

The SpaceCadet's Collection of
**Fabulous
Hacks & Tips**
for Knitting & Crochet from Awesome
Indie Designers



CONTENTS

- 5 WITH THANKS
- 7 THE TEXAS LONG TAIL CAST-ON
Sarah Wilson
The Sexy Knitter
- 9 USING LIFELINES TO SAVE YOUR KNITTING
Mercedes Tarasovich
Mercedes Knits
- 11 THE SLIP-STITCH BIND-OFF
Alasdair Post-Quinn
Fallingblox Designs
- 13 COUNTING CAST-ON STITCHES
Melissa Jean Tompkins-Stahl
Melissa Jean Designs
- 15 DECREASING ON THE WRONG SIDE
Heather Zoppetti
Heather Zoppetti Designs
- 17 IGNORE THE BALL BAND!
Rohn Strong
Rohn Strong Designs
- 19 A LIFELINE FOR A FORETHOUGHT HEEL
Elizabeth Green Musselman
Dark Matter Knits
- 21 WASHING GARMENTS WITH HANDMADE BUTTONS
Melissa Jean Tompkins-Stahl
Melissa Jean Designs
- 23 WHAT TO DO WHEN THE FOUNDATION IS A GABILLION CHAINS
Rebecca Velasquez
Rebecca Velasquez Designs
- 25 GIFTING HAND-KNITS
Melissa Schoenwether
6 Bits Storybooks
- 27 WEAVING IN AS YOU KNIT
Lee Meredith
Leethal Knits
- 29 SWATCHING IN THE ROUND
Hunter Hammersen
Violently Domestic
- 31 ABOUT SPACECADET® YARN

WITH THANKS

Every one of the designers in here is someone I have known, worked with, or admired for years. Creating designs that are fresh and exciting, each is pushing the world of knitting and crochet to move in new and innovative directions -- in pattern design, publishing, podcasting, and teaching.

It is absolutely one of the best parts of my job to get to work alongside these wonderfully creative people. And I am deeply grateful to every one of them for their generosity in sharing with us a quick tip or hack that will make our own knitting and crochet that little bit fresher and more exciting too.



Stephanie
Dyer and Head SpaceCadet
[SpaceCadet Inc](#)

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A NOTE ABOUT SPELLING: I spell many things the British way, while most contributors to this ebook spell things the American way. After a great deal of debate on the merits of presenting a consistent style throughout the book vs presenting individual voices, I've decided that, since these are individual pieces from individual designers, I didn't want to change their style or their spelling. Hence, you will see both colour and color in the pages that follow. I've no doubt you'll handle that beautifully.



My tip is for **never running out of yarn during the long-tail cast-on**. This is particularly handy when casting on a large number of stitches, or for people like me who hate having leftover yarn that goes to waste.

THE TEXAS LONG TAIL CAST-ON

Find both ends of your ball of yarn. Using both strands, make your slipknot as usual. You will have two loops of yarn on your needles, two short "ends," and two "long tails," each attached to the ball of yarn. In this way, you can perform your long tail cast-on as usual, except instead of having a tail,

you'll be pulling directly from your ball of yarn!



SARAH WILSON
THE SEXY KNITTER

When you've finished casting on, simply snip one of the live strands of yarn and proceed with knitting as usual. This cast-on will give you 3 ends to weave in instead of 1, but it'll also save you endless frustration from coming up JUST short with your long tail!

When using this hack (which I like to call the **TEXAS LONG TAIL CAST-ON**, since everything is bigger in Texas), you can count the two loops from your slipknot as two cast-on stitches, or count them as one and work them together on your first row.

Sarah Wilson is The Sexy Knitter, a full-time knitwear designer with designs in publications including Interweave Knits, Knitty.com, Knitscene Magazine, The Knitter, and Your Knitting Life. You can find her online at sexyknitter.com and her designs on Ravelry at www.ravelry.com/designers/sarah-wilson

USING LIFELINES TO SAVE YOUR KNITTING

LIFELINES AREN'T JUST FOR LACE!

When working on a complex stitch pattern such as brioche knitting or complex cables, you can take advantage of this handy technique to ensure that if you need to rip (it happens to all of us), you have an anchor row to return to.



MERCEDES TARASOVICH
MERCEDDES KNITS

Mercedes Tarasovich's knitwear designs have been seen in numerous publications such as Interweave Knits, Knitscene, Twist Collective, and Knitty, as well as patterns for yarn companies such as Classic Elite Yarns, Malabrigo Yarns, and Harrisville Designs. She's a Craftsy instructor and the author of Brioche Chic (Interweave). You can find her at mercedesk-nits.com





Want to take the guesswork out of your simple bind-off? Don't worry about how much yarn you need to finish it, or whether it's going to be too tight, too loose, or uneven.

This is like the simplest bind-off you know -- work 2 stitches, PSSO, etc -- but without the tedious guesswork.

THE SLIP-STITCH BIND-OFF

Instead of passing your stitches over and off, just finish working the whole row -- if there's a selvedge, make sure you work that stitch rather than slipping it here. Then, slip back to the beginning of the row (easy if you're on circulars or DPNs) and begin slipping the stitches instead of working them. Slip your knits knitwise and your purls purlwise, and every time you have 2 on the needle, PSSO. Work until you have one stitch left on the needle, break your end, pass it through and tighten. If you're doing this in double-knitting, work until you have one pair left, break both ends, and pass them through both loops before tightening.



Because you create the loops ahead of time, you can't over- or under-compensate for tension as you work the bind-off.

Your bind-off is the same tension as any standard row.

If you find it's too tight, take out that last row and work it again with a needle size up; if too loose, try a needle size down. Rather than worrying about saving just enough yarn for your bind-off, you can work until you run out and work the bind-off on that row.

ALASDAIR POST-QUINN
FALLINGBLOX DESIGNS

Alasdair Post-Quinn specializes in double-knitting techniques and releases patterns under the imprint Fallingblox Designs. He teaches his techniques in workshops, on [Craftsy](#) and through his book "Extreme Double-Knitting". He's been knitting since 2003 and lives in Cambridge, MA with his wife and cat. Find his patterns, classes and blog through his website at www.double-knitting.com



When casting on a large number of stitches, place markers every 25 stitches in the cast-on row.

That way, you do not need to keep recounting your stitches individually.

COUNTING CAST-ON STITCHES



I make up a bunch of stitch markers ahead of time by cutting 2" pieces of yarn and tying a knot at the ends.

MELISSA JEAN TOMPKINS-STAHL
MELISSA JEAN DESIGNS

Melissa Tompkins-Stahl creates beautiful knitting designs and handcrafts stunning porcelain buttons from her studio in Upstate New York. You can find her designs on Ravelry at www.ravelry.com/designers/melissa-jean-stahl and her buttons on her website at www.melissajeans.net



Here's my hack for decreasing on the wrong side. SSK worked on the wrong side is NOT p2togtbl - that's actually the wrong side of k2togtbl and will result in twisted stitches.

DECREASING ON THE WRONG SIDE

Instead, use SSP on the wrong side to match SSK on right side.



To create a SSK from the wrong side (SSP): slip the next 2 sts individually knitwise, then put them back onto the left needle. Now do your p2togtbl.

The knitwise slipping turns your stitches around so they don't get twisted. It also helps to make this stitch much easier to perform!

HEATHER ZOPPETTI
HEATHER ZOPPETTI DESIGNS

Heather Zoppetti is a knitwear designer, instructor, and founder of Stitch Sprouts, a distribution and service company for the knit industry. Her patterns have been published in many Interweave publications such as Interweave Knits, Knitscene, and Jane Austen Knits and by yarn companies such as Manos del Uruguay, Baah Yarns, The Alpaca Yarn Company, Reywa Fibers, and Universal Yarns. Heather lives and teaches in Lancaster, PA, and can be found at hzoppettidesigns.com and stitchsprouts.com.

IGNORE THE BALL BAND!

The best tip I can give to any new (or experienced) crocheter is to ignore the ball band.

Usually a recommended hook size is given, and more times than not...it's wrong.

Start with a hook that is 2-3 sizes larger than recommended

and make adjustments as needed based on the finished fabric you desire! This is especially important if using techniques like Tunisian crochet.



ROHN STRONG

ROHN STRONG DESIGNS

Rohn Strong is a crochet and knitwear designer who has been crocheting since he was 6! A Michigan native and North Carolina resident, Rohn describes his design work as having "urban simplicity, classic roots, and easy-to-wear style." You can follow his blog at www.rohnstrongdesigns.wordpress.com and find his designs at www.ravelry.com/designers/rohn-strong.





If you're doing a forethought heel (similar to an afterthought heel, but with waste yarn worked in advance to where the heel will be), and have trouble seeing where to pick up stitches for the heel, try this:

A LIFELINE FOR A FORETHOUGHT HEEL



Slip a lifeline into the heel stitches before the waste yarn and into the round after. When you come back to pick up stitches for the heel,

just slip your needle under each stitch that has the lifeline running through it.

VOILA!

ELIZABETH GREEN MUSSELMAN
DARK MATTER KNITS

Elizabeth Green Musselman designs knitwear for two of the most skeptical audiences on earth: men and school-aged boys. A podcaster, knitting teacher, and author of *Kung Fu Knits*, you can find her online at darkmatterknits.wordpress.com and her designs at www.ravelry.com/designers/elizabeth-green-musselman



WASHING GARMENTS WITH HANDMADE BUTTONS

When using awesome handmade ceramic buttons on a garment you intend to wash, **gently scrunch aluminum foil around each button so there are air pockets around the button.**



Turn the garment inside out and wash on the gentle cycle. If the buttons are large and heavy you can add a bit of bubble wrap under the foil and place the garment in a mesh bag before washing.

MELISSA JEAN TOMPKINS-STAHL
MELISSA JEAN DESIGNS

Melissa Tompkins-Stahl creates beautiful knitting designs and handcrafts stunning porcelain buttons from her studio in Upstate New York. You can find her designs on Ravelry at www.ravelry.com/designers/melissa-jean-stahl and her buttons on her website at www.melissajeans.net



Avoid all the counting: when making the slip knot, leave the knot loose & insert a marker/paperclip under a loop to keep it from becoming too tight.

WHAT TO DO WHEN THE FOUNDATION IS A GABILLION CHAINS

Count out the first 50 chains then measure. Need 500 chains? Multiply your measurement by 10.



REBECCA VELASQUEZ
REBECCA VELASQUEZ DESIGNS

Chain away, count-free, until the chain is the right length, add a few inches for security (I always do), turn and work your first row. Remove the marker and un-chain the extra!

Rebecca Velazquez is a knit and crochet designer whose patterns appear regularly in Love of Crochet magazine and Crochet! magazine. You can find her online at rebeccavelazquez.com and her designs on Ravelry at ravelry.com/designers/rebecca-velasquez.



Presentation can be a gift in itself when it comes to sharing hand knits. When giving a hand knit gift I like to provide a few extras to ensure the longevity of the gift.

GIFTING HAND-KNITS

With proper care and maintenance the hand knit gift can last and become an heirloom for others to enjoy!

Some things I do are save an original yarn tag as it offers fiber content and usually recommended care of the yarn; attach 2-3 yards of yarn to the tag for emergency repairs; on the back of the tag I include an extra matching button if the gift has buttons; include a single pack of laundering soap or a small bottle of SOAK; oftentimes I will write out instructions on how to wash and block the garment or accessory; include a handwritten "coupon" entitling the bearer of it to a free mending lesson or service by me should the garment need it. Believe it or not this has made me a better mender and teacher as I have had folks take me up on the offer of each!



MELISSA SCHOENWETHER
6 BITS STORYBOOKS

The majority of my hand knits are presented wrapped in brown paper which I recycle from brown paper bags. These sturdy wrappings look lovely "tied up with string" and embellished with a little decoration: sometimes dried and pressed flowers, a baby rattle, a collection of paper tags with well wishes on them... the possibilities are endless.

Melissa Schoenwether is known for her never-ending optimism, for her wildly popular podcasts *Singlehanded Knits* and *With Mel*, and for her newest venture, the 6 Bits design collections. You can find her at <http://withmeldotcom.wordpress.com> and her patterns on Ravelry at <http://www.ravelry.com/designers/mel-ski>



WEAVING IN AS YOU KNIT

I make a lot of projects with more than one color, so a favorite knitting trick of mine is to

weave ends into my stitches as I knit

whenever a yarn is added or broken mid-project, preventing that extra finishing work when the piece is off the needles!



LEE MEREDITH
LEETHAL KNITS

Lee Meredith is a maker of things, doer of stuff! Designer of modern and innovative knitting patterns, she specialises in any-gauge accessories, modular construction techniques, and designs that play with colour in fun ways. Find her online at <http://www.leethalknits.com> and <http://www.ravelry.com/designers/lee-meredith>



If your project will be knit in the round, you really should swatch in the round (your gauge is often different if you're working flat). There are a couple of ways to do this. The most obvious is to knit a tube, but that can be fiddly, and you'd have to knit a pretty darn big tube to get an accurate measurement. I find it much easier to just take a little short cut.

SWATCHING IN THE ROUND



You'll need two DPNs. I'm using two different colors of needle so you can tell the needles apart. We'll call the brown square needle A, and the pink round needle B.

Step 1: Cast on onto needle A. You'll have your stitches and your working yarn hanging out over on the left side of needle A.

Step 2: Shove your stitches over to the right side of needle A (this is an easy step).

Step 3: Reel off a nice long loop of yarn (more than enough to span the whole length of your swatch plus a few inches). Grab needle B and start on the first row of your swatch. That long loop of yarn you reeled off will just dangle in the background. Knit all the way across the row. Your stitches and your working yarn are now hanging out on the left side of needle B.

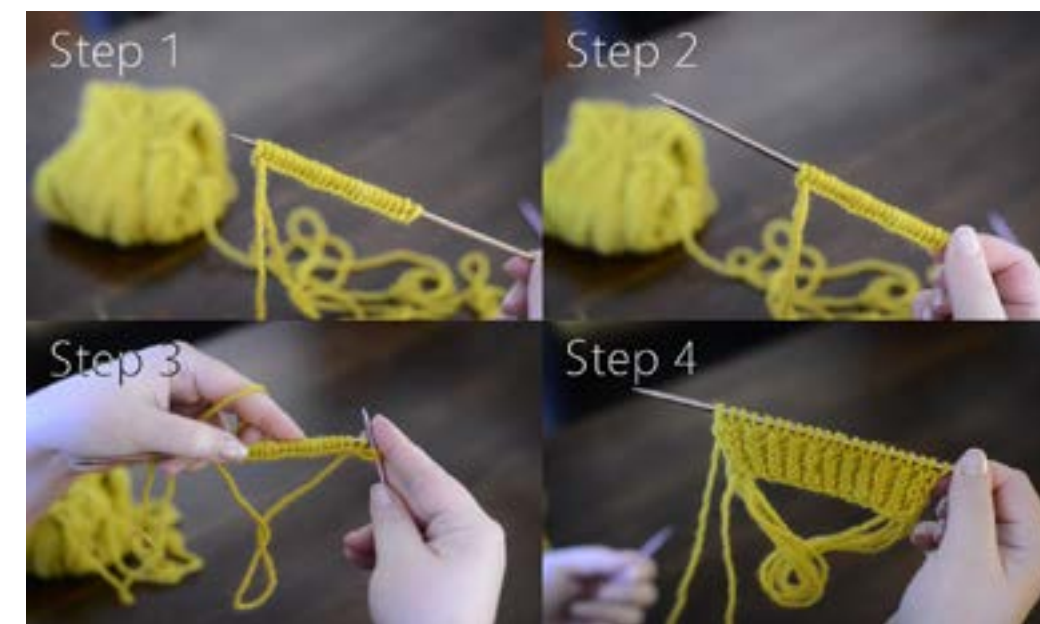
Now you just repeat steps 2 and 3 until your swatch is tall enough. Shove your stitches over to the right side of the needle, reel off another loop of yarn, and knit back across your swatch.

Notice that you're never looking at the back of your knitting. You're not flipping your knitting back and forth and working right side and wrong side rows. You're always working on the right side. You're knitting in the round, and you're just using those long loops of yarn to finish up the back side of the circle for you!

HUNTER HAMMERSEN VIOLENTLY DOMESTIC

In Step 4, you can see what it looks like once you've done half a dozen rows or so.

Once your swatch is tall enough, bind off. Grab the nearest pair of scissors and slice all those long loops of yarn in half. Block your swatch, and measure away.



Hunter didn't really like knitting the first time she tried it. She didn't much care for it the second time either. It wasn't till the third time, and the discovery of knitted socks, that she was properly smitten. Once she realized she could make up her own patterns, her fate was sealed. She's been busy designing ever since.

Find her on Ravelry at www.ravelry.com/designers/hunter-hammeresen and online at violentlydomestic.com

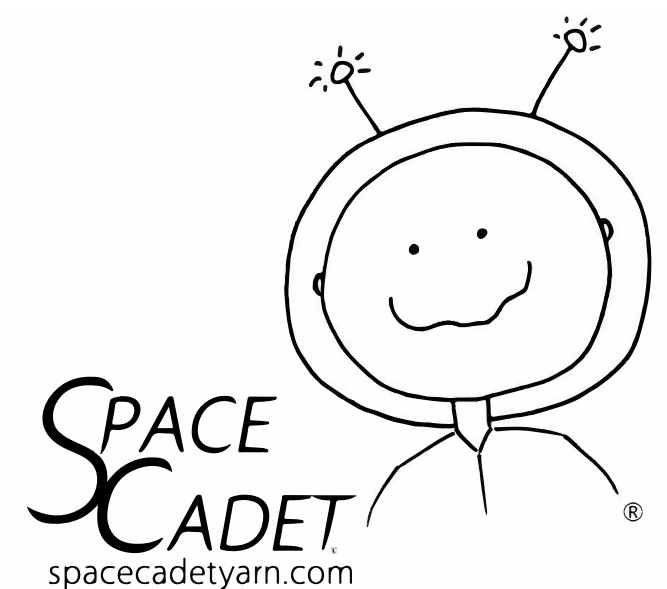


About SpaceCadet® Yarn

At SpaceCadet®, we passionately believe that knitting and crocheting make people happier, deep down inside, and that nothing does that more than working with gorgeous, vibrant yarn.

For us, dyeing is a cosmic adventure. We start with high quality yarns and luxurious fibers — merino wool, silk, linen, and bamboo — to begin the wonderful process of mixing our dyes by hand and seeing where the colour takes us. The result is yarn and fiber that is as exciting to work with as it is for us to create.

Started as a one-woman operation in 2010, we have grown to a small team that is proud to mix every colour from primaries, dye every skein individually, and to get to know our customers and club members personally.



www.spacecadetyarn.com

About the SpaceCadet



Stephanie is the Dyer and Head SpaceCadet at [SpaceCadet® yarn](#). She has been fascinated by fiber ever since she first took spinning lessons at the age of 11. She taught herself to knit at 19, went back to spinning (and actually got the hang of it) ten years later and, along the way, picked up a bit of experience in weaving, a smidge of crochet, and a degree in Textiles and Clothing. But it was when she began dyeing that she felt she'd really found her calling. She has lived half her life in the US and the other half in the UK, which explains her spelling.

She lives in Pittsburgh with her husband and two daughters. You can chat with her in the SpaceCadet_ [Ravelry](#) group, follow her as [SpaceCadetYarn on Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#), and you can contact her by email at missioncontrol@spacecadetyarn.com.

