



### Introduction – What is duplicate stitch and when is it used?

Duplicate stitch or Swiss darning as it is also called, is a great way to enhance knits. Used alone or combined with embroidering, it is possible to add motifs, patterns and a splash of colour to garments, accessories or homewares.

As the name suggests, duplicate stitch is essentially a means of sewing over an existing knitting stitch or group of stitches.

It can be used as decorative technique to create patterns or motifs or for functional purposes to cover up a stitch that may have been knitted in the wrong colour. It is also a useful means of reinforcing or repairing knits, for example, sock heels or sweater elbows.

Although the effect achieved is similar to intarsia and can even be used to recreate fairisle, because duplicate stitch and embroidery are done once a garment has been finished, they can be used on newly-completed or older garments.

Tired or boring garments can be given a new lease of life with a quirky motif or random scattering of small patterns. Charity shop finds can be revamped with a bit of funky stitching and zingy colour.

And on a practical note, duplicate stitch is particularly useful for covering up small stains or marks on that favourite sweater, fixing moth nibbles, mending snags and stopping fraying or unravelling if a stitch is accidentally cut.

### Duplicate stitch/Swiss darning technique

Thread a blunt-ended bodkin with a length of yarn 30-40cm (12-15in) long. Use a blunt bodkin so that the point won't split the fibres of the main fabric.



1. On the WS of the work, thread the yarn under 4 or 5 stitches finishing behind the stitch you are going to darn over. This will anchor the thread in place.
2. To anchor firmly, take the needle back over the last stitch and draw up snugly. This prevents the stitches working loose or puckering.



3. A knit stitch is a V shape. Bring the thread to the front of the work at the bottom of the V of the stitch you want to cover.



4. Take the bodkin from right to left under the base of the V of the stitch above the one you want to cover.



5. Draw up the yarn so that it sits neatly on the surface of the fabric without puckering or hanging loosely.



6. Take the thread back down through the bottom of the V of the stitch you want to cover (where you began the stitch).



7. Draw up snugly so that the stitch below is completely covered.



8. Repeat until you have covered all the stitches required.

9. For stitches that are close together it should be possible to run the thread across the back of the work. However, if the sections are more than a few stitches apart, fasten off the thread at the back of the work by running it through several stitches then cutting off and restarting.



## Embroidery

Knitted fabrics can be embroidered with yarns or threads using normal embroidery techniques and stitches.

### TOP TIPS

- When repairing a knitted fabric, start stitching outside the weak area and overlap the weak section by at least a couple of stitches on all sides.
- If the stitching will be in an area that could cause discomfort (a sock heel, for example), it may be appropriate to split the yarn and stitch with a thinned thread so as not to create excessive bulk.