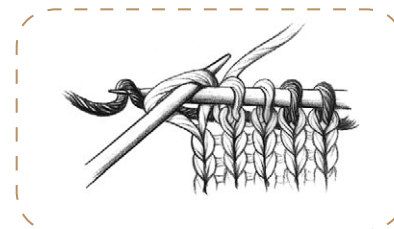


Figure 27: Right finger keeps background color above pattern color.

# 17

## Stranding and Knitting Multi-Colors (*continued*)

### Purl rows

The purl row, although a little more difficult to learn, is worked the same way. Use your left hand to keep the pattern yarn below the purled stitches when it is not being worked (Figure 28).

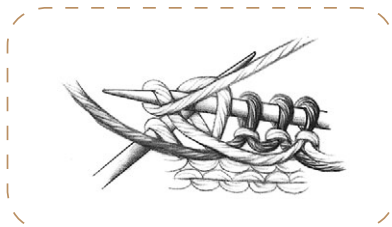


Figure 28: Left hand holds pattern color under stitch being purled.

Use your right hand to hold the background yarn up and away from the needle tips while your left forefinger passes the pattern yarn around the needle tip (Figure 29).

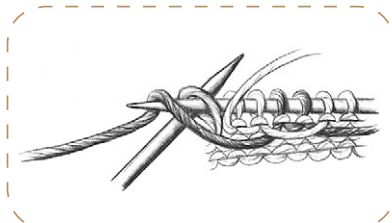


Figure 29: Right hand holds background color away from needle tips. Right hand holds background color away from needle tips.

# 18

## Make Knitting Intarsia Easier

### Make knitting intarsia easier and get rid of tangles.

Intarsia knitting is notorious for strands of yarns getting tangled up. A simple way to avoid the tangles is to use short lengths of yarns, no more than one yard, and just let them tangle. Because you're working with short lengths, you can easily untangle them as you go (Figure 30).

You can also make bobbins to hold your yarn lengths. Make them out of poster board (Figure 30a). This shape allows you to unravel as you need.



Figure 30



Figure 30a

# 19

## Minimize Color Pooling

### Minimize color pooling with handpainted yarns.

Handpainted, multi-colored yarns have a tendency to pool (areas where the same color stack upon itself row-to-row). You can minimize this pooling by first winding two balls from the same hank of yarn. Then, when working flat, alternate the balls of yarn at the end of every other row. When working in the round, switch the yarn every row. These techniques will reduce the chance of color stacking up.



### 20 Marking the End of Row

Continuously knit off the stitches on one needle and move onto the next one. Use a split stitch marker and move it as you knit (Figure 31). Pull your working yarn fairly tight to avoid ladders when you switch from one double-pointed needle to another.

You can also use very small circular needles to avoid the ladder. Work down to a fairly small circumference but you'll still have to transfer to double-pointed needles at some point as the circulars aren't small enough.

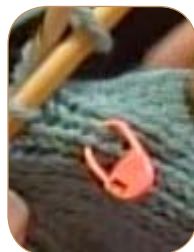


Figure 31

### 21 Jogless Join

**South American Join:** Designer Vicki Square shows how to join colors when striping while working in the round. If you want your stripes to join and not jog, here's what to do: Work to last stitch of the round before the color change. Slip the last stitch from the round knitwise. Then pick up the first stitch of the round from the row below from the back (Figure 32) (the one below the stitch that's on the needle) and place it on the left-hand needle, slip it knitwise. Then insert the left needle into the front of those two stitches and knit them together to make one stitch (Figure 33). This makes a continuous round without a color jog.



Figure 32



Figure 33

### 22 Lace Primer: Increasing and Decreasing

Making a project in lace takes less yarn than one made using cables, plus it stretches your knitting enjoyment. Learn the basic increases and decreases, and you'll enjoy knitting lace for years to come.

#### Ways to Knit Lace

To make lace, you simply need to know how to make yarnovers and decreases and how to count the stitches in between the two. But before you can begin to design with lace, you need to understand the structures of these yarnovers and decreases.

#### Yarnover Increases

Yarnovers are made in slightly different ways depending on what kind of stitches—knit or purl—precede or follow them. When working right-side rows of stockinette or garter stitch, a yarnover is made between two knit stitches. Simply wrap the yarn around the needle from front to back (Figure 34). To work a yarnover after a knit stitch and before a purl stitch, bring the yarn to the front under the needle, around the top of the needle to the back, then under the needle again to the front (Figure 35). Between two purl stitches, work the yarnover by bringing the yarn over the top of the needle (front to back), then around the bottom of the needle to the front again (Figure 36). Work a yarnover after a purl stitch and before a knit stitch by bringing the yarn over the top of the needle from front to back (Figure 37).

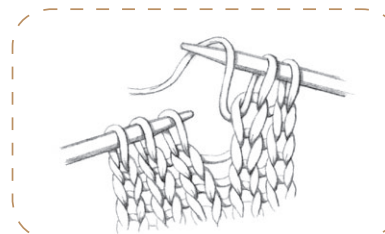


Figure 34

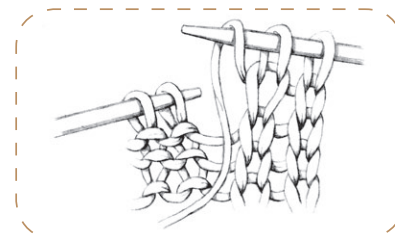


Figure 35

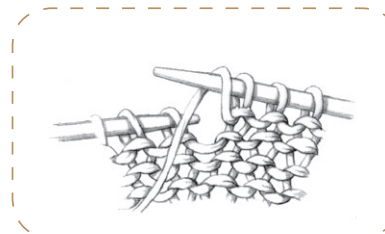


Figure 36

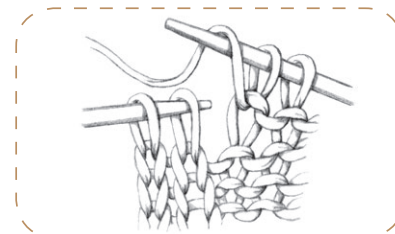


Figure 37

### 23 Lace: Lifeline

**Use a Lifeline:** Lifelines help you to see a complete row. Thread waste line through the stitches on your needle and spread out your lace for blocking (Figure 38).



Figure 38

## Special Technique Tips

### 24 I-Cord

Making a welt looks like a mock I-cord, but it's really just rows of knitting knit stitches together—just like binding off shoulder seams together (Figure 39). Use the applied I-cord when you want a piping effect on the edge of your project. Follow these tips from Eunny Jang.

#### I-Cord

With double-pointed needle, cast on desired number of stitches. \*Without turning the needle, slide the stitches to other end of the needle, pull the yarn around the back, and knit the stitches as usual; repeat from \* for desired length (Figure 40).

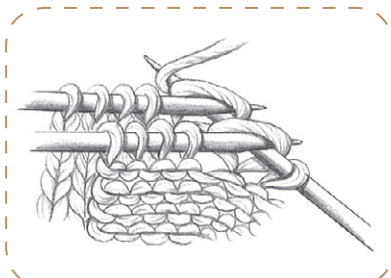


Figure 39: Binding off stitches together.

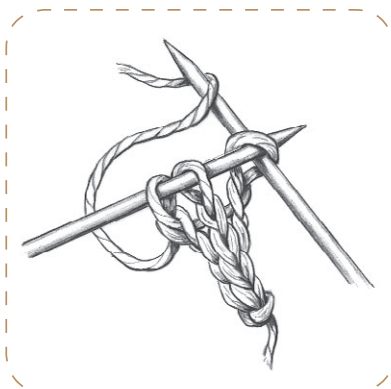


Figure 40: I-cord

### 25 Applied I-Cord

#### Applied I-Cord

As I-cord is knitted, attach it to the garment as follows: With garment RS facing and using a separate ball of yarn and circular needle, pick up the desired number of stitches along the garment edge. Slide these stitches down the needle so that the first picked-up stitch is near the opposite needle point. With double-pointed needle, cast on desired number of I-cord stitches. Knit across the I-cord to the last stitch, then knit the last stitch together with the first picked-up stitch on the garment, and pull the yarn behind the cord. Knit to the last I-cord stitch, then knit the last I-cord stitch together with the next picked-up stitch. Continue in this manner until all picked-up stitches have been used.

**Note:** When working attached I-cord, do not pick up every stitch. Work the edging for about 2" (5 cm), then lay the piece flat to make sure that the cord lies flat along the edge—if it doesn't, pull out the necessary stitches and rework, picking up more or fewer stitches along the garment edge, as needed.

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# 26

## Cable Without a Cable Needle

Progress on a heavily cabled project is much speedier when you don't need to constantly pick up and put down a separate cable needle. Cabling with two working needles alone is an easy technique to pick up—one that you can apply to almost any cable.

### Understanding a Cable

All knitted cables are formed by knitting stitches out of sequence. For a standard six-stitch cable, the first three stitches of the group are held either to the front or to the back of the work on a separate needle, the next three stitches are knitted as usual, and the held stitches are finally worked. The result is a group of stitches that cross either over or under another group.

When you work without a separate holding needle, you must reposition the waiting stitches on the left-hand needle instead.

#### Step 1

On a cable crossing row, work to just before the full cable group. With the yarn in back, slip all the stitches from the group purlwise to the right-hand needle to loosen them.

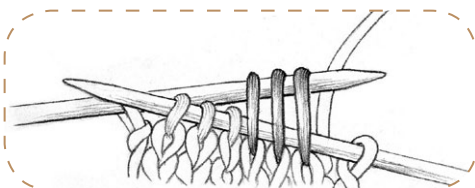


Figure 41

#### Step 2

For a cable crossing right (standard instructions: hold the cable needle to the back of the work), bring the left-hand needle to the front of the work and insert it into the fronts of all stitches that need to be held (Figure 41). For a cable crossing left (standard instructions: hold the cable needle to the front of the work), bring the left-hand needle to the back of the work and insert it into the backs of all stitches that need to be held (Figure 42).

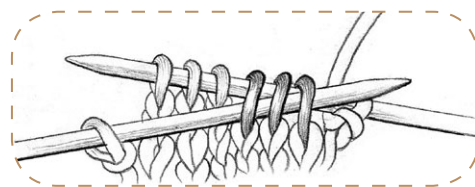


Figure 42

#### Step 3

Between the left thumb and forefinger, pinch the base of the slipped stitches firmly. Pull the right-hand needle completely free of all the slipped stitches (Figure 43; half will be on the

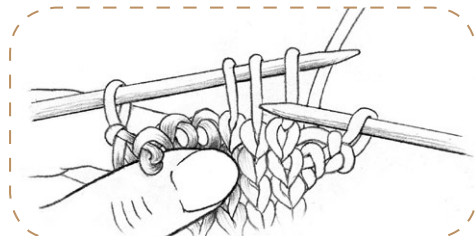


Figure 43

left-hand needle; half will be free for a moment) and maintaining front/back position as established, quickly reinsert it into the free stitches. Make sure all the stitches are seated correctly on the needle; if they're held firmly, the stitches won't have twisted or moved at all during the time that they were dropped.

#### Step 4

Slip stitches on the right-hand needle back to the left-hand needle. The stitches are now out of order and will be crossed when they're worked (Figure 44). Work as directed.



Figure 44

**Standard instructions for a six-stitch cable right cross** Slip 3 sts to cn and hold in back, k3, k3 from cn.

Modified instructions for a six-stitch cable right cross Slip 6 sts to the right-hand needle; insert the left-hand needle into back loops of the first 3 sts slipped; pull the right-hand needle free of all 6 sts and reinsert it into the 3 dropped sts, keeping right needle to the front of work; slip the 3 dropped sts back to the left-hand needle; k6.

**Standard instructions for a six-stitch cable left cross**

Slip 3 sts to cn and hold in front, k3, k3 from cn.

**Modified instructions for a six-stitch cable left cross**

Slip 6 sts to the right-hand needle; insert the left-hand needle into fronts of the first 3 sts slipped; pull the right-hand needle free of all 6 sts and reinsert it into the 3 dropped sts, keeping right needle to the back of work; slip the 3 dropped sts back to the left-hand needle; k6.

This technique can be used for almost any cable crossing. Once the stitches are rearranged on the left-hand needle, you simply work them as directed. (Note that because the technique relies on being able to hold all the dropped stitches firmly in place for a moment, you may want to work very wide cables the traditional way.)



# 27

## Gathered Ruffles and Ruches

Ruffles can be worked from the bottom up (going from a wide edge to a narrow gathered edge), from the top down (going from a narrow gathered edge to a wide edge), or from side to side. The gathered ruffle is the simplest type of ruffle, formed by working all the shaping on a single row—decreasing if worked from the bottom up; increasing if worked from the top down.

For a standard amount of flair, the wide edge should have twice the number of stitches as the narrow edge (Figure 45). Increase one stitch in every stitch.

For a more dramatic ruffle, the wide edge should have three to four times the number of stitches as the narrow edge (Figure 46). Increase one stitch in every stitch for two to three rows until desired number of stitches.

To work the gathered ruffle in a vertical orientation (Figure 47), pick up and knit one stitch in about every two-three stitches along the channel between columns of stitches. Purl a row, then double the number of stitches in the next row.

If you want to make a gather in your knitting (also known as ruching), take a blunt-end needle and sew a running stitch across the width of the fabric, gathering the fabric along the running stitch. Make sure you do this before you sew the piece into an edging. Ease the gathered fabric into the edging.



Figure 45: Gathered/Bottom Up



Figure 46: Crimped/Bottom Up



Figure 47: Gathered/Top Down

# 28

## Mattress Stitch Seam

With RS of knitting facing, use threaded needle to pick up one bar between first two stitches on one piece (Figure 48), then corresponding bar plus the bar above it on other piece (Figure 49). \*Pick up next two bars on first piece, then next two bars on other (Figure 50). Repeat from \* to end of seam, finishing by picking up last bar (or pair of bars) at the top of first piece.

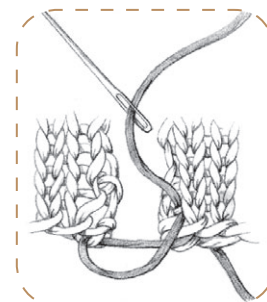


Figure 48

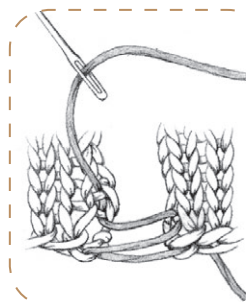


Figure 49

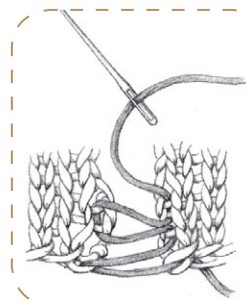


Figure 50

# 29

## Backstitch Seam

Working from right to left, one stitch in from selvedge, bring threaded needle up through both pieces of knitted fabric (Figure 51), then back down through both layers a short distance (about a row) to the right of the starting point (Figure 52). \*Bring needle up through both layers a row-length to the left of backstitch just made (Figure 53), then back down to the right, in same hole used before (Figure 54). Repeat from \*, working backward one row for every two rows worked forward.

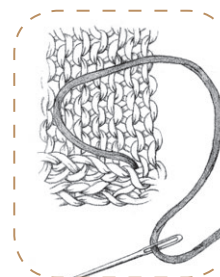


Figure 51

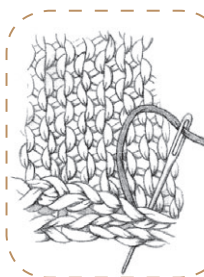


Figure 52

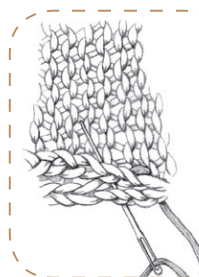


Figure 53



Figure 54



### 30 Knit Your Edging as a Separate Piece

Knit your edging as a separate piece and attach it to the main garment. Using open-end stitch markers, line up the pieces as you sew. Sew the edging using a mattress stitch (see Tip 28), right sides up, and facing you. Maintain an easy, steady tension. Use the same yarn as your base yarn or edging yarn so that the seam is invisible.

### 31 Knitted-On Garter-Stitch Edging

Work perpendicular to your project and live stitches on your needle. Cast on 5 edge stitches next to the live stitches on the main project. Knit 4 stitches, slip last edge stitch knitwise, slip first stitch from body knitwise, slip stitches back to the left-hand needle and knit together through back loop to join. Next row: Slip first stitch purlwise, knit every stitch. Keep repeating this sequence as your edging grows.

### 32 Yarn-Over Buttonhole

Knit to the stitch where your buttonhole starts, then knit 2 stitches together followed by a yarn over; continue working across the row. In the next row, when you come to the yarn over, work it as a stitch (Figure 55).



Figure 55

### 33 Grand-Eyelet Buttonhole

Knit 2 stitches together, yarn over twice; on returning row, just work one yarn over not both—this creates a bigger hole for a larger button (Figures 56 and 57).



Figure 56



Figure 57

### 34 One-Row Buttonhole

Work to where you want the buttonhole to begin, bring yarn to front, slip stitch purlwise, bring yarn to back (Figure 58), pass the first slipped stitch over the second (just like working a bind-off), do this until 3 stitches have been bound-off (Figure 59). Place the last loop back on left needle, turn work and do a knitted cast-on but cast on 4 stitches instead of 3 (Figure 60). Bring yarn to the back, slip first stitch off the left needle onto the right needle and pass the last cast-on stitch over it (Figure 61), work to the next buttonhole and repeat.



Figure 58

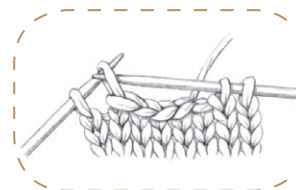


Figure 59



Figure 60



Figure 61

### 35 Sewing on Buttons

To avoid the sagging button, sew a smaller simple shirt button on the underside of the sweater and under the special button. This helps to stabilize the exterior button (Figure 62).

And if you're making a cardigan that you can slip over your head but want buttons for added interest, sew the cardigan opening closed and the buttons will always be stable.

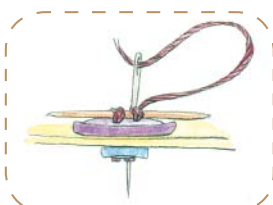


Figure 62

### 36 Corkscrew Fringe

#### Knit a fringe that spirals.

Cast on as many stitches as desired (sample is 7 stitches). On the very first row, increase all the stitches right away by knitting in the front and back of each stitch, thereby doubling the number of stitches on the needle. In the return row, bind off all the stitches. This rapid increase and bind-off creates a spiral fringe (Figure 63).



Figure 63

### 37 Twisted Cords

#### Create cords for closures.

Twisted Cords (great for projects requiring ties, such as baby booties or hoodies): Cut eight strands of yarn to the same length. Take all strands and make a loop at one end (Figure 64). Slip the loop on to a fixed point—one that you can pull tension against. Spin the cord in the same direction until the slack is taken up and the yarns start to overtwist (Figure 64a). Place one finger at midpoint and let the yarn double back on itself, twisting it into a two-ply cord. Slip it off the anchor and knot off the ends; trim (Figure 64b). You can use this same technique for special cords—use multi-colors or multi-textures or fine, delicate yarns to chunky (Figure 64c). You'll need to adjust the numbers of strands depending on the desired thickness of the final cord.

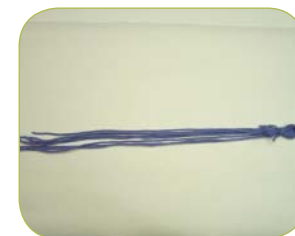


Figure 64

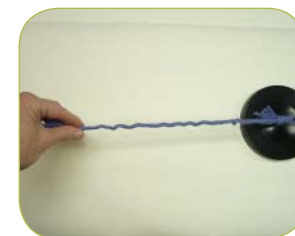


Figure 64a



Figure 64b



Figure 64c

### 38 Pom-Pom

Whether it's gift-giving time and you want to trim a package with a yarn embellishment, or you're looking for an accessory trim, Eunny Jang shares two simple ideas that just take yarn, cardboard, and a scissor.

Cut two circles of cardboard, each  $\frac{1}{2}$ " (1.3 cm) larger than desired finished pom-pom width. Cut a small circle out of the center and a small edge out of the side of each circle (Figure 65). Tie a strand of yarn between the circles, hold circles together and wrap with yarn—the more wraps, the thicker the pom-pom. Cut between the circles and knot the tie strand tightly (Figure 66). Place pom-pom between two smaller cardboard circles held together with a needle and trim the edges (Figure 67). This technique comes from *Nicky Epstein's Knitted Embellishments*, Interweave Press, 1999.

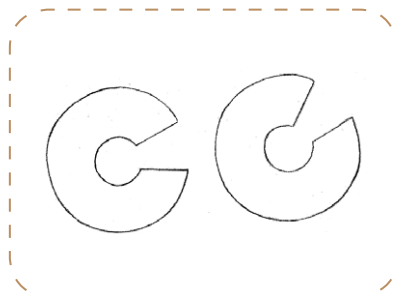


Figure 65

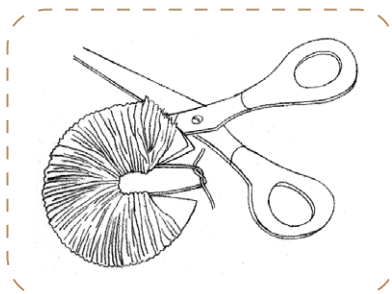


Figure 66

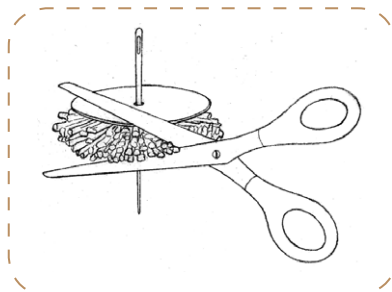


Figure 67

### 39 Tassel

Cut a piece of cardboard 4" (10 cm) wide by the desired length of the tassel plus 1" (2.5 cm). Wrap yarn to desired thickness around cardboard. Cut a short length of yarn and tie tightly around one end of wrapped yarn (Figure 68). Cut yarn loops at other end. Cut another piece of yarn and wrap tightly around loops a short distance below top knot to form tassel neck. Knot securely, thread ends onto tapestry needle, and pull to center of tassel (Figure 69). Trim ends.

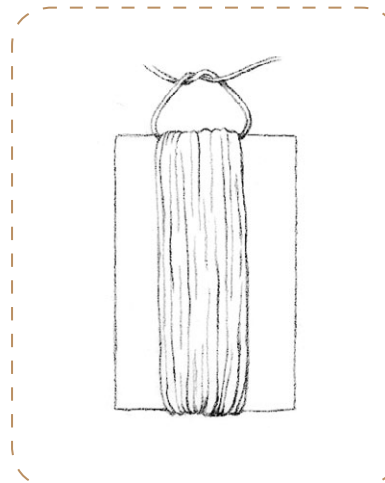


Figure 68

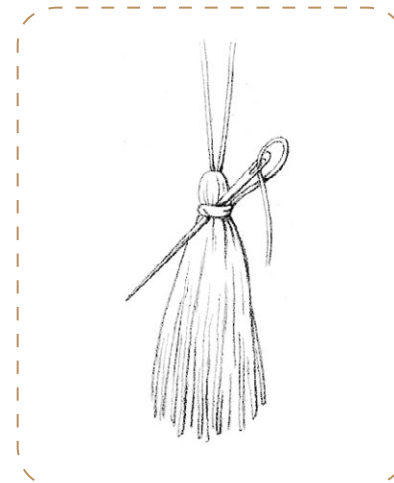


Figure 69

# 40

## Blocking

Add the finishing touches at the very end of your knitting using these wet-blocking techniques.

### Wet Blocking

By definition wet-blocking uses more moisture than steam-blocking, and can be used to stretch and enlarge a knitted piece (although loosely knitted pieces stretch more easily than tightly knitted ones, and any extra inches you gain in width, you may lose in length). There are three degrees of wet-blocking, depending on the amount of moisture added to the knitted fabric.

Spray-blocking is the mildest form of wet-blocking. It works equally well for all fibers—although silks and synthetics require more wetness than wool—and it allows for total control over temperature, dampness, and finished texture because you are not restricted to the temperature and amount of steam that comes out of your iron, and you can gently pat and shape the piece with your hands while you work. Pin the handknit to shape right side up on a padded surface placed away from direct sun or heat. Fill a spray bottle with cool tap water and spritz a fine, even mist over the piece. Use your hands to gently pat the moisture into the handknit, if desired, but be careful not to flatten any textured stitches.

Wet-wrapping imparts moisture deeper into the fibers and is appropriate for all types of yarn, especially cotton and acrylic, which are less resilient than wool and require more moisture penetration to reshape stitches. To wet-wrap, thoroughly soak a large bath towel in water, then put it through the spin cycle of a washing machine to remove excess moisture. Place the handknit on top of the towel, then roll the two together jelly-roll fashion. Let the bundle sit until the handknit is completely damp, overnight if necessary. Unroll the towel, remove the handknit, and pin it out to measurements on a padded surface away from direct sun or heat.

Immersion imparts moisture thoroughly through the fibers and allows complete reshaping. It is appropriate for all fiber types, and particularly ideal for heavily ribbed or cabled fabrics, or fabrics that have taken on a biased slant during knitting. It is also the method to use after washing a handknit. To immerse a handknit, turn it inside out and soak it in a basin of lukewarm water for about twenty minutes, or until thoroughly wet, gently squeezing water through the piece if necessary. Drain the water, carry the wet handknit in a bundle to the washing machine, and put it through the spin cycle (or roll it in dry towels) to remove excess moisture. Do not twist or wring the handknit. Shape the piece right side up on a padded surface, using pins (and blocking wires) as necessary.

### Blocking Tips

- Experiment with blocking your gauge swatch before you block an actual knitted piece.
- Do not rub, twist, or wring a handknit. Doing so may distort the stitches beyond correction.
- Before blocking, weave in all loose ends—the blocking process will help secure the ends in place.
- It is preferable to block individual pieces before sewing them together. Blocking makes the sewing process easier and the results of blocking are more consistent when you work with a single layer of fabric. You can block a garment that has been sewed together, but the results may not be as good.
- Many experts warn against blocking ribbing, which will lose its natural elasticity if blocked while stretched open. However, ribbing can be successfully blocked if you squeeze it into its most contracted state (so that all the purl stitches recede behind the knit stitches) before you apply moisture.
- Allow the blocked handknit to air-dry completely before moving it.



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## Books:

*Nicky Epstein's Knitted Embellishments*, Interweave Press, 1999

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