

Woolly Wormhead

unique & original woolly Hat designs

Kitchener Stitch - Grafting Garter Stitch

This tutorial is an extract from my first book, 'Going Straight – A New Generation of Knitted Hats', a book which contains kitchener/grafting instructions for 8 different combinations including reverse stocking stitch, garter stitch, reverse garter stitch, combining St.St and garter in one graft and much more!

Further information about this book can be found here: <http://www.woollywormhead.com/going-straight/>

Below are the four steps for kitchener stitch for garter stitch. To prepare for grafting, we need to ensure that our stitches are held together and parallel on the needles, with right sides of the work facing out.

To ensure your graft works correctly, you need to set your stitches up correctly. Unlike grafting stocking stitch, you cannot just bring the edges together, they need to be set up in a particular way. As you look at the needles from the top as shown in step 1, one side should have the ridges right up to the needle and the other should have the ridges sitting away from the needle. If your ridges are the other way around then you'll want to reverse the instructions (this would be known as 'ridge low' grafting). If both needles are the same, you'll want to unpick one side – this is especially important to remember if you're folding a piece in half to graft – in this case, knit half the row before folding.

When we graft, we work first on the front needle and then on the back needle. It's quite important to remember to stop after step 4 should you need to have a break or tighten up the slack, so that you can start again at a convenient point. Whenever I teach this technique, the most common problem that occurs is stopping mid way through the 4 step process which causes confusion for the knitter.

To start the graft and create the beginning selvedge edge, work steps 2 & 4 once. The work steps 1 to 4 until all stitches have been grafted, then finish with steps 1 & 3.

Preparing for the graft



1. For this graft known as 'ridge high', the front needle (shown here as the bottom needle) has the ridges high, the back needle (shown here as the top needle) has them low - right sides of work showing.



2. In most cases when you come to graft garter stitch, the released stitches will be on the back needle, and the yarn will be attached to the front needle.



3. Insert your needle into an inside ridge very close to the first stitch on the back needle



4. Pull your yarn through, and the yarn is now ready to come to the front needle to start the graft.

Grafting the Selvedge Stitches



1. Selvedge stitch 1, front needle – insert the needle purlwise, pull the yarn through then leave the stitch on the needle.



2. Selvedge stitch 2, back needle – insert the needle purlwise, pull the yarn through then leave the stitch on the needle.

Grafting Garter Stitch



3. Stitch 1, front needle – insert the needle knitwise, pull the yarn through then slip the stitch off the needle.



4. Stitch 2, front needle – insert the needle purlwise, pull the yarn through but leave the stitch on the needle.



5. Stitch 3, back needle – insert the needle knitwise, pull the yarn through then slip the stitch off the needle.



6. Stitch 4, back needle – insert the needle purlwise, pull the yarn through but leave the stitch on the needle. Repeat steps 3 to 6 for the grafting method. You'll also notice that what you do on the front needle you also do on the back needle. To close the graft, work steps 3 & 5 – this creates the final selvedge.

Other helpful tips to ensure your graft goes smoothly:

Try to take up the slack (i.e. tighten your stitches) every 5 or 10 stitches. Leaving this until the end will likely cause problems with your tension and cause the graft to look uneven. When taking up the slack, do it slowly, stitch by stitch – don't try pulling from the end as this will tighten some stitches and not others and may even cause your yarn to break!

Always remember to start on the front needle first. If your working yarn is on the front needle, slip it through the base of the first stitch on the back needle, to ensure it connects correctly when starting the graft.

A quick way to remember the garter stitch grafting method is this:
(front): knit off, purl on; (back) knit off, purl on

Contact:

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