

# TIPS & TECHNIQUES

*Studio*  
by **WHITE**

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## Hand Seaming Methods for Finishing Knits

Finishing can make or break the most perfectly knitted sweater so its worth taking some time to learn the basic hand methods used to join garment pieces. None of them is particularly difficult - and they all get faster with practice! The best hand seams are invisible and you'll need to consider details like the kind of garment, the placement of the seam, the yarn and the kind of stitches used when deciding on the best seaming method.

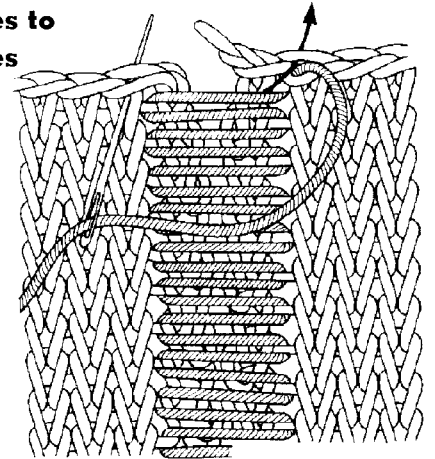
**Mattress Stitch** is the most commonly used seaming method for knits. It produces a strong, invisible seam that is worked from the right side, making it easy to match patterns. Its one downfall is that it produces bulk on the inside of the seam.

Thread your needle with a length about three times as long as the seam; you can leave a long tail when you start knitting and work with that yarn for seaming. In the diagrams that follow, you can see that mattress stitch is done by zig zagging back and forth to pick up a stitch or bar from each side. After the yarn has zig zagged across the seam five or six times, pull it taut to draw the two edges together. Do not pull too tight as the seam must have some elasticity or the yarn may snap.

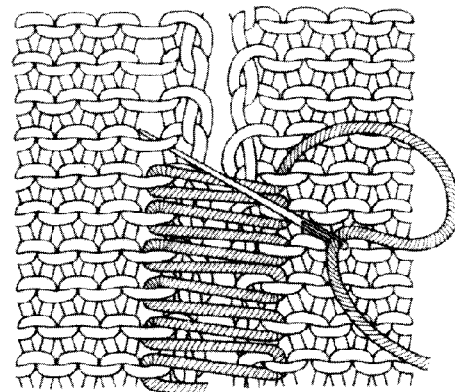
When sewing ribs with mattress stitch, make the first five or six zig zags and then, before pulling the yarn tight, insert the needle sideways through the cast on edge and then pull the seaming yarn taut. The needle in the

lower edge will prevent you from pulling too tight and will keep the edges even. Mattress stitch can be worked one full stitch from each edge or one half stitch from the edge, which produces less bulk but not as nice a seam. You can also work under two bars as you stitch; this is especially useful with fine knits. Some of the most common uses are shown below.

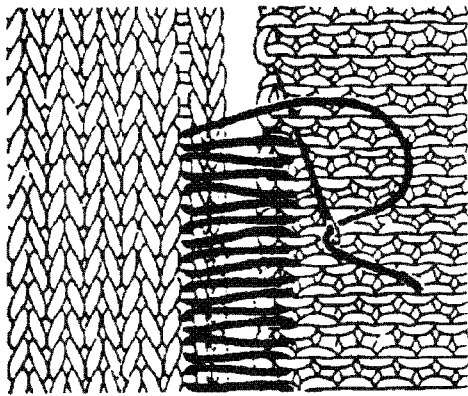
### Knit Stitches to Knit Stitches



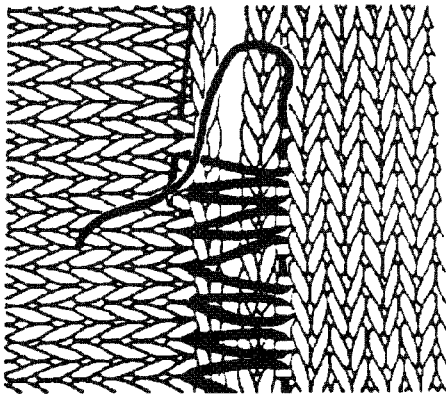
### Purl Stitches to Purl Stitches



### Purl Side to Knit Side

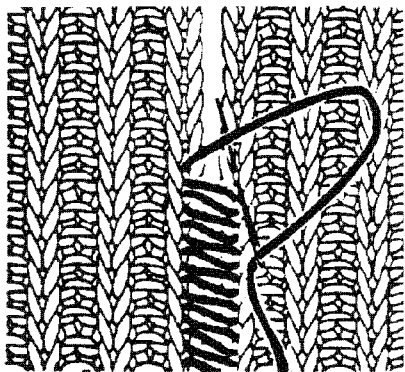


### Lengthwise to Crosswise Knit

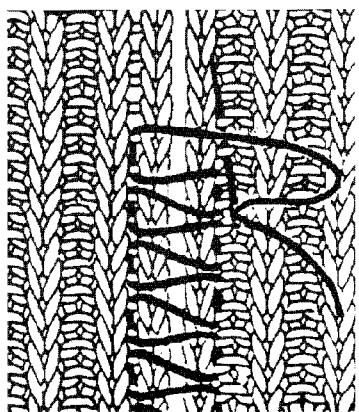


### 1 x 1 Rib

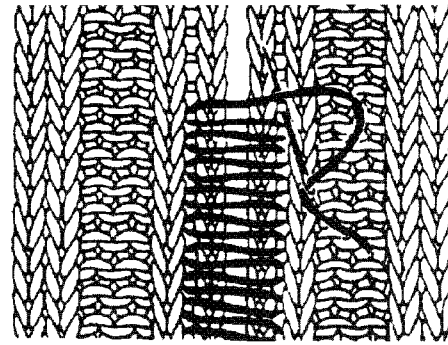
#### a. Working 1/2 stitch from both edges



#### b. Working one full stitch from each edge



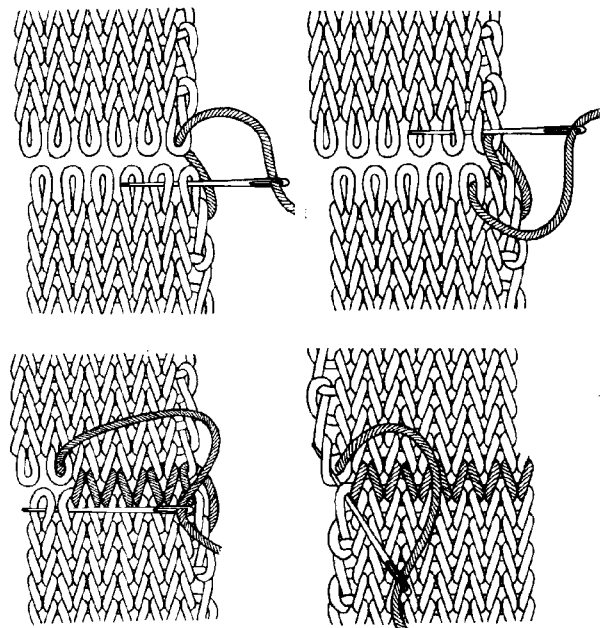
### 2 x 2 Rib



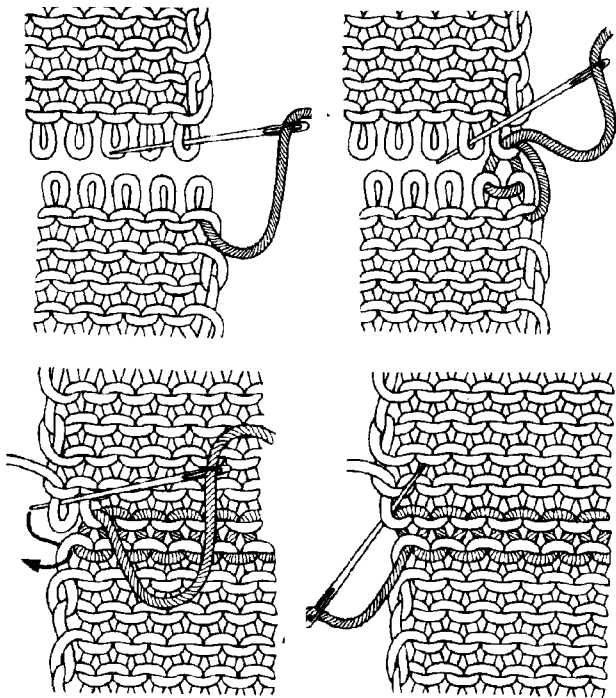
**Kitchener Stitch or Grafting** is a method that joins stitches in such a way that it duplicates an additional row of knitting. Kitchener produces a seam that is totally invisible on both sides of the fabric. Although it is usually used on live, open stitches, Kitchener can also be used to join side and bound of edges as shown below. It is most typically used to graft the toes of socks, the seam in sideways knitted skirts, joining neck bands to garments. Be careful when using it for shoulders as it can stretch and cause the shoulders to sag if the yarn is heavy.

You will find it much easier to produce even, smooth stitches if you press the waste yarn (not the garment stitches) first so it lies flat when you fold it back to stitch the seam. In some of the diagrams that follow, the waste yarn has been folded down or not drawn at all in order to make it easier for you to follow the process.

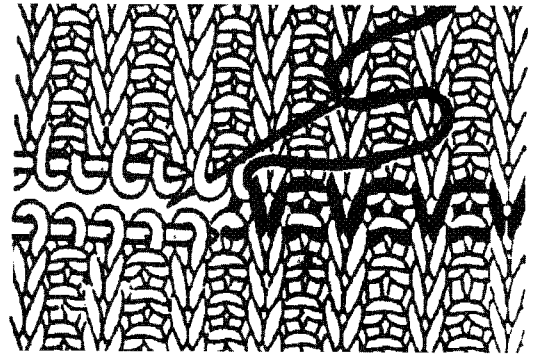
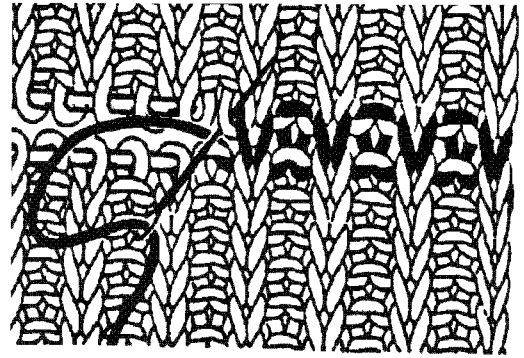
### Open Knits to Open Knits



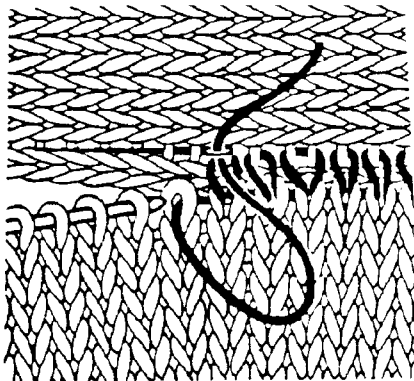
### Open Purls to Open Purls



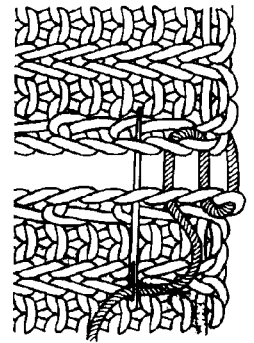
### 1 x 1 Rib



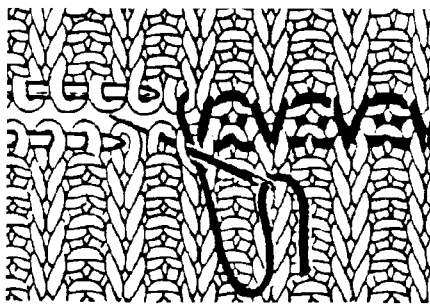
### Live Knits to Side Edge



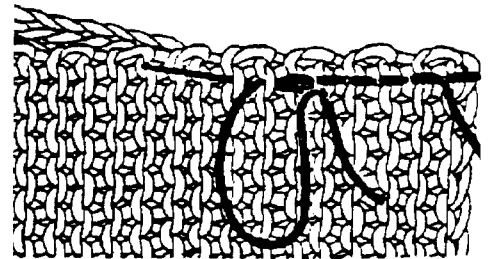
**Butted Seams** are less bulky than mattress stitches seams and a good alternative where grafting wouldn't be possible. This technique is often used to finish socks.



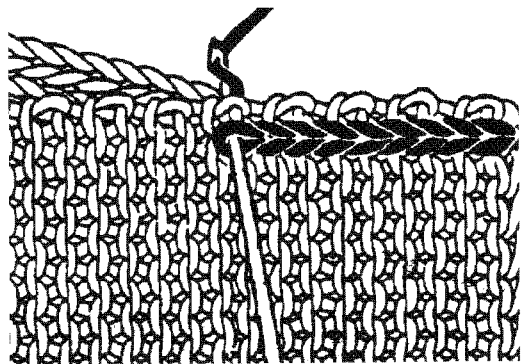
### 1 x 1 Rib



**Backstitch** is often used to set in sleeves, but is really second best to mattress stitch or slip crochet for this purpose. Quick to do, but producing bulky seams, this method is best used where seams are not highly prominent.



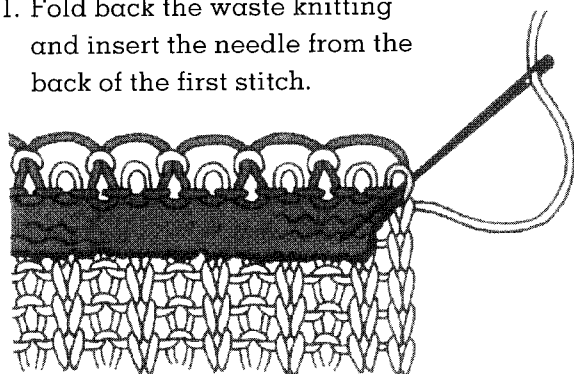
**Slip Stitch Crochet** produces the same kind of seam that the linking machines do. Make sure you work loosely enough for the seam to retain some elasticity. Setting in sleeves is an ideal use for this method.



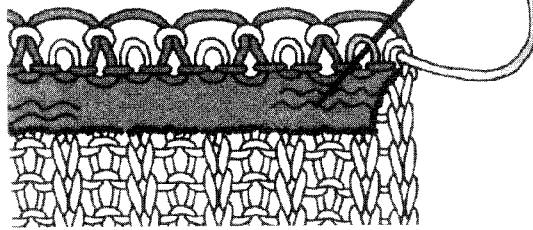
**Binding off rib by hand** produces a bound off edge that looks like a circular cast on. It is an ideal method to use when ribs are knitted after the garment pieces are done. For example, when a pattern (usually a hand knit) calls for increasing 20 stitches in the first row after the rib, you are better off beginning with scrap and ravel, knitting the garment and then re hanging the lower edge to knit the rib last. It is much easier to double up stitches to reduce for the ribbing!

Knit the required number of rows, and then scrap off with circular knitting. Or, transfer the ribber stitches to the main bed. Bring every other needle to D position, set the cam lever to Slip and Russel Levers (II). Knit 1 row. Scrap off. Either of these methods of scrapping off is fine because they enable you to differentiate one stitch from the next.

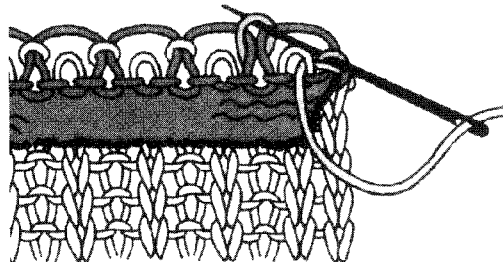
1. Fold back the waste knitting and insert the needle from the back of the first stitch.



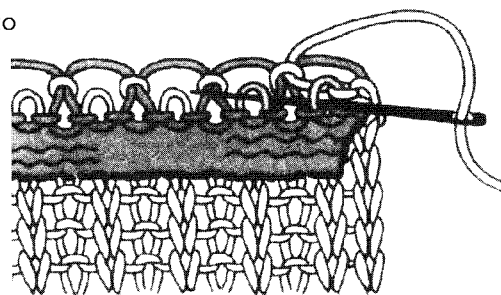
2. Insert needle into back of second stitch.



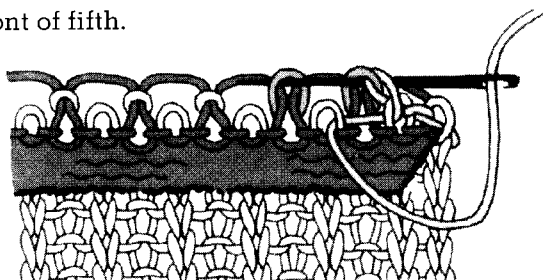
3. Insert needle into front of first then third stitch.



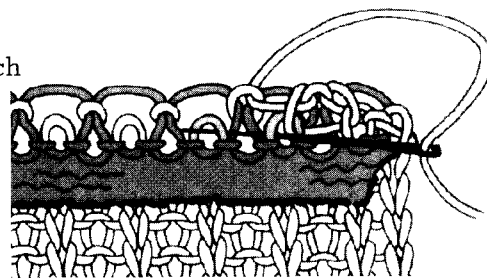
4. Insert needle into front of second stitch and back of fourth.



5. Insert needle into back of third stitch and front of fifth.



6. Insert needle into front of fourth stitch and back of sixth. Repeat steps 1-6 for all remaining stitches. Note that each stitch is worked twice.



*All of the stitch diagrams in this T & T were reprinted through the courtesy of Silver Reed. Additional finishing methods and knitting techniques can be found in "The Guide to Knitting Techniques" (part #98058514), available from your Studio by White authorized dealer.*