

Learn Something New!

Work a Traditional Andean Cast On—Puntas!

By Leslie Gonzalez

The Punta Cast On, or Punta Edging, is an Andean technique that creates a sawtooth, scalloped edge. Puntas are used at the base of hats, sweaters, and other articles of Andean style clothing.

Andean knitting is often very colorful, and the puntas can be made to accompany the colors of the garment. There are several ways to make the edging; and techniques, as well as the look of the points, vary from region to region.

The sources at the end of this article are great places to learn more about this technique.

The most common way to make the punta begins with a crochet chain. Once you master using a single-color crochet chain, you can try making and working from multicolored chains.

To begin the cast on, make a crochet chain:

Make a slip knot and place it on a crochet hook, then loosely chain a set of stitches.

[Video](#)—How to crochet a chain.

You can chain enough for one point or for all of the points. You can add to the chain as you go. Add a few extra chain stitches before starting the knitting. Place an interlocking stitch marker in the last loop to hold your place.

Each of these puntas uses seven chain stitches and creates four stitches. The first punta will create five stitches so that the entire set of points begins and ends with a chain color.

Set up the first point:

1. Slip the first chain to the working circular needle.

2. With a second yarn and using the circular needle, pick up and knit four stitches in the back bump of the chain stitches. See Figure 1.
3. On the right needle pass the second stitch over the first (similar to binding off).
4. Pick up and knit another stitch from the crochet chain.
5. On the right needle pass the second stitch over the first, then the third stitch over the second.
6. Pick up and knit another stitch from the crochet chain.
7. Turn the work and purl 3.
8. Turn the work and knit 3.
9. Slip one bump from the crochet hook to the right needle without knitting. (4 sts)

Repeat steps 2-9. When you work the remaining points, begin in the next consecutive stitch of the chain. Only the first point begins in the second stitch.

Once all the points are complete, pull out the extra crochet chain stitches.

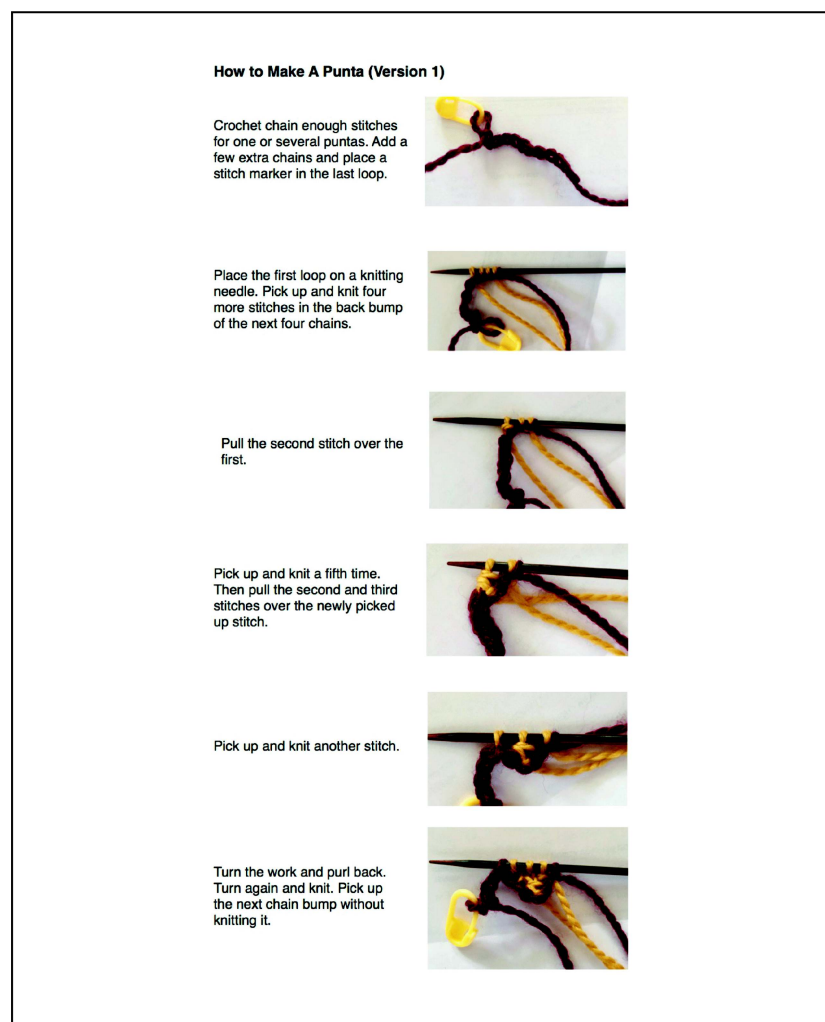


Figure 1

Another variation is to work each point using a different color for each point, or alternate a set of colors.

A second way to work this edging is to loosely cast on all of the stitches using a simple cast on such as the long-tail or similar cast on onto a circular needle. This method will require stitches to be used between points and has a more layered and softer scallop. Each point will use five stitches but should be preceded by at least one stitch if not several. Evenly space the points.

To make the points, work as follows:

1. Either slide the work back to the beginning or join to work in the round. Using a second color, knit two rows; or if working in the round, knit one round and purl the second round.
2. With a third color, knit to where you want to make the point.
3. Pull the second stitch over the first on the right needle.
4. Knit another stitch.
5. Slide two stitches from the right needle to the left and pull the second stitch on the left needle over the first. Place the remaining stitch on the right needle.
6. Pull the second stitch over the first on the right needle.
7. Knit another stitch.
8. Slide two stitches from the right needle to the left and pull the second stitch on the left needle over the first. Place the remaining stitch on the right needle.
9. Work several stitches plain to the next point.

Repeat steps 3-9. Be sure to end with the same number of stitches as preceded the first point.

See Figure 2 on next page.

Punta (Version 2)

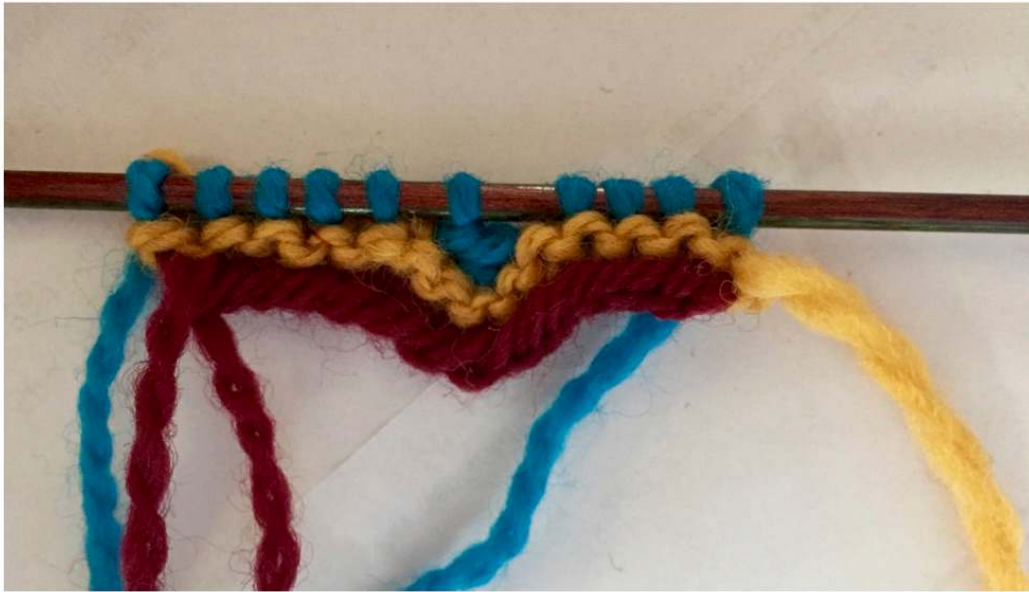


Figure 2

Both methods limit the number of stitches you can cast on because they require and create a certain number of stitches. If your work requires a different number, cast on the number of points that will give you one or a few more stitches than you need. On the next row, evenly decrease to the correct number of stitches for your work.

Andean knitting is typically done with sport, fingering, and sometimes DK weight yarns. Occasionally, worsted weight yarns are used. However, you can use these cast ons with any weight yarn to create different looks for your garment or piece. It's easier to work on circular or double point needles as well, even if you are working in rows. Circular needles allow you to work from both ends, making it a little more adaptable.

The points tend to curl so you want to carefully pin each point to lie flat but also to accentuate the point itself. See Figure 3.

Blocking Puntas



Figure 3

Bibliography

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