

Bind Offs

Are your bind-off edges too tight? The bind off / cast off edges often tends to be tight, limiting the stretch of the finished edge. Patterns instructions might say “bind off loosely”.

A looser bind off edge can be achieved in several different ways, but regardless of how it is done, it allows the edge to stretch more and lay nicer.

One way of obtaining a looser bind off edge can be achieved simply by changing to larger needles (1 or 2 size larger) to get a looser bind off.

Knitting Through the Back Loops:

This version gives a bind-off edge that looks just like a standard bind-off, but has more stretch.

Step 1. Knit together the first two (2) stitches on the left needle. **THROUGH THE BACK LOOP.**

Step 2. Slip the new stitch on the right needle back to the left needle.

Step 3. Repeat 1 and 2 until all stitches are bound off.
Give the bind off a tug and see how much more flexible it is.

Knitting Through the Front Loops:

The finished edge of this version looks slightly different but is just as stretchy.

Step 1. Knit together the first two (2) stitches on the left needle. **THROUGH THE FRONT LOOP.**

Step 2. Slip the new stitch on the right needle back to the left needle.

Step 3. Repeat these two (2) steps until all stitches are bound off.

Suspended Bind Off:

The Suspended Bind Off is structurally the same as the basic bind off method, but the extra step that lengthens the stitches helps to make the bind off looser.

The Suspended Bind Off technique is not an elastic bind off, so you wouldn't want to use it for things like toe-up socks, where the bind off edge is at the sock cuff.

It can be used for some types of shawls, depending on the type of edge that the shawl has. For any lace projects with lace near the bind off edge, the lace needs to have a very stretchy edge so that it can freely open up after blocking. So, for a lacy shawl, the Suspended Bind Off may not be a good option, and a bind off method that is really stretchy will be best.

Knitting the Suspended Bind Off:

Step 1. Knit the first two (2) stitches on the left needle.

Step 2. With left needle tip, lift up the first stitch on the right needle. Pass it over the second stitch and off the tip of the right needle, **BUT** leave it on the tip of the left needle.

Step 3. Insert the right needle into the next stitch, leaving the passed-over stitch from the previous step still on the left needle tip.

Step 4. Knit through the stitch.

Step 5. Slide both the stitch held on the left needle tip and the stitch you just knit off the left needle.

Repeat steps 1-4 across the row, until you have only two (2) stitches remaining on the right needle and no stitches remaining on the left needle. Pass the first stitch on the right needle over the second, then cut the yarn and tie off.