

Inside-out Sewn Bind-off

a slight variation on a classic technique.

Despite a lot of new and interesting inventions of bind-offs, my favorite remains the sewn bind-off or backstitch bind-off, as learned from Elizabeth Zimmermann's writing. It's stretchy and it looks the same as the basic longtail cast-on, so it's good for making the two ends of a piece of knitting match.

I tend a bit toward the idiosyncratic. In this case, I prefer what most people think of as the back of this bind-off (and also the back of the longtail cast-on). The texture reminds me of decorative braid.

Here's how the bind-off is done. First, measure out a length of yarn about 3.5 times as long as the piece being bound off then cut or break it. If you're working with a really wide piece of knitting, then measure out a length that's manageable; this bind-off can be done with multiple pieces of yarn, though it does mean more ends to work in. A darning needle is already in play; what's a few more ends to work in?

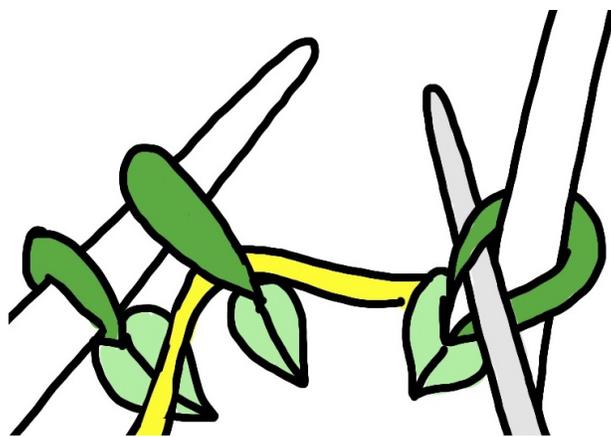
Thread a darning needle with the yarn that's still attached to the knitting.

The first and last parts are slightly different when working flat and when working in the round.

If working in the round:



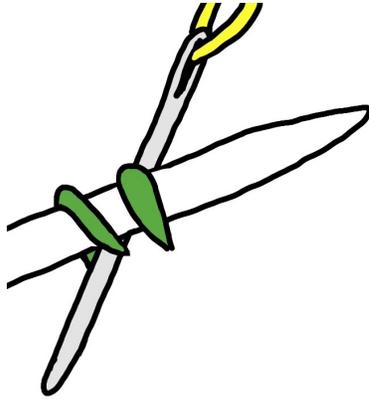
1. Bring the needle forward through the first stitch of the round. Pull up the slack.



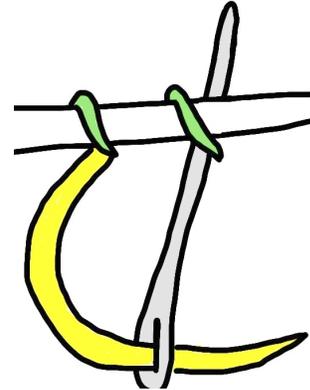
2. Move one stitch to the right and insert the needle through that stitch from front to back (knitwise) but don't pull it through yet.

Skip to Step 3.

If working flat:

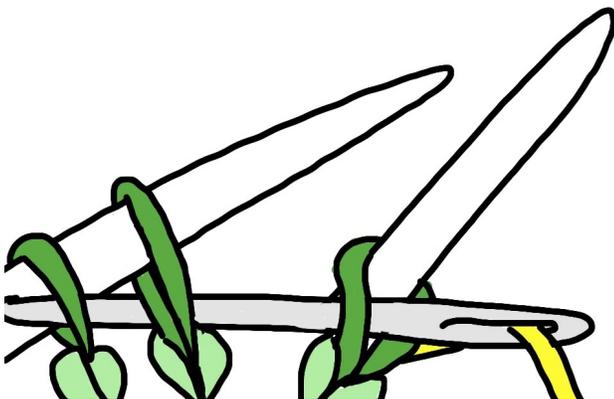


1. Take the needle behind the first stitch of the row and bring it forward through the second stitch (purlwise). Pull the needle and yarn through.

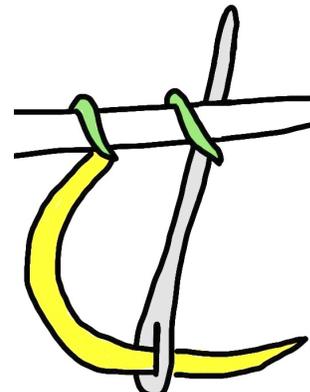


2. Move one stitch to the right and insert the needle through that stitch from front to back (knitwise) but don't pull it through yet. Slip that stitch from the knitting needle to the darning needle.

Repeat to end:



3. Skip behind the next stitch to the left and bring the darning needle forward (purlwise) through the next stitch that hasn't been sewn at all yet. Pull the yarn through.



4. Go back one stitch and insert the needle through the first stitch on the knitting needle. Slide that stitch off the knitting needle before pulling the sewing needle through the rest of the way.

If working in the round:

5. If working in the round, when all stitches have had the sewing needle pass through twice, the bind-off is done. The last stitch of the round was half-worked at the very beginning of the bind-off.

If working flat:

5. If working flat, after sliding the next to last stitch off the needle, bring the needle forward through the last stitch one more time.

I tend to be a tight knitter, so I find myself surprised by the way the sewn bind-off works for me: it's too loose and sloppy. I always go back and tighten it up loop by loop so it matches my cast-on. (It's stretchy enough afterward.) Other knitters' experience might vary, but I'd suggest swatching this the first time to see.