

Hello Adventurous Knitters,

I'm very much looking forward to having you in my Colourwork Top Down Sweater class later this month. Together we'll get you started on some of the theory, choices and knitting of a colourful sweater just for you. To prepare, please take the following measurements and do a couple of calculations (with the aid of a calculator). Then cast on a neckline.

YOUR SWATCH MEASUREMENTS

Your swatch should be colourworked and knitted in the round, as your sweater will be. Work out what size needles you need to get 22 sts per 10cm / 4" for your stitch tension using DK yarn. Make note of how many rows you get per 10cm/4" too. If you prefer to work with a different tension or yarn weight (and tension), use those measurements and numbers instead.

Stitches per 10cm	
Rows per 10 cm	
Divide 10 by your number of sts in 10cm. For example: $10/22 = 0.4545$ (this is the width of 1 stitch).	
Divide 10 by your number of rows in 10cm For example: $10 / 32 = 0.3125$ (this the height of 1 row).	
Metric needle size for body (aka, the Bigger Needle, the one you used for swatching.) For example: 4mm.	
Metric needle size for rib (aka, the Smaller Needle). You don't need to swatch for this, just go down a full metric size. For example: if using 4mm for the body, then use 3mm for the rib, if 3.5mm, then 2.5mm).	

YOUR BODY MEASUREMENTS

With more time in class we'd take these measurements together, as it's interesting to see how different we all are. On this occasion, I ask you to get out your tape measure and grab a friend – together you can reach (and read) the parts you can't alone. If you return the favour to your buddy by measuring them, it can be very insightful to know how much we all vary, even from our besties. Allow a little breathing space between you and the tape measure. Measure in centimetres (by all means keep note of inches, if that's useful to you, but we will work in metric for this class). Write the measurements down in the table, to avoid confusion later.

MEASURE AROUND YOUR...

HEAD (over ears)		FIST (make one and measure it)	
NECK		WRIST (the narrowest part of your whole arm)	
FAVOURITE NECKLINE (probably somewhere around collar bone)		TOP OF ARM (the thickest bit, where your muscle would pop out, if you were Popeye)	
SHOULDERS (around the lot: over top of arms, boobs and back)		NATURAL WAIST (between your ribs and hip bones)	
ABOVE THE BOOBS (across the top of the ladies, right up in your armpits)		HIPS (at around start-of-bum-crack height)	
BOOBS (under the arms, around the biggest part of your chest, probably across nipples)		BUM (the biggest bit down there)	

MEASURE THE LENGTH OF YOUR...

ARM (from armpit to base of hand – where the wrinkle is)	
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BACK (from the slight nubble where your spine curves into your neck, down to bum-crack)	
YOKE DROP (from collar bone to base of sternum - inline with, but slightly below your armpits)	

CALCULATING YOUR NECKLINE

Having measured round yourself where you would like your neckline to be (Favourite Neckline), measure the neckline of a favourite sweater – cross-referencing is always useful. Once you've made an ideal, neckline-length loop with your tape measure, check it fits over your head and that you can't pull it down far enough to use it for breast-feeding (unless that's your plan for the sweater or you want to channel the 80s off-the-shoulder look). Remember, the neckline of your sweater is what keeps it on you. Too low a neckline and the whole lot might slip off completely. On the flipside, too tight isn't good either: your head has to fit through (without feeling like you are being born each time you put on or take off your jumper). If you want a particularly high and tight neckline, buttons/zips/snaps are an option for future knits, but let's start with something that goes over your head with some ease.

WHAT NUMBER OF STITCHES TO CAST ON TO GET THE RIGHT SIZE?

Using your Favourite Neckline measurement, minus 2cm for give (your knitted neckline will have the most 'pull' on it – this little reduction in the measurement from which you calculate how many stitches you need and dropping down a needle size should roughly accommodate for that). Divide this measurement by the decimal you got for the size of a single stitches (3rd question in the first table) to get the number of stitches you need to cast on to get that length.

For example: I like a neckline that is 60cm, so... $60\text{cm} - 2\text{cm} = 58\text{cm}$, then $58\text{cm} / 0.4545 = 127.61$ sts. I can't knit 0.61 of a stitch, so I will make this number 128. I could cast on 128 stitches for my neckline, but before I do that I need to check if it works with my rib...

CALCULATING YOUR RIB REPEAT

Now you know the number of stitches you need to get the right length, decide what type of variegated rib you would like to use and work out how to adjust your cast-on number to fit your rib. Would you like your rib to be 1x1 or 2x2? 2x3 or 3x2x1x2? If you are working out whether a rib will work, remember to use the whole number, as in, the full repeat: both the knits and the purls, added together. This way, if you are doing a 2x2 rib for example, you make sure your number is devisable by 4, not just 2. This way you won't end up with 2 knits at the beginning and 2 knits at the end of your round, making 4 knit stitches in a row, when everywhere else there are only 2 in a row.

For rib, check you are using a number that can divide by:

- 2 if you want a 1x1 rib
- 4 if you want a 2x2 or 1x3 rib
- 5 if you want a 2x3 or 1x4 rib
- 6 if you want a 3x3, 2x4 or 1x2 rib

For example: If I would like to use a 2x2 rib, I check if 128 divides by 4. $128 / 4 = 32$. It's a whole number, so I am good to go. If I wanted a 3x3 rib, I would use the same approach $128 / 6 = 21.333$ – in this case I have a number with a decimal point and a few other numbers to the right of it. This means I have to choose to cast on either $21 \times 6 = 126$ sts or $22 \times 6 = 132$ sts to have my rib repeat work. It's a tough call, but I'd probably go with casting on 132 stitches. I know 60cm isn't a deep neckline, so I have some space to get bigger without getting too big, but I don't want to get too much smaller.

THE SWEATER STARTS

Using yarn A (whatever colour calls to you to start your sweater) and your smaller needles, cast on the number of stitches you calculated will work with your desired rib. The long-tail method is a popular one to use when casting on to work in the round. You might consider using the alternate cable method if intending to work a 1x1 rib. Feel free to use another method, just make sure it works well with your rib and has a suitable amount of stretch for a neckline (too much and it will flare, too little and it will prevent the stretch you need to get it on and off).

Join in the round being careful not to twist. Place a marker to indicate beginning of the round.

VARIEGATED RIBBING

I suggest you edge your sweater using a variegated rib. Variegated ribbing is colourwork with texture thrown in. It uses two colours: one to make the knits and the other to make the purls. This is what creates vertical stripes in ribbing, rather than horizontal ones (instead made by changing the colour every couple of rows). It creates a decorative, sturdy edging. In comparison to uncolourworked ribbing, it has a little less stretch to it and it can curl a little. I've been working on a couple of little approaches to combat the roll. Using smaller needles is a good start and I will explain another using 2x2 ribbing as an example. Feel free to insert the rib repeat you did your calculations for. Reversing the rib and purl between round 1 and 2 helps prevent the rolling. It also helps stop the colourwork floats from the wrong side peeping out over the right-side edge.

Round 1: [K2, p2] to end using yarn A only.

Round 2: Introduce yarn B. [P2A, k2B] to end.

Repeat Round 2 a further 4 times. Break yarn B.

Work one round of knit using yarn A only. Leave your neckline live on your needles, ready for class!

REMEMBER TO BRING TO CLASS:

- your neckline,
- your swatch
- both sizes of needles
- potential palette of at least 7 yarns – small quantities are fine.
- pen
- coloured pencils
- squared paper
- calculator
- If you have a favourite sweater – bought, borrowed, handmade or not, wear it to the workshop (or simply bring it along) so you can take some measurements from it as reference.
- If you have been fantasising about your dream, yoked sweater, by all means draw it and bring it along.
- this sheet!

See you in a few weeks time!

xoAnna

P.S. Hopefully this makes sense to you, but if you get totally stuck, drop me an email at hello@annamaltz.com. Be warned, I might not respond immediately, so give yourself plenty of time to hear back from me.