

# Joining in a new yarn

There are a number of methods for joining two balls of yarn. Because yarns vary in their texture, thickness and structure (smooth, fluffy, slippery and so on), choosing the right join can be important.

Joins can be made at almost any point in a piece of knitting. A join may be needed when you run out of yarn and simply need to carry on knitting in the same yarn, or when changing colours or changing from one yarn type to another in a textured garment.

Where possible, a join should be made in an unobtrusive part of the knitting and also at a point where it will be secure and unlikely to unravel if placed under strain. Some yarns, such as Shetland and other 'fuzzy' wools, have a natural tendency to grip to one another, so more joining options are available for them. Smooth cottons, bamboo, silk and similar yarns have no natural grip, so it is important to use a join that will be permanent but at the same time remain subtle. Certain fabrics, such as fine shawls, will show

joins more readily, and thick yarns may need to be thinned to reduce bulk where the new yarn is introduced. Joining at a row end, where the join is likely to be hidden within the seam, is often a good choice. Splicing (also referred to as wet-/spit-splicing) or a Russian join is a good choice for 'grippy' wools and can be carried out anywhere in a row. Where there are many joins, for example with colourwork, it is often best to vary the location of the colour changes if possible, to avoid the joins stacking up on top of one another and causing a thickened section.

## ROW END

This is a simple method that works well for seam edges, but is not necessarily the neatest edge for a neckline or front edge, particularly when working with a fine yarn. It is an excellent join for stripes where a new row is always begun with the new colour and a complete stripe of the new yarn is to be made.



1

At the end of the row before the colour change, knot the old and the new yarns together. At the start of the next row, start knitting with the new yarn.



2

During assembly, carefully undo the knot, weave in the ends and trim.

CLIPS 7a & 7b  
Joining in at the  
row end and  
Joining in,  
overlapping  
method



### OVERLAPPING METHOD

This method has the advantage of being possible to work anywhere in a row, but it can cause a bulky patch where the two yarns are worked together. This is not an issue with fluffy or slubbed yarns (unless the slubs come together in the same place). However, with a smooth pattern or a fine yarn, the join can be seen and may well spoil the overall look.



**1**  
Lay the new yarn over the old, with its tail end facing the working end of the old yarn. Overlap the two yarns by around 20cm (8in) and hold them together.



**2**  
Work only with the old yarn for approximately 8cm (3¼in), then knit with both the old and new yarns held together. You will have a tail sticking out from the stitches on the RH needle and several stitches worked with two strands of yarn.

**3**  
Once around 10cm (4in) has been worked using both yarns together, drop the old yarn and continue to work in the new yarn only. Trim the old yarn to a tail of around 10cm (4in) to allow for darning in later.



Shown here in two colours for clarity, this technique is used only where joining in a yarn of the same colour.

**SPLICING (WET-SPLICE OR SPIT-SPLICE)**

This technique is suitable for wool and similar yarns with natural grip and a tendency to felt when rubbed together. It can be done almost anywhere in the knitted fabric and creates a smooth join with no knot. It is only suited to joining two yarns of the same colour because the two are knitted together for several stitches.



**1**  
Take the end of the tail yarn and untwist the plies for about 3–5cm (1¼–2in). Do the same with the new ball of yarn.



Join the two untwisted ends.

**2**  
Lay the two untwisted ends over each other so that they overlap with the ends pointing away from each other. Intertwine the untwisted ends into each other as smoothly as possible, like interlocking fingers.



**3**  
Dampen your thumb and forefinger and gently roll the joining area so that the yarns begin to felt together. Start at the centre and work out towards the cut ends.



The two yarns merge to appear as one.

**4**  
Keep working the yarn until the two ends are almost invisible.

### TEMPORARY KNOT METHOD

This method places a temporary knot in the two yarns that is later undone and left for darning in. In this technique, the temporary knot holds the two yarns together but doesn't allow the stitch where the yarns join to stretch or spread. When the knot is undone, placing a single knot in the yarn holds the stitches either side in place without causing any puckering or holes. Because the yarns are woven in opposite directions, the stitches remain firm but not pulled. Weaving in the ends rather than knitting with two yarns eliminates bulk at the join. Joins can also be made anywhere in the row.



**1** When you reach the point at which the yarns are to be changed, tie the old and new yarns together with an overhand knot. Leave a tail on each of about 15cm (6in) to allow for weaving in later.



**2** You should aim to keep the knot to the wrong side of the work and adjust its positioning as required to achieve this.



**3** When assembling, carefully undo the knot. Then, place a single knot in the two yarns.



**4** Draw up the single knot gently until it is more or less flat with the knitted fabric.



**5** Weave in the two loose ends, working in opposite directions to the direction of the yarn in the knitting. Working on the wrong side of the fabric, the new yarn should be woven in to the right and the old to the left. Weave the ends back on themselves for a couple of stitches, then trim close to the fabric.

**RUSSIAN JOIN**

This is a stitched join, which is good for joining two yarns of the same colour and can be worked almost anywhere in the knitting. A smooth join with no knot, however, may not be suited to very bulky yarns due to the doubling of the yarn at the loop.



A fine needle will more easily split the yarn.

**1**

Thread as fine a needle as possible onto the tail of the old yarn.

**2**

Take the threaded needle back along the yarn tail, working into the centre of the ply twist. Depending on the fineness of the yarn and how grippy it is, thread back through the yarn for around 3–4cm (1¼–1½in).



Keep the loop small so it is less likely to pucker when pulled taut.

**3**

Leaving a small loop of yarn, pull the tail completely through and take it off the needle.