

## *Hems and Finishes*

by Bonnie Triola

Perfect bands and impeccable finishing are the hallmarks of a Bonnie Triola suit. The following are some of Bonnie's favorite treatments. Add them to your finishing repertoire and experience the difference!

**The Classic Hem:** (bottom of photo). This hem is used by top knitwear designers because it produces a crisp, neat edge. Added after the garment has been knitted, this hem does not flare or curl up and is suitable for all types of yarn.

This perfect edge is due to two things. First of all, the live garment stitches are reduced as they are rehung and the hem is knitted with a much smaller stitch size than the garment. The number of stitches reduced from garment to hem depends on the gauge of the yarn. The sample in photo #1 was knitted with wool velveen at stitch size 6. Wool velveen usually produces a gauge of 8 to 9 stitches per inch and responds well to a 25% stitch reduction. For a coarser gauge you might only reduce the total number of stitches by 15 to 20%, doubling every fifth or sixth stitch (instead of every fourth) as you rehang the garment edge. This hem can be used for the bottom of skirts, slacks, jackets or sweaters where a ribbed edge would be too sporty. It can be knitted plain (as shown) or with a picot edge.

Begin the garment pieces with waste and ravel cord and complete all pieces before you knit the hems. With the wrong side of the garment facing you (the purl side in the sample), fold back the waste knitting and re-hang the live stitches (at the bottom edge of the skirt) on the machine, hanging two stitches on every fourth needle to reduce the lower edge of the garment by 25%. Begin with the carriage on the right and row counter 000. Knit one row to eliminate the doubled stitches. Then knit one marking row as follows: If you are working on a punch card machine, push every other needle to D position. Set Russell Levers (II) (II) to knit needles back from holding position and set the cam lever set to slip. Knit one row. The procedure is the same for electronic machines, but you must begin with the carriage on the left with the cam lever set to circular. After knitting the marking row set the carriage for stockinette and knit to RC 16. Pick up the slip stitches from the marking row and hang them on every other needle. Latch tool bind off around one sinker post to maintain an even, elastic bind off. Run a wire or the close knit bar through the hem and pull away from the garment to help set the stitches.





**Better Pleated Skirt Edges:** Most instructions for ribber pleated skirts call for a traditional circular cast on that begins with a tight edge. Problems arise when you transfer the stitches for the pleat needle set up and then try to knit the first row of the skirt. More often than not, the stitches break. A better alternative is to use a racking cast on at garment tension. With the swing lever at five and the beds in half pitch, arrange the needles for full needle rib. Set both carriages to the same stitch size you will use to knit the garment. Turn the swing lever indicator to six. Knit the zigzag row then hang the comb and weights. Turn the swing lever back to five. Knit one row with both carriages set to knit. Transfer the stitches as desired for the pleat set up and continue knitting. Steam edge slightly when finished. If the edge looks too loose, take a small crochet hook (steel size 6 to 8) and chain one stitch through the next along the bottom edge.

**Easy on Waistband:** ( top edge) This waistband adds no bulk to your waistline yet stretches easily over any size hips. Scrap off the stitches at the top of each skirt panel. With the wrong side facing you, fold back the waste knitting and rehang the skirt stitches onto the number of needles that equal your actual waist measurement, doubling stitches where necessary. For example if your hips are forty inches and your waist is thirty inches, you need to reduce ten inches totally (five inches each on back and front). Translate inches into stitches by multiplying the number of inches to be decreased by your stitch gauge. For example, with a stitch gauge of 8 stitches/inch you would need to reduce each panel by 40 stitches:  $8 \text{ stitches/inch} \times 10" = 80 \text{ stitches} \div 2 \text{ panels} = 40 \text{ stitches per panel}$ . Thus you would double up 40 stitches evenly across the bed when re hanging your skirt. Beginning with the carriage on the right, knit one row to eliminate the doubled stitches. Knit a marking row as you did for the first hem. Knit two inches of band (for 1" wide elastic). Hang the slip stitches from the marking row onto every other needle. Latch tool bind off, carrying yarn behind two sinker posts to ensure an even, elastic bind off.



**Variations:** This bind off is also an excellent way to attach ribbed turtlenecks to kids sweaters to compensate for the differences between head size and neck openings. You probably won't need quite as much stretch as you do for waistbands, so binding off around one sinker post should do.

*Bonnie Triola is best known for her classic designs and attention to detail. A popular demonstrator at seminars for many years, Bonnie has cut back on her travel to run Bonnie Triola Yarns.*

**Studio**  
by **WHITE**



One designer frequently uses the purl side as the right side of the garment and then adds this hem at the lower edges. The hem appears in knit stitches that contrast sharply with the purls, and his customers interpret the effect as a “special designer trim”. Although this band is not nearly as elastic as ribbing, it makes an excellent trim for necklines too. Just be sure to leave a slit at the center back of a jewel neckline, so you can get it on over your head.

**The Best Basic Band:** This extremely simple band has many uses, holds its shape well and adds a professional touch to jacket styles. It is knitted in two pieces and is ideal for hiding cut and sew edges. Our full needle rib sample was knitted in wool velveen and features a stockinet band applied to cover the serged edges.

If you use this band along the center front edges of a stockinet jacket you would cast on  $\frac{2}{3}$  of the rows. That is, if the center front of the jacket was 300 rows in length, you would cast on 200 stitches to knit the band. If this band is applied to a jacket that is knit in jacquard, full needle rib, fairisle, tuck, weaving, etc., you should try a few inches of band on your swatch to calculate exactly how many stitches to cast on. I found that especially when covering a cut and sew edge, the band stretches itself over the fabric, requiring fewer stitches than calculations based on a stockinet gauge might indicate. Also, when adding this band to a jacket or cardigan knitted in a single bed stitch, you should turn under a two inch facing on the garment and hang the band onto the facing fold. If you apply this band to the very edge of most single bed fabrics, the edge of the garment will curl. To avoid this, when knitting the jacket fronts, just add two inches worth of stitches (stitch gauge  $\times$  2) to each center front edge. Because this facing will be turned to the inside it doesn't alter the fit of the jacket at all. After the band is attached and the garment has been blocked, use sewing thread to catch the facing down to the inside of the garment.



\* With scrap yarn and ravel cord, cast on the required number of stitches. Use one full stitch size smaller than you would for stockinet (we used stitch size 5). Knit half of the band (in wool velveen 8 to 10 rows knits about a  $\frac{3}{4}$ " band). Remove the band piece on garter bar or scrap yarn. Hang the garment edge over the same number of needles with the right side facing you; with needles in holding position, push the garment edge behind the latches. Then, with the purl side facing you, rehang the band in the same needle hooks. If you used the garter bar to remove the half knitted band, simply hang the garter bar back on without turning and pull the band stitches off the bar and into needle hooks. Close the latches and pull the band stitches through the garment edge by gradually returning all needles to regular working position. Keep checking the latches to make sure they stay closed. \*\* Knit the same number of rows for the second half of the band. At this point there are two ways to finish this band. For a completely invisible

join you can scrap off the second side of the band then join the two halves together with kitchner stitch. Or you can re hang the (cast on edge) stitches of the first half of the band in the same needle hooks then latch tool bind off both sets of stitches together, working around one sinker post to maintain even tension. Later on you can further embellish this edge with one row of crab stitch or backwards crochet as we did on the long edge of our sample; the short edge features the plain bound off edge.

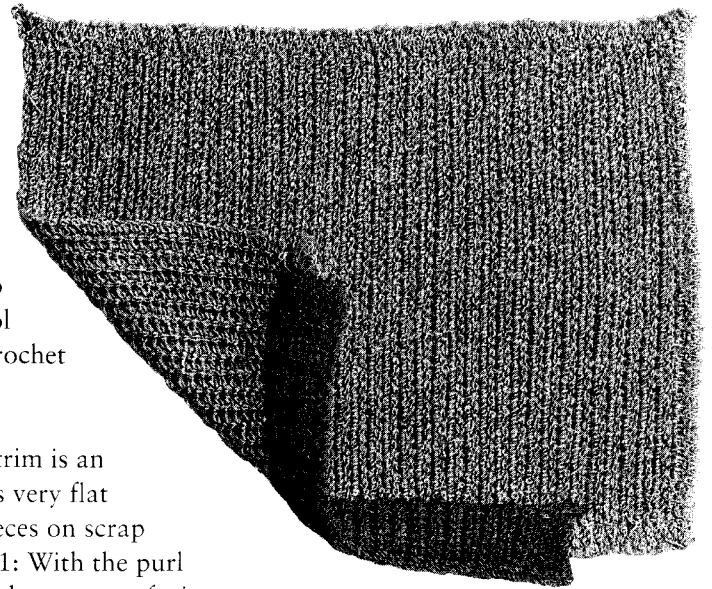


Mitered edges look great where the front bands meet the neck band. To figure the decreases for a mitered band, simply add one half the number of rows you are knitting in the band to the number of stitches you are going to cast on. For example, if the band is 16 rows deep add 8 stitches more to the number of stitches you cast on. When you knit the first half of the band decrease one stitch

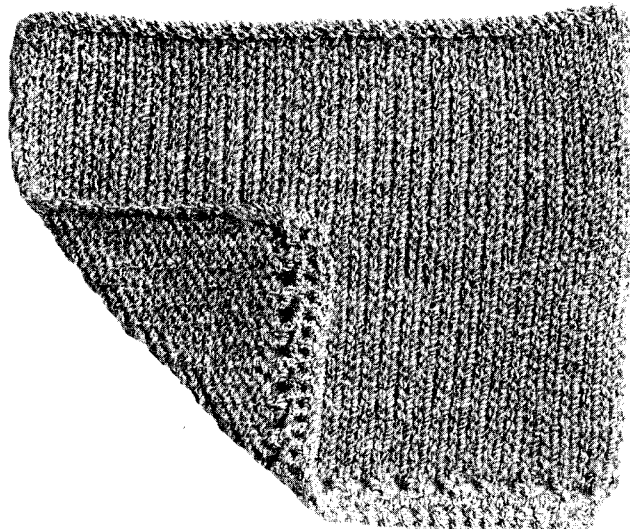
every other row at the mitered edge only; when knitting the second half of the band, increase one stitch at the miter edge every other row. Use plain, edge decrease and increases, rather than full fashion. Sew the miter together with mattress stitch, taking in one half stitch at each edge. Whenever you must knit a band in sections (as on the corner edge of a miter or on a long jacket or coat that may require more than 200 stitches), hang the beginning of the second band section in the same hole or garment pick up as the last band stitch of the previous section. You will have two band stitches coming out of one garment stitch. Sew the sections together with mattress stitch, one bar at a time and taking in one half stitch on each edge. The seam is less bulky and makes the bands look like it was knitted in one continuous piece.

Over the years we have had great fun experimenting with this band at Camp Tuckanitslip. The following are some of the campers most creative ideas. Knit the band in fairisle; a diagonal fairisle design looks like candy cane stripes on the finished band.... Do a row of picots just before binding off. Or, do a picot row then string pearls or beads on a separate piece of yarn and pop them into the picot holes before binding off.... Wind some ribbon over and under the needles before binding off. Do a picot row then use a heavier ribbon or several strands of a contrast yarn to bind off.... Hint for a dark colored cut and sew edge: If you don't have matching thread for your serger, use white or a light color thread, then use a dark permanent magic marker to color over your serger thread so it won't show through.

**An Easy Hem for Cut and Sew:** Hem finishes can be tricky when you work with knit yardage and sewing patterns because there are often no finished (selvage) edges on any of the pieces. You can use a variation of the above band to add a non-bulky hem to such a garment. Cut, sew and block your pieces. Then proceed to knit the band as instructed above from \* to \*\*. RC 000. Knit two rows. Transfer every other stitch to the adjacent needle and put the empty needles in non working position. Tighten the stitch size by two whole numbers. Knit two fewer rows than you did on the front side of the band. For example, if the first section of the band was ten rows, when doing the second half of the band you would knit two rows on all the needles, then transfer the stitches and knit eight more rows on every other needle. Pick up and hang the first edge of the band onto every needle. Latch tool bind off around one sinker post to maintain even tension. No crochet finish is necessary.



**Bonnie's Crocheted Hem:** This three row crochet trim is an old favorite with those who like crochet finishing because it lays very flat when done with yarns that can be pressed. Start the garment pieces on scrap yarn and ravel cord. Block, then seam the pieces together. Row 1: With the purl side of the garment facing



you, use a steel crochet hook (size 4 or 5 for wool velveen) to pick up two garment stitches from the ravel cord. Single crochet, chain one for the entire row. End by joining with a slip stitch, chain one and turn. Row 2: (knit side is facing you) single crochet in each stitch. This means once into the hole formed by the chain one in the previous row and once into the top of the next stitch. At the end of the row join with a slip stitch, chain one and turn. Row 3: (purl side is facing you) single crochet in each stitch.

To add this same trim to a bound off neckline or to the center front of a jacket (of course you would have knitted and turned under a two inch facing), pick up the edge you wish to trim and hang on the machine, knit one row and scrap off. This scrapped off, single knitted row provides an even base of open stitches to crochet through. Remove the scrap yarn after working the first row of crochet.