

Snip your knits:

STEEK WITH CONFIDENCE!

with Mieka John of Salt & Stone Knits

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Welcome! In this class we'll dive into steeking, learning how to prepare your stitches for a crochet steek and hand sewn steek plus tips and tricks to arm you with confidence to take scissors to your first steeked project!

In this class, you'll:

- learn what a steek is and best methods of executing one based on your materials
- learn about various methods of steeking
- execute a crochet steek
- execute a hand sewn steek

STEEKING

A steek is a small section of knitting that creates a bridge between two pieces of fabric that will be later separated. Steeks are inserted to continue knitting in the round. This is especially desired when you want to work solely on the right side of your work and maintain consistent tension. Steeks are often seen in stranded colorwork knitting but can be incorporated into many types of knitting such as lace pieces.

Knitted stitches naturally want to unravel down (as we've all experienced with a dropped stitch) but are much more reluctant to unravel sideways. With very traditional methods of steeking, this characteristic of knitted fabric is used in combination with very "sticky" yarn, tight gauge and alternating color changes to cut a steek without reinforcement. The edges felt together and no reinforcement is needed.

For extra security, piece of mind and with more slippery yarns, reinforcement is used. There are many ways to reinforce a steek to further secure that raw edge. A few examples would be hand sewing, crochet, knit facing, and machine sewing. After the steek is reinforced on both sides, the knitting is cut vertically separating the tube into a flat piece of knitting.

The best yarns to use for steeking are "sticky" yarns made mostly of animal fibers that will grab onto each other and felt over time. Non-animal fiber yarns are also possible to steek but I would advise stronger machine sewing reinforcement, multiple layers of reinforcement and steeking a swatch beforehand.

Steeks often have an odd number of stitches, with the cut along the middle of the center stitch. In stranded colorwork, steek stitches are often

worked in a checkerboard pattern (Figure A) or vertical line pattern (Figure B) to densely interweave the colors together, encouraging felting after it's cut.

HOMEWORK PATTERN

Using worsted-weight yarn and 4.5mm (US 7) DPNs (or long circular needle if using magic loop method), cast on 48 sts using the long-tail cast-on. Place a beginning of round marker and join in the round. Join CC and begin colorwork chart from the class photos. Knit the 2 rounds from the chart once. Cut CC and knit 6 rounds in MC. Join CC and knit the 2 rounds of the colorwork chart a total of 5 times. Bind off all sts in MC with any preferred bind off method, cut yarn, block swatch and bring to class!

Abbreviations: CC - contrasting color, MC - main color, st(s) - stitch(es)

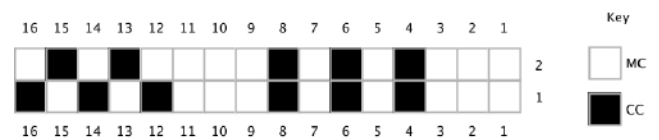


Figure A

Figure B

CROCHET REINFORCED STEEK

Step 1: Thread a tapestry needle with CC and sew along the line you will cut with a running stitch to act as a guide.

Step 2: Make a slip knot with your thinner yarn and place it onto your crochet hook. With the RS facing and the cast on edge on top, insert your hook into the cast on edge two stitches to the right from the center steek stitch and slip stitch with the crochet hook towards the center stitch, securing the reinforcement yarn into the knitting.

Step 3: Turn the work so that the steek is horizontal with the first crochet stitches you've made on the right side. In Figure C, you'll be following the purple line, picking up a purple leg of Stitch 1 together with the left blue leg of Stitch 2 and crocheting them together with a slip stitch.

Step 4: Continue crocheting along this line until you reach the end. It helps to fold the work over exposing the two legs you need to pick up.

Step 5: When you've reached the bind off end, secure the reinforcement yarn for two more stitches along the bind off edge as you did for the cast on edge and cut the yarn, pulling the end through the last loop.

Step 6: Repeat Steps 2-5 from the bind off edge toward the cast on edge crocheting the green left leg of Stitch 3 and the blue right leg of Stitch 2 together.

Step 7: Carefully spread the edges you've just reinforced apart and lift it away from the back of the work. With sharp scissors, cut between the two lines of crochet reinforcement. It's best to cut just a few stitches at a time, careful not to cut anything but the center of Stitch 2.

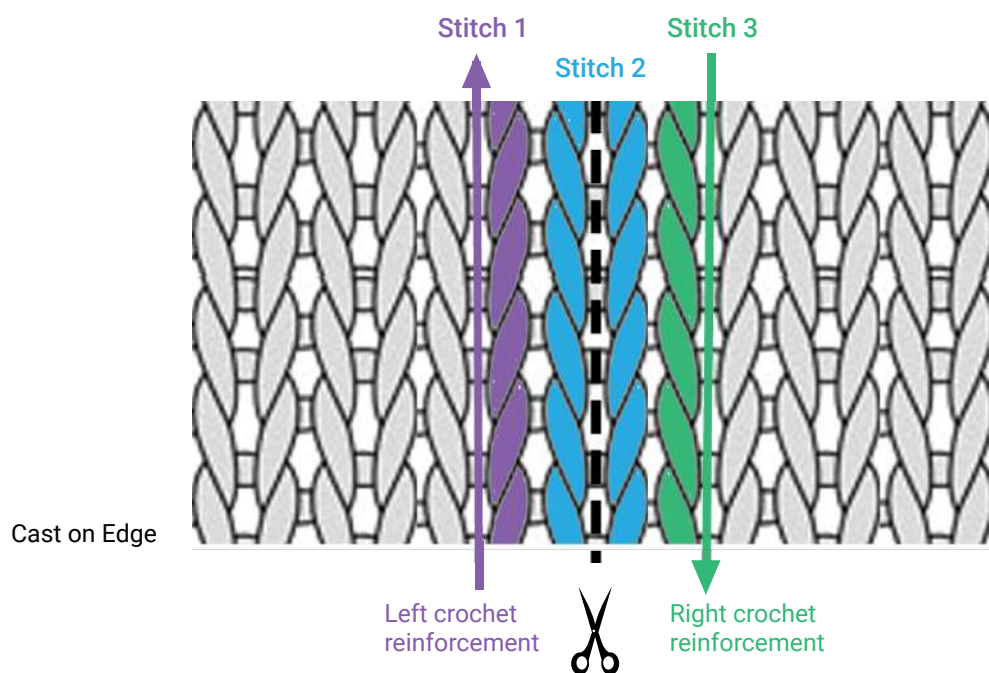


Figure C

HAND SEWN REINFORCED STEEK

Step 1: Thread a tapestry needle with CC and sew along the line you will cut with a running stitch to act as a guide.

Step 2: Thread a sharp tapestry needle or large-eye sewing needle with your thinner yarn.

Step 3: Begin with Stitch 1. Insert your needle into the cast on edge of Stitch 1 and sew into the left legs of each stitch in that column with a running stitch all the way to the bind off.

Step 4: Turn your work around. Sew into the right legs of each stitch in that column with a backstitch. An easy way to remember how to sew this stitch is: 2 steps forward, 1 step back. Cut the yarn.

Step 5: Repeat Steps 2-4 with Stitch 3 but this time you'll be sewing the running stitch into the right leg and sewing the backstitch into the left leg. You want the lines of backstitching closest to the cut line. Cut the yarn.

Step 6: Carefully spread the edges you've just reinforced apart and lift it away from the back of the work. With sharp scissors, cut between the two lines of sewn reinforcement. It's best to cut just a few stitches at a time, careful not to cut anything but the center of Stitch 2.

