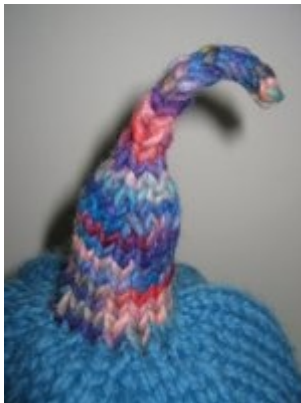


3D Grafting with a Hook



Knitters do use hooks, y'know. For the odd thing, like picking up dropped stitches and adding a nice little picot edge or something. Personally though, I reckon they're under used. For starters, I much prefer to use a hook to do the bind-off I explained in my Tri-Peak pattern....easier than a 3-needle-bind-off yet giving the same results - invisible on one side, nice detailed finish on the other.

Also consider this... you're working something top-down... you want to keep going 'till you run out of yarn... but how do you calculate how much yarn you need to save to be able to cast-off? Well, don't stress about it. Keep knitting 'till you have your regular 3" or 4" end or to the end of



round/row, and just pick up your hook. Slip the first 2 stitches onto the hook, passover the first one, slip next off needle, passover again, and keep going to remaining stitch, finish as usual. Gives the same finish without the worry. Think about how you cast off...

Now, I've been practising picking up stitches and grafting extras onto my hats. There probably is a traditional, tried & tested way of doing this but then I'm not one for convention. And I like to find things out for myself ;) I've found the way that gives the neatest results is to use a crochet hook. And that's what's gonna be explained here.



Basically, I use the hook to slip underneath the stitches to get a more even 'pick-up'. The hook allows you to slide in under the 'v' (presuming you're working in stocking stitch) and pull your new yarn through with ease. Obvious really, eh?

The real trick though, is get an even line across your stitches, so that there's no wonky edge to your grafting. It's best to follow the line of V's that make



up your row for grafting in straight lines. For Hats and adding to the crown, it's recommended to graft onto a decrease row, as these naturally follow a circular-ish shape (again presuming that you want to graft an even circular shape in the centre of the crown)

Oh, and do remember that you need to pick up both sides of the 'V'.. the first photo here shows the hook slid underneath the first stitch... the bottom of the 'V' is linked into the previous row, showing the 2 sides of the stitch that need to be picked up. Make sense?



For good results, use a yarn that's close in gauge to the one you used for the main body of the item. This Hat was knitted in Rowan Big Wool, and the graft is knitted in remnants of hand-dyed chunky. A slightly different gauge, true, but probably as different as this technique will allow for.



For even neater results, use a size smaller hook than recommended - think I used either a 5mm or 5.5mm for this graft, yet this yarn knits comfortably on 6mm. Mind, I often use a size smaller for my Hats... helps keep the wind out ;) Once you've picked up sufficient stitches, slip them evenly onto your DPN's and away you go.



I picked up a total of 17 stitches for this graft (aiming for 4sts on each needle) with the extra stitch at the start of the round - which I then k2tog to make sure there were no unsightly holes. If in doubt, pick up more stitches than you need and decrease them on the first round. This one may look square-ish, but that's just the needles holding it all like that. If you look at the finished graft, and at the last photo which shows it from the inside, you'll see it's circular.



To shape your graft, use decreases and increases as you see fit, just remember that anything too large will add weight.. but then that may be the effect you want! I added a small amount of toy stuffing to this one, just before I decreased sufficiently to start the I-cord.

It's not that difficult is it?! You could also stay with the hook and crochet your graft, which I did for



another Hat - works just as well, and infact suits free-forming better giving more unusual shapes. You don't have to stick with working the crown on Hats either.. once you've got the hang of picking up the stitches evenly, there's lots you could do... my notebook is full of ideas based on this method ;)

And as usual, I request to see photos of what you've been up to... now go knit and experiment - it's good for you!

I looked up this method in my copy of Montse Stanley's 'Knitters Handbook'. Checked out grafting but all they had were various takes on Kitchener stitch. It had to be in there.... there's no way I'd discovered a new technique. I eventually found it on page 191, under 'picking up stitches'. All that's discussed is picking up stitches in horizontal or vertical straight lines to form rectangles, primarily for pockets. This seems a bit... limited.... who said pockets had to be flat and rectangular anyway? To graft means to 'fix or join permanently', and in my mind this means more than seams or pockets, or kitchener stitch.

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