# "Join without twisting ..." A Fool-Proof Method

How many times have you seen this phrase in a pattern for knitting in the round? "Join without twisting ..." or something similar like "Being careful not to twist stitches, join into round".

Seems straightforward enough, right? You probably heed the advice to check, and then recheck once more, to make sure stitches are not twisted before joining into the round.

I have to admit that I have goofed more than once. I don't like to waste time on goofing, darn it. When there are relatively few stitches, at least it's not too big of a deal to rip and start over.

But what about when there are LOTS of stitches? If you are like me, you want to avoid mishaps after investing much time in casting on and knitting a few rounds, only to then discover a problem despite your best efforts to avoid a twist.

This step-by-step tutorial is for a foolproof method to join without twisting when there are lots and lots of stitches. I think you will especially find this method helpful when using finer yarns where you can't easily see or feel the stitches.
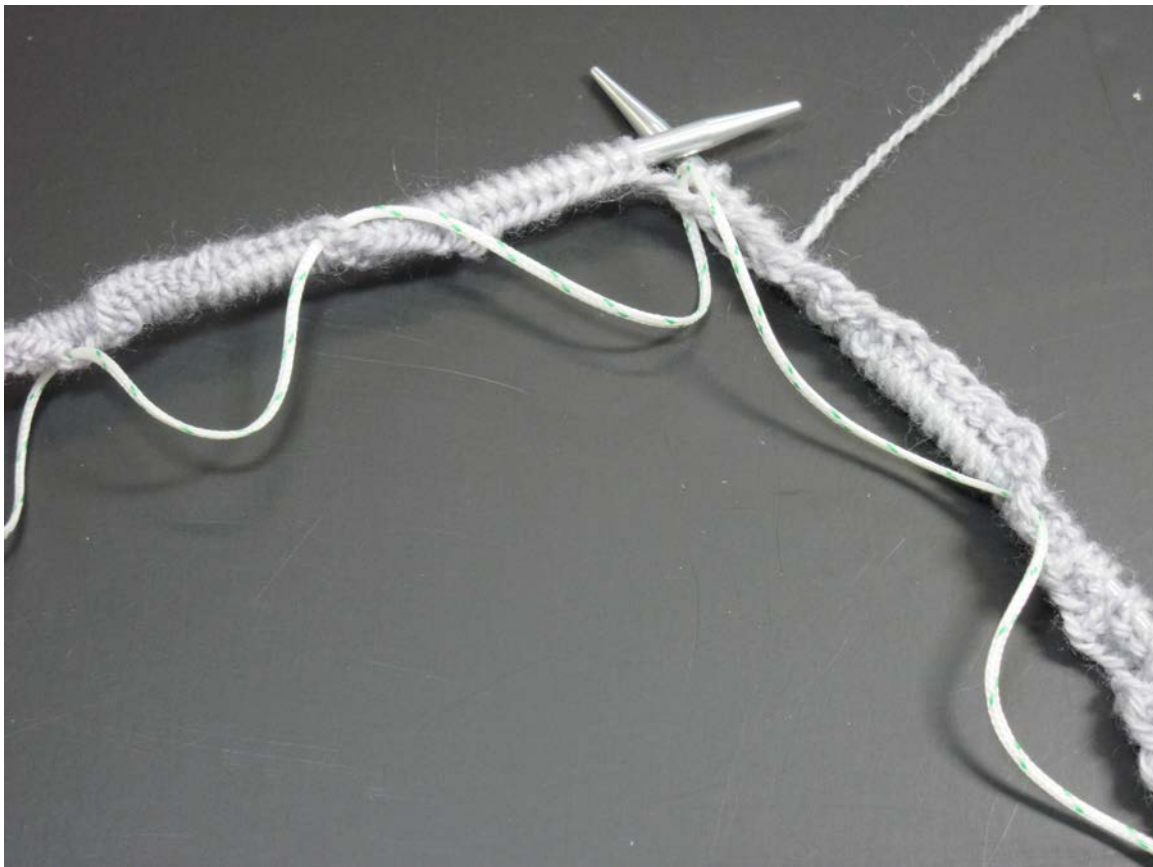
There are side benefits of this method, too. It can help you easily count stitches and confirm stitch count by groups of some convenient number of your choosing. If additionally you choose that number to coincide with the stitch pattern multiple that you will work after casting on and joining, then you are one step ahead of the game in establishing and confirming your stitch pattern sequence.

What You Will Need

Circular needle and yarn to be used in your project.

> Suggestion: Use a heavier yarn and fewer stitches to try the technique before attempting a huge number of stitches with fine yarn for a real project. That way you can prove to yourself that the method works and have the confidence to use on a larger project.

Waste string in contrast color (somewhat thinner than working yarn, but not too thin to be hard to see or handle).

> For example, the practice materials shown here are DK weight yarn from my stash, size US 7 / 4.5 mm circular needle 16" length for casting on 100 stitches; plain white crochet thread size 10 for waste string.
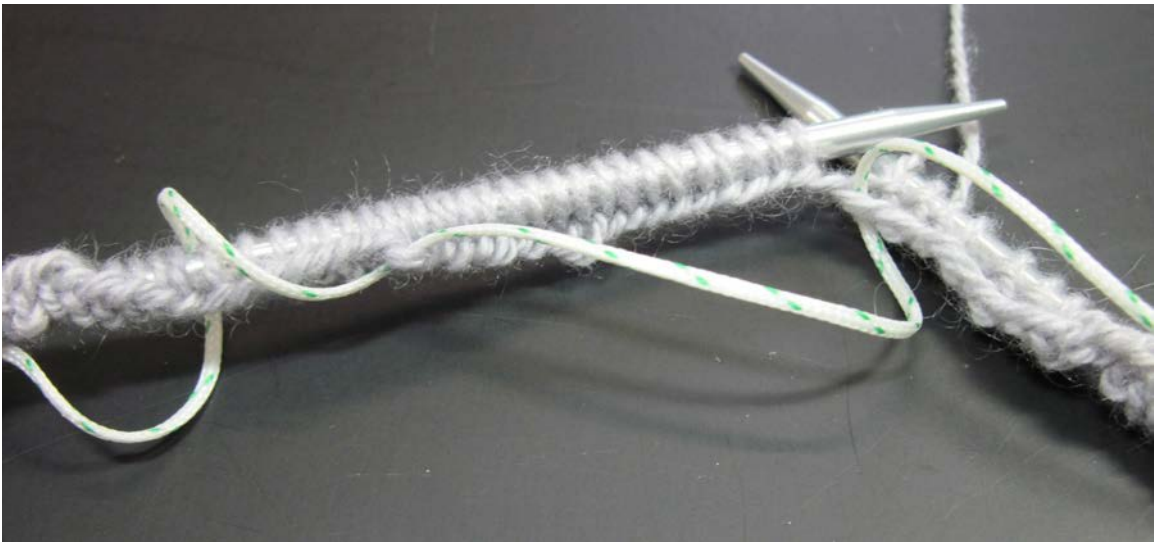
This example of actual project materials is for HeartStrings pattern #H16 Hug-Me-Tight Fan Lace Jacket Wrap using Jade Sapphire Silk Cashmere lace weight yarn, size US 5 / 3.75 mm circular needle 32" length for casting on 400 stitches, and braided Dacron trolling line for waste string.

Steps to Success

You may refer to the picture of my practice piece on the previous page as you progress through steps 1 – 11.

1. Measure waste string = length of circular needle plus 6 – 8" beyond each end.

2. Ready the working yarn for your cast on. I used long tail cast on.

3. Place loop for first stitch on needle.

4. Place waste string between this first cast on stitch and the working yarn end(s) so that the waste string will lie between the first two stitches after the next stitch is cast on.

5. Continue to cast on next x-1 stitches, where x is any convenient number of stitches for you to count. "x" could also be the multiple of the stitch pattern that you will begin once you have completed casting on.

   In the practice example of casting on 100 stitches, I chose x = 25 as a convenient evenly divisible number to count between groups of stitches.

   For the Hug-Me-Tight project, I chose x = 20 since that is the multiple to begin round 1 of the stitch pattern.

6. Place waste string between most recently cast on stitch and the working yarn end(s).

7. Continue to cast on next x stitches.

8. Repeat steps 6 – 7 until all stitches have been cast on except the last stitch.

9. Repeat step 6 again.

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10. Cast on last stitch.

    At this point, you can take advantage of how you placed your waste string at even intervals to confirm that you have the correct stitch count. For example, since 100 divided by 25 is 4, you should have 4 waste string loops. Maybe this seems unnecessary, and I would agree for the practice piece. But I wanted to point this out now so you would understand how it could be used in cases where you are casting on a ziillion stitches. I myself don't have too much trouble counting up to 100 without being distracted. But 100's of stitches is another matter!

11. Tie together the ends of the waste string temporarily as shown. This loose knot can be removed after you have tested for twisting and joined the round successfully.

12. Align stitches on needle so that waste string does not wrap around needle. (I insert right-hand needle tip into first stitch of the round to temporarily stabilize while testing that the waste string is not twisted around the needle anywhere.)

Look at the picture on page 2. Do you see how the white waste string is wrapped around the needle? The path of the waste string alerts you that if you join with the stitches in their current orientation, you will end up with a twist in your knitting.

Here is that same problem viewed more closely.

Waste string has passed under the needle cord

Waste string has passed over the needle cord

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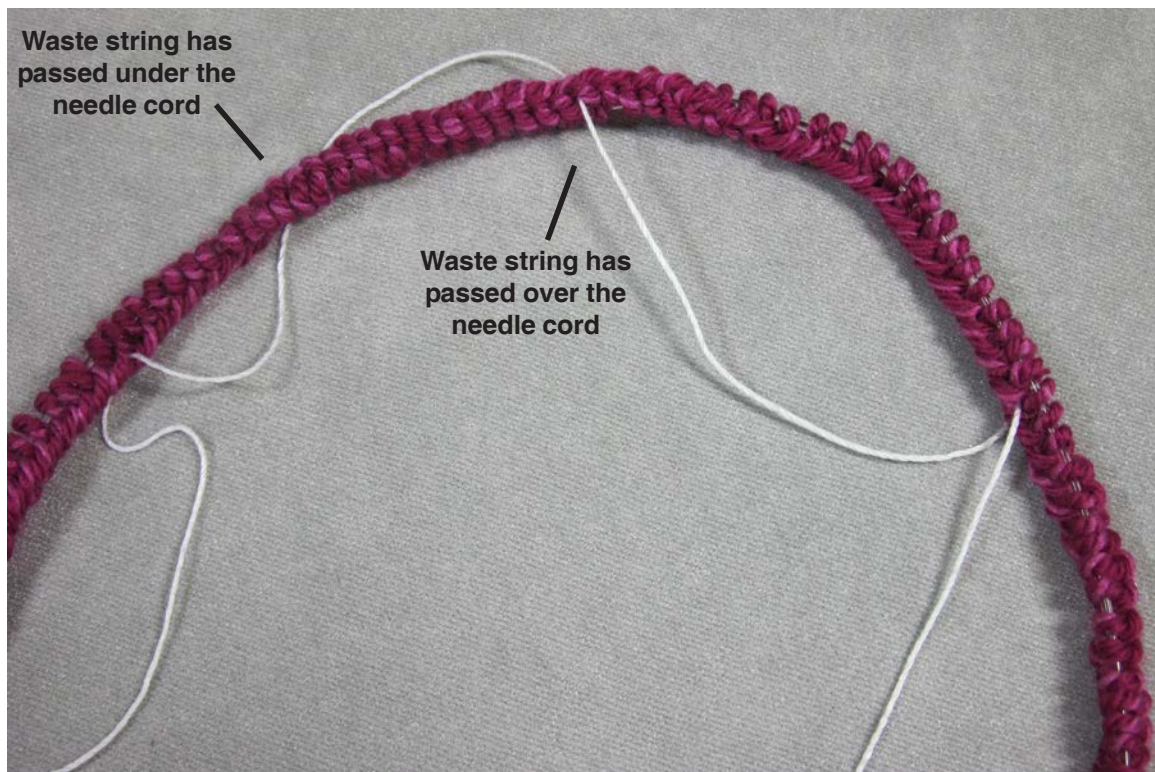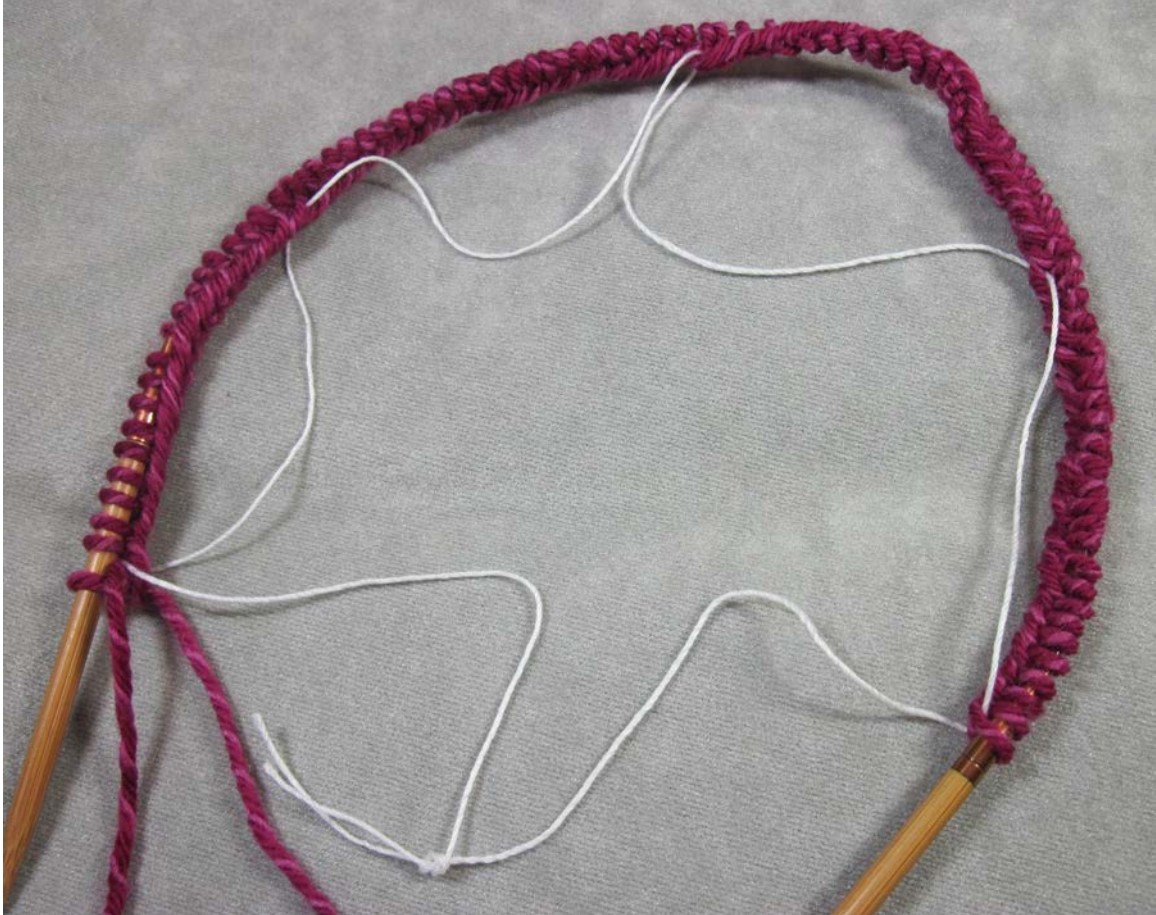
13. Re-test by making sure that all loops of the waste string can be drawn toward the center without wrapping around the needle at any point. The waste string should be hanging off only the bottom edge of the cast on as shown above; not hiding away between stitches and still wrapped around your needle cord. If there are still any problems, adjust the orientation of the stitches as needed again and re-test.

14. Join the stitches into a round and proceed with your knitting. You can leave the waste string in place until you have completed several rounds, especially if you are using this method to also help you establish the multiples of your stitch pattern.

Project Suggestions

In case you want to have a project or two lined up on which to use this method, check out these HeartStrings patterns —

#H16 Hug-Me-Tight Fan Lace Jacket Wrap

#H55
Filigree
Lace-edged
Baby Blanket

#H45 Ring of Lace Wrap

I hope this method helps you get off to a good start in these projects or others you may have been challenged to "join without twisting ...". . Let me know how it goes!