FREE KNITTING TUTORIAL

Provisional Cast-On

The crochet-chain provisional cast-on, plus a seamless garter ear warmer in 3 sizes · US terms

SKILL LEVEL	PRACTICE	YARN
Advanced beginner	**Ear warmer, 3 sizes**	**Worsted (#4) wool**
NEEDLES	**ALSO**	**JOIN**
US 8 (5 mm)	**Waste yarn, US H-8 (5 mm) hook**	**3-needle BO or Kitchener**

Materials

- Worsted (#4) wool: 85 yd (child), 105 yd (adult S) or 130 yd (adult L)
- About 1 yd (1 m) of smooth cotton waste yarn in a contrast colour, a US H-8 (5 mm) crochet hook
- 2 US 8 (5 mm) needles plus 1 spare (or a circular and a spare needle), tapestry needle

Abbreviations (US terms)

k	knit	**RS / WS**	right side / wrong side
sl 1 wyif	slip 1 purlwise with yarn in front	**BO**	bind off

Gauge: 18 sts and 36 rows (18 ridges) = 4 in (10 cm) in garter stitch. This is a typical worsted value, not a measured one: swatch first.

The band is 12% shorter than the head (negative ease). If your gauge differs, knit to the length in the size table, keeping the row count even.

Other method: hook onto the needle

1	Slip knot of waste yarn on the hook. Hold the needle in your left hand, the waste yarn behind it.
2	Hook in front of the needle: reach over it, catch the yarn, pull it through the loop on the hook. 1 st is on the needle.
3	Take the yarn back behind the needle and repeat for every stitch. Chain 4 off the needle, cut, pull through, knot the tail.
4	Knit row 1 with the main yarn. Unzip later from the knotted end, exactly as for the chain method.

Ear warmer, Adult S

Waste chain	With waste yarn and a US H-8 (5 mm) hook, chain 21. Cut the yarn, pull it through the last loop and tie a knot in that tail: that knotted end is where you'll unzip later.	
Pick up	With the main yarn and a US 8 (5 mm) needle, skip the first 2 chains at the slip-knot end and pick up and knit 1 st through the back bump of each of the next 16 chains. 3 chains are left free at the knotted end.	**(16)**
Row 1 (RS)	Sl 1 purlwise with yarn in front, move the yarn to the back between the needles, knit to the end.	**(16)**

Rows 2–166	Repeat row 1. Every row is the same; the slipped stitches make a neat chain along both edges (83 chains per edge). Stop after row 166: the band measures about 18.44 in (47 cm) unstretched.	**(16)**
Leave live	Don't bind off. Cut the yarn leaving a tail of 20 in (51 cm) and leave the 16 sts on the needle.	**(16)**
Unzip	At the knotted end, undo the last chain and pull the waste yarn gently: each loop that pops free goes onto a spare needle. You'll have 15 loops plus a half loop at the tail edge; lift that edge strand onto the needle too.	**(16)**
Join	Bring the 2 needles together, ends of the band meeting without a twist. Join with a three-needle bind off (16 pairs, the ridge on the inside) or graft with garter Kitchener. Weave in the ends.	**(0)**

Ear warmer, Child

Numbers	Waste chain 19, pick up 14 sts, work 150 rows, unzip to 13 loops + 1 edge strand, join 14 + 14 sts.

Ear warmer, Adult L

Numbers	Waste chain 23, pick up 18 sts, work 182 rows, unzip to 17 loops + 1 edge strand, join 18 + 18 sts.

What's exact, what's calculated

Exact	Stitch counts checked row by row; both live ends hold the same count before the join.
Calculated	Stitches, rows, ease and yarn from the gauge.
Assumed	The gauge and the head sizes.

How to Do a Crochet Chain Provisional Cast-On

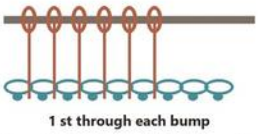
waste yarn holds the first loops live · unzip it later and knit or graft from the bottom edge

1 · Waste chain



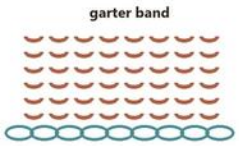
Chain 5 more than you need in smooth waste yarn. Knot the tail at the end you fastened off.

2 · Pick up the bumps



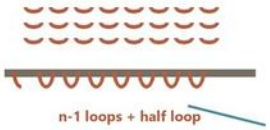
Turn the chain over. With the main yarn, pick up and knit 1 stitch through each back bump.

3 · Knit the piece



Work your piece as usual. The waste chain hangs at the bottom, holding the first loops.

4 · Unzip



At the knotted end, undo the last chain and pull. Catch each loop on a needle as it frees.

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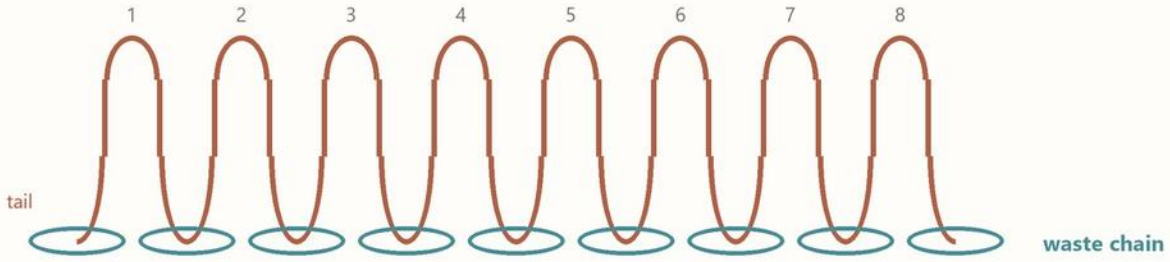
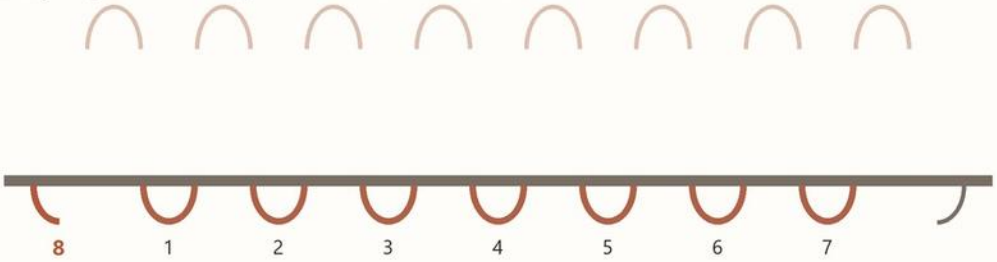
Why the Unzipped Edge Is 1 Stitch Short

8 stitches picked up → 7 full loops + a half loop at each edge after unzipping

Before: the waste chain holds the bottom of the pick-up row



After: the chain is gone, the sinker loops are now the live stitches

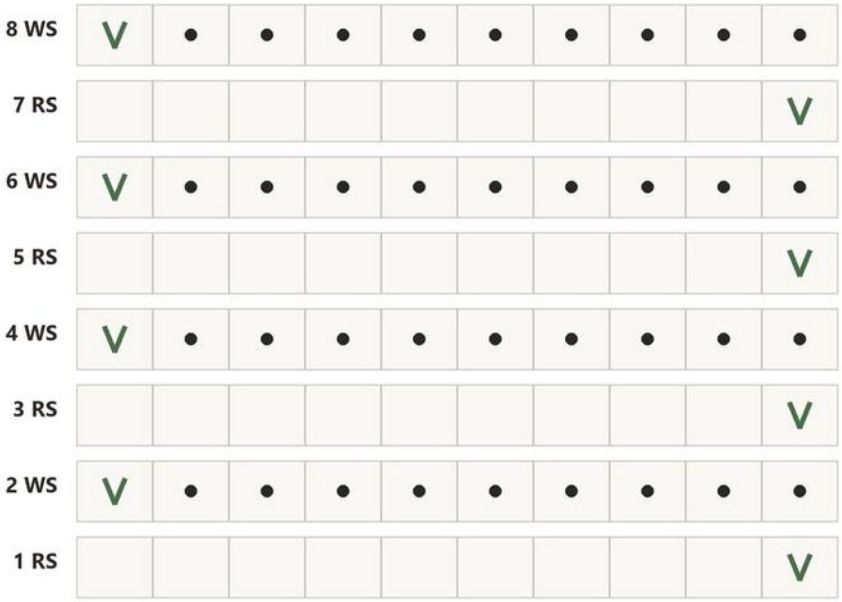


Pale arcs = the stitches of row 1 above · brown = the 7 sinker loops, each sitting half a stitch to the side of a row-1 stitch

Orange = the half loop on the tail edge: lift it onto the needle as the last stitch, and both ends hold the same count again.

Slipped-Edge Garter Band · Chart

10 sts shown · RS rows right to left, WS rows left to right · every row: sl 1 wyif, knit to the end



Blank square = knit on the RS · dot = knit on a WS row (shows as a purl bump on the RS)

V = slip 1 purlwise with yarn in front, then move the yarn to the back. The cast-on below row 1 is the provisional pick-up row.

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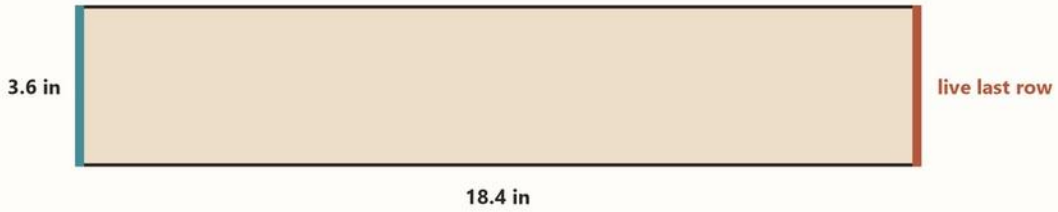
Ear Warmer Band · Adult S

16 sts × 166 rows (83 garter ridges) · head 21 in, band 18.4 in = 12% negative ease



Teal = provisional cast-on end (unzip to 15 loops + 1 edge strand = 16 sts) · orange = last row, left live (16 sts)
Fold into a ring without a twist, then join the 2 live ends: three-needle bind off or garter Kitchener.

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Ear Warmer · Sizes

Worsted (#4) wool · US 8 (5 mm) needles · gauge 18 sts × 36 rows = 4 in in garter stitch (assumed, swatch first)

Size	Head	Band, unstretched	Cast on	Rows	Join (live sts)	Worsted wool
Child	19 in (48 cm)	16.7 × 3.1 in (42 × 7.9 cm)	14	150 (75 ridges)	14 + 14	85 yd
Adult S	21 in (53 cm)	18.4 × 3.6 in (47 × 9.0 cm)	16	166 (83 ridges)	16 + 16	105 yd
Adult L	23 in (58 cm)	20.2 × 4.0 in (51 × 10.2 cm)	18	182 (91 ridges)	18 + 18	130 yd

The band is 12% shorter than the head so it hugs without slipping. Measure the head around the forehead and ears.

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