Blocking Instructions

1. (This step is only if you're using the string method to block a shawl) Thread the string (I use 8ply cotton) through the straight edge before the shawl gets soaked.
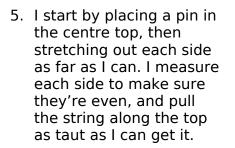
2. Now you need to soak your project. I use warm water with a little bit of "Soak" woolwash. I put the project in the water and leave it for at least half an hour. Most of the time I just leave it until the water gets cold. Then I drain the water off the project, gently squeezing out as much excess water as I can, then lay the knitting out on a towel.

3. Roll the towel up with the knitting inside it and wring it out. This squeezes out the excess water and leaves your project damp. If your knitting isn't delicate, and your washing machine isn't too rough, you can put your item in the machine on a gentle spin cycle instead.

4. Lay your item out where you plan to block, making sure you have enough room to block your item to its full size.

5. I start by placing a pin in the centre top, then stretching out each side as far as I can. I measure each side to make sure they're even, and pull the string along the top as taut as I can get it.
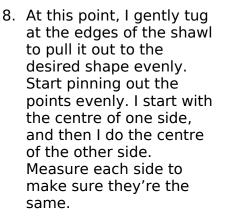

6. Tighten the string and secure it at each end – I twist it around a few pins to keep it in place.
I also place a few pins along the string at the top of the shawl to ensure its straight.

7. At this point the top is finished, and you can start blocking the body of the shawl.
    Take the point of the shawl and pull it down as far as you can. If it's a triangular shawl, your centre point should be half the length the width of your shawl along the top.
    I run my fingers down the centre point to make sure it's stretched evenly. Pin the bottom point.

8. At this point, I gently tug at the edges of the shawl to pull it out to the desired shape evenly. Start pinning out the points evenly. I start with the centre of one side, and then I do the centre of the other side. Measure each side to make sure they're the same.

9. Then pin out each point evenly. I start with halfway, then I pin into quarters, then eighths, sixteenths etc. This ensures that you're stretching your shawl out evenly.

10. When you've pinned out the whole shawl, leave it to dry as long as you can.

Using Blocking Wires

1. Soak your shawl and wring it in the towel the same way you would with the string method. After laying out your shawl, gently run the blocking wires through the top edge of the shawl. Leave a bit of room at the end of each wire to overlap.

2. Stretch out and measure the top edge of the shawl the same way you would with the string method. Where your wires overlap, use pins to hold them in place.

3. At this point, you can use wires to block the body, or pin it out the same way as you did with the string method.
   If you use wires, thread the wire through each point of the shawl, overlapping the wires at the points at the top and the base of the triangle.

4. Pull the wires out evenly so that your knitting is quite taut, and use pins to hold the wires in place, overlapping them the same way you did along the top.
   Leave to dry as before.

If you have a shawl with a wavy edge, or crochet loops trim, you'll need to pin out each loop individually. Be prepared with plenty of pins on hand.
If it has a straight top edge you can do it the same as above, then start with the bottom of your triangle and work out evenly as we did with the points. Start with halfway along the sides, then do quarters, eighths, sixteenths etc again.
Circular shawls can be blocked with lightweight wires, which will bend. Use plenty of pins to keep the wires where you want them. Square shawls can be folded in half and treated like a triangular shawl if you lack room.

Blocking Garments

1. Begin the same way as shown for the shawls. (Soaking, wringing gently, or spin dry)
2. Thread wires through each straight edge. Measure as you go to ensure that all seams end up the same length and that cardigan fronts match.

3. I use a lightweight flexible wire for the armholes, although the example isn't very curved!

4. Then I use lots of pins to hold the wires in place. I don't stretch out ribbing, I like it to maintain it's elasticity.
Usually I would block all the pieces together, but I only blocked one front as an example for the presentation.