

# Channel Island Cast-On

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The Channel Island Cast-On is a favorite of mine. It has similarities to the long tail cast-on, and was traditionally used in Ganseys, a working garment of fishermen in the British Isles (hence the name "Channel Island"). It forms a decorative and hard wearing edge, one that works well in other types of garments. It is a versatile design element, and adds a detail that is not commonly seen.

To practice, you will need a ball of yarn and two additional pieces of yarn, 18 or 24" is a good length to practice with. When using on a garment, using three balls of yarn eliminates guessing how long to make the two additional strands.

Place the ends together, and form a slip knot and place this on the needle. For your practice, the strand from the ball will be your working yarn and the one that remains when the cast-on is complete.

When working with a strand from three balls, choose one to be your working strand. The other two will be cast-on strands. Separate the working strand from the cast-on strands. The working strand will be held over the index finger, just as when working a long-tail cast-on. The two cast-on strands will always be over the thumb.



For this cast-on, the yarn is wrapped twice around the thumb, winding counter-clockwise (Long-Tail Cast-On has the yarn going clockwise).

Here I have one "wind" over my thumb and need to wind it one more time. Notice the tails are coming down between the thumb and index finger, and the wrap crosses over the thumb from left to right.

Bring the thumb, with the first wind still looped over it, from left to right again for the second wrap. This is a bit easier if the needle is held behind the thumb a bit.

Now that I have the yarn wrapped twice over the top of my thumb, I am ready to begin. There are always two parts to this cast-on, the part with the working strand (index finger) and the part with the cast-on strands (thumb).



Insert the tip of the needle under the working strand (index finger strand), so the strand is laying over the top of the needle like a yarn over. You can keep track of this strand with the hand you are holding the needle with. Sometimes I place the tip of my right index finger lightly on it while working so that it doesn't get loose and sloppy.



Next, insert the tip of the needle under the wrapped cast-on strands on the thumb...

...and bring the needle tip up towards the working strand on the index finger.



Bring the tip of the needle over the top of the working strand...



...then back down over it, so that you are picking up a loop to pull through the cast-on strands wrapped over the thumb.

Here you can see the loop is just at the point where it is going to be pulled back through as the needle went in.

This part is what makes those little purl bumps, a knot if you will.





When the stitch gets pulled through the cast-on wraps on the thumb, you will let them slide off the thumb so that you can complete the stitch.

Note here I am holding the yarn as I would for a Long-Tail Cast-On. When I dropped the wraps off of my thumb, I immediately inserted my thumb back into the yarn to pick up the Cast-On strands again so that I could tighten up the knot the stitch is making.

You don't want to do this too tight. You want to just snug it up so that they are nice, round and fat. You don't want it to be loose and sloppy, but you don't want it to be pulled so tight that you have battened down the hatches either.

Snug it up enough that it makes a nice little ball.



This shows what it looks like with more than one.

When performing the Channel Island Cast-On, the steps as shown form two stitches on the right needle.

The stitch formed from the "yarn-over" does not form a hole, as it is part of the over-all process. It is anchored by the second part, which forms the knotted ball.

Peace and Knitting, JoLene Treace

