

"SEPARABLE SLIDE FASTENER AND METHOD OF
ATTACHING THE SAME TO KNIT FABRICS"

The present invention relates to a separable slide fastener for use on knit fabrics and a method of attaching such a separable slide fastener to knit fabrics.

5 A variety of slide fasteners are known which have coarse regions or openings in stringer tapes thereof for venting air or easy attachment to bags or articles of difficult materials. Some representative prior art slide fasteners are disclosed in the following patents
10 and publications:

U.S. Patent 2,701,222, patented Feb. 1, 1955;
Canadian Patent 827,367, patented Nov. 18, 1969;
Japanese Utility Model Publication 34-6608,
published May 4, 1959;

15 Japanese Utility Model Publication 52-24161
published June 1, 1977;
Japanese Utility Model Laid-Open Publication
50-84205, published July 18, 1975; and
Japanese Utility Model Laid-Open Publication
20 51-135709 published Nov. 2, 1976.

In our parent patent application No. 81 10886 there is claimed a separable slide fastener comprising:

(a) a pair of warp-knit stringer tapes each including a first web composed of at least

one wale of chain stitches, a second web spaced transversely from said first web with a wale-free region therebetween, said second web including a wale of chain stitches extending along said wale-free region in confronting relation to said wale in said first web, said wales of chain stitches being knitted of reinforced threads, and a thread interconnecting said wales of chain stitches across said wale-free region;

- (b) a pair of rows of coupling elements mounted on said second web of one of said warp-knit stringer tapes which is remote from said wale-free region;
- (c) a slider movable along said pair of rows of coupling elements for engaging and disengaging the latter;
- (d) a separable bottom end stop comprising a box and a box pin extending therefrom, which are mounted on one of said warp-knit stringer tapes at one end thereof, and a pin mounted on the other stringer tape at one end thereof and insertable into said box; and
- (e) a reinforcement member mounted on each of said stringer tapes at said one end thereof and adjacent to said separable bottom end

stop and including first and second portions partly covering said first and second webs, respectively, a third portion contiguous to said first and second portions and partly covering said wale-free region.

According to the first aspect of the invention there is provided a method of attaching a slide fastener stringer to a knit-fabric, comprising the steps of:

- (a) providing a slide fastener stringer having two tape webs spaced from each other and interconnected by a plurality of longitudinally spaced transverse thread portions, a separable bottom end stop member, and a reinforced end portion adjacent to said separable bottom end stop member, said reinforced end portion covering at least one of said transverse thread portions;
- (b) looping said transverse thread portions with a row of loops which constitute a course of a knit fabric; and
- (c) thereafter, knitting said knit fabric so as to form successive courses.

According to a second aspect of the invention there is provided a method of attaching a slide fastener stringer to a knit fabric on a knitting machine, comprising the steps of:

- (a) providing a slide fastener stringer having a



series of longitudinally arranged openings therein, a separable bottom end stop member, and a reinforced end portion adjacent to said separable bottom end stop member, said reinforced end portion extending transversely across one of said openings to partly cover the same;

- (b) inserting a series of knitting needles of a knitting machine into said opening in the stringer; and
- (c) thereafter, knitting a fabric on said knitting needles so as to form successive courses constituted by a row of loops, one of said loops extending around said reinforced end portion.

According to a third aspect of the invention there is provided a method of attaching a slide fastener stringer to a knit fabric, comprising the steps of:

- (a) providing a slide fastener stringer having a series of longitudinally arranged openings therein, a separable bottom end stop member, and a reinforced end portion adjacent to said separable bottom end stop member, said reinforced end portion extending transversely across one of said openings to partly cover the same;
- (b) introducing into said opening a row of loops projecting from and extending along a wale of a knit fabric; and
- (c) thereafter, interlooping a linking thread with

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said row of loops projecting through said openings and extending along the knit fabric.

According to a fourth aspect of the invention there is provided a method of attaching a slide fastener stringer to a knit fabric, comprising the steps of:

- (a) providing a slide fastener stringer having a series of longitudinally arranged openings therein, a separable bottom end stop member, and a reinforced end portion adjacent to said separable bottom end stop member;
- (b) inserting a series of knitting needles of a knitting machine successively into said openings in said stringer while the stringer is being tensioned with one of the knitting needles being held against said reinforced end portion; and thereafter, knitting a fabric or said knitting needles so as to form successive courses.



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It is believed possible by means of the present invention to provide a method of knitting a separable slide fastener into a knit fabric while the latter is

being knitted, and /or a method of attaching a separable slide fastener to a knit fabric easily on a knitting machine.

5 The invention will be described by way of example with reference to the accompanying drawings in which:-

Fig. 1 is a fragmentary plan view of a separable slide fastener;

10 Fig. 2 is a point diagram showing lapping movements for a warp-knit stringer tape of the slide fastener shown in Fig. 1;

Fig. 3 is an enlarged fragmentary plan view of a lower end portion of the slide fastener shown in Fig. 1;

Fig. 4 is an enlarged cross-sectional view taken along line IV-IV of Fig. 3;

15 Fig. 5 is an enlarged cross-sectional view taken along line V-V of Fig. 3;

Fig. 6 is an enlarged cross-sectional view taken along line VI-VI of Fig. 3;

20 Fig. 7 is a point diagram showing lapping movements for a portion of a modified stringer tape;

Fig. 8 is a point diagram showing lapping movements

for a portion of a modified stringer tape;

Fig. 9 is a point diagram showing lapping movements for a modified stringer tape;

Fig. 10 is a point diagram showing lapping movements
5 for a portion of a modified stringer tape;

Fig. 11 is an enlarged fragmentary plan view of a lower end portion of a modified separable slide fastener;

Fig. 12 is an enlarged cross-sectional view taken
10 along line XII - XII of Fig. 11;

Fig. 13 is a view similar to Fig. 12, showing a modification;

Fig. 14 is an enlarged fragmentary plan view of a lower end portion of a modified separable slide
15 fastener;

Fig. 15 is an enlarged fragmentary plan view of a lower end portion of a modified separable slide fastener;

Fig. 16 is an enlarged cross-sectional view taken
20 along line XVI - XVI of Fig. 15;

Fig. 17 is an enlarged fragmentary plan view of a lower end portion of a modified separable slide fastener;

Fig. 18 is an enlarged cross-sectional view taken
25 along line XVIII - XVIII of Fig. 17;

Fig. 19 is an enlarged fragmentary plan view of a

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lower end portion of a modified separable slide fastener;

Fig. 20 is an enlarged cross-sectional view taken along line XX - XX of Fig. 19;

5 Fig. 21 is an enlarged fragmentary plan view of a lower end portion of a modified separable slide fastener;

Fig. 22 is an enlarged cross-sectional view taken along line XXII - XXII of Fig. 21;

10 Fig. 23 is an enlarged fragmentary plan view of a lower end portion of a modified separable slide fastener;

Fig. 24 is a point diagram showing lapping movements for a modified stringer tape;

15 Fig. 25 is a fragmentary plan view of another separable slide fastener.-

Fig. 26 is an enlarged fragmentary perspective view illustrative of the way in which one of the stringers of Fig. 1 is put on a row of knitting needles;

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Fig. 27 is an enlarged fragmentary perspective view of the stringer of Fig. 1 which is knit into a knit fabric on the needle shown in Fig. 26;

Fig. 28 is an enlarged fragmentary perspective view illustrative of the way in which one of the stringers of Fig. 21 is put on knitting needles;

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Figure 29 is an enlarged fragmentary perspective view of a slide fastener stringer which is differently knit into a knit fabric; and

Figure 30 is an enlarged fragmentary perspective view of a slide fastener stringer attached to a knit fabric.

As shown in Figure 1, a separable slide fastener 10 for use on a garment such as a cardigan having completely separable opposite edges along which the fastener is attachable, comprises a pair of warp-knit stringer tapes 11, 12 each including a pair of first and second longitudinal warp-knit webs 13, 14 with a wale-free coarse region 15 therebetween which is devoid of two wales (Figure 2). The wale-free coarse region 15, however, may be varied in width by selecting a suitable number of wales to be removed therefrom. As best shown in Figure 2, the webs 13, 14 have a pair of innermost opposite wales 16, 17, respectively, which include chain stitches of reinforced yarn and are interconnected by a connector thread 18 laid in a pattern of 0-0/1-1/0-0/1-1/0-0/0-0/4-4/3-3/4-4/3-3/4-4/4-4. The connector thread 18 thus laid in includes a plurality of substantially parallel portions 19 extending transversely across the wale-free

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coarse region 15, providing a plurality of rectangular openings 20 arranged longitudinally in and along the wale-free coarse region 15. The connector thread 18 is made of a plurality of foundation threads twisted together. The second webs 14, 14 (Fig. 1) have a pair of beaded edges 21, 22, respectively, each of which is constructed of a reinforced region 14a (Fig. 2) of the web 14. A pair of rows of coupling elements 23, 24, which are made preferably of filamentary material, are mounted on the beaded edges 21, 22, respectively, of the webs 14, 14. A slider 25 (Fig. 1) is slidably mounted on the rows of coupling elements 23, 24 for taking the latter into and out of interdigitating engagement to open and close the slide fastener 10.

15 The stringer tapes 11, 12 have respective lower end portions 26, 27 on which is mounted a separable bottom end stop 28 including a box 29 and a box pin 30 extending therefrom, the box 29 and the box pin 30 being injection-molded on the end portion 26 of the tape 12, and a pin 31 injection-molded on the end portion 27 of the tape 12. The separable bottom end stop 28 is located adjacent to the lower end of the rows of coupling elements 23, 24. The first web 13 is narrower than the second web 14.

25 As best illustrated in Figs. 3 through 6, a pair of reinforcement members 32, 33 each in the form of a

film are bonded to or otherwise mounted on the tape end portions 26, 27, respectively, each of the reinforcement members 32, 33 including first and second portions 34, 35 disposed on the webs 14, 13, respectively, and a third portion 36 contiguous to and joining the first and second portions 34, 35 and extending across the wale-free coarse region 15 in overlying relation to the lowermost one of the parallel portions 19 of the connector thread 18. The third portion 36 is of such a width that there is defined a recess 37 between the first and second portions 34, 35 and through which the wale-free coarse region 15 is exposed. The reinforcement members 32, 33 are integrally connected to the box 29 and box pin 30 and the pin 31, respectively.

Preferably, the reinforcement films 32, 33 are first attached, and then the separable bottom end stop 28 is injection-molded integrally with the films 32, 33.

With the reinforcement members 32, 33 thus mounted on the tapes 11, 12, respectively, the pin 31 can be manipulated smoothly into and out of fitting engagement with the box 29, and the tapes 11, 12 are protected against rupture at the coarse regions 15, 15 which would otherwise occur due to repeated coupling and uncoupling of the separable end stop 28.

Fig. 7 shows a modification in which a pair of

connector threads 40, 41 are laid across a wale-free region 39 in patterns of 0-0/1-1/0-0/1-1/0-0/3-3/2-2/3-3/2-2/3-3 and 3-3/2-2/3-3/0-0/1-1/0-0/1-1/0-0/3-3/2-2, respectively, the connector threads 40, 41 inter-
5 connecting a pair of innermost opposite wales 42, 43 of a pair of warp-knit webs (not shown). The connector threads 40, 41 have transverse portions 44, 45, respectively, extending across the wale-free region 39.

According to another modification shown in Fig. 8,
10 a pair of warp threads 47, 48 are laid along a pair of innermost opposite wales 49, 50, respectively, each in a pattern of 0-0/1-1. A connector thread 51 is laid in a pattern of 0-0/1-1/0-0/3-3/2-2/3-3 across a wale-free region 46 with transverse portions 52 extending
15 between the wales 49, 50.

Fig. 9 illustrates a modified stringer tape 54 including a first warp-knit web 55, a second warp-knit web 56 spaced laterally therefrom with a wale-free coarse region 57 therebetween, and a connecting thread
20 58 knitted in a pattern of 1-0/3-4/3-4/1-0 across the wale-free region 57. The connector thread 58 has stitches or loops 61 incorporated in a pair of innermost opposite wales 59, 60 of the first and second webs 56, 56, respectively and transverse portions 62
25 extending obliquely across the wale-free region 57. The first warp-knit web 55 is composed of the wale 60

and an additional wale 63 adjacent thereto and remote from the wale-free region 57.

Another modification shown in Fig. 10 comprises a connector thread 65 knitted in a pattern of 3-4/1-0
5 between a pair of innermost opposite wales 66, 67 of a pair of warp-knit webs (not shown), the connector thread 65 having stitches or loops 68 incorporated in the wales 66, 67. The connector thread 65 also has transverse portions 69 extending obliquely across a
10 wale-free region 64 between the innermost opposite wales 66, 67.

Figs. 11 and 12 illustrate a modified separable slide fastener 71 which includes a pair of lower end portions 72, 73 of warp-knit stringer tapes 74, 75,
15 respectively, on which a separable bottom end stop 76 is mounted. A pair of reinforcement members 77, 78 in the form of films of a uniform thickness are bonded to the tape end portions 72, 73, respectively. The reinforcement films 77, 78 have a pair of holes 79, 80,
20 respectively, which are substantially registered with wale-free coarse regions 81, 82 respectively in the tapes 74, 75. Such holes 79, 80 can be formed as by punching after the films 77, 78 have been bonded to the stringer tapes 74, 75.

25 Fig. 13 shows a modified reinforcement film 84 bonded to a warp-knit stringer tape 85 and including

a thin layer 86 overlying a wale-free coarse region 87, the thin layer 86 of the film 84 being of a thickness such that it is readily penetratable by a knitting needle when the latter is thrust in, as described
5 later on.

According to still another modification shown in Fig. 14, a pair of substantially L-shaped reinforcement members or films 90, 91 are bonded respectively to a pair of warp-knit stringer tapes 92, 93 at and across
10 lower end portion thereof, each film 90, 91 having a transverse portion 96 extending across a wale-free coarse region 99 between a pair of warp-knit webs 97, 98 of each stringer tape 92, 93. Each film 90, 91 also includes a longitudinal portion 100 extending on
15 the web 98. A separable bottom end stop 101 is mounted on the tape end portions and includes a box pin 102 and a pin 103 which are injection-molded on and along the longitudinal portions 100, 100, respectively. Each of the transverse portions 96 has a width which is sub-
20 stantially half the length of the longitudinal portion 100 so that portions of the wale-free region 99 and the tape web 97 are exposed alongside of the longitudinal portion 100.

A modification illustrated in Figs. 15 and 16
25 includes a pair of transverse reinforcement members or films 105, 106 of a reduced width bonded respectively

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- to a pair of warp-knit stringer tapes 107, 108 at and across lower end portions thereof. Each of the reinforcement films 105, 106 overlies a lowermost transverse portion 109 of a connector thread, which extends across
- 5 a wale-free region 104 between a pair of webs 110 and 111 of one of the tapes 107, 108. A separable bottom end stop 112 that is mounted on the stringer tapes 107, 108 includes a box pin 113 having a reinforcement bar 114 integral therewith and injection-molded around an
- 10 end portion of the tape 107 and a portion of the reinforcement film 105, and a pin 115 having a reinforcement bar 116 integral therewith and injection-molded around an end portion of the tape 108 and a portion of the reinforcement film 106. The reinforcement bars 114,
- 15 116 extend across the wale-free regions 104, 104, respectively. With the modification as illustrated in Figs. 15 and 16, the tape ends are more stiffened and more tape surfaces are left exposed at tape end portions.
- 20 Figs. 17 and 18 illustrate still another modification including a separable bottom end stop 118 having a box pin 119 and a pin 120 with which are integrally injection-molded a pair of reinforcement bodies 121, 122, respectively, each in the form of a centrally opened rectangular
- 25 frame having an opening 123. Each of the openings 123, 123 is located at a wale-free coarse region 124 between

a pair of webs 125, 126 of a warp-knit stringer tape 127, the openings 123, 123 being positioned adjacent to the lower end of the stringer tape 127. A transverse reinforcement film 128 is bonded to each stringer tape 5 127 at its end portion across the wale-free coarse region 124 and covers a lowermost transverse portion 129 of a connector thread that interconnects the webs 125, 126. To prepare the assembly, after the reinforcement films 128, 128 have been bonded to the stringer 10 tapes 127, 127, respectively, the reinforcement bodies 121, 122 are injection-molded on the stringer tapes 127, 127. Each of the reinforcement bodies 121, 122 includes a lower transverse portion 130 wrapping the lowermost transverse thread portion 129 and a portion 15 of the reinforcement film 128, and an upper transverse portion 131 wrapping another transverse thread portion 132 extending across the wale-free region 124.

According to still another modification shown in Figs. 19 and 20, a pair of reinforcement films 134, 135 20 are bonded to a pair of stringer tapes 140, 140, respectively, at lower end portions thereof. Each of the reinforcement films 134, 135 has a recess 136 which registers with a wale-free coarse region 137 between a pair of webs 138, 139 of one of the stringer tapes 140. 25 The reinforcement films 134, 135 includes a central bottom portion 141 located adjacent to the recess 136

and covering two transverse portions 142, 142 of a connector thread spanning across the wale-free coarse region 137. As best shown in Fig. 20, the reinforcement film 134 comprises a pair of layers 143, 144 sandwiching the stringer tape 140 therebetween and bonded together at an outer edge 145 and at the central bottom portion 141 in the wale-free coarse region 137. A separable bottom end stop 146 is injection-molded on the stringer tapes 140, 140 after the reinforcement films 134, 135 have been bonded to the stringer tapes 140, 140.

Figs. 21 and 22 illustrate still another modification in which a pair of reinforcement films 148, 149 are bonded respectively to a pair of stringer tapes 156, 156 and each comprise a U-shaped thick layer 150 having a recess 151 and a thin layer 152 disposed in the recess 151 in registry with a wale-free coarse region 153 between a pair of webs 154, 155 of the stringer tape 156. Each of the reinforcement films 148, 149 also includes a central bottom portion 157 adjacent to the recess 151, covering two transverse portions 158, 158 of a connector thread extending across the wale-free region 153. Bonding of the reinforcement films 148, 149 to the tapes 156, 156 is followed by injection-molding of a separable bottom end stop 159 on the tapes 156, 156. The thin layer 152 has a thickness such that it will be penetratable by knitting needles as described

later on.

According to a modification shown in Fig. 23, a pair of reinforcement films 161, 162 each include a pair of laterally spaced portions 163, 164 bonded respectively to a pair of webs 165, 166 of a warp-knit stringer tape 167. The stringer tape 167 has a wale-free coarse region 168 located between the webs 165, 166 and having a lowermost transverse portion 169 of a connector thread interconnecting the webs 165, 166 across the wale-free region 168. Each of the reinforcement films 161, 162 also includes a bridge portion 170 interconnecting the film portion 163, 164 at a position spaced from the lower end of the stringer tape 167, the bridge portion 170 covering the lowermost transverse thread portion 169.

A modified warp-knit stringer tape 172 shown in Fig. 24 comprises a web 173 having a plurality of wales 174 juxtaposed thereacross, three of which constitute an edge portion 175 for supporting a row of coupling elements (not shown). The stringer tape 172 also includes another web 176 composed of a single wale 177 which comprises chain stitches 178 knit in a pattern of 1-1/0-0 and reinforced by an inlaid warp thread 179, the web 176 being transversely spaced from the web 173 with a wale-free coarse region 180 therebetween which is devoid of one wale and across which extend a pair of

connector threads 181, 182 laid in patterns of 0-0/1-1/
0-0/1-1/0-0/3-3/2-2/3-3/2-2/3-3 and 3-3/2-2/3-3/0-0/1-1/
0-0/1-1/0-0/3-3/2-2, respectively, and interconnect the
wale 177 and an innermost one of the wales 174 which
5 confronts the wale 177.

Fig. 25 illustrates a separable slide fastener 184
of the present invention. The slide fastener 184
comprises a pair of warp-knit stringer tapes 185, 186
each having a pair of longitudinal wale-free coarse
10 regions 187, 188 which are selectively utilized for
attachment to a garment.

Figs. 26 and 27 are illustrative of a manner in
which the separable slide fastener 10 shown in Figs. 1
through 6 is knit into a knit fabric. First, the
15 slide fastener 10 is uncoupled or separated, and one
of the stringers 11 is put on a knitting machine so
that a series of knitting needles 190 thereof are
inserted into the openings 20 in the stringer tape 11.
At this time, the endmost one of the openings 20 which
20 is adjacent to the reinforcement film portion 36 (Fig.
3) should receive one of the knitting needles 190. When
thus mounting the stringer on the knitting needles 190,
the stringer tape 11 is longitudinally tensioned with
the film portion 36 engaged by the knitting needle 190
25 and then starts to be successively placed on the knitting
needles 190. The film portion 36 therefore serves as a

positioning guide. The knitting needles 190 may occupy all of the openings 20 or may skip some of the openings 20 depending on the gauge of the knitting machine used. After the stringer is readied on the knitting machine
5 for knitting operation, the knitting machine is operated in the usual manner to knit a row of needle loops 192, or a first course, that are looped with the transverse thread portion 19. The knitting machine is continuously operated to form a knit fabric 193 including a plurality
10 of successive courses 194. The slide fastener stringer is thus knit into the knit fabric 193.

The stringer tape 156 as illustrated in Figs. 21 and 22 can be mounted on a knitting machine by first thrusting or penetrating a pair of knitting needles 196,
15 196 into the thin layer 152 of the reinforcement film 148 as shown in Fig. 28.

According to a modification shown in Fig. 29, a selvage 198 and a row of needle loops 199 constituting a first course are first knitted on a knitting machine,
20 and then the stringer tape 11 is put on the knitting machine. Knitting is started again to form a next row of needle loops 200 constituting a second course and looped around the transverse thread portions 19. Continuous knitting operation forms a knit fabric 201
25 having successive courses 202. The selvage 198 overlaps and hence conceals a portion of the stringer tape

11 to make a finished knit article look slightly and attractive.

Figure 30 shows a slide fastener stringer 203 attached along a marginal edge 204 of a prefabricated knit garment 205. The stringer 203 is fastened to the knit garment 205 by a first row of loops 206 extending along a wale 207 through the knit garment 205 and a row of openings 208 defined by transverse thread portions 209 extending across a wale-free region 210 in a stringer tape 212 of the stringer 203. A linking thread 211 in the form of a row of loops or chain stitches is interlooped with the first row of loops 206 projecting through the openings 208 to connect the stringer 203 and the knit garment 205 together. Such linking operations can be carried out by an ordinary knitting machine or a linking machine or looper.

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Although various minor modifications might be

suggested by those versed in the art, it should be understood that we wish to embody within the scope of the patent warranted hereon, all such embodiments as reasonably and properly come within the scope of
5 our contribution to the art.



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Claims:-

1. A method of attaching a slide fastener stringer to a knit-fabric, comprising the steps of:

- 5 (a) providing a slide fastener stringer having two tape webs spaced from each other and interconnected by a plurality of longitudinally spaced transverse thread portions, a separable bottom end stop member, and a reinforced end portion adjacent to said separable bottom end
- 10 stop member, said reinforced end portion covering at least one of said transverse thread portions;
- (b) looping said transverse thread portions with a row of loops which constitute a course of a knit
- 15 fabric; and
- (c) thereafter, knitting said knit fabric so as to form successive course.

2. A method according to claim 1, said row of loops defining a selvage of said knit fabric.

20 3. A method of attaching a slide fastener stringer to a knit fabric on a knitting machine, comprising the steps of:

- (a) providing a slide fastener stringer having a series of longitudinally arranged openings
- 25 therein, a separable bottom end stop member, and a reinforced end portion adjacent to said separable bottom end stop member, said



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reinforced end portion extending transversely across one of said openings to partly cover the same;

(b) inserting a series of knitting needles of a knitting machine into said opening in the stringer; and

(c) thereafter, knitting a fabric on said knitting needles so as to form successive courses constituted by a row of loops, one of said loops extending around said reinforced end portion.

4. A method according to claim 3, including the step of forming at least one course on said knitting needles before said inserting step (b).

5. A method of attaching a slide fastener stringer to a knit fabric, comprising the steps of:

(a) providing a slide fastener stringer having a series of longitudinally arranged openings therein, a separable bottom end stop member, and a reinforced end portion adjacent to said separable bottom end stop member, said reinforced end portion extending transversely across one of said openings to partly cover the same;

(b) introducing into said openings a row of loops projecting from and extending along a wale of a knit fabric; and

(c) thereafter, interlooping a linking thread with



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said row of loops projecting through said openings and extending along the knit fabric.

6. A method according to claim 5, said linking thread constituting a row of chain stitches.
7. A method of attaching a slide fastener stringer to a knit fabric, comprising the steps of:
 - (a) providing a slide fastener stringer having a series of longitudinally arranged openings therein, a separable bottom end stop member, and a reinforced end portion adjacent to said separable bottom end stop member;
 - (b) inserting a series of knitting needles of a knitting machine successively into said openings in said stringer while the stringer is being tensioned with one of the knitting needles being held against said reinforced end portion; and
 - (c) thereafter, knitting a fabric or said knitting needles so as to form successive courses.
8. A method as claimed in claim 1 or claim 7 and substantially as described with reference to Figures 1 to 6 of the accompanying drawings.
9. A method as claimed in claim 1 or claim 7 and substantially as described with reference to Figure 7 of the accompanying drawings.
10. A method as claimed in claim 1 or claim 7 and substantially as described with reference to Figure 8 of the accompanying drawings.
11. A method as claimed in claim 1 or claim 7 and substantially as described with reference to Figure 9 of the accompanying drawings.



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12. A method as claimed in claim 1 or claim 7 and substantially as described with reference to Figure 10 of the accompanying drawings.

13. A method as claimed in claim 1 or claim 7 and substantially as described with reference to Figures 11 and 12 of the accompanying drawings.

14. A method as claimed in claim 1 or claim 7 and substantially as described with reference to Figure 13 of the accompanying drawings.

15. A method as claimed in claim 1 or claim 7 and substantially as described with reference to Figures 15 and 16 of the accompanying drawings.

16. A method as claimed in claim 1 or claim 7 and substantially as described with reference to Figures 17 and 18 of the accompanying drawings.

17. A method as claimed in claim 1 or claim 7 and substantially as described with reference to Figures 19 and 20 of the accompanying drawings.

18. A method as claimed in claim 1 or claim 7 and substantially as described with reference to Figures 21 and 22 of the accompanying drawings.

19. A method as claimed in claim 1 or claim 7 and substantially as described with reference to Figure 23 of the accompanying drawings.

20. A method as claimed in claim 1 or claim 7 and substantially as described with reference to Figure 24 of the accompanying drawings.

21. A method as claimed in claim 1 or claim 7 substantially as described with reference to Figures 1 to 6, 26 and 27 of the

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accompanying drawings.

22. A method as claimed in claim 1 or claim 7 and substantially as described with reference to Figure 29 of the accompanying drawings.

23. A method as claimed in claim 1 or claim 7 and substantially as described with reference to Figure 30 of the accompanying drawings.
