

KnittingFairy

Buttonholes Revealed!
A quick lesson from The Knitting Fairy

Which side do the buttonholes go on?
The holes go on the left front for boys, right front for girls. I am not sure why, but someone once told me it was so that the buttonholes were on the same side when women dressed the men. Probably bunk, but a funny story!

Which type of buttonhole to use?
This is a matter of taste and design preference. I love to use an eyelet. (K2tog, YO) This will all be worked on one row, it scales itself to the gauge of your knitting and will accommodate up to a ¾" button.

One row buttonhole: (Elizabeth Zimmerman un-vented this one)
Slip one stitch purlwise, bring yarn to the front, slip another stitch purlwise, pass the first stitch over the second, slip another stitch purlwise, pass the second slipped stitch over the third, Slip another stitch purlwise, Pass the third stitch over the fourth. Place the fourth stitch back on the left needle TWISTED, TWIST the stitch on the RIGHT needle as well. Pull the yarn firmly over the right needle from front to back, pass the twisted stitch over this yarn. Cast on 4 sts onto the right needle, Knit the next two sts on the left needle together.

Vertical buttonholes:
First buttonhole row: (RS) work to buttonhole, yarn over twice, K2togtbl, finish row.
Second buttonhole row: (WS) work to buttonhole, purl the first yo, drop the second yarn over, finish row.
Third buttonhole row: (RS) work to buttonhole, knit into the remaining yarnover from the first row (the same one you dropped last row!) drop the next st (the yarn over you purled last row!) work to end.

You can also work eyelet (K2tog, yo) buttonholes on vertical buttonbands.

There are tons of different buttonholes, if you don't like the one your pattern is using substitute with one you do like! Just remember you may have to refigure your spacing.
Spacing:

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I draw a picture of my buttonband first. Include the number of holes you want.

Next I count the number of stitches in my band. (we will call this B) B= ___
Number of stitches involved in each buttonhole. (we will call this H) H=___
Number of buttonholes desired. (we will call this N) N= ___

For example, if I was making a buttonhole band that was 157 sts long and I wanted 7 buttonholes which I was planning to make as a (Ktog, yo) type I would do this:
B= 157 H=2 N=7

Plug these numbers into this formula to find how many stitches you have to space out:
B- (HxN)= Stitches left
157- (2x7)= 143

I have 143 sts to place elsewhere on the buttonhole band. You need to leave at least 2 sts on each end, more if you wish. Make sure your buttons won't hang over the edge. You also need to figure out how many whole spaces you have between buttonholes. This will be one less than the number of holes, therefore I will have six spaces on my buttonband. To figure the size of these spaces you will subtract the ends from your sts left (143 – 4= 139) and divide that number by the number of spaces you have. 139/6= 23 with a remainder of 1. Place this st in one of the ends.

My buttonhole row will be worked like this:
Work 3, (yo, k2tog, work 23) 6 times, yo, k2tog, work 2.

You can use any type of buttonband you wish with this, just plug the appropriate stitches into place to keep the pattern correct. (ie: seed st, garter st, ribbings of any kind).

Also keep in mind that an odd number of buttonholes is visually more pleasing. If the person you are knitting for is large chested or has a pot belly then use more buttonholes closer together. Larger spaces will gape open when stretched.

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