

FREE GUIDE TO
Fixing
Knitting Mistakes
for all Knitters

FREE GUIDE TO *Fixing Knitting Mistakes for all Knitters*

I'VE OFTEN SEEN KNITTERS WHO MAKE A MISTAKE IN THEIR KNITTING and don't know how to fix it. They inevitably end up putting their project aside and either starting another one, or taking a break from knitting altogether, until they can learn how to fix their mistakes.

I want you to be able to keep on knitting, so I decided to put together an eBook with some common fixes that every knitter should know how to do.

I hope you find this helpful!

Cheers,



Kathleen Cubley
Editor, *KnittingDaily.com*

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FREE GUIDE TO FIXING KNITTING MISTAKES FOR ALL KNITTERS

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Tools to Help You Fix Knitting Mistakes

You'll need to have a few tools and notions on hand to fix your mistakes. These are things you probably have in your knitting bag already, but review the list just to make sure.

- **Crochet hooks.** Get hooks in various sizes, at least E, F, G, and H. You'll use crochet hooks to pick up dropped stitches, ladder down to fix a problem stitch, and put stitches back on the needle if they fall off.
- **Stitch markers.** Have interlocking stitch markers handy. You can use them to hold dropped stitches, hold two or three stitches of a mis-crossed cable, and so forth.
- **Tapestry needles.** You'll use this to thread stitches onto waste yarn, string lifelines, tug misshapen stitches into shape, and more.
- **Waste yarn.** I like mercerized cotton because it's smooth, which makes it easy to put stitches on and take them off.
- **Small Double Pointed Needles.** You'll use these to hold stitches and knit up from mistakes that you ladder down to.



Fixing Basic Mistakes

LADDERING DOWN TO FIX A STITCH

Vertical Fixes for Stitch Mistakes

While unknitting corrects mistakes horizontally, sometimes it's more efficient to drop down vertically through multiple rows to fix a single dropped or twisted stitch, or even to change a knit stitch into a purl and vice versa.

Dropped Stitch

1 To begin, trace along the column from the dropped stitch up to your needle (Figure 5). Knit or unknit to the stitch to the right of this stitch.

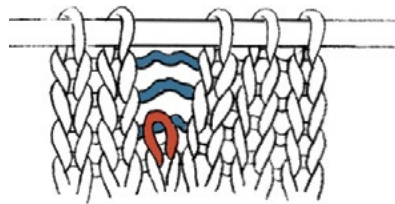


Figure 5: Ladder and hanging stitch

2 To rescue a knit stitch, push the crochet hook through the front of the hanging stitch.

3 Then pick up the first ladder, the one farthest down from the knitting needle. Position the ladder

between tip of the crochet hook and the hanging stitch (Figure 6).

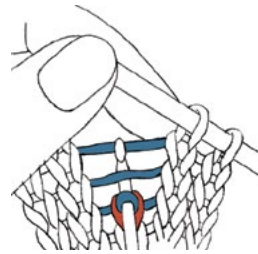


Figure 6: Ladder and stitch on hook

4 Pull the ladder through the stitch, back to front, and drop the rescued stitch off the end of the hook. Continue this maneuver until you've scooped every ladder through the loop below it, then transfer the stitch to the left needle (Figure 7).

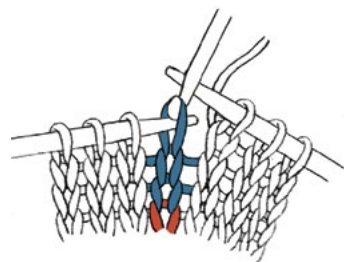


Figure 7: One knit stitch picked up

You've saved one knit stitch. When you pick up a stitch and pull the ladder through with the crochet hook, you mimic vertically what your knitting

LADDERING DOWN TO FIX A STITCH

needles do horizontally when wrapping a stitch.

To rescue a purl stitch, insert the crochet hook from the back of the work to the front to pick up the stitch (Figure 8) and pull the ladder through to the back (Figure 9).



Figure 8: Pick up purl stitch

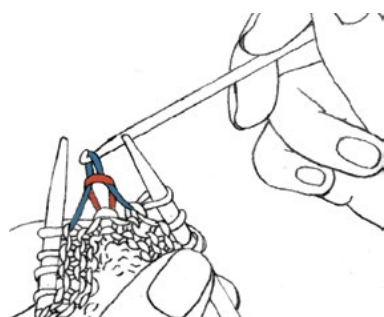


Figure 9: One purl stitch picked up

Sometimes it's easier to fix a purl by turning the work to the knit side, allowing you to pick it up from the front as a knit stitch.

To save a dropped stitch when you're working in garter stitch, alternate between rescuing knit stitch and a purl stitch from a row to row as you hook ladders up to the needle. Remember that, although working garter stitch back and forth means knitting each stitch on each row, what you actually produce is alternating rows of knit stitches (the valleys) and rows of purl stitches (the hills), since the reverse of every knit stitch is a purl stitch.



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UNKNITTING

Unknitting

Unknitting—sometimes called “tinking” (“tink” is “knit” spelled backward)—is like seeing a reverse, slow-motion film of knitting errors as they happen. We all tend to repeat the same mistakes on any project. Unknitting takes us back to the mistake. Undoing the mistake shows what went wrong, giving us the chance to learn.

Here’s How to Unknit

Unknitting moves stitches in reverse, undoing each new stitch from the right needle and replacing the old stitch on the left. If you’re at the end of a row, leave the full right needle in your right hand, exactly the opposite of what you’d do normally. If you’re in the middle of a row, find your working yarn (see page 8) and hold the needle it’s attached to in your right hand. The

working yarn comes off the back of knit stitches and off the front for purls.

1 The trick to unknitting is to place the left needle tip into the stitch lying right underneath the live stitch next to the tip of your right needle. To do this, pull on the working yarn; the opening created in your stitches points to exactly where to place your left needle.

2 Place your left needle in the opening from front to back (Figures 1 and 2). This captures the stitch from the previous row without twisting it.

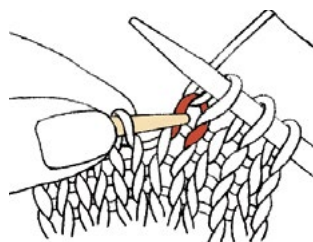


Figure 1: Unknit Step 2

UNKNITTING

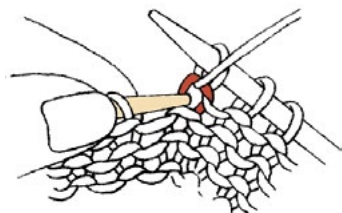


Figure 2: Unpurl Step 2

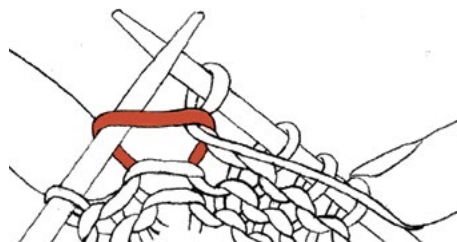


Figure 3: Unpurl Step 3

3 Slip this stitch from right needle to left needle. Pull the working yarn to unravel the stitch. The old stitch now sits on the left needle—one stitch has been unknitted (Figures 3 and 4).

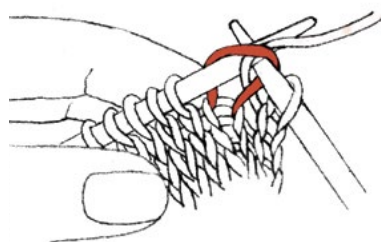
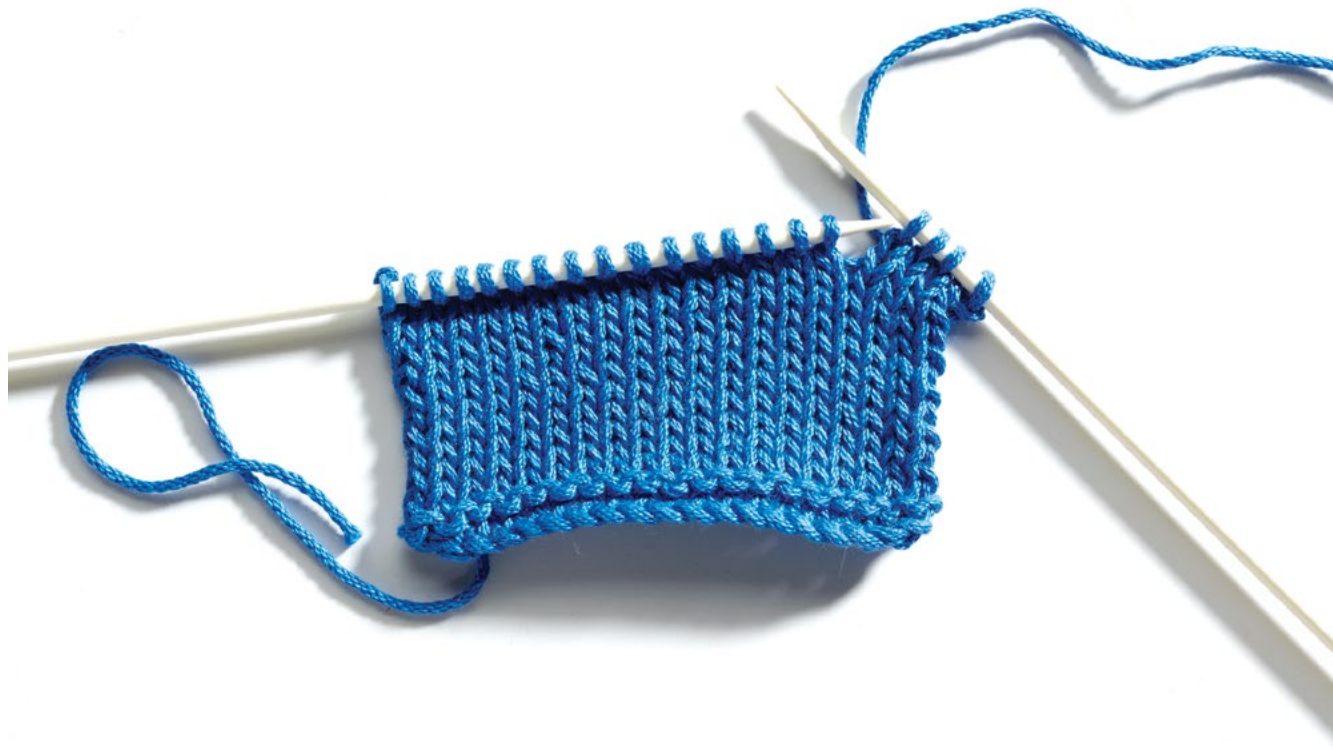


Figure 4: Unknit Step 4

4 Repeat Steps 2 and 3 until you arrive at the mistake.



RIPPING OUT ROWS

Ripping Out Rows

Take the fear out of ripping your knitting without dropping a single stitch.

See a mistake a few rows back? Use a much smaller-gauge needle than the one you're knitting with and pick up one loop (right leg) of every single stitch straight across the row (Figure 18). Pay attention to the base of the loops as you're doing so to ensure you're in the same row all the way across. Be careful not to pick up extra stitches by splitting stitches. Once all the stitches are picked up, pull out the knitting—all the loops are now on your needle and none have been dropped (Figure 19).



Figure 18



Figure 19

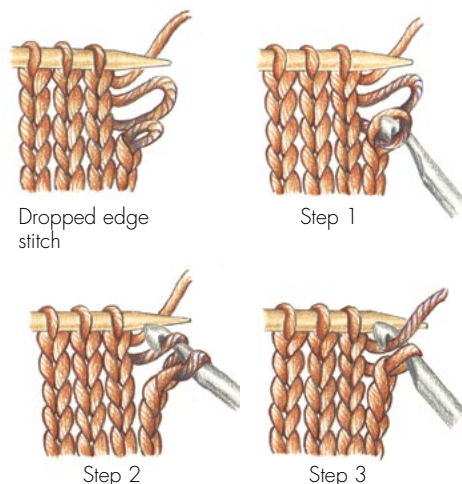
PICKING UP A DROPPED EDGE STITCH

Edge Stitch When an edge stitch drops and ravel, there will be no visible “ladders,” but there will be a large loop extending from the edge above a small loop, below which the knitted edge is intact.

1. Insert the crochet hook into the small loop, from front to back, then hold the large loop with some tension as you pull the lower part of the large loop through the loop on the hook to form a stitch.
2. With the hook in the stitch just made, pull the upper part of the large loop through this loop to form another stitch.

Repeat Steps 1 and 2 as many times as necessary.

3. With the hook in the last stitch made, pull the working yarn through this loop.
4. Place the last stitch on the needle, making sure that the leading leg is in front of the needle.



FIXING A SPLIT STITCH

DIAGNOSIS: If you’re working with yarn that’s not tightly plied, you may have split the yarn in a single stitch with the needle point when you placed the needle for the first step of the knit stitch. It’s easy to knit the split yarn as two stitches (Figure 15), and the next thing you know, your stitch count is off.

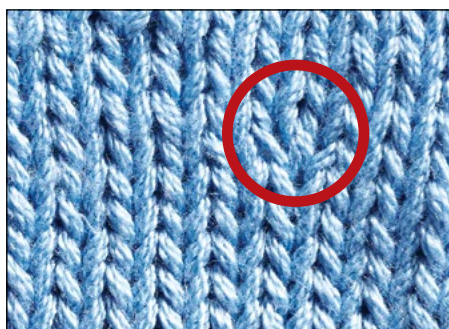


Figure 15: Split stitch

FIX: If the split stitch is on the same row you’re working, unknit back past that stitch, then knit it again as a single stitch. If the split stitch is farther down in the finished fabric, use the vertical fix to drop down and pick it up as a single stitch.

PREVENTING AND FIXING TWISTED STITCHES

Prevent Twisted Stitches

Prevent twisted stitches by paying attention to *where* and *how* you insert your needle into a stitch. Every stitch has a front leg and a back leg—the front leg being closest to you (Figure 9). A twisted stitch is caused by knitting through the back leg of a stitch. Sometimes a pattern will call for a twisted stitch but the directions will say so. To make a knit stitch, insert the right-hand needle through the front leg of the stitch on your left-hand needle (Figure 10).

To make sure you're not twisting a stitch when purling, insert your needle into the front leg from right to left of the leg, and purl the stitch (Figure 11).

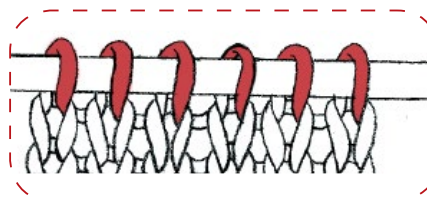


Figure 9

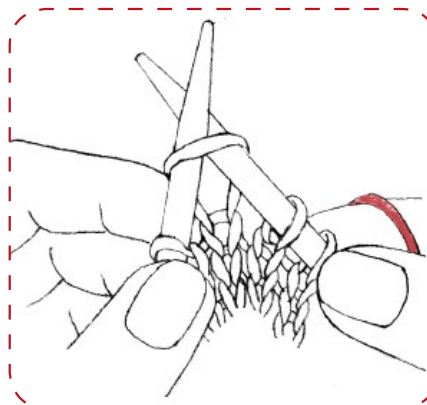


Figure 10

Fixing Twisted Stitches

Twisted stitches often happen when stitches are placed back on the needle after you've ripped out a few rows, or, Heaven forbid, when the needle falls out of the knitting.

It's best just to get those stitches back on the needle, whether they're oriented correctly or not. Start knitting, and when you come to a twisted stitch, simply knit into the back loop and your stitch will be magically corrected! You can do the same thing on the purl side.

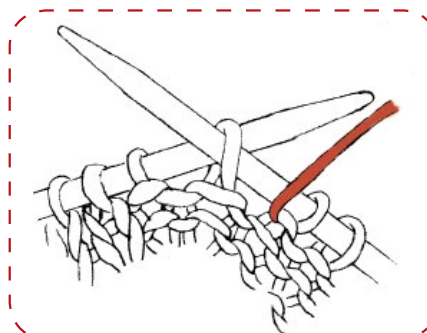
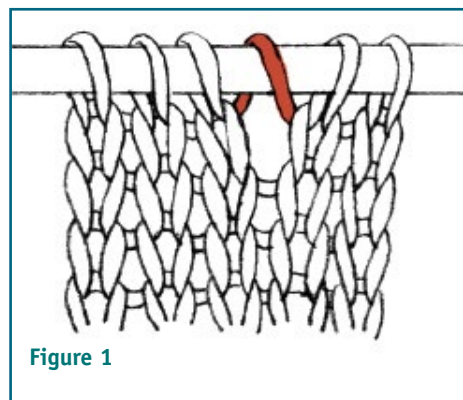


Figure 11

FIXING AN ADDED YARN OVER

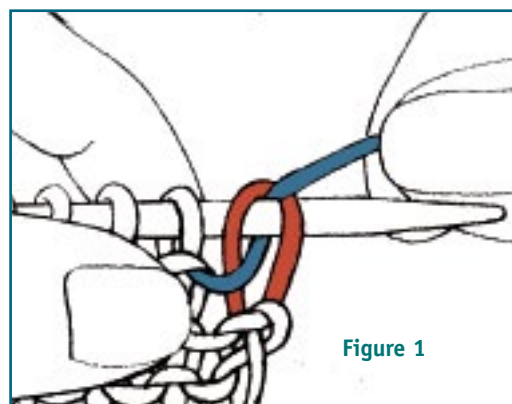
When you're beginning to knit, it's a good idea to count your stitches at the end of each row. If you end a row with more stitches than you began with, you've probably added some extra stitches. Look for slanted stitches on your needle (See **Figure 1**). If you see slanted stitches on your needle (See **Figure 1**), you may have accidentally made yarnover.

To fix it, unknit to the unwanted yarnover and pull it off the needle. Finish your row without the extra stitch!



ACCIDENTALLY WORKING THE FIRST STITCH AS TWO STITCHES

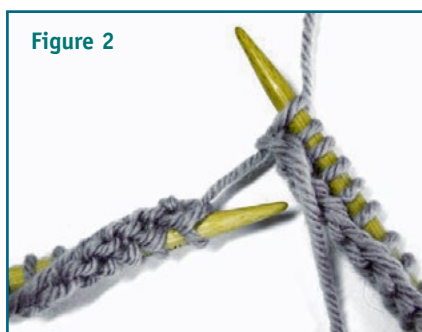
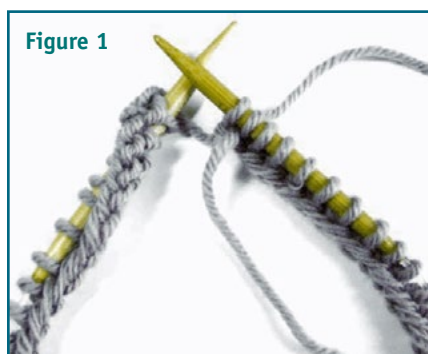
This common problem is a variation of the accidental yarnover: the working yarn is thrown over the needle at the end of the row, front to back, instead of under the needle. That pulls the first stitch up so that it looks like two stitches (**Figure 1**). To fix this mistake, simply unknit to the double stitch and reknit it as one stitch.



Fixing Mistakes in Circular Knitting

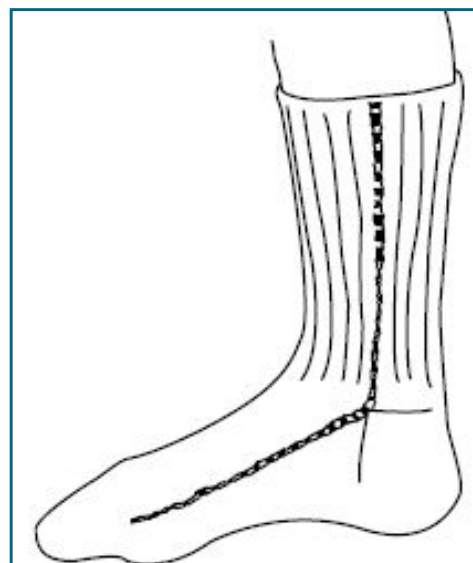
FIXING A TWIST AFTER THE FACT

What if, despite your valiant efforts, you discover that you have a twist in your cast-on? It's easy to correct this at the end of your first round. Shift the twist around to the tip of the left needle (**Figure 1**). You'll see that there is only one strand of yarn going from the right needle to the left (it's the strand that made the initial join). Work the twist into that strand by putting the point of the left needle down and through the center of the circle that you're knitting (**Figure 2**), passing the needle tip either in front of or behind the single strand so that the cast-on no longer twists around the needle (**Figure 3**). The single strand will be twisted a little more tightly or loosely, depending on which way your cast-on was twisted, but it won't be noticeable. After you start working your second round there will be two strands in that space. If you tried to work the twist into that area, the two strands would twist around each other, which would be noticeable. So always double-check for a twist at the end of your first round—it's your last chance to fix it easily!



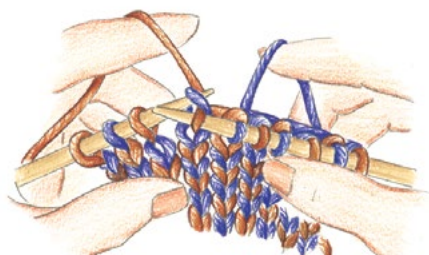
PREVENTING LADDERS WHEN USING DPNs

Many knitters are plagued by columns of loose stitches between the last stitch on one needle and the first stitch on the next. This typically happens when the first or last stitch on each needle is worked a little looser than the rest. To avoid this problem, maintain consistent tension at needle changes. If this doesn't take care of the problem, shift the boundary between needles every round or two so that the needle boundaries do not fall between the same pair of stitches for more than a couple of rounds. Another solution is to eliminate the boundaries between needles—work the socks on a very short circular needle so that all the stitches are on the same needle. Most knitters find that working with two circular needles or one very long circular needle also eliminates the problem.



Fixing Mistakes in Colorwork

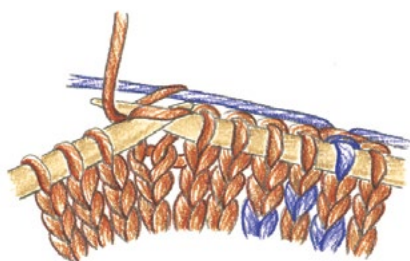
PREVENTING TANGLES IN YARN



Prevent tangles You can prevent the two balls of yarn from tangling around each other as you knit by always stranding the right-hand yarn over the left-hand yarn and the left-hand yarn under the right-hand yarn. Do not twist the strands on the back.

PREVENTING PUCKERS IN STRANDED KNITTING

Prevent puckers In multicolor knitting, the stitches will pucker if the strands are pulled too tightly across the back. To prevent this, spread the stitches on the right-hand needle to their approximate gauge each time you change colors, rather than allowing them to scrunch up near the tip of the needle.



PREVENTING JOGS IN STRIPED KNITTING

Jogless Join

South American Join—Designer Vicki Square shows how to join colors when striping while working in the round. If you want your stripes to join and not jog, here's what to do. Work to last stitch of the round before the color change. Slip the last stitch from the round knitwise. Then pick up the first stitch of the round from the row below from the back (the one below the stitch that's on the needle) (Figure 32) and place it on the left-hand needle, slip it knitwise. Then insert the left needle into the front of those two stitches and knit them together to make one stitch (Figure 33). This makes a continuous round without a color jog.



Figure 32



Figure 33

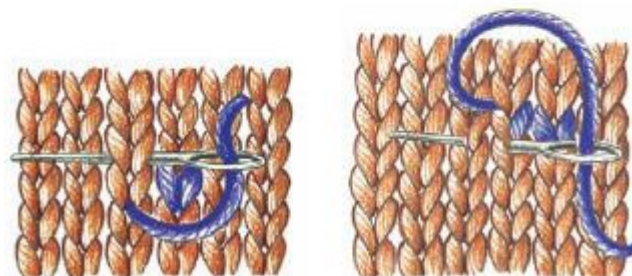
FIXING MISTAKES WITH DUPLICATE STITCH

Duplicate Stitch

When knitting stranded colorwork, it's easy to knit a stitch in the wrong color, but not so easy to fix it when you notice it several rows later! Here's a simple fix, an embroidery technique called duplicate stitch.

Step 1. Bring the threaded tapestry needle up from the back at the base of the V of the knit stitch to be covered, and then insert it under both loops of the stitch in the row above it, and pull the needle through.

Step 2. Insert the needle into the base of the V again, and pull the needle through to the back of the work.



Step 1

Step 2

Fixing Other Mistakes

PLACING A LIFELINE

A lifeline is a strand of yarn that is inserted into the work so that if an error is encountered, it is easy to rip back to that point. Lifelines are often used in lace knitting. Leave lifelines in your work until the piece is complete.

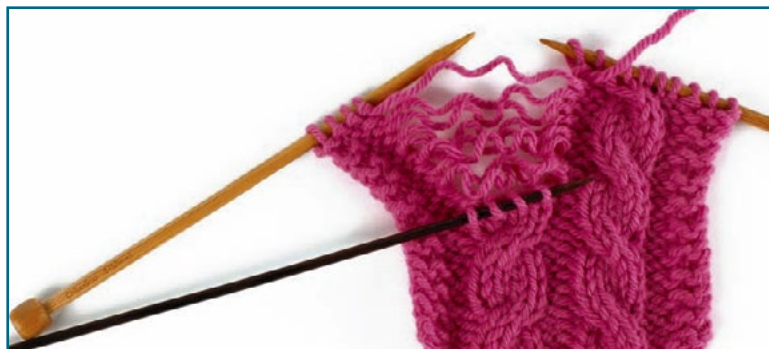
To insert a lifeline, thread a tapestry needle with smooth, tightly twisted yarn (such as crochet or perle cotton) and insert the tapestry needle purlwise through each stitch on the needle, catching each stitch but **going around any markers**. Do not remove the stitches from the needle.

When working on a circular needle, it is easier to insert the lifeline if the stitches are pushed onto the cable portion of the needle. If you must rip back, use a smaller needle to pick up the stitches from the lifeline thread, and then resume working with your regular needle.



FIXING A MIS-CROSSED CABLE

If you find a mistake in a cable crossing several rows (or even repeats) down and don't want to live with it, don't rip out all your work to that point! Instead, insert a small double-pointed needle or stitch holder into the stitches in the row just below the incorrect cable. Work up to the point of the offending crossing and then drop only the involved stitches from your needle. (If the error involves strands that have since separated, this point may be several stitches away from the original crossing point. The stitches in each strand stay with it throughout the knitting, meaning that you must drop from wherever the original strand's stitches have ended up.) Ladder the dropped stitches down until you reach the held stitches. Rework the pattern correctly, using the ladders as the working yarn. Use a blunt-tipped needle to even the tension in any wonky stitches afterwards.



SWISS DARNING

Swiss Darning

Do you need to fix small holes or weak spots in your knitting? Use this method when you have a hole with no base stitches. Set up a framework of sewing thread—this makes it easier to establish your stitches. Bring the tapestry needle from the back to front at the base of the stitch. Insert the needle from right to left under the sewing thread and back into the stitch from the row below. Continue doing this across the row connecting to the base stitch on the edge. When finished, remove the sewing thread (Figure 20, 21, 22).



Figure 20



Figure 21



Figure 22

CREDITS

Information in this eBook was augmented with content and images from the following Interweave publications:

Books: *Knit Fix*, by Lisa Kartus and *The Knitter's Companion*, Deluxe Edition, by Vicki Square

Magazines: *Interweave Knits* and *Knitscene*