
Knitting Cast Ons with Debbie Stoller

Chapter 1 - Introduction

Overview

- When you're learning to do the knit stitch or the purl stitch, you're making those stitches through pre-existing loops. So you might be wondering, "Okay, cool, but how does this thing start? "How do I get those first set of loops on the needle?" That's called casting on, and believe it or not, there are so many different ways to do it. Each cast on has its strengths and its weaknesses. Some are tighter, some are looser. I'm gonna teach you three of the most commonly used ones, the long tail cast on, the knit cast on, and the cable cast on, plus one extra special one called the provisional cast on that is pretty awesome.

Chapter 2 - Cast Ons

Long tail cast on

- The long tail cast on is my personal favorite. It's not too tight, it's not too loose, and it's the cast on my grandmother taught me. It's also, I think, the fastest cast on and sometimes you might be having to cast on like 200 stitches for a project. I wanna be able to do it fast. The down side on the long tail cast on is well, you'll see. It looks a little crazy when you're doing it. You start with a long tail. It's called a long tail cast on. Usually about three times the width of the piece you're gonna be knitting. So if I'm gonna be casting on for something that's supposed to end up being 20 inches wide I would wanna get a tail that's like 60 inches long. You know, you need to get a lot of tail. You see all that long tail. Next, you put the ball to the right and you put the tail to the left and you make yourself a little slip knot. Slip knots are really kind of easier to just do than explain but in essence you just bring the yarn around in a loop and then you pull that back strand through and you got a little slip knot. You put that on a needle. For the long tail cast on you only need one knitting needle. Then snug that up. Don't strangle the needle, just snug it up. The next couple of steps are kinda weird but you'll get the hang of it and then you'll be whipping out these stitches like no one's business. Put your finger on the stitch, on that loop that's right on your needle and hang the two strands down in front of your hand. With the tail end off to the left and the ball end off to the right. Then you close your lower three fingers over those two yarn strands like you're holding a gun. Then you take these two fingers from behind and open up those two strands like a curtain. So you come in here and you open up those two strands like a curtain. You don't switch the order of these strands. So the strand that's over my thumb is coming from the tail end and the strand that's over my pointer is coming from the ball. Now, you take, with your finger on there, you bring your needle down and you scoop up from underneath this strand that's going across your thumb. You're not gonna see that so much if you forget to bring your needle with your yarn on it down. So bring it down and you scoop that up. The next thing is you take the yarn that's on your finger and you wrap it around the needle. I guess that would be counterclockwise. Then you take the loop that's on your thumb and you bring it up and over the needlepoint. Take your thumb out. Then your thumb can just grab that other piece of yarn again and you snug that up. The yarn that was on my pointer finger here really hardly changed. And there's your first long tail cast on stitch. You also have the slip knot. That also counts as a stitch. So now we're gonna do another one. It goes exactly the same way. Scoop up that strand that's on the front part of your thumb from the bottom. The strand on your finger wraps around the needle counterclockwise. The loop on your thumb goes up and over the needle. You pull your

thumb out. You snug up that stitch and you also at the same time, your thumb just picks up that strand of yarn again. So up through the bottom of the thumb strand. Around the pointer. The loop on the thumb goes up and over. Take your thumb out and then use your fingers to spread out that little curtain again. From underneath the thumb, around the pointer, loop off, and everybody goes back into position. And eventually you can just knock them out like that. Boo yah. Check it out. Cast on stitches, one after the other after the other. Nice and fast. That's it for the long tail cast on.

Knit cast on

- The knit cast on is probably the most popular cast on, these days and it's pretty straight forward. You don't need a long tail, a regular little tail. You start by making a slip knot which is easier to just show you than to actually explain. Wrap the yarn around, then go and pull a loop up from the back. Tighten that up and I'm gonna put that on a knitting needle. And I'm gonna snug that up. Right, magic. It slips, that slip knot actually does slip. Now you take your needles in your hand, the regular way for knitting and the needle with just the one little stitch is in your left hand. And I'm gonna actually knit stitches and put them onto this needle as they're made. So I start by just knitting a stitch. So insert my needle into the slip knot, like I was gonna knit it, and pull up knit stitch. So now I've got two stitches. One on the needle, that left hand needle, one and the right hand needle, this stitch is gonna go onto that needle. There's two different ways that could happen, right? I could either just insert the left hand needle into that loop, this way, from left to right or I could come around and insert that needle into the loop this way from right to left. If you do it this way, it's called an untwisted knit cast on and it's not the usual way to do it. Most often you're gonna want what's called a twisted knit cast on. Most people just call it a straight out knit cast on. So you're just gonna insert your left hand needle into the loop on the right needle from right to left. Basically you're inserting it into that loop the same way that the needle that's already in it is inserted into it. Tighten that up and then gonna make the next knit cast on stitch. Insert your needle into that new stitch that you just made, knit wise. Knit a stitch. Put that stitch on the needle this way. Remember I'm gonna insert this needle into this stitch the same way that the right hand needle is already in it. Right, from right to left. Snug it up. So the knit, the slip knot counts as the first stitch here and then now we've got three cast on stitches that we're casting on, by knitting them on. And actually once you get this going, you don't ever really have to take the needles out of the loop of yarn because of the way this goes when you put the loop onto the left hand needle this way, you don't ever have to take your needles out. If you put your loop on the untwisted way, you would have to take your needles out each time. So if you don't have to take your needles out you know you're doing it the right way. And that just goes like that. This makes a nice, stretchy cast on but if you drop a stitch when you're working it, it will just get lost right away. It will be very difficult to find it back but it's a good cast on and it's nice and straight forward.

Cable cast on

- If you want a nice, firm cast on, the cable cast on is your guy. It's a lot like the knit cast on, but it's a little different. It starts, like all these guys do, with a slip knot. Just wrap the yarn around, make a loop with the yarn, and then pull the strand that's behind through to the front. Hook that slip knot onto a needle and slip it up. Like the knit cast on, I'm gonna go and get my hands into my regular, usual knitting position with my yarn here and the stitches that need to be knit here on the left-hand needle. And the very first stitch is exactly like the knit cast on. Insert my needle knitwise, pull up a loop, and put it on the needle this way with my left-hand needle point going from the right to the

left through that loop, basically the exact same way that my right-hand needle is already in it. Now, here's where the cable cast on takes the road less traveled. Instead of going in there to do the stitch, and your very next stitch, the usual knit way, you are gonna insert it in between those two stitches that are already cast on. Just in between them, wrap your yarn, pull up a loop, put that loop back onto the left-hand needle the same twisty way. Three stitches, then insert your needle again in between those last two stitches, pull up a loop. And put them back with his friends over there. So I've got one, two, three, four. It's important, when you do these, that you don't make them too tight, because your needle really has to get in between those two guys, and if they're all really tight together, that's gonna be pretty difficult to do. Like I said, this makes a nice, firm cast on. Some people like to use it for the beginning of hats. It's not particularly stretchy, but it is a good, reliable cast on. A cable cast on.

Provisional cast on

- [Instructor] A provisional cast on is a kind of cast on that leaves all your cast on stitches as live stitches. Meaning, at any point when you want to, you can unzip those stitches, put them on a needle, and just start knitting in the opposite direction, knitting down from your work as if no stitches had ever been cast on there, nothing will show. And this comes up sometimes in your knitting. It's kinda cool, the way it starts. You need two things, though, in addition to the regular yarn and needles. You need two extra things. First is a nice, smooth piece of yarn. Cotton is great for this, this mercerized cotton. You wanna use a nice, smooth yarn for this. You don't want anything fuzzy because you don't want the fuzz from this waste yarn to end up inside your work when you pull this out later. So, cotton is a really good choice, and that's what I'm using here. The other thing you need is a crochet hook. Now, I know you came here to learn to knit and here I am with a crochet hook in my hand, but deal with it. If you've ever tried to crochet and you've hated it, despised it, never wanna see it again, don't do this cast on. There are other provisional cast ons. This one, though, requires a crochet hook and you have to just do one simple little crochet stitch. I'm not gonna spend too much time on showing to you, I'll try to do my best. So, you start with a slip knot and you put that slip knot on to this crochet hook. And what I need to now is I have to crochet what's called a chain. And I have to do one stitch for every stitch that I'm gonna want to have as a cast on stitch. So, when I crochet, I hold my yarn here in my left hand and I wrap it over my pointer finger so I have a nice little strand. I take my needle and I bring it clockwise around that strand, grab it in the throat of the crochet hook, and then pull it through this loop. Now, this part is key when you're crocheting a chain. You do not wanna make this snug. When you're knitting, you wouldn't make a loop like that, it would be up here. But in crochet, you really wanna leave some air in there because you have to keep pulling your hook through there every time you make a new stitch. And if it's too tight, that is really gonna suck hard. Okay, so, I'm pulling another chain stitch, alright. Once you get comfortable with crocheting a chain, you're gonna chain up a whole bunch of crochet stitches. And you can even do way more than the number of stitches that you need. You just have to have at least the number of stitches that you need. And the other thing you wanna do is you wanna make sure that this chain doesn't start twisting and turning all over the place. When you're got your last chain stitch on, and take your crochet hook out of that loop, and put the tail through that loop and pull that up really loosely. Because later on when we wanna unzip it, we're gonna have to undo that. The other way you could do this that could make that a little bit easier is instead of pulling that whole tail through, pull another loop through and then just tighten that up around that loop. So, then you'll be able to pull this out and undo it. Okay, look at this crochet chain. Can you

see that when you look at the front of these stitches it looks like Vs, it almost looks like a knit V, can you kinda see that? If you're already familiar with crochet, you'll be able to know that right away. But if you're just doing it for this, you're really gonna have to look a little bit. If I turn my crochet over, and look at the back of it, I don't see Vs, I see little bumps. I call these the butts of the crochet chain, you can call it whatever you want. These butts are what is important here. Now you get out your knitting needle, and the yarn that you wanna use to cast on, and you start by inserting your knitting needle into that butt, underneath that butt of the crochet chain, it's just one strand should end up on top of your needle, here. And I'm gonna pull up a loop through there by just making my yarn into a regular old U-shape, just hanging it over My needle like this, you see, it's Just a regular old U, and just pulling that through. Then we're gonna go to the next little butt loop. Can you sort of see that there's a loop there? A little butt bump, almost like a purl bump? Insert your needle there and pull up another loop. And so, we're not gonna pull up a loop for every single butt strand, 'cause like I said, you can make more butt strands than you, you can make more chain stitches than you need. What you're gonna do is you're gonna now start counting the number of loops that you're pulling up because those are your cast on stitches that you're gonna be knitting into. And so, you'll keep going through this butt loop, pick up just the amount that you need. Alright. Okay, and then you're just gonna start knitting these stitches. And you just keep knitting away and you just let this yarn hang there until later on when you need to use those stitches. Now, here is some fabric that I've already knit after doing that crochet hook provisional cast on. You can see here's my little cotton yarn chain of stitches. And pretend that I've knit a whole bunch already or that you've knit a whole bunch already and it's time to go back and grab these stitches at the bottom from where you cast on so you can knit in the other direction. You start by loosening up this, undoing that last crochet stitch. And then you can start to pull it out a loop at a time. And I'm gonna turn this work to face this way. And I'm gonna get a knitting needle at the ready to grab those loops as soon as they get freed up. You're gonna just do this one at a time. Okay, pull that one out, you see there's a knitting stitch right there? I'm just gonna grab it with my needle. I pull the next one out, completely out. Aha, there's another little knit stitch waiting for me. And go to the next one, and grab that little guy. Now, one thing you can do that I didn't do here, that can sometimes make this a little bit easier, is if you use a needle that's much thinner than the needle that you're knitting with just to grab these loops. And then you would transfer them all to the regular sized knitting needle that you are gonna knit with. And go on. You see how it's important that this is a somewhat slippery yarn, so it's not getting too tangled up with the yarn that I'm gonna be working with. And we just do this operation a little bit delicately because we don't want those stitches to run away. We free up these loops one at a time and get them on the needle, sometimes you could just insert your needle into the loop first and then pull the crochet chain out. I'm almost done here. And the last one. Okay, now, this is all gonna go away. Tada! So now, when you start knitting into these stitches, it'll just blend in completely smoothly, you'll never even see that stitches were cast on there at all. If you're doing this, this will probably have been finished, you're not gonna usually do this with another knitting needle hanging off of the end of it. But now I can take some yarn and I can just knit on these stitches as if they were any other kinda stitches. And when you do that work, you'll never know that these were ever cast on in the first place because they'll just knit out normally in the other direction. The other thing you wanna do here is you wanna be careful of your stitch orientation. Sometimes if you've just grabbed those loops, those live loops that were provisionally cast on, like right now these stitches are all on this needle with the wrong orientation. The loop in the back is closer to the point and the loop in the front is closer to the end. And that's not really how I want them to be. So

to fix that, I just slip it knitwise from one needle to the next and then I slip it back. And that just changed its orientation and now it's ready for me to purl the normal way. Or you can just purl through the back loop, it does the same thing, just for that first row until everybody's back to the way they should be. So you can just take this guy and just transfer him over, flip him around so that he's situated correctly and then purl, or purl or knit, whatever you're on, through the back loop so that you're not twisting that stitch. And now, if you look, you'll see these loops are just coming right out of that fabric and I can just keep keep knitting and knitting away. In this direction, for whatever reason my pattern wants me to do that, I can do it. That's it.