



## Guide to Top-Down Knitting TOP-DOWN CARDIGANS with SET-IN SLEEVES

### Before you Begin

Before you begin any knit sweater, it is imperative that you knit a gauge swatch. Gauge is the number of stitches and rows that are in one inch. Typically, gauge is taken over four inches, for greater accuracy. To learn more about how to determine your gauge and how to knit a gauge swatch for knitting in the round, visit our website.

Note the abbreviations key at the beginning of your pattern. Instructional videos for many of the techniques used in your sweater can also be found on our website.

### Getting Started

Top-down sweaters get their name because you cast-on at the top of the sweater and knit your way down to the bottom. Most top-down sweaters are worked in one piece, with little to no sewing required. The following describes how to get started when knitting a top-down cardigan with a set-in sleeve.

You will begin by casting on the stitches across the shoulder using the invisible cast-on. The invisible cast-on is a provisional cast-on method that will allow you to knit the upper back of your sweater, put it on a holder and then pick up live stitches along the cast-on edge and knit the fronts of your sweater. The result is a seamless join of the fronts and backs at the shoulder. It should be noted that, if you prefer, you can use a regular cast-on method and then pick up and knit the stitches for the right and left fronts. This method creates the look of a seam, which will not ruin your sweater, but we think the invisible cast-on is well worth the clean, seamless results. Refer to your pattern for instructions on how to perform the invisible cast-on or visit our website to watch an instructional video.

### Upper Back

After casting on and working a few set-up rows, you will begin short-row shaping the shoulders. A short row is a row in which only some of the stitches are worked before turning to work the next row. To begin, you will place markers according to your pattern's instructions, dividing your work into three sections: a center and two shoulder sections. Work only a few stitches into the far shoulder, stop, and perform a wrap-and-turn. A wrap-and-turn is the process of wrapping your yarn around the next stitch and then turning your work to begin working the next row.

To perform a wrap-and-turn on a knit row:

- 1) slip the next stitch (as if to purl)
- 2) bring yarn between needles to front of work
- 3) slip stitch on right needle back to left needle
- 4) take yarn between needles to back of work, wrapping the slipped stitch
- 5) turn work to begin working the next row

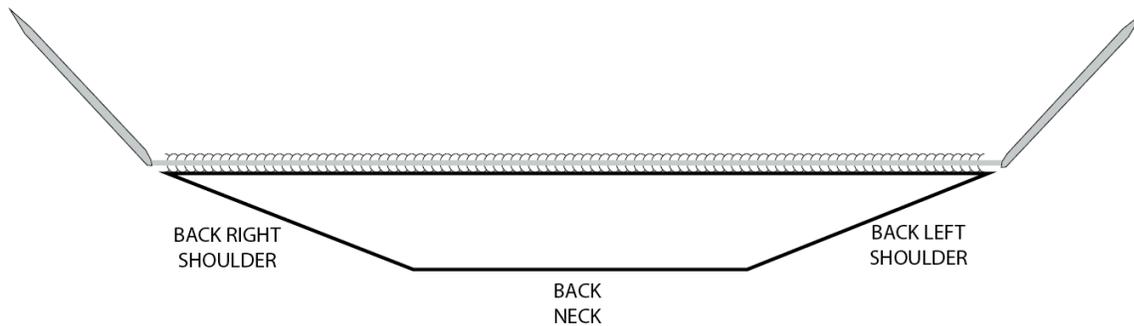
To perform a wrap-and-turn on a purl row:

- 1) slip the next stitch (as if to purl)
- 2) bring yarn between needles to back of work
- 3) slip stitch on right needle back to left needle
- 4) take yarn between needles to front of work, wrapping the slipped stitch
- 5) turn work to begin working the next row

You will continue to work back and forth in short rows. Each short row is a little longer than the last one.

As you extend each short row, working over the wrapped stitch from the previous row, pick up (from RS to WS) the wrap and work it together with the stitch it wrapped. Visit our website to see a video tutorial on short-row shaping.

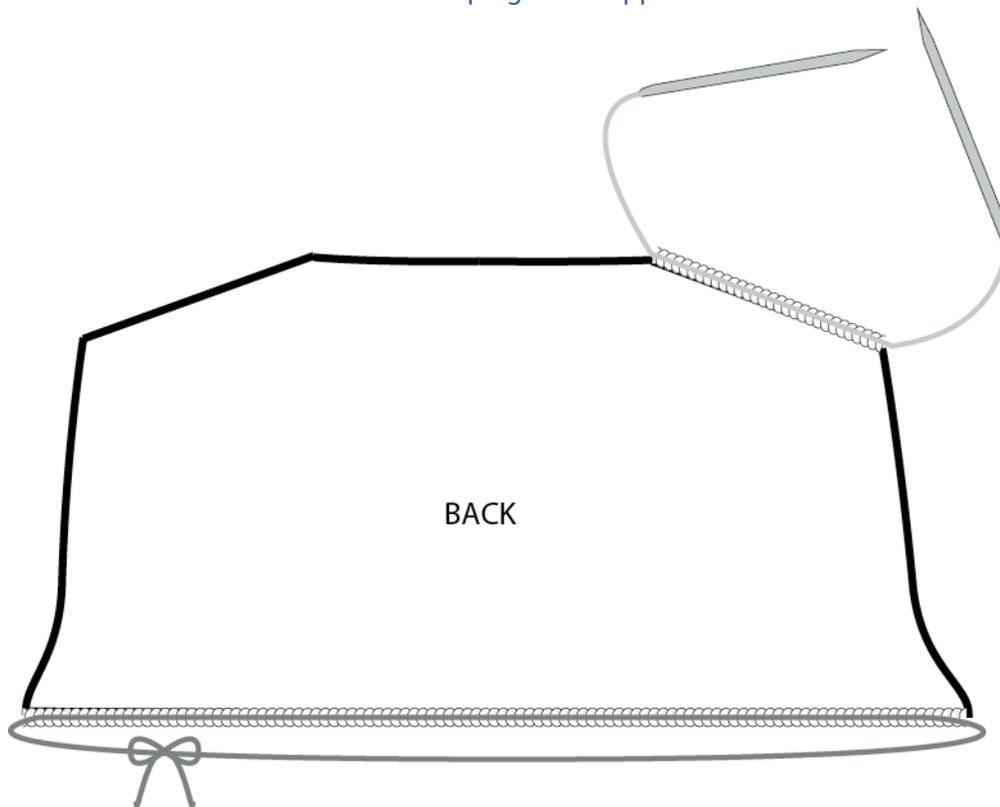
As you continue short-row shaping, you will start to see the back shoulder shaping form. This is what your knitting might look like after completing the short rows, if you removed it from the needle and laid it flat.



Continue working the upper back as per your pattern's instructions. When you've completed the armhole shaping, place all the stitches on a holder.

### Fronts

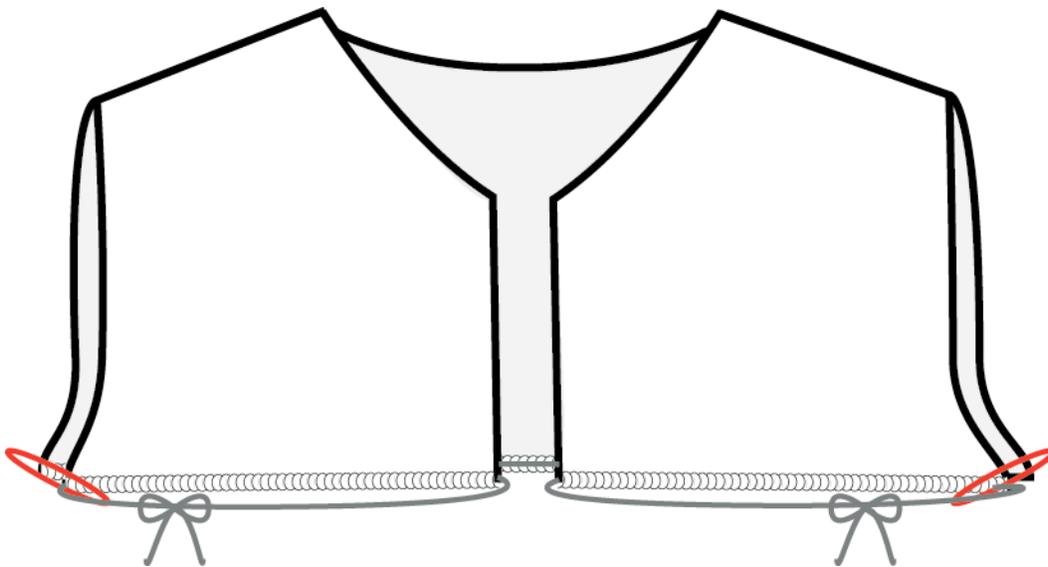
The two fronts are worked separately. Pick up stitches, as per your pattern's instructions, and work in short rows to mimic the short row shaping of the upper back.



Continue to work the front and shape the armholes. When you've completed the armhole shaping, place all the stitches on a holder and work the second front. Then place those stitches on a holder.

### Lower Body

You are now ready to knit the lower body. But first, now is a great time to pause your knitting and check to see that your garment is coming out to be the right size. To do this, gather three long pieces of scrap yarn. Place the back, and each front on its own piece of scrap yarn. Make sure you use enough scrap yarn to allow the knitting to rest at its natural width – no bunching up. At this point you can actually try your sweater on. Simply place it on your shoulders, then use a locking stitch marker or safety pin to bring the front and back sleeves together at the underarm.



Remember that your cardigan may include a neckband or button band that you've not yet knit. Take this into consideration as it will add some width to your fronts. If the sweater isn't for you and you can't try it on its own, you can also lay the knitting flat on a table and measure the chest and sleeve width so see if they align with your pattern's schematic.

Next, you will work one round in which you work across the left front, back and right front to join them. Note that, depending on your pattern, you may have to use the cable cast-on to cast-on stitches at the underarm, adding width to the body. Continue working the body according to your pattern.

### Starting the Sleeves

You will begin knitting your sleeves using a 16" circular needle. The sleeves are worked one at a time and in the round. Per your pattern's instructions, begin at the underarm (the beginning of your round) and pick up stitches evenly around the sleeve. Note that if you cast-on stitches at the underarm when you were joining the fronts and back, you will have to pick up a corresponding number of stitches along that cast-on edge. The beginning of your round will be located in the middle of these cast-on stitches. To shape the cap of the sleeve, work in short rows similar to those worked in the shoulder shaping. When all the short rows are complete, and the cap of your sleeve is even with the underarm, begin working decreases according to your pattern to taper to the cuff. When the sleeve becomes too small for your 16" needle, switch over to double-pointed (dp) needles. To do this, knit the first third of your stitches onto

one dp needle, then the second third onto a second dp needle, and finally the remaining stitches on a third dp needle. You do not need to have exactly 1/3 of your stitches on each needle, but approximately.

To knit your first round on the double-points, knit the first third of your stitches from the first dp needle onto a fourth (empty) dp needle. Then use the first dp needle (which is now empty) to knit the second third of your stitches. Use the newly empty needle to knit the final third of your stitches. You've now completed one round.

Continue working in this fashion, following your pattern, until your sleeves are complete.

### **Finishing**

If your pattern calls for one, work the neck edging, placket or collar. Since you've knit a top-down sweater, you're likely to have few to no seams to sew-in! Simply secure any loose ends and enjoy.