

Mattress stitch

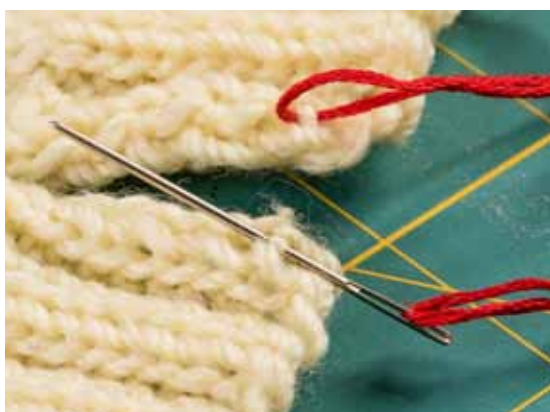
RIGHT-HANDED



1 We're working on a sample with 2x2 rib and stocking stitch. If you insert a needle in the groove between the first and second stitches, you should see pairs of bars.



2 I prefer to begin a couple of bars up from the cast-on edge: a soft start lets you unpick easily if needed. Locate the bars again and pass the needle under just one this time.



3 Leaving a long tail, cross to the corresponding bar on the other edge and insert the needle under it. Pull the thread through but leave about 1cm ($\frac{3}{8}$ in) between the two edges.



4 Now go across to the first side and insert the needle under the bar immediately above the first one. Pull the thread through as before.



5 Return to the second edge and go under the bar immediately above the first one on that side. Pull the thread through again.



6 Continue to pick up one bar on each side a couple more times. You can see a ladder of stitches forming. This would normally be sewn with the same yarn as the knitting.



7 When you've sewn under three or four bars on each side, pull up the thread to close the seam. Even with strongly contrasting thread, the seam is virtually invisible.



8 Repeat Steps 4-7 for the entire ribbed section. Stitching every bar makes a strong and dense seam, ideal for ribbed areas of a garment or for durable soft toys.



9 For the stocking-stitch part of a garment seam, pick up a pair of bars for each stitch. Just be sure to keep them level from side to side as you go – don't skip any!



10 This time the ladder of stitches is slightly more widely spaced than in the ribbed section, but it still results in a perfectly sturdy, invisible seam.



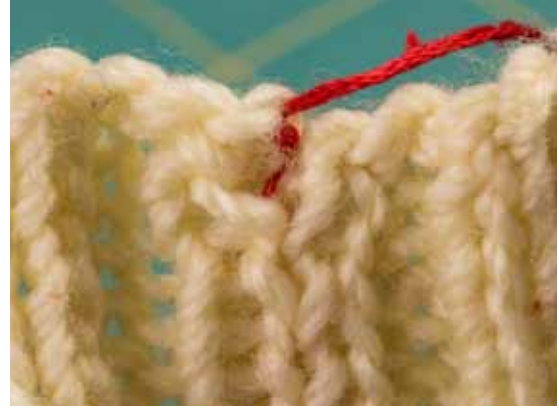
11 Pull up the thread to close the seam after sewing three or four stitches each side. By working in the grooves between the stitches, the seam disappears.



12 From the back of the work, you can see the seam, but the red joining thread all but disappears. (You can see the tail at the bottom of the rib for completing the seam.)



13 When you get to the top end of the seam, sew through the last loops at the two edges to finish closing the seam.



14 Sew through them again to secure the thread. It's then woven down through the stitches in the seam allowance at the back to bury the end.



15 Go back to the tail you left at the start and sew the rest of the seam neatly. Sew the bottom stitch a couple of times, then weave the end in the seam allowance.



16 If the yarn you've knitted with is too nobby, use a matching smooth yarn or stranded embroidery thread to sew the seams. Red was used here for clarity only.