Catch a Dropped Stitch in a Simple Knit Sweater

Recover the ladder from the bottom



Knit face. Hook the lowest intact bar through the loop.

Re-form a short ladder of intact stockinette loops and secure the recovered live stitch without pulling the fabric out of shape.

14 practical steps • Original diagrams and repair records

Illustrative repair plans — not physical test results

Before you start

A dropped stitch leaves a live loop below a ladder of horizontal yarn bars. This method is for a small accessible ladder in ordinary simple stockinette knitting with intact yarn, away from seams, shaping, colourwork and ribbing. A hole caused by broken yarn or a missing row is not the same problem. Work off the body. If the knit is felted, delicate, unravelled across several columns or cannot be identified, consult a knitwear repairer.

Materials

Clean sweater, diffuse light, magnifier, small smooth crochet hook suited to the yarn, locking stitch marker, blunt tapestry needle and compatible matching yarn if needed for securing the recovered loop. Comparable stockinette swatch with an intact practice ladder, ruler and paper.

Plan the repair

Lay the sweater relaxed, knit (V) face up. Find the lowest live loop and the bars above it. Temporarily secure the loop with a locking marker. On a simple knit column, lift the lowest bar through the live loop from the knit face using a crochet hook, creating a new live loop. Repeat in bottom-to-top order, one bar per row. Inspect the loop orientation each time to avoid twisting. At the top, secure the live loop to an intact stitch at the original endpoint with compatible yarn using a small duplicate-stitch-style anchoring path; do not knot or cinch the column. If the upper attachment is missing or ambiguous, keep the loop secured and refer.

Steps 1–2

1. Lay out the sweater

Place the knit face up on a supported table without stretching. Locate the run and keep it away from snagging objects.

2. Identify stockinette

Look for a single column of V-shaped knit stitches and horizontal ladder bars above a loose loop. Exclude complex patterns and ribbing from this worked method.

Steps 3–4

3. Check the yarn

Inspect the bars and live loop for breaks, abrasion or missing yarn. If a bar has broken, this is not a simple dropped stitch; secure loose loops and refer.

4. Catch the live loop

Slip a locking stitch marker through the loose loop without piercing the yarn. Do not pull on it or allow it to drop farther.

Steps 5–6

5. Map the ladder

Count visible intact bars and identify the original upper endpoint. Label the bottom bar first. If the sequence or endpoint is uncertain, leave the marker in place and seek advice.

6. Select the hook

Choose a smooth hook that fits the yarn without splitting it. Practise on a similar stockinette swatch so you recognize the V orientation and a correctly formed loop.

Steps 7–8

7. Orient the work

Keep the knit face toward you and the ladder above the live loop. Arrange the bars loosely in their original order; do not cross them.

8. Transfer the loop

Insert the hook through the live loop from the knit face, keeping the loop on the hook as you remove the marker. Keep the hook held securely throughout.

Steps 9–10

9. Recover the lowest bar

Catch the nearest intact ladder bar above the live loop from behind it and draw that bar through the loop toward the knit face. A new loop now sits on the hook.

10. Continue upwards

Use the next bar only, in the original row order. Pull each bar through the current loop, checking the newly formed V matches its neighbours. If a loop twists, undo only that step and reorient it.

Steps 11–12

11. Stop at the original top

After the last bar, secure the recovered live loop with the marker again if needed. Compare the column with nearby intact stitches. Never let the final loop remain unsecured.

12. Secure to intact knitting

If the original top attachment is clearly identifiable, thread compatible yarn through the recovered live loop and follow the adjacent intact stitch path to secure it without drawing the columns together. Weave the ends into nearby sound stitches on the wrong side without tightening. If attachment is unclear, keep the marker and refer rather than improvising.

Steps 13–14

13. Check the relaxed surface

Remove the hook and marker only when the loop is secured. Look for crossed bars, twisted stitches, tight columns and remaining loose loops. Never stretch the repair to prove strength.

14. Record and monitor

Record the number of bars, original endpoint and actual appearance. Observe after normal wear and permitted care; seek repair advice if the ladder returns or yarn breaks.

Fix, care and preserve

A bar is missing

Do not skip a broken or absent bar and tighten the neighbouring rows. Secure the live loop and seek a yarn-replacement repair.

A recovered stitch is twisted

Undo the latest loop while keeping it secured on the hook. Re-form it in the same orientation as adjacent Vs; refer if uncertain.

The column becomes tight

Do not pull the bars harder. Allow the knit to relax and redistribute slack gently if the yarn remains sound.

The top loop cannot be anchored

Keep a locking marker in the live loop while awaiting repair. Do not wear the sweater with the marker or leave the live loop unsecured.

Originality and evidence boundary

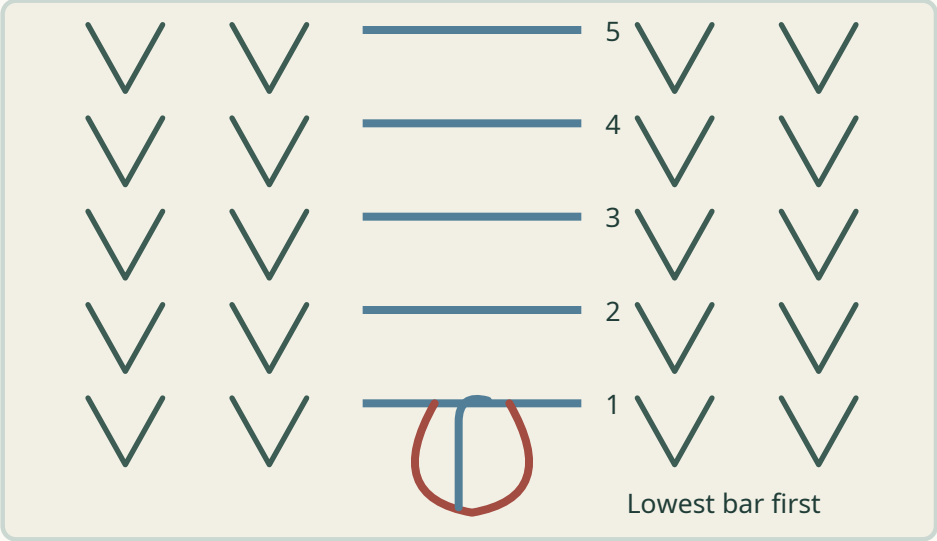
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Print the following pages separately if desired. Schematics are illustrative, not full-size cutting patterns. Record only actual observations.

Pattern 1

Stitch ladder recovery diagram: knit face, V-shaped columns on either side, lowest live loop beneath intact horizontal bars numbered from bottom to top; the hook draws bar 1 through the loop to form the next loop. Continue one bar per row. Illustration shows orientation only.

Recover the ladder from the bottom



Live loop

Knit face. Hook the lowest intact bar through the loop.

Pattern 2

Loop sequence: stage A, capture the live loop; stage B, draw the lowest bar through; stage C, repeat in ascending order; stage D, temporarily secure and anchor the last loop only to clearly identified sound upper knitting. If yarn is broken or top attachment unclear, stop and refer.

Catch, lift, repeat, secure

A — Catch live loop
Locking marker until hook holds the live loop.

B — Lift lowest bar
Pull the bar through the existing loop.

C — Continue upward
One bar per row; do not twist the Vs.

D — Secure final live loop
Anchor only to a known sound upper stitch, or refer.

Broken yarn or uncertain top attachment: stop and refer.

Record 1 — Materials and repair plan

Record actual observations only. Use UNKNOWN or NOT CHECKED for anything you have not established.

Sweater / yarn / care

Knit face and column type

Live loop location

Number and condition of bars

Upper endpoint evidence

Hook size / scrap observation

Securing yarn and route

Decision: recover / refer

Record 2 — Finish and follow-up

Record actual observations only. Use UNKNOWN or NOT CHECKED for anything you have not established.

Actual bars recovered

Loop orientation / column appearance

Top loop secured?

All hooks and markers removed?

Ends woven / no gathering?

Ordinary wear / care observation

Decision: use cautiously / refer

Date / follow-up