

Woolly Wormhead

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Kitchener Close Up

I won't be doing any indepth photographic tutorials on the basics of kitchener here, so if you're new to grafting check out my other tutorial, 'Kitchener Stitch Basics – Stocking Stitch' What I aim to do here, apart from reiterate and get the brain to absorb, is to point out the differences between stocking stitch, reverse stocking stitch and garter stitch grafting.

Now, I'm going to presume the following things:-

- You've tried grafting before, so most of this will make sense,
- That the right sides of the work are facing you, and the wrong sides (back) are together.
- That the basic repeat of Kitchener works on the two stitches on the front needle first, and then the two stitches on the back needle.

If you check the other tutorial, you'll get the idea that regular St.St. grafting goes a bit like this:

1)Knit, slip stitch off, 2) purl, 3) purl, slip stitch off, 4) knit

where the knit/purl instructions are the direction you insert the needle into the stitch, and that you slip the stitch off after steps 1 and 3 ONLY. To get the kitchener started and prep the first two stitches, perform steps 2 and 4, then go into the main method. To finish up, work steps 1 and 3.

Regular (Stocking Stitch) Kitchener

So we know this one - it's the most common, and probably the only one most folk know. The method repetition works like this:-

1)Knit, slip stitch off, 2) purl, 3) purl, slip stitch off, 4) knit

So this is what it looks like, right side then wrong side as you're working, and after it's been neatened up (i.e. slack removed from the grafted stitches)



Right side



Won't explain too much about this one, as there's already loads of information out there. Just remember that method, yeah? It'll come in handy later...

Reverse Stocking Stitch Kitchener

Now, this is where the contention starts. There are a few websites that have this method labelled as garter stitch kitchener, but it's not. Because of this, I have gone over and over to make sure I get the facts right so I don't ruffle too many feathers! Read on to find out why..... first though, here's the method followed by right and wrong side photos:-

1) Purl, slip stitch off, 2) knit, 3) knit, slip stitch off, 4) purl



Right side



Now, this method has been listed as garter stitch grafting, but can you see why it isn't? Look at the two finished photos, right side and wrong side. You'll see that it is actually reverse stocking stitch, because the two rows of bumps are too close for garter stitch. On the reverse side, you can see the white grafting yarn, and how it's created a stocking stitch finish. Maybe it will be more obvious in the garter stitch samples.

Basically, this method is the complete opposite of regular kitchener. Montse Stanley calls it 'purl grafting', because essentially that's what you're doing on the right side of the work. But why bother? There are very few situations when you'll need to do this.... it's easier to turn the work inside out, wrong sides facing out, and work a regular stocking stitch grafting. Compare it to, say, garter stitch - you can create it by either knitting every row or purling every row, but how many people do the latter?

Garter Stitch Kitchener

This is where, some would say, it gets trickier. But it doesn't. It's like anything else, it's always hard when you don't know how.

What you need to notice first about your work, is where the bumps are. When you've just knitted a knit row, the bumps at the back are highest - take a look when you do it. When you form a knit stitch, you create a 'V' at the front, a bump (or ridge) at the back. You do the same thing every row, which is why garter stitch is alternate 'V's and bumps, and not just bumps.

When done, the kitchener looks like, and is, an extra row. So to presume that to do a purl (reverse st.st) grafting would give you a garter stitch finish isn't a daft idea at first thought, but not enough. Kitchener is equivalent to one row. But what you need to take into account is that that one row also has a relationship with the rows either side, and thus there's more to it than that. A purl graft on a stocking stitch body logically would create two reverse stocking stitch bumps/ridges.

Let's take a look at this example, see where the bumps are and what the method is...



In this example, the upper (back) needle is a wrong side row, as the bumps are high and close to the needle. The lower (front) needle is a right side row, and there's a 'V' just been formed on the needle, and so the bumps are lower. The method for grafting this one is as follows:-

1) Purl, slip stitch off, 2) knit, 3) purl, slip stitch off, 4) knit

Here's the view from the front, before and after taking up slack.....



If you are working the opposite way round, so have the back/upper needle as a right side row and the front needle as a wrong side row, then work the method the other way around...i.e:-

1) Knit, slip stitch off, 2) purl, 3) knit, slip stitch off, 4) purl

If you've got two right sides together, then you could use the reverse stocking stitch graft....if you've got two wrong sides together, then you could use the stocking stitch graft. Either way though, you won't get a clean, balanced finish - you'll still get those double-bumps. The neatest kitchener comes from a right to wrong graft or vice versa.

Here's that again on a stocking stitch ground, which is what I was fiddling with when all this fell into place. I wanted one ridge, one line of bumps. This sample shows

1) Purl, slip stitch off, 2) knit, 3) purl, slip stitch off, 4) knit



So, the golden rule with garter grafting is this - start with a purl for the bumps to be at the bottom (on the right side) and look like a right side row, start with a knit for the bumps to be at the top and imitate a wrong side row.

Hopefully I've managed to show that there are differences, and none of them are particularly difficult so long as you remember (and I say it aloud to myself each time) the method for each one.

To conclude, this is kitchener reduced to it's basic elements:-

- Starting with a purl on the front needle stitches will give you a bump.
- Going into a purl on the back needle stitches will create a 'V'.
- Starting with a knit on the front needle stitches will give you a 'V'.
- Going into a knit on the back needle stitches will create a bump.
- Whichever you start with - a knit or a purl - the 2nd (following) stitch is worked in the opposite direction. (unless you're switching from knit to purl or vice versa in the same row.... but that's a whole other tutorial!)

Contact:

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