

## Cabling Without a Cable Needle

April 2013 Sand n Sea Program by Jillian Borders (notice on Ravelry)

### Introduction:

A traditional cable is made by working stitches out of order. Stitches are slipped onto a small cable needle and held to either the front or the back of the work depending on the direction that the cable is leaning/travelling. This same effect can be produced without using a cable needle at all, which can be quicker and not dependent on remembering to have a cable needle on hand! Instead of slipping the stitches onto a cable needle, they are slipped unknit onto the working needles, the next stitches of the cable are worked, the stitches are reordered by a quick procedure and then the last stitches are worked.

### Exercise:

You should have a 20st stockinette swatch, ending with a WS row. We will practice doing a left leaning cable and a right leaning cable.

K4 stitches, then follow the directions for a left leaning cable over 4 stitches, K4 stitches, follow the directions for a right leaning cable over 4 stitches, K4 stitches. Work 3 more rows in stockinette stitch, and repeat cable row on the 4<sup>th</sup> row (RS).

Left leaning cable:

1. Knit to the location of the cable.
2. With yarn in back, slip the next 2 stitches (of # of stitches crossing to the left) purlwise.
3. Knit the next 2 stitches (or # of stitches being crossed).
4. Insert the tip of the left hand needle into the stitches that were slipped, from the front from left to right.
5. Squeeze the base of the cable stitches with your left hand (the X where the needles cross) and slip the right needle out of the stitches.
6. Put the open stitches back onto the right hand needle, leaving the stitches to be worked on the left hand needle.
7. Knit the stitches on the left hand needle and your cable is complete!

Right leaning cable:

1. Knit to the location of the cable.
2. With yarn in front, slip the next 2 stitches (or # of stitches being crossed) purlwise.
3. Bring working yarn to the back and knit next 2 stitches (or # of stitches crossing to right).
4. Insert the tip of the left hand needle into the stitches that were slipped , from the back from left to right.
5. Squeeze the base of the cable stitches with your left hand (the X where the needles cross) and slip the right needle out of the stitches.

6. Put the open stitches (that have already been knit) onto the right hand needle, leaving the stitches to be worked on the left hand needle.
7. Knit the stitches on the left hand needle and your cable is complete!

**Tips:**

When you read (for a left leaning cable), “put 4 stitches on a cable needle, and hold in *front*,” slip the stitches with the yarn in the back so the stitches are in *front* of the yarn. When it says to “hold them in *back*,”(for a right leaning cable) slip the stitches with the yarn in front so that the stitches are in *back* of the yarn.

The needle is inserted from the side that does not have the strand of yarn running across it. If the stitches are in front of the yarn, you insert your needle from the front of the piece.

All cables can be done in this manner, but if it is an especially bulky cable, it may be a little more difficult. Because you are slipping the stitches, there can be a loose stitch if you slip too many at one time. If you pull the working yarn a little snugly when knitting the first stitches of the cable, that can help avoid any additional looseness. If you are nervous about dropping the stitches, pinch the stitches tightly, and maybe try it out first on stickier wool than a slick fiber.

This technique can be used for almost any kind of cable. Have you seen this complicated cable cross in a pattern? Sl 3 sts to first cn and hold in front; Sl 1 st to second cn and hold in back; K3; P1 from second cn; K3 from first cn. This cable switches the position of the outside stitches while the center stitch(es) remain in the middle. Without a cable needle, it would be done like this:

Sl 3 sts with yarn in back. Bring working yarn to the front and sl 1 st. K3 sts. Insert left needle in the back of the 1 st held to the back. Pinch the 3 sts that have been worked, slip the needle out of all 4 sts and back into the worked stitches. P1 st. Insert left needle into the front of the 3 sts that were slipped. Slip the right needle out of all 7 sts and reinsert it into the 3 unworked sts. Knit the last 3 sts. Yes, this sounds complicated, but it will get easier with time and you don't need to have 2 cable needles!

**OnlineTutorials:**

Grumperina: <http://www.grumperina.com/rightcable.htm>

<http://www.grumperina.com/leftcable.htm>

Annie Modesitt: <http://knittingheretic.com/handouts/ck/cabbling.pdf>

Wendy D. Johnson: <http://wendyjohnson.net/knit/cabbling.htm>

Wendy does her cables a slightly different way, where you switch the order of the stitches before knitting any of them.