



CLEMENTINE THE SMILING FISH

Free Knitting Pattern

Confident Beginner / Intermediate



A softly rounded orange fish with a cream belly, forked tail, simple fins and a stitched smile.

This pattern uses circular knitting for the body and flat stockinette for the belly, fins and tail pieces. All visible joins are sewn after the body is stuffed and closed.

1. About This Pattern

Clementine is a plump knitted fish plushie with a rounded body, cream underside, paired side fins, one dorsal fin and a two-lobed tail. The body is worked in the round from the nose toward the tail root. The cream belly is knitted flat as one panel. The side fins, dorsal fin and tail lobes are knitted flat in matching halves, then seamed and attached with tidy surface seams. The shaping uses only basic increases and decreases, making the project approachable for knitters who are comfortable with small circumferences and simple seaming.

2. Finished Size

Measurement	Approximate finished size
Overall length	Approximately 24.5-25.5 cm / 9.5-10 in from nose to the farthest tail tip with the tail lobes set at about 40 degrees.
Body length	Approximately 19 cm / 7.5 in before the tail is attached.
Body width / height	Approximately 10.5-11.5 cm / 4.25-4.5 in at the fullest section.
Side fins	Approximately 4.5-5 cm / 1.75-2 in long.
Dorsal fin	Approximately 4 cm / 1.5-1.6 in high.
Tail lobe	Approximately 7.5-8 cm / 3-3.25 in long each.

Finished size may vary depending on yarn, needle size, tension, stuffing and individual technique.

3. Materials and Tools

- DK / light worsted weight yarn: orange, approximately 100-120 g / 220-265 m.
- DK / light worsted weight yarn: cream, approximately 20-30 g / 45-65 m.
- Small amounts of black yarn or embroidery floss for the mouth, and optional white yarn for tiny eye highlights.
- 3.25 mm / US 3 needles for the body: DPNs or a long circular needle for Magic Loop.
- 3.25 mm / US 3 straight or circular needles for flat pieces.
- Two 12 mm black safety eyes, or black yarn for embroidered eyes.
- Polyester toy stuffing, approximately 120-160 g.
- Tapestry needle, removable locking markers, pins, scissors and measuring tape.

Safety eyes and other small rigid components may not be suitable for projects intended for children under three years. Embroidered eyes can be used instead.

4. Gauge

22 sts x 30 rnds/rows = 10 x 10 cm / 4 x 4 in in stockinette stitch using 3.25 mm / US 3 needles, measured after the fabric has relaxed. Aim for a firm, dense fabric so stuffing does not show through. Exact gauge is not essential, but a different gauge will change the finished size and the fit of the belly and fin pieces.

5. Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Meaning
BO	bind off
BOR	beginning of round

Abbreviation	Meaning
CO	cast on
DK	double knitting yarn weight
DPN/DPNs	double-pointed needle(s)
k	knit
k2tog	knit 2 stitches together; decreases 1 stitch
kfb	knit into front and back of the same stitch; increases 1 stitch
p	purl
rnd/rnds	round/rounds
RS	right side
ssk	slip 1 knitwise, slip 1 knitwise, knit the slipped stitches together through the back loops; decreases 1 stitch
st/sts	stitch/stitches
WS	wrong side

6. Method and Orientation

- The body is worked in the round in stockinette stitch; knit every body round.
- Place the BOR at the centre underside. The BOR remains on the underside for the entire body and is the main guide mark for the cream belly.
- When the body has 72 sts, number stitches 1-72 beginning immediately after BOR. Sts 1-36 run up the item-left side to top centre; sts 37-72 run down the item-right side back to BOR.
- Right and left are described from the finished item's point of view.
- The belly panel and all fin and tail-lobe halves are knitted flat in stockinette. Odd-numbered rows are RS knit rows; even-numbered rows are WS purl rows unless a row says otherwise.
- For paired flat pieces, keep the smooth stockinette RS facing outward after seaming.
- Do not sew over a locking marker. If a marker lies under an attachment, transfer the guide mark to the top of the pinned piece and remove the covered marker before sewing.

7. Construction Overview

Piece	Construction
Body	Make 1 in orange. Work in the round from nose to tail root. Insert safety eyes before the tail taper closes access. Stuff firmly but keep the final tail-root area slightly softer.
Cream belly	Make 1 flat. Leave unstuffed. Pin and sew to the underside after the body is closed.
Side fins	Make 4 matching halves, then seam into 2 fins. Add only a pinch of stuffing and keep each CO base flat for attachment.
Dorsal fin	Make 2 matching halves, seam into 1 fin, add a small amount of stuffing and keep the CO base flat.
Tail lobes	Make 4 matching halves, seam into 2 lobes. Lightly stuff. Attach one lobe upward and one downward at the closed rear root.
Face	Safety eyes are inserted before closure. Embroider the smile and optional white highlights after the body is stuffed so the expression can be centred accurately.

Body orientation map - 72-stitch section (viewed from the nose)

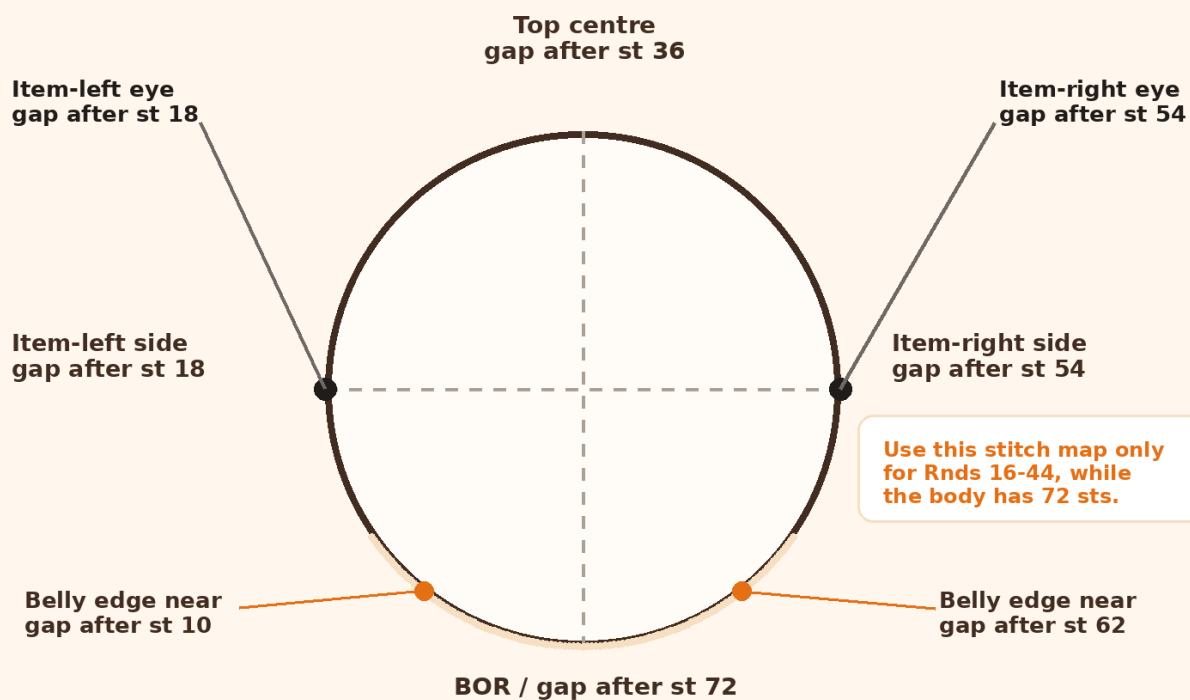


Figure 1. Body stitch orientation on the 72-stitch section.

8. Body - Make 1 in Orange

CO 8 sts, leaving a 25 cm / 10 in cast-on tail. Distribute evenly over DPNs or arrange for Magic Loop. Join to work in the round, taking care not to twist. Place BOR at centre underside. The cast-on edge forms the nose.

The first few rounds are small. If joining 8 sts feels awkward, work Rnd 1 flat, then join at the start of Rnd 2. The short join gap and the circular cast-on opening are closed with the cast-on tail in the nose-closing step below.

Rnd / Row	Instruction	Count
Rnd 1	Knit.	8
Rnd 2	Kfb in each st around.	16
Rnd 3	Knit.	16
Rnd 4	*K1, kfb; repeat from * around.	24
Rnd 5	Knit.	24
Rnd 6	*K2, kfb; repeat from * around.	32
Rnd 7	Knit.	32
Rnd 8	*K3, kfb; repeat from * around.	40

Close the Nose Opening

Thread the cast-on tail through all 8 cast-on edge loops and draw the ring fully closed. Take two small crossing stitches through the gathered centre, secure firmly, and bury the tail to the inside. If Rnd 1 was worked flat, close the short gap between the cast-on edge and Rnd 2 before securing the tail.

Rnd / Row	Instruction	Count
Rnd 9	Knit.	40
Rnd 10	*K4, kfb; repeat from * around.	48
Rnd 11	Knit.	48
Rnd 12	*K5, kfb; repeat from * around.	56
Rnd 13	Knit.	56
Rnd 14	*K6, kfb; repeat from * around.	64
Rnd 15	Knit.	64
Rnd 16	*K7, kfb; repeat from * around.	72
Rnd 17	Knit.	72
Rnd 18	Knit. As you finish this round, clip removable markers in the gaps after st 18 and after st 54; these mark the eye positions between Rnds 18 and 19.	72
Rnd 19	Knit.	72
Rnd 20	Knit.	72
Rnd 21	Knit.	72
Rnd 22	Knit.	72
Rnd 23	Knit.	72
Rnd 24	Knit.	72
Rnd 25	Knit.	72
Rnd 26	Knit.	72
Rnd 27	Knit.	72

Rnd / Row	Instruction	Count
Rnd 28	Knit.	72
Rnd 29	Knit.	72
Rnd 30	Knit. Clip a locking marker through the fabric at top centre (gap after st 36), one near the item-left belly margin (gap after st 10), one near the item-right belly margin (gap after st 62), and one at BOR/underside. These markers are used for later placement.	72
Rnd 31	Knit.	72
Rnd 32	Knit.	72
Rnd 33	Knit.	72
Rnd 34	Knit.	72
Rnd 35	Knit.	72
Rnd 36	Knit.	72
Rnd 37	Knit.	72
Rnd 38	Knit.	72
Rnd 39	Knit.	72
Rnd 40	Knit.	72
Rnd 41	Knit.	72
Rnd 42	Knit.	72
Rnd 43	Knit.	72
Rnd 44	Knit.	72

Insert the Safety Eyes Now

Before beginning Rnd 45, insert the two 12 mm safety eyes at the marked gaps between Body Rnds 18 and 19: item-left eye after st 18 and item-right eye after st 54. Check the placement from the nose, both sides and the top, then secure the washers firmly. Do not continue to Rnd 45 until both safety eyes are secured.

Rnd / Row	Instruction	Count
Rnd 45	*K7, k2tog; repeat from * around.	64
Rnd 46	Knit.	64
Rnd 47	*K6, k2tog; repeat from * around.	56
Rnd 48	Knit.	56
Rnd 49	*K5, k2tog; repeat from * around.	48
Rnd 50	Knit.	48
Rnd 51	*K4, k2tog; repeat from * around.	40
Rnd 52	Knit.	40
Rnd 53	*K3, k2tog; repeat from * around.	32
Rnd 54	Knit. Pause and stuff the body firmly, shaping the nose into a smooth rounded front. Keep the last 2-3 cm / 0.75-1.25 in near the tail root slightly softer.	32
Rnd 55	*K2, k2tog; repeat from * around.	24
Rnd 56	Knit. Add the final small amount of stuffing if needed.	24
Rnd 57	*K1, k2tog; repeat from * around.	16

Rnd / Row	Instruction	Count
Rnd 58	Knit.	16

Close the Tail Root

Cut the orange yarn, leaving a 30 cm / 12 in tail. Thread it through the remaining 16 sts twice, remove the needles and draw the opening closed. Take two small reinforcing passes across the gathered centre, secure firmly and bury the tail inside the body. Massage the stuffing so the body is smoothly oval with a rounded nose and a narrower rear root.

9. Cream Belly Panel - Make 1

Work flat in cream. CO 8 sts. The CO edge is the front end of the belly; the BO edge is the rear end.

Rnd / Row	Instruction	Count
Row 1	RS: Knit.	8
Row 2	WS: Purl.	8
Row 3	RS: Kfb, k6, kfb.	10
Row 4	WS: Purl.	10
Row 5	RS: Kfb, k8, kfb.	12
Row 6	WS: Purl.	12
Row 7	RS: Kfb, k10, kfb.	14
Row 8	WS: Purl.	14
Row 9	RS: Kfb, k12, kfb.	16
Row 10	WS: Purl.	16
Row 11	RS: Kfb, k14, kfb.	18
Row 12	WS: Purl.	18
Row 13	RS: Kfb, k16, kfb.	20
Row 14	WS: Purl.	20
Row 15	RS: Knit.	20
Row 16	WS: Purl.	20
Row 17	RS: Knit.	20
Row 18	WS: Purl.	20
Row 19	RS: Knit.	20
Row 20	WS: Purl.	20
Row 21	RS: Knit.	20
Row 22	WS: Purl.	20
Row 23	RS: Knit.	20
Row 24	WS: Purl.	20
Row 25	RS: Knit.	20
Row 26	WS: Purl.	20
Row 27	RS: Knit.	20
Row 28	WS: Purl.	20
Row 29	RS: K2tog, k16, ssk.	18
Row 30	WS: Purl.	18
Row 31	RS: K2tog, k14, ssk.	16

Rnd / Row	Instruction	Count
Row 32	WS: Purl.	16
Row 33	RS: K2tog, k12, ssk.	14
Row 34	WS: Purl.	14
Row 35	RS: K2tog, k10, ssk.	12
Row 36	WS: Purl.	12
Row 37	RS: K2tog, k8, ssk.	10
Row 38	WS: Purl.	10
Row 39	RS: K2tog, k6, ssk.	8
Row 40	WS: Purl.	8

BO all 8 sts loosely in cream. Leave a 70 cm / 28 in sewing tail at the rear BO edge. Weave in the CO tail. Do not stuff the belly panel.

10. Side Fins - Make 4 Halves, Assemble 2 Fins

Work each half flat in orange. CO 4 sts. The CO edge is the attachment base and must remain open when the two halves are seamed together.

Rnd / Row	Instruction	Count
Row 1	RS: Kfb, k2, kfb.	6
Row 2	WS: Purl.	6
Row 3	RS: Knit.	6
Row 4	WS: Purl.	6
Row 5	RS: Knit.	6
Row 6	WS: Purl.	6
Row 7	RS: Knit.	6
Row 8	WS: Purl.	6
Row 9	RS: K2tog, k2, ssk.	4
Row 10	WS: Purl.	4
Row 11	RS: Knit.	4
Row 12	WS: Purl.	4
Row 13	RS: Knit.	4
Row 14	WS: Purl.	4

BO all 4 sts. Leave a 35 cm / 14 in tail on two halves for seaming. Pair the halves to make two fins.

Seam Each Side Fin

Place two matching halves with WS together and RS facing outward. Beginning at one corner of the CO edge, mattress stitch or small whip stitch up one side, across the BO tip and down the opposite side. Leave the entire CO edge open. Add only a small pinch of stuffing to round the fin without making it firm. Keep the CO edge flat; it will be closed during attachment to the body.

11. Dorsal Fin - Make 2 Halves, Assemble 1 Fin

Work each half flat in orange. CO 10 sts. The CO edge is the attachment base.

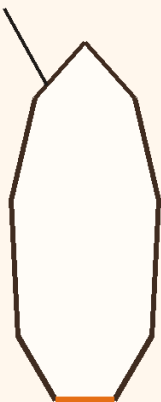
Rnd / Row	Instruction	Count
Row 1	RS: Knit.	10

Rnd / Row	Instruction	Count
Row 2	WS: Purl.	10
Row 3	RS: Knit.	10
Row 4	WS: Purl.	10
Row 5	RS: Knit.	10
Row 6	WS: Purl.	10
Row 7	RS: K2tog, k6, ssk.	8
Row 8	WS: Purl.	8
Row 9	RS: Knit.	8
Row 10	WS: Purl.	8
Row 11	RS: Knit.	8
Row 12	WS: Purl.	8

BO all 8 sts. Seam the two halves exactly as for the side fins, leaving the 10-st CO base open. Add a small amount of stuffing so the fin stands softly upright, but keep the base flat.

Fin and tail seam traces

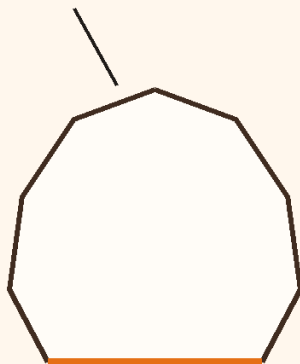
Seam around outer edge



Side fin

Leave 4-st CO base open

Seam around outer edge



Dorsal fin

Leave 10-st CO base open

Seam around outer edge



Tail lobe

Leave 4-st CO base open

Place matching halves with WS together and stockinette RS facing out.
Whip stitch or mattress stitch around the curved outer edge and BO tip.
Leave the CO edge open, add only a small amount of stuffing, then use the CO edge as the attachment base.

Figure 2. Seam the outer edges of each paired fin or tail lobe and leave the CO base open for attachment.

12. Tail Lobes - Make 4 Halves, Assemble 2 Lobes

Work each half flat in orange. CO 4 sts. The CO edge is the tail-root attachment base.

Rnd / Row	Instruction	Count
Row 1	RS: Kfb, k2, kfb.	6
Row 2	WS: Purl.	6
Row 3	RS: Kfb, k4, kfb.	8
Row 4	WS: Purl.	8
Row 5	RS: Knit.	8
Row 6	WS: Purl.	8
Row 7	RS: Knit.	8
Row 8	WS: Purl.	8
Row 9	RS: Knit.	8
Row 10	WS: Purl.	8
Row 11	RS: Knit.	8
Row 12	WS: Purl.	8
Row 13	RS: Knit.	8
Row 14	WS: Purl.	8
Row 15	RS: Knit.	8
Row 16	WS: Purl.	8
Row 17	RS: K2tog, k4, ssk.	6
Row 18	WS: Purl.	6
Row 19	RS: Knit.	6
Row 20	WS: Purl.	6
Row 21	RS: K2tog, k2, ssk.	4
Row 22	WS: Purl.	4
Row 23	RS: Knit.	4
Row 24	WS: Purl.	4

BO all 4 sts. Pair the halves to make two matching lobes. Seam around the curved outer edge and BO tip, leaving each 4-st CO base open. Add a light, even layer of stuffing; the lobes should remain flexible rather than firm.

13. Placement Guide

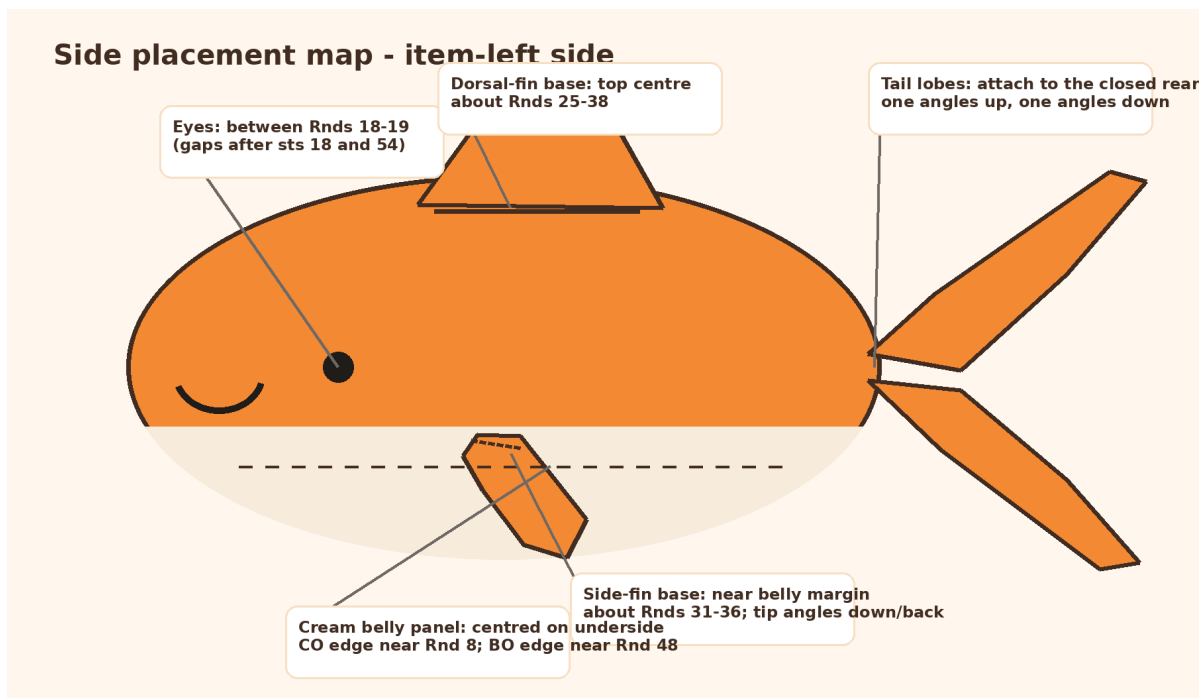


Figure 3. Main feature placement shown on the item-left side. Mirror the side fin and eye on the item-right side.

Cream Belly Placement

Lay the body on its back with BOR centred along the underside. Pin the cream belly panel lengthwise with the CO edge near Body Rnd 8 and the BO edge near Body Rnd 48. Centre the panel on the BOR line. Across the 72-st middle section, the widest cream area should reach approximately to the gaps after body st 10 and st 62. Keep the panel relaxed; do not stretch it from end to end.

Eye Placement

The eye centres sit between Body Rnds 18 and 19. On the 72-st section, the item-left eye is in the gap after st 18 and the item-right eye is in the gap after st 54. The eyes therefore sit on the two lateral side axes and are mirrored around top centre.

Dorsal Fin Placement

Pin the 10-st CO base along the top-centre line, roughly from Body Rnd 25 through Rnd 38. Distribute the 10 base stitches evenly over that attachment length. The fin should stand upright and lean only slightly toward the tail.

Side Fin Placement

Pin one fin on each side. Centre the item-left fin base near the cream-belly margin at the gap after st 10 and the item-right fin base near the cream-belly margin at the gap after st 62. Place each 4-st CO base approximately across Body Rnds 31-36. Angle the free end downward and slightly toward the tail. Mirror both sides before sewing.

Tail Placement

Pin the two 4-st lobe bases to the gathered rear root, one centred across the upper half and one centred across the lower half. Let the bases touch or overlap slightly at centre. Angle one lobe about 40 degrees upward and the other about 40 degrees downward, then check the fork from the side and rear.

14. Assembly and Finishing

- 1. Check the stuffed body.** Roll the body gently between your hands to smooth the stuffing. The nose should be rounded, the middle full and the tail root narrower. Make sure no needle gaps are open enough to show stuffing.
- 2. Pin the cream belly.** Use the placement above. Check that the panel runs straight from nose toward tail and that both side edges rise equally. If the underside BOR marker will be covered, transfer the centre guide mark to a removable marker through the pinned cream panel and remove the covered marker before sewing.
- 3. Sew the cream belly.** Using cream yarn and small whip stitches, catch one edge stitch of the belly panel and then a small horizontal bar of orange body fabric directly beside it. Work around the entire panel. Keep the stitches snug enough to close the edge but not so tight that the panel puckers. Secure and bury both ends inside the body.
- 4. Finish the face.** With black yarn, embroider a shallow smile across the front nose. Aim for a curve about 2-2.5 cm / 0.75-1 in wide, centred between the two eyes and about 1-1.5 cm / 0.4-0.6 in above the front edge of the cream belly. Use 3-5 small backstitches or couch a short strand into a smooth curve. For a bright eye detail, add one tiny white duplicate stitch immediately beside the upper-front edge of each eye.
- 5. Attach the dorsal fin.** Pin the open 10-st CO base along top centre from about Rnds 25-38. Using orange yarn, whip stitch through both layers of the flattened CO base before entering the body. Each stitch must capture both fin layers. Sew from the front end of the base to the rear end, then take a second light pass back toward the centre if extra stability is needed. Do not pull the seam so tight that the fin puckers.
- 6. Attach the side fins.** Pin both fins before sewing either one. With the body viewed from the front, the bases should be level and mirrored; from the side, the tips should angle down and slightly back. Sew each CO base using small whip stitches that capture both fin layers before entering the body. Keep the attachment line short and slightly diagonal rather than vertical.
- 7. Attach the tail lobes.** Pin both lobes at the rear root and check the fork from the side, top and back. Sew the upper lobe first, then the lower. For each stitch, pass through both layers of the 4-st lobe base, then through a firm bite of body fabric around the gathered root. Reinforce the inner junction where the two lobes meet with 2-3 extra stitches so the fork holds its angle.
- 8. Final shaping.** Adjust stuffing by gently pressing the body from the sides and underside. Smooth the cream panel, straighten the dorsal fin and compare the two side fins. If one tail lobe turns forward, add one small anchoring stitch from its inner base to the rear body.
- 9. Secure and tidy.** Knot sewing yarns only where they can be buried. Thread each tail through the body for several centimetres, bring it out through the fabric and trim close so the end retracts inside. Remove every temporary marker and pin.

15. Sewing Notes

Join	Recommended method
Belly panel	Small whip stitch. Catch the panel edge and a nearby horizontal bar of body fabric. Keep the seam flat and even.
Paired fin and tail halves	Mattress stitch or small whip stitch around the curved outer edges with WS together and RS outward. Leave the CO base open.
Fin and tail attachment	Flatten the open CO base so both layers lie together. Every attachment stitch must pass through both layers before entering the body.
Loose seam correction	Add a second pass only through the existing attachment zone. Avoid pulling hard enough to dent the stuffed body.

16. Troubleshooting

Problem	Practical correction
Stuffing shows between stitches	Your fabric is too loose for the amount of stuffing. Remove a little stuffing or remake the structural pieces at a firmer gauge with a smaller needle.
Body looks pointed at the nose	Massage stuffing away from the exact cast-on centre and toward the surrounding Rnds 4-10. A few gentle rolling motions usually round the front.
Body is too large or too small	Check stockinette gauge before remaking the fins or belly. All structural pieces are scaled to the same 22-st x 30-row/rnd gauge.
Cream belly ripples	The panel is being compressed. Repin with the CO edge near Rnd 8 and BO edge near Rnd 48, then let the panel lie relaxed before sewing.
Cream belly pulls the body flat	The belly seam is too tight. Remove a short section and resew with smaller, more frequent whip stitches that lie on the surface instead of cinching the body.
Eyes are not level	Before securing safety-eye washers, count the same round gap on both sides and confirm the stitch gaps after 18 and 54. For embroidered eyes, remove and restitch the higher eye.
Dorsal fin leans sideways	The base was sewn off the top-centre line or one side of the seam is tighter. Add a small anchoring stitch on the loose side or release one tight stitch.
Side fins point in different directions	Pin both fins before sewing. Match the attachment span across Rnds 31-36 and mirror the tip angle down and back.
Tail fork looks closed	Open the angle between the lobes and add one anchoring stitch from the inner base of each lobe to the body slightly above or below centre.
Tail lobes sag	Use less stuffing in the lobes and reinforce the base seam with a second pass through both layers and the rear body fabric.
Visible gaps in a paired fin seam	Use a smaller whip stitch and catch the edge bars just inside the selvedge rather than pulling through the outermost loops only.

17. Final Visual Checklist

- ☐ Body is smoothly rounded with a full middle and narrower rear root.
- ☐ Cream belly is centred, flat and reaches evenly up both lower sides.
- ☐ Eyes are level and mirrored around top centre.
- ☐ Smile is centred on the nose and does not pull the fabric inward.
- ☐ Dorsal fin is centred on top and stands upright.
- ☐ Side fins are at matching heights and both point down and slightly back.
- ☐ Tail lobes form a balanced fork when viewed from the side and back.
- ☐ No stuffing is visible through the fabric or seams.
- ☐ The nose cast-on opening and gathered tail-root opening are fully closed, and no stuffing openings or seam gaps remain.
- ☐ All yarn tails are secured and buried.
- ☐ All temporary markers and pins have been removed.
- ☐ The finished fish rests evenly without one fin or tail lobe twisting the body.