

How to knit a swatch

by Deborah V. Gardner

Swatching is very important, as most knitters understand—even the knitters who do not swatch. They are plagued by sweaters that do not fit or blankets that are huge or far too small because the gauge was not correct. You can read more about the Importance of Gauge here: <http://www.deborahsknitting.com/articles.html>

For this example, let us assume that the gauge is stated as 20 sts x 26 rows = 4" (10cm). (Often, it is not possible to obtain both stitch and row gauge and, generally, stitch gauge is the more important of the two.)

Directions

Cast on 24 stitches using the stated needle size.

Rows 1 – 3: Knit.

Row 4 (wrong side): K2, p20, k2.

Repeat Rows 3 and 4 for a total of 24 rows.

Knit 2 more rows and bind off.

Block. (Okay, even many of us who do swatch do not block.)

Measure between the garter stitch borders.

Many times, as we knit our swatches we know after just a few rows that the needle size has to be adjusted. So here are a couple of tips.

In our example, assume you start with a US 6 needle. On Row 5, k4, (k2tog, yo) 6 times, k to end of row. As you knit, you realize that the gauge will be too tight, so you decide to go up a needle size. On the next right side row, knit a few stitches, p7, knit to the end of the row. Continue with your swatch.

The six holes created by the yarn overs represent the size 6 needles you used. The seven purl stitches represent the size 7 needles you used.



Swatch knitted in two needle sizes