

CGI.M2.L07.5: Shape – Edgings – Integrated edgings – Picked up and knitted edgings

In this lesson we'll be looking at how edgings may be joined to the main knitting by picking up stitches, using live stitches put onto stitch holders during knitting, or from a provisional cast on.

Introduction

Professional finishing can be the difference between a garment fit for the runway and one destined for the back of the wardrobe. A key feature of a well-finished garment will be the edgings, bands and necklines. These are commonly made by utilising stitches along garment edges, lifting or picking up the stitches and knitting into them.

The beauty of this technique is that, by using existing stitches there may be no need for seaming or sewing up and this gives a neater result. Picking up stitches allows knitted edges to travel in a different direction to the main knitting. Contrasting yarns and interesting stitch combinations can also be incorporated into a picked up edging, allowing designers to add stylish features and originality to an otherwise simple design.

Picked up edges have practical functions, giving a garment extra stability, shape or structure, as a base for fasteners such as buttonhole bands or cords. Stitches may also be picked up around armholes to knit sleeves from the armhole to the cuff, along sock heel flaps, to create fingers in gloves and more besides. Key features of a garment can be emphasised by the use of a picked up edging.

Many knitters find picking up stitches particularly challenging and are often frustrated by the appearance of the edgings on their knits. However, there are some straightforward techniques that can solve this problem and with a little practice it is possible, not only to achieve a great finish, but even to add customised edgings and finishes.

Pick up and knit along a straight, vertical edge

To add an edging along the straight, vertical front edge of a garment, begin by measuring the edge and dividing it into manageable sections. Mark each end with a large-headed pin. Mark half way between the two pins, dividing the edge into two sections. Repeat, dividing each section until the sections are about 4-6" apart.

Calculate the number of stitches to be picked up in each section by dividing the total number of stitches to be picked up by the number of sections (4 in this case). Count the number of rows of knitting in each section. This will give an indication as to whether a stitch will be picked up from each row.

As a rule, with a stocking stitch (stockinette) edge, a stitch will be made into 3 out of every 4 rows rather than one per row. Too many stitches will make the band spread and flare out. Too few stitches will cause the band to pull in and pucker

When working in stocking stitch, the work when held upright will be made up of V shaped stitches. The work will be turned on its side and stitches will be picked up sideways into these stitches. This will produce a new knitted fabric that grows at right angles to the main knitting.

1. Holding the work in the LH with the RS facing, start picking up stitches along the edge, beginning at the end nearest to you. Join the edging yarn to the existing yarn using a temporary knot. If you don't have a tail to join onto, join in the yarn by weaving in at the corner as you normally would when seaming and sewing up.





2. With a knitting needle in the RH, insert the needle under both legs of the V-shaped stitch on the first row of knitting. Work one stitch in from the edge of the knitting as the very edge stitch may be loose and will give an uneven result.



3. Keeping a tail of yarn to the right (about 8" or so), wrap the yarn around the needle as if to knit and draw the loop of yarn through the V stitch. One stitch picked up and knitted.



4. Insert the needle under both loops of the next V and wrap the working yarn around the needle, again as if to knit.



5. Draw the loop through the V. Two stitches picked up and knitted.



6. Continue in this way, checking that the number of stitches picked up and knitted in each section is the same as the number calculated in step 2. Note that it may not be necessary to pick up a stitch in every row of the main knitting and be prepared to flex the placing a little as required. The priority is to ensure a flat edge that neither flares nor puckers.



7. Once all the stitches have been picked up and knitted, turn the work and continue working according to the pattern.



8. Note how in this sample the stitches in the k1 p1 ribbed band lie at right angles to the main fabric.

TOP TIPS

- Don't be afraid to flex the number of picked up stitches if necessary, either adding or reducing the number. If it isn't working, don't try to fudge it – pull it out and start again – it will be worth it!
- Make sure your first and final stitches are at the very edge of the main fabric or you may end up with a 'step' or gap.
- Edgings are a good place to experiment with different colours, stitches and even different yarns or added 'bling'. Swatch a good-sized sample before doing the full piece and don't forget to wash and finish the swatch – a yarn that shrinks or pills on washing may ruin all your hard work!

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