

Attached Edgings

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Edgings are a way of dressing up a project. They are added to a project after finishing the main section(s). They are most often found on lace projects or as lace additions to a non-lace project. Edgings can also be worked in other stitch patterns. In this lesson, we will explore how to attach an edging to a knitted piece. While the article will concentrate on lace edgings, most of the principles can be applied to other types of attached edgings.

How It Works

The edging section is worked back and forth in rows perpendicular to the main project. The main project will have “live,” or unworked, stitches on the left needle. If there are no unworked stitches, stitches can be picked up to be used to attach the edging.

One row will work away from the project and the next (return) row will work toward the project. (See Diagrams A, B, and C below). As the edging is worked toward the project, the last stitch of the edging is worked together with the next stitch of the project. That stitch remains part of the edging and remains part of the edging’s stitch count. In other words, the number of edging stitches remains consistent, but the main piece will have the stitch count reduced by one each time a row of the edging is attached to the project. The next row of the edging is worked away from the project. And the process begins again. So, for every two rows of the edging, one stitch of the project is attached. Attachment of the edging replaces any bind off that would have taken place.

The join can be any type of decrease: knit or purl two stitches together; slip, slip, knit or purl; or twisted versions of these decreases, such as knit two stitches together through the back loop. Each type of join will have a different look. If worked on the right side, a right-leaning decrease (k2tog) will put the project stitch on top of the edging stitch while a left-leaning decrease (ssk) will put the edging stitch on top. It’s best to test out the type of join you plan to use on a swatch to make sure you like the look it creates.

Planning the Placement of the Edging

Planning is essential for a good outcome. The simplest situation is working the edging across one side. It gets more complicated when the edging must go around a corner and even more complicated when the edging circles the project. Below are examples. The red line shows the cast-on edge. In the square project this is a provisional cast on, and the end is not bound off but is grafted to the provisional cast on. The same situation would apply to a circular project but there would be no corners to go around. The green lines show the direction that the rows are worked and where they join to the main piece. The blue lines show the direction of the row progression. The yellow lines

show bind-off rows. Black lines delineate the main piece from the edging.

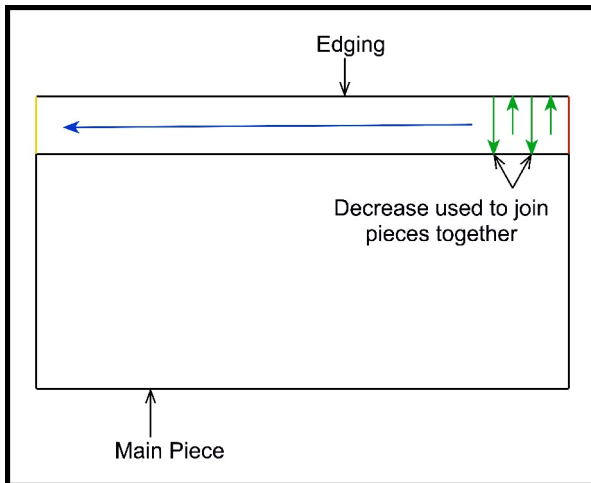


Diagram A

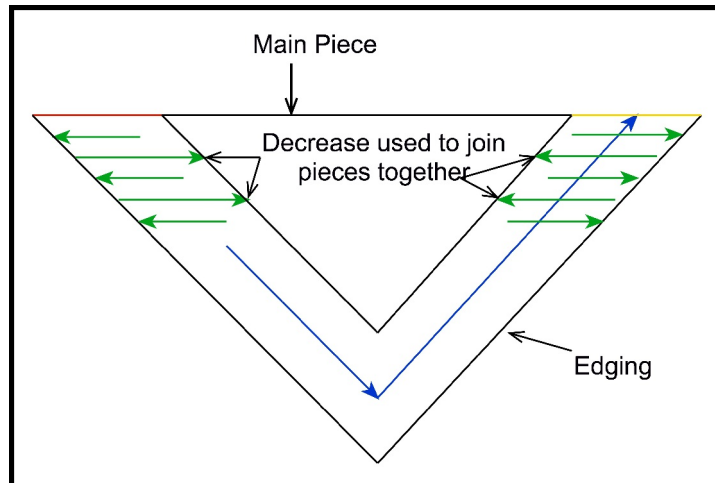


Diagram B

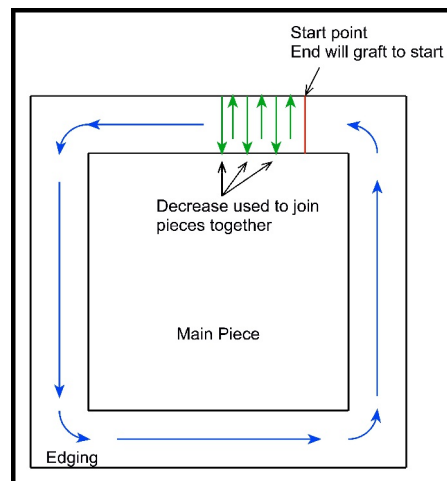


Diagram C

As noted above, for every two rows of edging, one stitch of the project is used for each join. Therefore, the stitch count on the project must work with the row count of the edging. To figure out if this will happen, divide the row count of a single repeat of the pattern by two. This is the number of rows that will need a stitch for attachment. Take the total number of stitches on the main project and divide by the number of rows per repeat that will be attached. It doesn't always work out to be a whole number, and in those cases, you will have to make some adjustments.

Adding an Edging to a Single Side

This is the easiest situation in which to add an edging. For an edging applied to one single side, the ratio of 2:1 must equal the ratio of rows of edging to stitches to be connected on the project. So, for every unworked stitch, there must be two rows of the edging. You must also consider the number of rows in the repeat, and that number must work with the stitch count. If it doesn't, there are a few

things you can do to make things work out. Sometimes you can fudge a couple of rows by attaching one row to two stitches or working a row without attaching it. An easy fix is to add plain rows before and after the edging so the center area has the correct number of rows. Another fix is to adapt the edging or change by increasing or decreasing the number of rows in the repeat. You may find that even if you adapt the edging, you need to add plain rows before and after the edging pattern as well. If none of these solutions will work, you will have to find a different edging that does or that can be made to work.

Let's look at some examples:

You want to add an edging to the end of a scarf. The scarf is 100 stitches wide.

Example 1:

Let's look first at an instance that works exactly. The edging you choose has 20 rows. $100 \div 20 = 5$, with no stitches left over. So, 5 repeats of the edging can be added to this end of the scarf.

Now let's look at some variants:

Example 2:

The edging you choose requires 12 rows to work. $100 \div 12 = 8.33$. The edging will require 9 repeats of the 12 rows, but there will be 4 stitches that will be left over. Because there are very few stitches left over, you can fudge them in without distortion to either the main section or the edging fabric. To work this edging, you can evenly distribute 4 double joins to the end of the scarf. Or make up the extra rows by working 2 rows in garter or stockinette stitch before and after the main edging pattern, two rows at each end with the edging pattern between.

Example 3:

The edging you like requires 36 rows. $100 \div 36 = 2.77$. The edging can be worked 2 times, but there will be 28 stitches remaining. Depending on the stitch pattern, you might be able to fudge them in as above, but you will probably have a distortion or rippling to the edging, and the project edge may pull inward. In this case, you have a few choices: (1) Adapt the edging, if possible (see below). (2) Add several plain rows in garter or stockinette at the beginning and end of the edging. For this example, there are 28 extra stitches left over. Divide them between the beginning and end of the scarf edge. This would mean you would work 14 plain rows to 14 stitches before the first repeat of the edging pattern and after the last repeat.

Illustration 1 below shows a 12-row edging that has been modified to 10 rows.

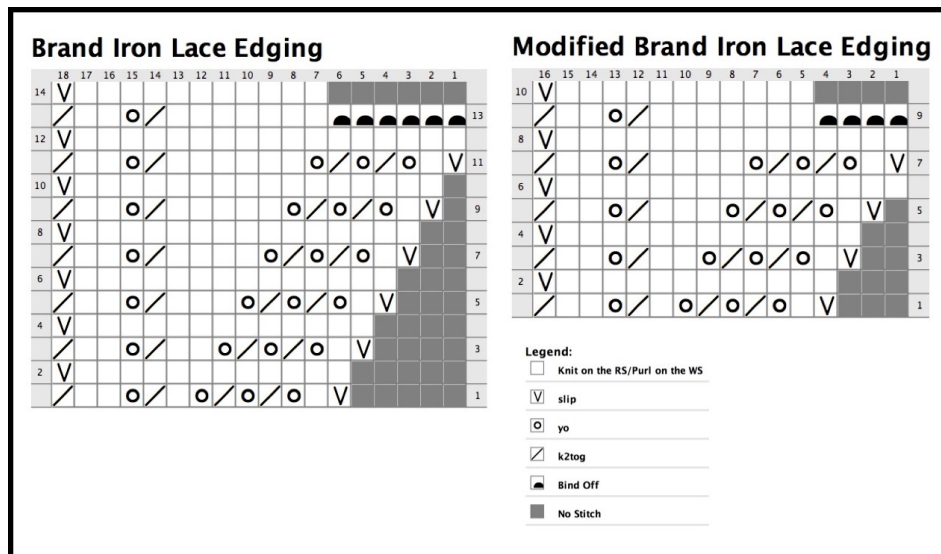


Illustration 1: Adapting a Pattern

Once you've done the math and have a plan to add the edging, cast on the number of stitches needed for the edging onto a separate needle. A double-pointed needle works well. Some patterns may have you work a row to stabilize the start. Then work the first row of the edging, attaching the last stitch to the first stitch of the project. Continue until all of the stitches have been worked on the project. Bind off the edging.

Adding an Edging to Two or More Continuous Sides with a Corner

Here we have two scenarios. All of the principles discussed for a straight edge can be applied to these situations.

The first scenario is similar to the situation above, but you have to go around a corner or two, such as adding an edging to the bottom of a triangular shawl. There is a distinct beginning or cast-on edge and a distinct end or bind-off edge. See Diagram B.

The second situation would be adding an edging to a square, rectangle, or circle. Here you will go around the piece and you will join the beginning of the edging to the end. See Diagram C.

In both situations you will need to go around a corner. To round a corner, the ratio of rows to stitches changes over the corner. Here you need to increase the number of rows per stitch. To do this, you work rows of the edging that normally require attachment to the piece without attaching them. These non-attached, inward-working rows should be evenly spaced around the corner. The wider the edging, the more rows will need to be left unconnected to the main piece. The process is very similar to working short rows.

Corners look best when the edging repeat is worked over the corner.

The doily lesson project that accompanies this article is a good example. The doily is a square and thus has four sides, each side having 32 stitches. The edging is 10 rows long and 12 to 16 stitches wide. So, for the 10 rows of the edging there must be 5 stitches to attach to.

To plan this edging so that 10 rows of the edging go around each corner, there will need to be 2 stitches at each corner. On the straight section, 5 of the rows would attach, but since we are rounding the corner, 3 of the rows will not attach; therefore, only 2 stitches are required to attach those 10 rows of the edging. This means that one stitch at the start and end of every side will be used for the corner repeat of the edging.

Below (Illustration 2) is the plan for the stitches on the project to be joined to the edging.

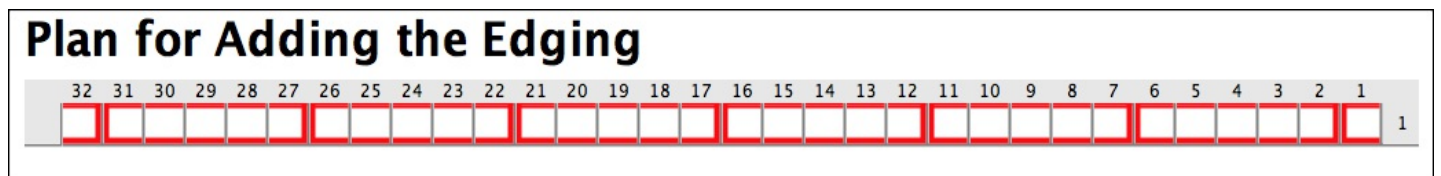


Illustration 2

To implement this plan, you can't start with the first stitch on that side since it has been designated to be used with the repeat coming around the corner preceding it. Plus, it's easier to start the edging along the edge where stitches have been established. In this case, the first 6 stitches will be slipped to the right needle holding the project stitches. The edging is cast on using a separate needle, and the last stitch of the first row will be attached to stitch 7 of that side. Illustration 3 below shows where the edging first attaches to the doily.

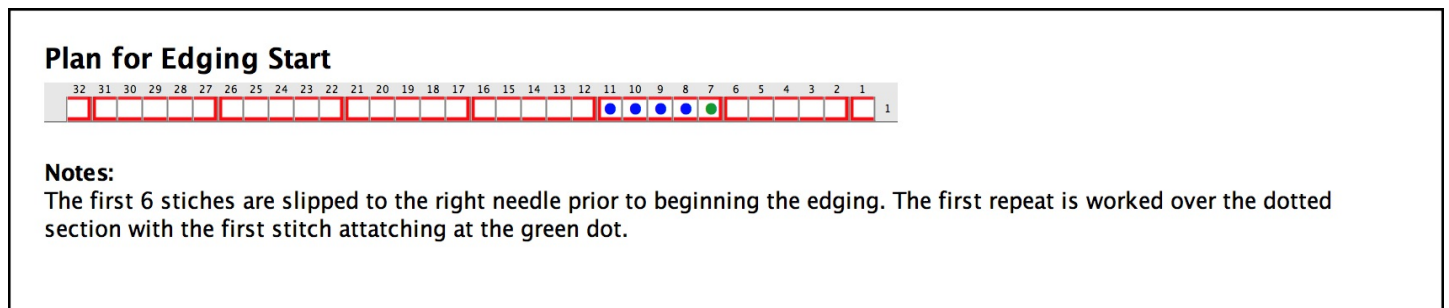


Illustration 3

After working the first 5 repeats of the edging, the first corner is worked, then 6 repeats of the second side, the second corner, 6 repeats on the third side, the third corner, and finally 6 repeats on the fourth side and the last corner. After working the last corner, 5 stitches will remain to finish the first side. One repeat of the edging is worked and the end of the edging is grafted to the beginning to create a continuous edging.

To attach the start of the edging with the end, you should cast on with a provisional cast on. This will leave you with “live” stitches that can be grafted to the end of the edging. Some patterns will have you work a plain row to stabilize the work before working the first row of the edging.

Another option for corners is to work short rows into the border pattern, but not all stitch patterns will allow for this.

Other Considerations

Finessing the Connections and Outside Edges

This is done by slipping the first stitch of every row. On the outside it creates a nice smooth edge. After the join, slipping the two stitches that were just worked together creates a smooth look on both the right and wrong side of the work.

Shaping Edgings

There are three shaping types to edgings: straight, peaked, and sawtooth. Generally, attached edgings are not worked straight. Most edgings undulate. Straight edgings can be ruffles or variations of fringe. But since most attached edgings are some form of lace or eyelets, they tend to widen and narrow. The knitting can gradually widen using increases and then gradually narrow using decreases, creating peaks. Or it can gradually widen using increases and then abruptly narrow, using a bind off for added stitches; this is called a sawtooth edging. Keep in mind, the stitch count changes. To determine the cast on for this type of edging, count the stitches in the final row of the repeat since the first row will include the first added stitch. The doily lesson pattern accompanying this article uses a sawtooth edging.

Adapting an Edging Pattern

Some edging patterns can be adapted to create a narrower or wider version of the pattern. When you change a lace pattern, outside of any shaping increases and decreases that make the edging widen or narrow, every yarn over must have a decrease. Charting software assists and it’s not always an easy process. You will need to play with the pattern to keep lines of yarn overs and decreases consistent as you remove or add rows.

Adapting the Base Piece to Have Stitches to Attach

Not all stitches will be “live” or ready to knit. On pieces that you have worked in rows, you can begin with a provisional cast on that will leave ready-to-work stitches; and, of course, when you finish the body, you will have “live” stitches. It’s possible to pick up stitches to use, but be sure you like the look. The knitted cast on is often a great choice for lace, as it is loose and leaves a row of little loops that can act as “live” stitches if needed. The look isn’t as clean as using a provisional cast on but can work well depending on the situation and experience of the knitter.

Along the selvages, you will have to create stitches. Here there are several possibilities:

The first option is to work the start of each row with a yarn over/decrease. This will leave a series of yarn overs along both selvages—one stitch for every two rows of work along both sides. This works well with lace patterns. Here, you simply slip the yarn overs onto your needle and you're ready to go.

The next option is to slip the first stitch of each row, creating a large chained edge along each selvedge. You can either pick up stitches using one or both legs of the stitches, or you can slip one leg of each stitch onto your needle. Whichever method you choose, you will notice that the right and wrong sides will look different. As with the first method, this technique will give you one stitch for every two rows along both selvages.

The final option is to work the first stitch of every row as usual. Then use a stitch-to-row ratio to pick up stitches along the selvages. Here you will have a right and wrong side with a chain showing to the wrong side.

Once you've picked up the stitches, you can work a row/round or two to adjust the number of stitches to a number that will work with your edging pattern.

Reconciling Stitch and Row Gauge

The knit stitch is wider than it is tall. This means in stockinette stitch and other stitch patterns, there are more rows than stitches per inch. Remember, with these edgings you are attaching stitches to rows. This can present a problem if the same base stitch pattern will be used for the edging.

Lace edgings are very forgiving, and if the difference is not that great, you may be able to simply block out the difference. If the difference is too great, you can try using smaller needles for the edging. Be sure to swatch first and make sure the fabric of the edging is acceptable. Many times, edgings are worked in garter stitch. Garter stitch is unique in that there are almost twice as many rows as there are stitches, making it a perfect fit for most stitch patterns. Lace can be worked in garter stitch. Again, swatch before attempting on your project.

Reading Charts

If the chart has the attachments along the left side, then the edging attaches to the main piece on the right-side rows. If, however, the attachments are along the right side of the chart, then the edging will be attached on the wrong-side rows.

The chart may have a no-stitch symbol—typically a gray or black box—if the edging is growing and receding. Simply ignore these boxes as they are place holders.

It can be tricky to read edging charts because the join stitch will appear as a decrease. Knitters are used to seeing one decrease per yarn over; but on these charts, as the edging expands, there aren't any unaccompanied yarn overs. Always remember, that final decrease isn't really a decrease, but it is an attachment to the main piece. It is being decreased to a stitch that isn't on the chart. Then, as the

edging thins, there seem to be two extra decreases when there should be only one extra decrease. Again, remember, that final decrease isn't really a decrease; it is an attachment to the main piece.

One final oddity is found in the sawtooth edging. The number of stitches bound off requires one extra. Remember, to bind off a stitch, you must work the next stitch to anchor the final bound off stitch. So, if you have 10 stitches and you need to bind off 3, you will need to work 4 stitches. Be sure to work that anchor stitch according to the chart. The chart below shows the final 2 rows of the edging pattern from above. It is a 10-row edging. On Row 9, the first 4 stitches will be bound off, but to bind off stitch 4, the knitter must first work stitch 5, leaving 6 stitches to knit rather than the 7 that appear on the chart.

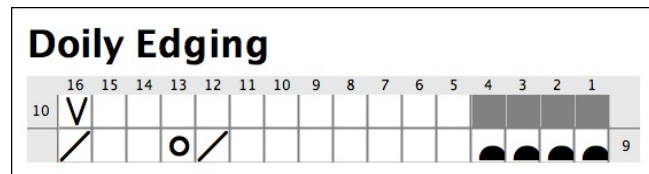


Illustration 4

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