

Knit Happens: What to Do When It Does

Mistakes are part of knitting. Truly. Every single knitter—yes, even the experienced ones- drop stitches, twist stitches, mis-cross cables, and miss yarn overs.

This class will cover:

Common mistakes and how to fix them

What can be fixed (and what can't)

When to tink, & When to rip

And how to do all of this with less drama

Mistakes We'll Cover

Retrieving a dropped stitch

Fixing a twisted (“flipped”) stitch

Duplicate stitch for color work corrections

Using stitch markers to prevent mistakes

Lifelines (how, when, and why)

Tinking (unknitting)

Ripping safely to a lifeline

Cable fixes (time permitting)

Lace fixes (time permitting, and ...if you're feeling brave!)

Retrieving a Dropped Stitch

Catch the dropped stitch immediately with a locking stitch marker.

Knit to the stitch location.

Using your “handy tool”, ladder the stitch back up one row at a time, making sure you follow the correct knit/purl pattern.

Place the retrieved stitch on the left needle...ensuring it's facing the correct way.

Continue knitting joyfully.

Fixing a Twisted (“Flipped”) Stitch

(This happens when you purled instead of knit, or mounted the stitch on the needle incorrectly. It just “looks weird”.)

Knit to the column where the mistake occurred.

Drop the stitches (yes, drop them on purpose!) down to the incorrect stitch.

Use your handy tool to turn the stitch to face the correct way.

Ladder it back up to the current row, following the stitch pattern carefully.

Place it back on the needle and continue knitting like a pro.

Duplicate Stitch (Color work Fix)

This is a clean way to fix a color work mistake without ripping back.

Thread an embroidery needle with the correct yarn color.

Follow the path of the incorrect stitch, stitching directly over the wrong one.

Keep your tension relaxed so the new stitch fully covers the old one.

Fasten off on the wrong side. Pat yourself on the back.

Stitch Markers: Your First Line of Defense

Markers prevent mistakes before they happen.

Use them to:

Mark pattern changes

Track stitch counts

Separate repeats

Highlight areas that require attention

Leave the drama to the actors!

Use stitch markers... They love to help.

Lifelines

A lifeline is a strand of scrap yarn (or dental floss!) woven through a row of stitches to preserve a “mistake-free” point in your work.

Think of it as your “safe landing zone.”

If something goes wrong later, you can rip back to this exact place in your pattern, confidently knowing your stitches are secured and CORRECT.

Adding a Lifeline While Knitting

Thread an embroidery needle with scrap yarn or floss.

Weave it through EVERY stitch in the row (including yarn overs)

Leave long tails on both ends.

MARK THE ROW that corresponds to your lifeline.

Continue knitting happily.

When you're ready for a new lifeline:

Check your work.

Remove the old lifeline.

Insert a new one.

Note the NEW row number.

Adding a Lifeline Before Ripping

Sometimes the mistake is too far down to tink.

That's when it's time to: "Rip it! Rip it good!"

Before you rip:

Thread your needle with scrap yarn.

Carefully weave a lifeline through the row you want to return to,
ensuring you've caught every front leg of every stitch.

Double-check that you caught every stitch. (And Yarn Overs, etc)

Also, determine exactly which row you are ripping back to and make a **note** of it on your pattern.

Then, let's rip!

Rip down to your lifeline.

Place all stitches back on your needle.

Reorient any twisted stitches. (Consider keeping the life-line in)

Continue knitting like nothing happened...except that you are now reminding yourself to put in more lifelines as you knit.

Tinking (Knitting Backwards)

“Tink” is simply “knit” spelled backwards—and that’s exactly what you’re doing. Unknitting. This is perfect for when your mistake is only a few stitches or few rows back.

Undo your work one stitch at a time, placing the undone stitches back on the needle.

Focus on:

Undoing every stitch as you go, and reorienting stitches before reknitting. You can reorient as you tinker, or turn them as you come to them when you reknit.

Don't stress about tinkering perfectly. Just make sure you tinker back **fully**. Then fix stitch orientation as needed.

Continue knitting up a storm.

Reorienting Cable Stitches

(Have your cable needle ready.)

Knit to the cable.

Drop down all stitches involved in the cable (i.e., if it's a 6-stitch cable, drop all 6).

Use your cable needle to rearrange the stitches correctly.

Ladder each stitch back up individually using your handy tool.

Adjust tension and smooth out any puckering. (Blocking will help this as well)

Take your time. Cables look complicated—but they're fixable.

Carry on with your cables, paying more attention this time.

Fixing Lace

Lace can sometimes be repaired... and, sometimes it humbles us.

Before attempting anything:

Insert a lifeline and know exactly where you are in your pattern.

Knit to the mistake and drop down carefully.

Recreate yarn overs, decreases, or pattern elements with your handy tool as you ladder the stitches back up.

If it works? You are officially a badass knitter. If it doesn't? Rip back to your lifeline and move forward a little wiser.

Final Truth

Mistakes are not failures. They are a part of the process.

Think of them as mini data points. They can be a great way to learn more about yourself, the stitches you are managing, and the fabric you are creating.

Knitting teaches patience and is good for your mind and soul.

It teaches us how to pause, assess, and begin again...

Skills every good human needs to practice.

Knit happens.

And now—you know what to do when it does. 🧶

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