

Woolly Wormhead

unique & original woolly Hat designs

3 Needle Bind-off

The 3needle bind-off is a popular method for joining live stitches. Unlike Kitchener stitch it isn't invisible, but is fairly unnoticeable if the bind-off is worked with the right sides of the work together.

Personally, I like to work this technique with the wrong sides of the work together, so that it becomes a feature of your knitting – it creates a strong, structured ridge that can look very effective and add additional detail to a piece.

This bind-off is commonly used for seams where extra support is needed, for instance shoulder seams, where it's bulk helps give a garment shape and prolong the life of the seam.

To do this bind-off, you will need a spare needle, ideally slightly larger than the working needles, and some waste yarn, which would normally be the tail recently cut after knitting has finished. The amount of yarn needed will vary depending on your project, and 3 times the length of the seam to be joined is a good estimate.

Because you are working a k2tog *and* a cast-off in one go, your work can get a bit tight, and a tight seam doesn't have much flexibility. This is why it is recommended that the 3rd needle be a slightly larger gauge than the working needles.

In this example shown here, the 3needle bind-off is being worked as a decorative seam, so the wrong sides of the work are together. Also, the stitches on the back needle have been released from a provisional cast-on. For a less visible seam, place the right sides of the work together before joining.



1. Using the spare needle, insert in knit-wise into the first stitch on the front needle and the first stitch on the back needle.



2. Wrap the yarn around the spare needle and pull through both stitches, knitting them together (K2tog)



3. Insert the needle again into the next stitch on both the front needle and the back needle, the same as you did in step one.



4. Knit these 2 stitches together, the same as you did in step 2. There are now 2 stitches on the spare needle.



5. Using one of the needles in your left hand, lift the first/lower stitch on the spare needle over the 2nd/upper stitch and slip it off the needle, exactly the same as you would when you are casting off.



6. Now repeat from step 3 until all stitches have been cast off, and then thread yarn through the remaining stitch on the spare needle to finish.

The Hat I was knitting when I took the photos for this tutorial was a sideways design, and I had short rows to encounter whilst binding off. Short rows are not difficult to deal with when joining live stitches, and the method shown below works for kitchener stitch as well as the 3needle bind-off.

The important thing to remember with short rows is to be consistent throughout your work – it doesn't matter whether you knit into the back of them or not, as this is a personal choice and we all like to do them different ways. Interesting effects can be achieved by performing the short rows differently, so try and experiment a little. You don't have to try and make shaping in knitting invisible, because more often shaping won't be invisible, so it can be much more interesting to make a feature of them.



7. Insert the right hand needle into the wrap to lift it.



8. Lift the wrap up onto the needle so that it sits next to its stitch.

9. If you worked the wraps in other areas of the pattern by knitting into them together through the backs of the loops, then you will need to lift both the wrap and it's stitch off the needle, twist them towards you and then place them back onto the holding needle ready to join them.

This method of twisting has exactly the same effect as knitting through the back of the loops.

You can also do this when grafting, and treat the wrap and it's stitch as one stitch. If you didn't knit into the backs of the loops when working the short rows then you don't need to perform this twist.



10. Now perform the next step as normal, and knit the wrap with it's stitch together with the stitch on the other needle. You'll need to do this for each short row wrap that appears during the bind-off.

Contact:

All information included is accurate to the best of my knowledge, and is gained through my own experimentation and development.

Copyright Woolly Wormhead © 2009. All rights reserved.

Website: <http://woollywormhead.com>

Ravelry: <http://www.ravelry.com/groups/wormheads-hats>