

The Longtail Cast On Method

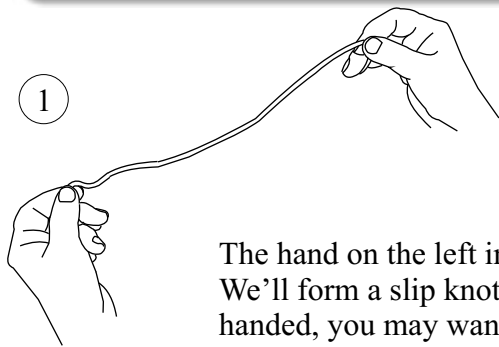
This could be the most important skill you will acquire in knitting. The 'longtail caston' is fast and gives a better edge than most other methods. It looks hard, but it's not.

Give the learning of this method high priority. Even if it seems difficult at first, keep trying. Learning the best skills is sometimes a little harder than the other ones, but more worthwhile. And remember, if there's something about this tutorial you just don't grasp, come and see me at Butler's Country Knit Shop in beautiful, historic Waterford, PA. I'll help you get around your sticking point and you'll make this excellent method your own.

There are many of you who won't be able to come to the shop for special help. I urge you to find a knitting expert near you who can do this. I feel this is just that important to your ultimate knitting practice.

Your knitting friend,

Marge Butler

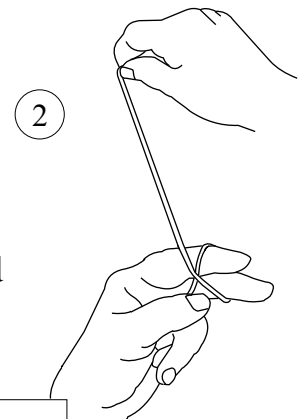


Of course you start with just yarn. Take the end in your two hands as in the picture at left. It should have a long enough 'tail' (in the right hand) to make the cast on long enough for the item you're knitting. Right now, this is only practice. You'll learn later how much yarn to use with the needles and yarn you use by experience.

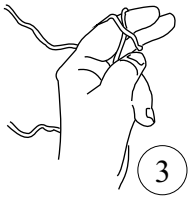
The hand on the left in the illustration is where the first part of the cast on method takes place. We'll form a slip knot over the first two fingers of that hand. **SPECIAL NOTE:** if you're left handed, you may want to try doing the method your own way, but I think it'll be better in the long run if you make the effort to do it as shown.

Hold the yarn in the left hand with that thumb and wind the other section around the two fingers as shown.

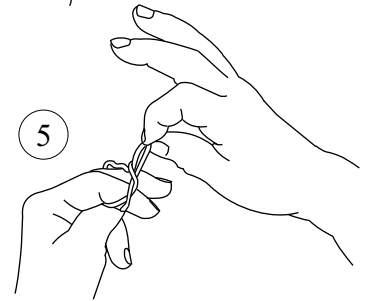
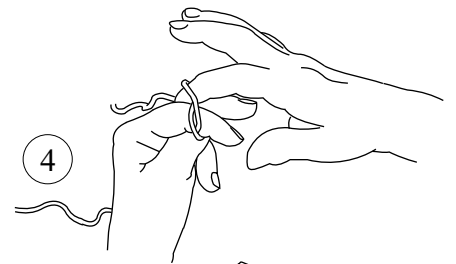
Notice how the yarn crosses over in front of the fingers. Bring it around the back of the fingers and drop it.



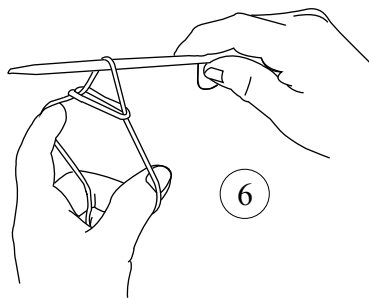
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Now it should look like the picture at left. Turn the hand with the yarn over and reach between the two fingers with your other hand as in the right picture.

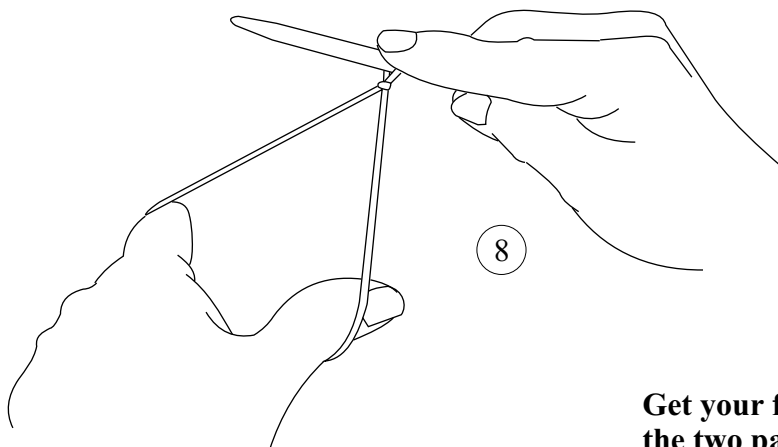
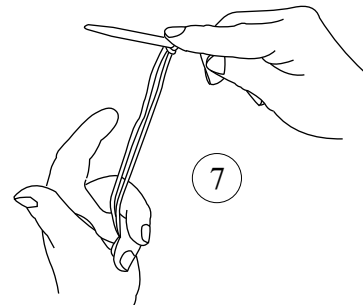


Pull the yarn tail through with the index finger of the other hand, forming a loop as shown at right. Don't pull the tail all the way through, just far enough to form the loop. This is a slip knot and it's the first thing on the needle.



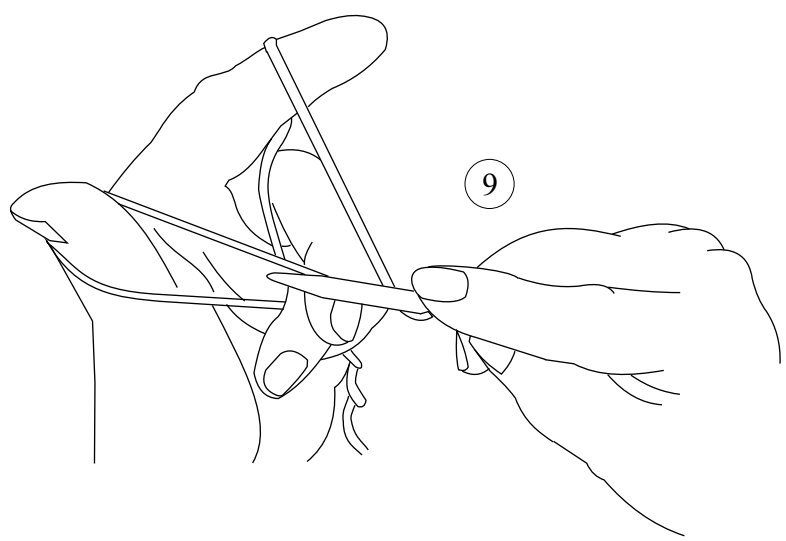
Place the loop on one needle.

Hold both tails of yarn in your left hand with the middle, ring and pinky fingers. The short tail is on the thumb side.

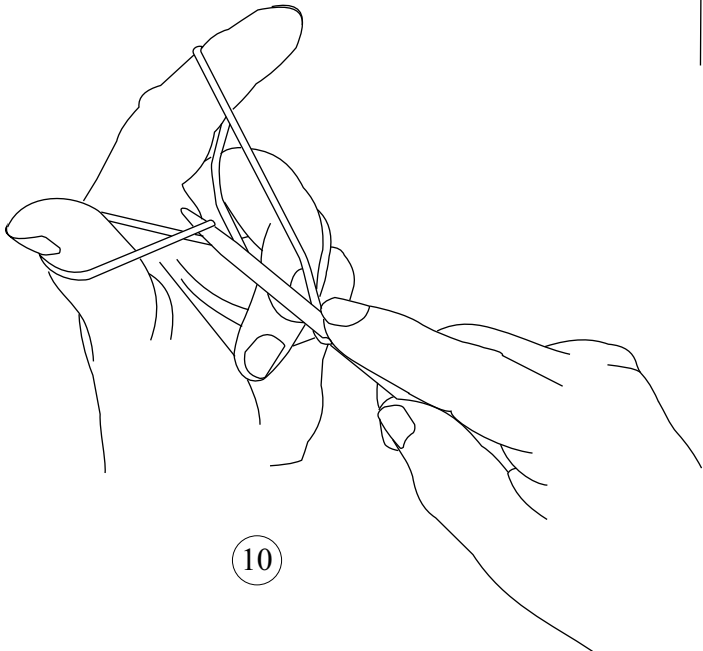


Get your forefinger and thumb between the two parts of the yarn and make a "vee" as in the drawing at left.

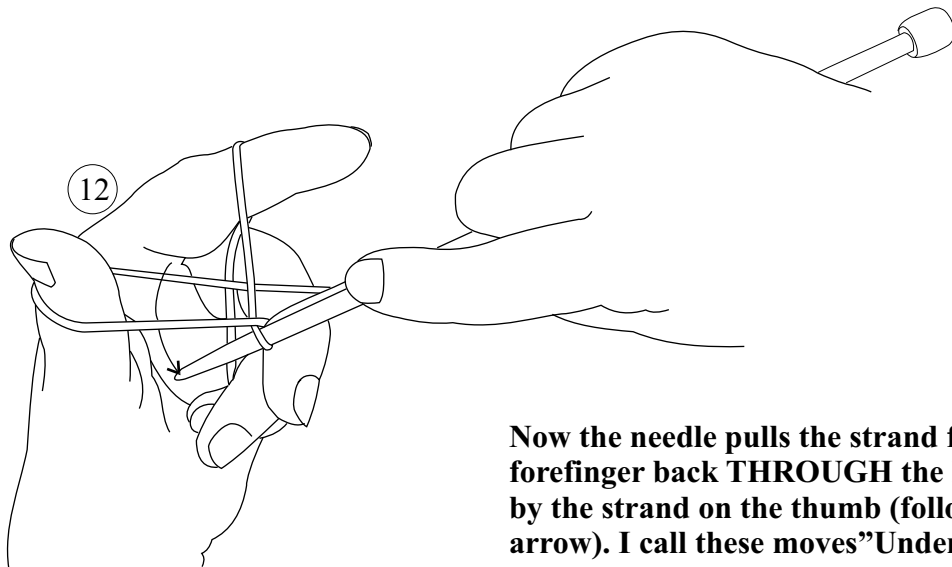
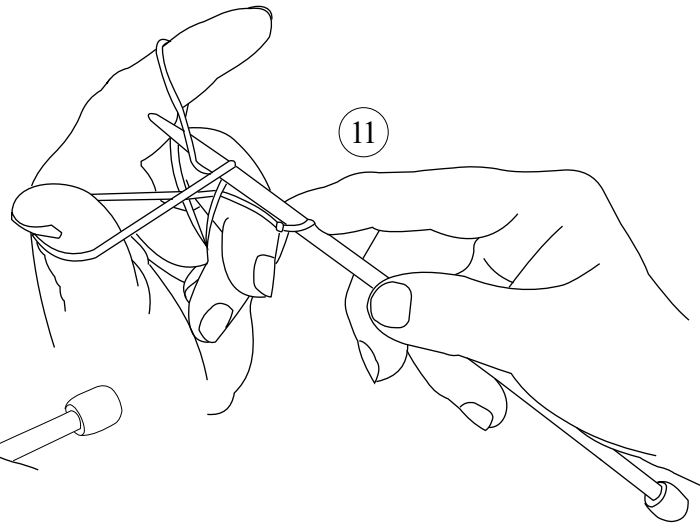
Turn the left hand over so the yarn forms a slingshot between the needle and the fingers of the left hand.



Keeping a little tension on the yarn, get the point of the needle UNDER the strand outside of the left thumb on the needle as shown.

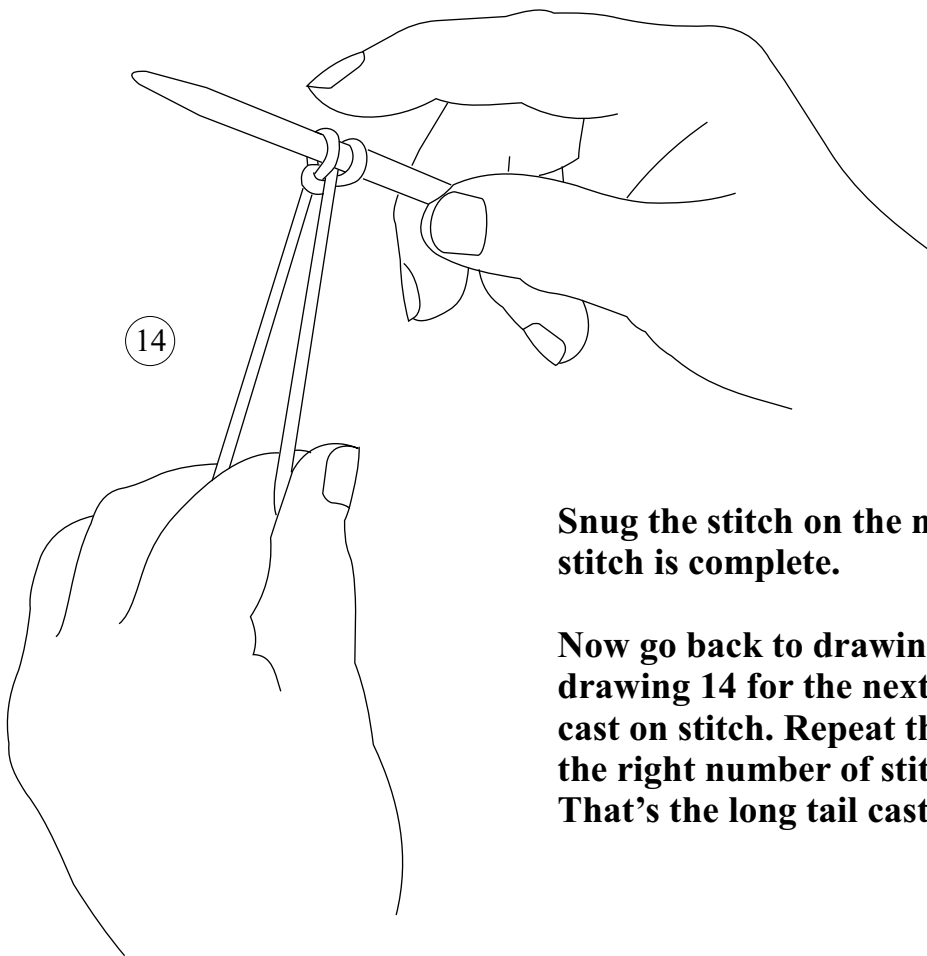
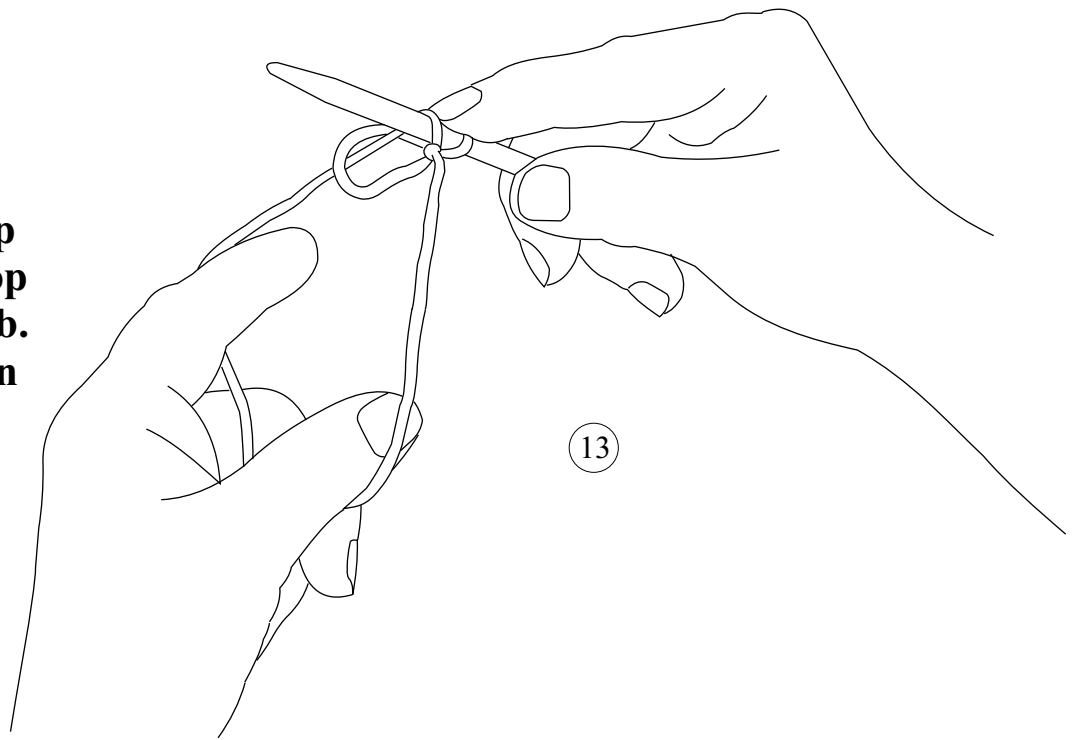


The point of the needle now goes OVER the strand coming from the left side of the forefinger.



Now the needle pulls the strand from the forefinger back THROUGH the loop formed by the strand on the thumb (follow the arrow). I call these moves "Under, over and through".

Lift the needle up and allow the loop slip off the thumb. Hold the stitch on the needle with your right forefinger.



Snug the stitch on the needle and the first cast on stitch is complete.

Now go back to drawing 8 and repeat through drawing 14 for the next stitch for the second cast on stitch. Repeat the process until you have the right number of stitches.

That's the long tail cast on!