

This article was first published in 1987 or so. The information is evergreen . . . that is, it still works and it will continue to work for a long time. Feel free to share this with your knitting friends far and wide.

Warm regards for joyous and empowered knitting,
Cheryl Brunette, 2011

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Cardigan Edges

By Cheryl Brunette

Knitting a cardigan is a special challenge because you have two extra edges to contend with. And since they are front and center, they need to be good-looking, firm (they get tugged at a lot) and flat. Here are some things you can do to make those edges behave properly.

There are two fast ways to knit the fronts of a cardigan on the machine: one is to knit the band and front in one piece, resulting in a vertical band; the other is to finish the front, rehang the band edge and knit out, making a horizontal band. In both cases, the difficulty for even experienced knitters is to match the row and stitch gauges so that the band neither droops nor pulls up.

Usually, the front band of a crew-neck cardigan starts at the lower edge and stops at the beginning of the neck shaping (Diagram 1). The neck band is added after. A V-neck cardigan is different in that the band continues to the shoulder seam and around the back of the neck. If you are knitting a vertical band as you knit the front, move the decrease for the V one or two stitches in past the inner edge of the band. Put the bandstitches on a holder or WY when you reach the shoulder seam so that you can pick them up later to continue across the back of the neck.

Open and zippered cardigans have edges that meet politely down the front looking tastefully tailored. Their fronts are exactly half as wide as a comparable pullover. Each front of a cardigan that overlaps and buttons must be wider by $\frac{1}{2}$ the width of the front bands.

Always knit the front with the button band first; that's **left** for a woman and **right** for a man. Long ago the distinction had to do with men keeping their weapons' hand warm (remember Napoleon?) and women nursing. Now we do it to keep people from fumbling on dark winter mornings with back-

wards buttonholes.

Although we're concerned primarily with cardigans here, these noncurling edges can be used on afghans, scarves, tabard sides, etc. Try making a sampler of each of these bands. Not only will you learn new techniques without the pressure to produce a perfect sweater, but you'll have a "library" of edges to consult when you approach a new project.

Vertical (As-You-Go) Edges

Cardigan fronts with these edges must be knit from the bottom edge up (That is, you cannot knit the body first and rehang it to do the lower rib). You must work the bottom rib, hem or border as you work the band. Therefore, start with a closed cast on, or use waste yarn and cast off later with needles and thread as shown on page 5, machine Instruction Book 3.

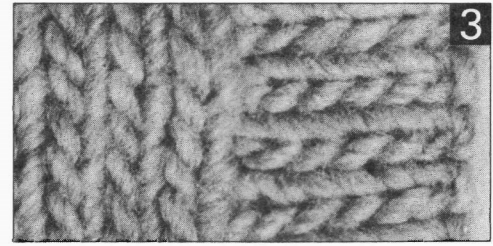
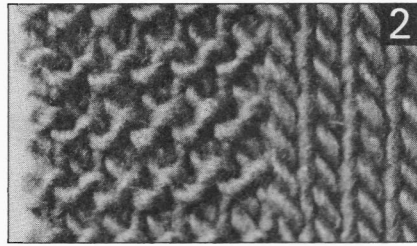
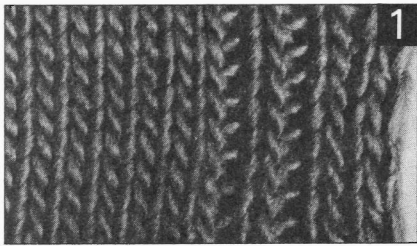
These bands are usually 1 to $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches wide or 6 to 11 stitches. Because the row gauges of the band and body often differ, you must work short rows in one or the other to make them the same length. These directions suggest how often to add short rows, but yarns vary. Just be sure to calculate the length of the front based on the row gauge of the body; then add or subtract rows from the band according to its gauge.

SELF-FACED STOCKINGKNIT BAND This is the easiest to knit, and because it is double thickness, it works well in sport weight or finer yarns. Starting at the outer edge it consists of a facing, a slipped stitch, a band and a purled stitch.

To decide how many stitches to cast on for the band, multiply the stitches you want for the finished band by 2 then add 2. To make a **left** front band 6 stitches wide, for example, cast on the stitches for the sweater front plus 14 ($6 \times 2 + 2 = 14$). Beginning with COR.

To Form Slipped Stitch: ROW 1: Put the 7th needle from the right into HP. K across. ROW 2: Return 7th needle to HKP. K across.





Repeat these two rows. Every 10 or 12 rows, stop to drop and latch up the 14th stitch from the right. This purl forms the inner edge of the band. To finish: block, fold the band along the slipped stitch and sew down loosely to the inside. The slipped stitch pulls up slightly making a firm edge that won't stretch.

1 VERTICAL RIBBED BAND WITH SLIPPED SELVEDGE STITCH Cast on the stitches for the body. Add an odd number for the band (7 to 11). Knit 3 or 4 rows straight. End with carriage on the band side. **ROW 1:** Put the end needle on the band side in HP. K across.

Every 10 to 12 rows stop and latch up the rib. Starting with the 3rd stitch from the end, drop and latch up every other stitch to the desired width of the band. **AT THE SAME TIME**, every 23rd or 24th row you must work short rows in the band. All other things equal (yarn and keyplate) ribbed borders need to be shorter than the body of the sweater. Therefore, you need to decrease the number of rows in the band vs the number of rows in the body. To work these short rows:

1. With carriage on the side opposite the band, put all band needles into HP. K across.
2. Put needle next to the band into HP and knit back.
3. Put all needles back to HKP and continue knitting.

NOTE: These 2 rows count as rows in the body of the sweater. This is important when a pattern stitch is involved.

2 GARTER STITCH BAND Cast on the stitches you need for the body plus band. Knit 2 rows, end with carriage on band side. Now convert the end 6 or so stitches to purl:

1. Find the first stitch you want to convert.
2. Insert latch tool into center of the stitch directly below it.
3. Drop the stitch off its needle by pulling it all the way toward you and pushing it back. That gives you one "ladder."
4. Pull the ladder through the stitch on the tool and rehang it. Continue across band stitches. Take care to pull the end stitch tight so that it is the

same size as the other stitches in the row.

Knit 2 rows and latch again. **AT THE SAME TIME** every 23 or 24 rows (depending on the yarn, but a good rule of thumb), work 2 short rows to add length to the band:

1. With carriage on band side, put all body needles except the one closest to the band in HP. K across.
2. Put last body needle into HP, K back.
3. Convert band stitches to knit.
4. Put body needles in HKP and continue.

SEED STITCH BAND This is similar to the garter stitch band in gauge and construction. However, instead of converting all the band stitches every other row, you stop after each row to convert every other stitch.

Cast on the body and band stitches:

1. K 2 rows. End with carriage on band side.
2. Starting with the end needle, convert the 1st, 3rd and 5th stitches to Purl. K across.
3. Convert the 2nd, 4th and 6th sts to purl. K across.

Repeat the last 2 steps for the pattern. **AT THE SAME TIME** work short rows as you did for the garter band, converting every other stitch.

Horizontal Bands

These bands are added after the front is complete. Rehang the front edge, **WRONG SIDE FACING YOU**. Insert the single prong transfer tool and lift both loops of the end stitch onto a needle. (See machine Instruction Book 3, page 14, figure B. Note you're hanging only one piece.)

A knit stitch is fatter than it is tall, so you seldom hang every stitch. Figure out the gauges from a sample swatch of each pattern stitch. Then decide how many band stitches you need to match the length of the center front (or beyond, to the center back with a V-neck). Push out that many needles and put green cards behind them. Mark the center of the piece of knitting. Hang each end stitch on an end needle. Pick up the center stitch of your knitting and hang it on the center needle. Continue eyeballing the center of each hanging swag of knitting until all the needles have stitches on them.

You will have painlessly 'eased' the front band.

Hang the weighted hem as usual. Remove the green cards and move all needles into HKP. Knit the first row slowly, with the FABRIC GUIDE OFF. Immediately put it on or you'll make a loopy mess, and knit the subsequent rows.

3 STOCKINGKNIT STITCH Start with the same keyplate as you used for the body. If you divide your stitch gauge by the row gauge you'll get the percentage of center front stitches you need to pick up. Hang the front edge and hem. K 3 to 6 rows depending on your gauge and preference.

Conversion Row: Switch to one keyplate size smaller (filed keyplates are especially helpful here). If you have a garter bar:

1. K 1 row.
2. Turn knitting with garter bar and K 1 row.
3. Turn again and K the same number of rows you knit before turning the first time.

If you don't have a garter bar:

1. K 2 rows.
2. Convert all sts of the last row to purl with latch tool.
3. K the same number of rows you knit before the conversion row.

To finish, fold along purl ridge and sew down.

4 HORIZONTAL RIB Hang the front edge (you usually pick up 75% to 80% of the edge stitches). Use a keyplate one size smaller than that used for the body. Knit 4-8 rows. End with COL. Knit one last row with a keyplate 1½ to 2 sizes larger, or manually knit this row so that the stitches are 1½ to 2 times longer than those in the row below. Drop and latch up every other stitch as for ribbing. Bind off as follows: push all the needles forward so that the stitches go behind the latches. Starting at the left, insert the latch tool into the first stitch, then the second. Pull the second through the first. Continue chaining across, pulling the yarn end through the last stitch.

5 GARTER STITCH (Work with a garter bar or great patience). Use a smaller keyplate for which you've done a gauge swatch. Hang the front and K 1 row. Repeat more often than you think you need, to the depth you want. Bind off.

6 REVERSE STOCKINGKNIT STITCH (Must have garter bar) This is more like a piping than a band. Use a smaller keyplate and you can even use a finer yarn. Hang the front edge as above. Knit cast on row only. Turn work with a garter bar. Knit 3 to 6 rows. Bind off loosely. Let the band roll over the edge and sew down.

Buttonholes

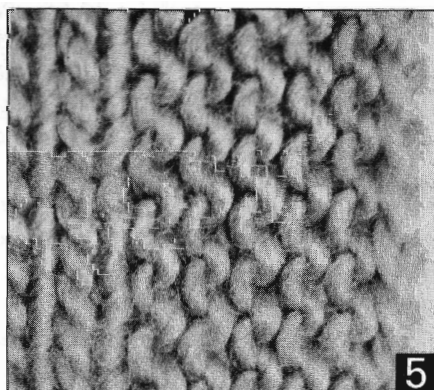
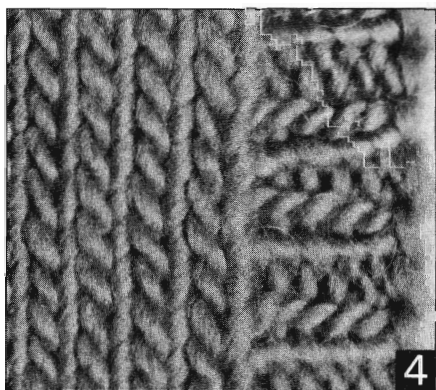
Spacing buttonholes is easy once the button band is done. Put a pin 3 to 5 rows from the bottom of the button band. The top buttonhole comes in the neckband (figure about ½ inch above the beginning of the neck shaping). Count your buttons, get out your ruler, and put pins equally spaced between the top and bottom marks. Space the buttonholes on the second band to correspond to the pins.

Remember, when you do either of the stocking-knit stitch bands, to make one hole in the band and one in the facing. You can neaten those two holes by embroidering them together with blanket or buttonhole stitch when finished.

This simple buttonhole is especially good for baby's clothes or small buttons. See machine Instruction Book 5, page 1 for instructions. These can be left plain or you can sew an overcast stitch around the hole.

VERTICAL BUTTONHOLE These are usually 3 to 5 rows long. With the carriage opposite the band, knit to the center of the band. Stop the eye of the carriage between two needles. Take the main yarn out of the eye, keeping the fabric guide on. Thread a 1½ to 2 foot length of yarn through the eye, leaving a long tail, and complete the row. Knit back to the join, take the new thread out of the eye. Without crossing the two threads, pick up your original thread and finish the row. Repeat this to desired depth of the buttonhole.

If you find that your new thread end is at the band edge when your buttonhole is long enough, just knit back to the buttonhole, take it out of the eye. This time, pick up your main yarn making sure to cross the two threads as in intarsia. Continue knitting with your main yarn.



Techniques

HORIZONTAL BUTTONHOLE Knit to the beginning of the buttonhole; stop the carriage between two needles. Take the main yarn out of the eye and insert a short (6 to 8 inches) length of contrasting yarn. Knit 2 to 4 stitches. Stop between two needles. Pick up your main yarn (run it under the but-

tonhole needles) and continue knitting. After one row hang a claw weight on the buttonhole stitches.

When you finish the piece, start in the lower left corner of the buttonhole with a separate piece of yarn threaded through a needle and back-stitch cast off counterclockwise around the hole. You might want to use a finer yarn, or a ply of your main yarn for this. Catch the 'float' on the wrong side of the work. Be creative in the corners and in working in the ends. ■
