

Cast-on stitch (single)

LEFT-HANDED



1 Use a long needle with a narrow eye for this stitch such as a milliner's (straw) needle or, in this case, a quilter's basting needle. Come up and make a stitch the size desired.



2 Leave the needle in the fabric. Hold the working thread with your left hand and loop it over and behind your right index finger.



3 Keeping tension on the thread, rotate your right finger so the nail is facing up. The thread is now looped around itself to the left of your finger.



4 Without losing the loop, move your fingertip lightly against the tip of the needle and slide the loop onto the shaft of the needle with your left hand.



5 Pull down on the working thread to tighten the loop around the needle shaft and slide it up snugly against the point where the needle emerges, but not too, too tightly.



6 For the second looped wrap, take the working thread over and behind your right index finger again and keep light tension on the thread with your left hand.



7 Rotate your finger once again so the twist is to the left of your right finger.



8 With your fingertip against the point of the needle again, slide the loop onto the needle shaft.



9 Before it is tightened, the loop should look like this.



10 Tighten the loop and bring it up against the previous loop. Aim for an even tension on all the loops, but not too tight or it will be difficult to pull the thread through later.



11 Continue making loops. In this case, the number of looped wraps is close to twice the length of the stitch, which will create a curved cast-on stitch.



12 Lightly hold the wraps on the needle with your thumb against the fabric or between your thumb and index finger and start to pull the needle through them.



13 Twisting the needle shaft back and forth as you pull it through helps its progress if it's a bit stubborn. This shot shows the needle pulled through but the stitch still loose.



14 Continue pulling the working thread through the stitch until the excess disappears and only the wrapped area remains on the surface.



15 Insert the needle at the left starting point of the stitch to complete it.



16 The finished cast-on stitch. You can see that it is sitting up off the surface of the fabric at the moment, but it can be pushed to one side to make a curve too.



17 The second example will be a cast-on loop stitch, so make a very small stitch at the start and leave the needle in the fabric.



18 This time, make many more looped wraps on the needle shaft than the length of the stitch. This is where long needles become essential.



19 Hold the wraps on the needle with your thumb as you pull the needle through them. This helps to keep the wraps sitting together nicely so the stitch isn't distorted.



20 Although we show you the stitches partially pulled through, it is best to keep a hold of the wraps until the thread is completely pulled through.



21 After the thread is pulled right through, insert the needle at the starting point.



22 The completed cast-on loop stitch. You can leave it sitting up for a 3D effect, or couch it down to resemble a textured lazy-daisy stitch.



23 Cast-on stitches needn't be curved or three-dimensional. For a flat, straight stitch, make the wraps just a tiny bit longer than the length of the stitch.



24 This gives you a well-filled flat straight cast-on stitch, since the wraps tend to compress on the thread a bit more tightly than they do on the needle.