

BLOCKING TUTORIAL

What is blocking?

Blocking is the process of wetting or steaming your final pieces of knitting to set the finished size and even out the stitches. It is a simple but vital step which will greatly improve the look of even the most beginning knitting. If you have gone to the effort to hand-knit something, it deserves to be blocked.

It used to be that you needed a clean rug or a blocking board, along with the space to store it, in order to block your work. But the Knitter's Block kit contains everything you need in a 14" square bag. The blocks are backed with waterproof EVA (the same material used on the soles of shoes) so you can safely block on a bed, table or floor.

Before you block:

Pre-wash and dry the pressing cloth (this is optional, but you'll find it is more absorbent and works better after it has been through the washer and dryer).

Always block your finished pieces before seaming.

The yarn fiber and stitch pattern will determine how you block your finished pieces. You may already be familiar with blocking and have a favorite method. If not, here is a general guide:

Wet blocking with steam

- Wool (including alpaca, camel hair, merino, cashmere)
- Cotton (steam optional)
- Linen (steam optional)

Wet blocking with no steam

- Angora
- Mohair
- Synthetics
- Wool blends
- Cotton
- Linen

Novelty yarns (highly textured) should not be blocked.

If your knitting involves a lot of texture, such as cables, you may want to wet block your work without steam. If you use steam, be especially careful not to press down on your knitting with the steam iron or you will flatten the texture.

If unsure about the best blocking method, experiment with your gauge swatch using the method you plan to use for the finished piece.



Getting started:

You will need:

- your schematics or finished measurements
- a tape measure
- a clean spray bottle and/or steam iron
- everything else is in your Knitter's Block kit, including: blocks, T-pins and pressing cloth

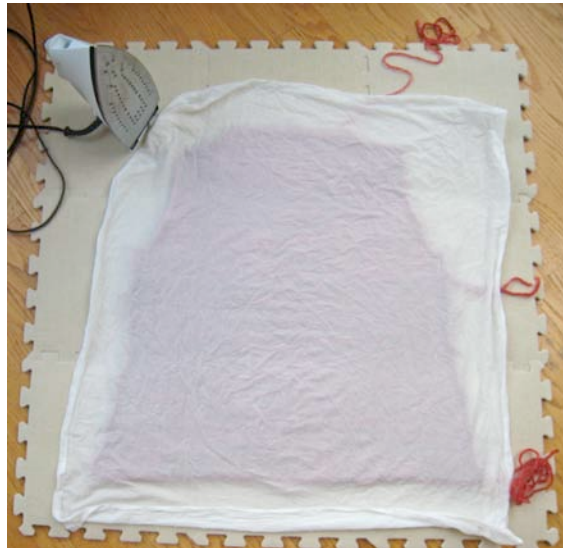
Assemble your Knitter's Blocks in the necessary configuration. For instance, sweater pieces use 3 x 3 (36" x 36"), for a scarf, use 1 x 9 (12" x 108").

Lay your finished piece wrong side up on the Knitter's Blocks. Gently massage the piece to your finished measurement. The texture of the Knitter's Blocks will help hold the piece in place.



Place T-pins around the edges. Place the first pin in the top center, moving to the bottom center as you pin the piece to the correct length. Next, pin your work to the correct width (if blocking a sweater, start with the bust width). Fill in around the edges, always referring to your finished measurements.

Now follow directions for wet blocking either with or without steam.



Wet blocking with steam:

- Set the temperature of your iron to the lowest setting that allows steam.
- While the iron is heating, completely saturate your pressing cloth with water. Squeeze out the excess so that it is no longer dripping but still very wet (not just damp).
- At this point, for very heavy blocking (thick, coarse wool that you are trying to soften up, for instance) you can spray the whole piece with water from a clean spray bottle. This step is not necessary for medium/light blocking.
- Lay the wet pressing cloth over the top of your pinned piece.
- Using an up and down motion (never side to side) gently use the iron to steam the entire piece. No pressure is necessary and using pressure may even ruin your knitting. It is the moisture of the steam which is doing the blocking so just barely touch the pressing cloth with the iron and hold it there a few seconds, then move on to the next spot until the whole piece has been steamed.
- For light blocking, you can now lift the cloth and allow the knitting to dry. For medium/heavy blocking, leave the cloth in place until it has dried. If your knitting is still damp, allow it to dry before removing.

Wet blocking without steam:

- Thoroughly spray the pinned piece using a clean spray bottle filled with water.
- Completely saturate your pressing cloth with water. Squeeze out the excess so that it is no longer dripping but still very wet (not just damp).
- Lay the wet pressing cloth over the top of your pinned piece.

- Leave the cloth in place until it has dried.

Regardless of whether you use wet blocking with or without steam, make sure your pieces are all dry before removing from the Knitter's Block.

After you have sewn your garment together you may wish to steam the seams, especially if they are bulky or stiff. For shoulder and armhole seams, use a terrycloth hand towel folded and then rolled to the size and shape of your upper arm. Turn the garment inside out and fit the rolled towel into the shoulder and armhole openings. Steam the seams gently by using the wet pressing cloth and steam iron, and just barely touching the pressing cloth with the iron.

