

The "Breaks All the Rules, Can't Possibly Work But It Does (and Beautifully) Cast On"

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Breaking The Rules

On pages two through six of BOOK 2 of your instructions [one of the booklets that came with the original blue BOND] are the diagrams that show how to hang the weighted hem and complete an open cast on. If you learn like I do, these pages are well worn, for when I first started knitting on the machine I had to consult the book every time I cast on. However once the sequence was set in my mind I stopped reading the book and started breaking the rules, unintentionally at first.

One day, while hurrying, talking on the phone, and casting on all at once, I forgot to put the fabric guide on. I swept the carriage across the bed before the "Arghh!" could drop out my mouth. When I opened my eyes to inspect the damage I saw that it had worked and knew that it had moved more smoothly than any cast on I had ever done. When I had done it the right way, the fabric guide would sometimes snag in the plastic slots of the weighted hem, dislodge and, in general, make an uncooperative nuisance of itself. After that I discarded the fabric guide from the casting on process.

Nothing inspires confidence as much as success, even if it is accidental, so the next step was to tackle the problem of rehanging the hem at the neck or armhole edge. If you've done it the traditional way, you know that it can be a messy piece of business. After you rehang the edge of your knitted piece onto the needles you proceed with a regular hem hanging and cast on. Some of the latches, which must be open, insist upon slipping into the stitches already hanging on the needles.

The yarn splits, the carriage jams, and the knitter curses or mutters depending on her or his sensibilities. Patience helps but it doesn't solve the problem.

The Solution

There is, in fact, a tidy solution: "The Breaks All The Rules, Can't Possibly Work But It Does (and Beautifully) Cast On." It is essential to your knitterly composure when you hang an edge of knitting—neck, armhole, cardigan front, entrelac edge—or do a closed cast on. Beyond that, it works any time.

The Method

In the beginning you follow the basic steps of the traditional cast on :

1. Insert green cards behind the needles you need.
2. Hang your knitted piece on the needles. (Forget this step if you are starting fresh.)

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3. Lay the weighted hem on the bed, a slot in each space between needles.
4. Open all the latches.
5. Lay your pull cord, elastic, string, or whatever you use in the hooks. Clip each end.
6. Fold over the weighted hem and push it back against the bed. All this sounds familiar, but now it's time to deviate from the norm.
7. Lay your knitting yarn into the hooks as you did the pull cord. The yarn end should overhang the last needle by four inches and be on the same side as the carriage.
8. Remove the green cards and use them to CLOSE THE LATCHES OVER THE YARN.
9. With the green cards, push the needles to HKP.
10. At the side of the bed opposite the carriage, on the floor next to you, make a pile of slack yarn about three yards long.
11. Insert the keyplate you need into the carriage and plop on the handle. Leave the fabric guide off. [Those of you with newer carriages, of course, don't have a wire fabric guide, but this technique will still work for you.]
12. Clear the decks. That is, make sure your yarn isn't lying on the bed or under the cat.
13. With firm downward pressure, move the carriage slowly across the bed.
- 14 Hang a clip on the bitter end of the yarn. Thread the working end through the eyes of the carriage, pull up on the slack and put the fabric guide on.
15. Knit like crazy.

Admittedly, it will take you some time to sit down at the machine with this magazine sliding around on your lap to try out this new technique, but it's worth it. Not only is it a happy alternative to what you've been doing, but you need this skill to knit Entrelacs or "Basketweave" which is the subject of my next article. If you don't learn "Breaks All the Rules . . . etc" now, you'll need two magazines slipping around on your lap the next time. And *that* is an exceptionally messy piece of business. [I realize the reference to the magazines is out of date but I liked it and left it in].

*A 2012 P.S. You can see this cast-on demonstrated on video [right here!](#)

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