

Stitch Smarts

by Bethany Dailey

Choices in Cast Ons

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We've all been there. A terrific pattern is at the ready. The perfect complimenting yarn has been found. You've been imagining how gorgeous this brand new item is going to be as it transforms from string into the finished piece of knitted beauty. Your chosen loom is in one hand, your yarn is in the other...but wait. Where to go from here?

To the beginning, of course!

There are so many ways to begin adding yarn to our looms, how do we make an informed decision as to which one is the best for a particular project? I'd love to share with you a comparison between the main cast ons that are commonly available today. Some of them are better for certain knitted items than others. Some of them might just have that particular look you'd like to employ on your project at hand. Let's dive in and take a closer look at them, shall we?

There is a terrific cast on tutorial written by Isela Phelps that is found at her blog, www.loomknit.com or by clicking this [link](#). This tutorial contains step-by-step instructions for six different cast on methods. We will be using this tutorial as the basis for the following cast on comparisons.

One of the most sought after elements of a loom knitting cast on is a non-loopy edge. This is a bit trickier in looming than in needle knitting, because when we cast onto our looms, the yarn is placed at the knitted panel's most stretched out position. Once the cast on has been worked down off of the pegs, along with the knitted panel, the tension is released and stitches retract to their normal resting position. If a cast on is not created using a method that will help snug in this extra slack, you will end up with larger than desired loops at the cast on edge.

E-Wrap Cast On



This is the most basic of cast ons in the loom knitting world. It's the initial technique that new loom knitters learn as they begin their very first project. It does the job and stands the test of time for being the most accessible way to begin working on a loom. As you begin branching out in your loom knitting craft, you might feel the desire for a cast on that leaves less of a tell-tale sign of where you began your stitches. The E-wrap Cast On does create a line of loose loops at the beginning of your work. If you're creating an edge that won't be highly visible, as with some fashion yarns or when making the brim of a hat, this cast on is an acceptable choice. When working with a very fine gauge, such as when knitting socks, the E-wrap Cast On is a great way to go, as it's highly elastic and is easy to work around those fine gauge pegs.

Double E-Wrap Cast On



Definitely less loopy than the regular E-wrap Cast On, the Double E-wrap Cast On is a good alternative if you'd prefer a simple method to begin your project. This is also a great choice if you are looking for an edging that is fairly elastic.

Long Tail Cast On



The Long Tail Cast On is a respectable method for casting onto your looms, which creates a line of nicely even loops that remain somewhat elastic. Once you get the hang of using the two separate lengths of yarn, it's really quite easy to master and could be used for pretty much any type of project.

Chain Cast On



I must admit that the cast on method that is described in Isela's tutorial as the Chain Cast On is one that I have always thought of as the Crochet Cast On. I think the confusion has to do with the actual method with which it's created. The movements feel just like crocheting a row directly around the pegs. You may have followed some of my patterns in the past which recommend using the Crochet Cast On. Well, in Isela's tutorial and in the photo above, this is referred to as the Chain Cast On. This is by far my favorite cast on of them all! I use this method for almost every project I embark on. The method in which this is created is a very simple process and the results are lovely. This cast on most closely matches the Basic Bind Off method and therefore is a perfect one to employ when both your cast on and bind off edges will be seen in the finished product; such as a scarf, blanket or washcloth.



Crochet Cast On



Alternatively, this cast on is the one that I have always thought of as the Chain Cast On. The method of placing the chain you create with your crochet hook directly on the peg, without creating an additional loop seems to imply working with only the chain, rather than actually crocheting it onto the pegs. I have to be honest. This cast on is not my favorite. While it is easy enough to create, it makes a fairly loopy edging and to my mind, seems a bit sloppy. When we have such a beautiful cast on to work with as the aforementioned Chain Cast On, why would we need to use something that could be created with almost the same actions, but with ending results that are not as pretty? But this just may be my own preferences coming through, as you may have found that the Crochet Cast On, as detailed above, is the perfect match for your looming style. This is great, as it's all about personal preferences and choices.

Cable Cast On



The Cable Cast On is simply lovely. It is worked in a very similar method to the Chain Cast On and creates a beautifully decorative edging that has a cable-twist look to it. This is a wonderful technique to use when wanting to add a bit of frill to your beginning edge, such as on the hem of a garment, or the wristband of mittens.

Here is a link to an alternative method for creating the Cable CO, which adds an even more decorative look to your edging: <http://gettinitpegged.files.wordpress.com/2008/01/decorative-cable-cast-on.pdf>

There are two more cast ons that are definitely worth mentioning in our comparison. The first is the Half Hitch Cast On. The method in which the loops are twisted onto the loom for this cast on can be seen in the following video tutorial: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a8aWyT4sc4w&feature=share&list=PL413D5BC440AB43AC>

Half Hitch Cast On



I've known for some time that this is a terrific way to add extra stitches onto the outside pegs of your knitted project, but just recently tried this method as an entire cast on. I found that the result was an edge that, even though the process is extremely similar to the E-wrap Cast On, turned out straight and snug. It even rivals the

Long Tail Cast On for tighter edge stitches! I'll definitely be employing the Half Hitch Cast On a lot more often in my projects from now on, after seeing these obvious advantages.

Adjustable Cast On



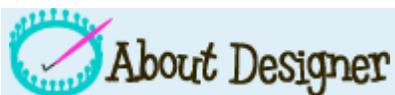
This is another cast on that is in a class of its own. The Adjustable Cast On was originally created by Brenda Myers as a way to bring the benefits of her Drawstring Cast On (which is worked in the round) to a flat panel project. This cast on is an excellent technique to employ when you desire your beginning edge to be completely adjustable, just by pulling on the cast on tail. Whether you choose to simply remove some of the slack that occurs with other cast ons, or you desire to add a few gathers to your flat panel, this is a simple way to make that happen. You can find the tutorial detailing this cast on technique here by clicking on this [link](#).

Just remember that with the Adjustable Cast On, the more you pull the cast on tail, the less elastic the finished edging will be. Keep this in mind when choosing which types of projects to use this method.

There you have it...a run-down of eight different cast on methods that all have their own uses in the wonderful art of loom knitting. Hopefully this will help you the next time you have that loom in one hand and your perfectly chosen yarn in the other, to be able to make a more informed decision as to which way to begin looming your project. Remember that all of them will work, so never fear that you're going to be making a huge blunder by choosing the "wrong" cast on! It's just that some of them might be more what you're looking for than others.

Happy Looming to you!

Bethany~



Bethany A. Dailey has loved the art of loom knitting since 2005. She discovered that even with hand and wrist limitations, she was still able to successfully create lots of fibery goodies on her knitting looms. She soon began teaching locally, as well as online through her website, GettintPegged.com. Bethany has participated in several loom knitting publications over the years and has just released her debut book, *Loom Knitting for Little People*. Contact [Bethany](#).