

S T E E K I N G

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Steeking is a traditional method of turning a sweater knitted in the round into a cardigan. This is done by knitting extra stitches and then edging these before cutting. The word 'steek' quite often fills the average knitter with dread at the thought of cutting knitting that has taken a long time to work. Once the initial fear has been conquered it is an easy and pleasurable technique to do. Steeking is most successful when the knitting yarn is 100% Wool. Shetland Wool is perfect as it is extra 'sticky' which means that the fibres 'felt' together to help prevent any loose stitches from running. Do not try and steek cotton yarns as the fibres are short and smooth and therefore are more difficult to work.

Pattern note: the steek stitches are numbered from right to left, 1 to 5.

Below and on the opposite page I explain how to steek using crochet, you can work machine stitch steeks but personally I find this technique a bit 'hit or miss' but the choice is yours. With crochet you can more or less guarantee that all the stitches have been caught before starting to cut.

1. When wanting to steek a design, extra stitches need to be added at the centre front or armholes. Normally an odd number of stitches are added, I usually add an extra 5 stitches for my steeks. These 5 stitches are then worked as a part of the Fair Isle pattern and are shown on the chart. It is **very important that you do NOT weave any loose ends across the steek stitches**, as this could cause the stitches to pull apart once cut.

2 & 3. With RS facing and starting at the welt edge and using a fine crochet hook (I use a 2.50mm (US B1/C2) hook for most steeks) start to work a dc (sc) into each stitch as follows: push the hook into the left hand leg of vertical steek stitch 2 and then into the right hand leg of vertical steek stitch 3 and complete a dc (sc) through both legs. Continue to work in this way until the top of the garment is reached. Break off the yarn.

2 & 3. With RS facing rejoin the yarn and work in the same way down the garment from top to bottom, working a dc (sc) into the left hand leg of vertical steek stitch 3 and the right hand leg of vertical steek stitch 4. Break off the yarn.

4. Now spread out the fabric and you will see that a vertical line of horizontal stitches have appeared where vertical steek stitch 3 was, this is the cutting line.

5. Carefully cut up this 'ladder' and the cut edges will disappear into the crochet 'edge' on either side of the fabric.

6. The fabric is now ready to be folded back to the WS of the garment. This can be held in place by hand stitching with the fold along the 1st and 5th vertical steek stitch. The back of the steek can then be covered if preferred with a pretty woven ribbon or knitted strapping. A steek worked in Shetland Wool can be left uncovered as this will felt as the garment is washed and worn. Cardigan trims or sleeves can now be worked by picking up and knitting the stitches along vertical steek stitch 1 and 5.

Be brave and happy steeking!



1 .



4 .



2 .



5 .



3 .



6 .