

Guide to Top-Down Knitting TOP-DOWN PULLOVERS with FULL-FASHIONED NECK SHAPING

Before you Begin

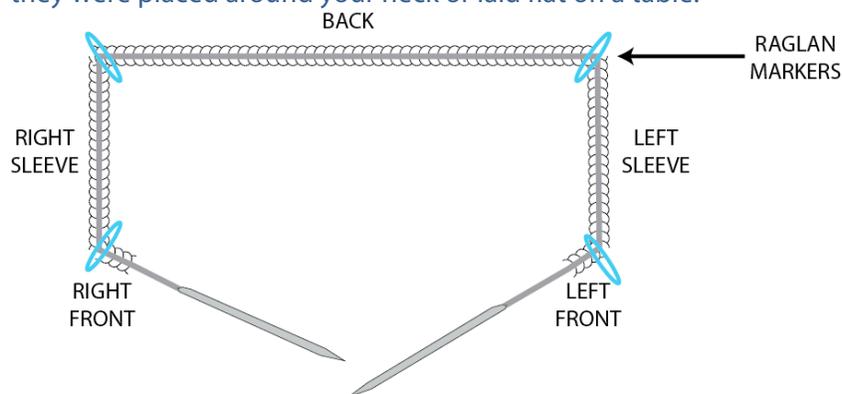
Before you begin any knit sweater, it is imperative that you knit a gauge swatch. Gauge refers to the number of stitches and rows that are in one inch. Typically, gauge is taken over at least four inches, for greater accuracy. To learn more about how to determine your gauge and how to knit a gauge swatch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

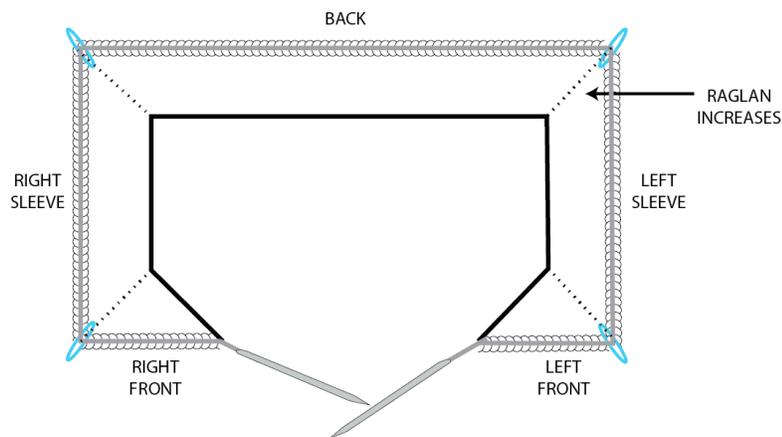
Getting Started

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 raglan pullover with full-fashioned neck shaping.

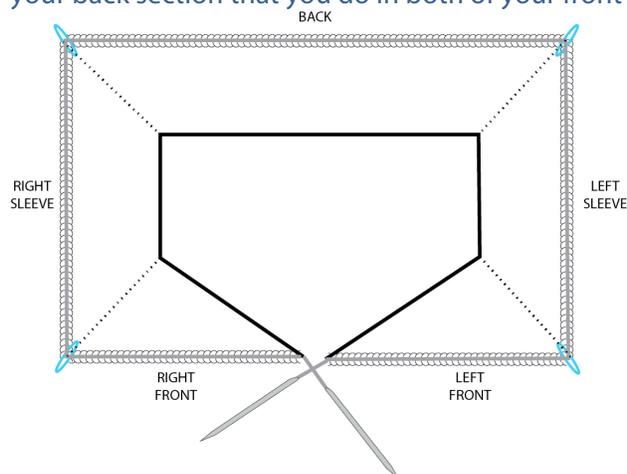
Full-fashioned neck shaping simply means that the front neck, whether a crew or v-neck, is shaped by working increases. You will begin by casting on the stitches around the neck. Included in this cast-on are stitches that belong to the left front, left sleeve, back, right sleeve, and right front. These five sections of sts, are separated by four stitch markers. Let's call these markers "raglan markers". While the stitches and markers may not look like much on your needle, it helps to imagine what the stitches would look like if they were placed around your neck or laid flat on a table:



Note that, although most of your sweater will be knit in the round, you will begin by knitting back and forth in rows. Soon after casting on you will begin increasing. You will increase on both sides of the four raglan markers (widening the front, back and sleeves, and at the beginning and end of the row (shaping the neck). This is what your knitting might look like if, after working several increase rows, you removed it from the needle and laid it flat.



You will continue to increase in this fashion until you have the same or almost the same number of sts in your back section that you do in both of your front sections combined.

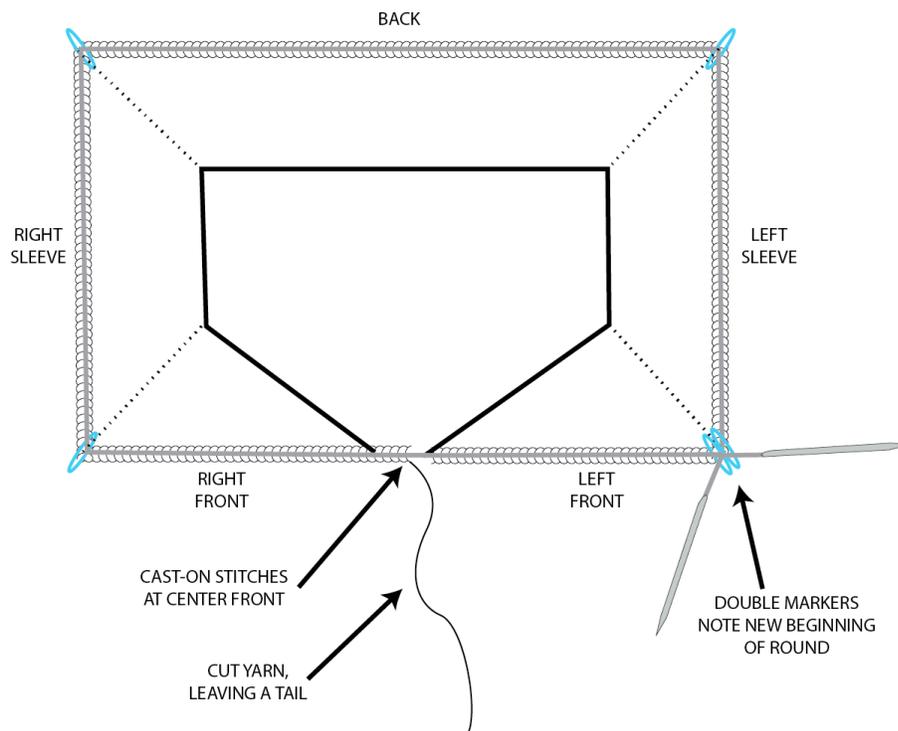


Joining in the Round

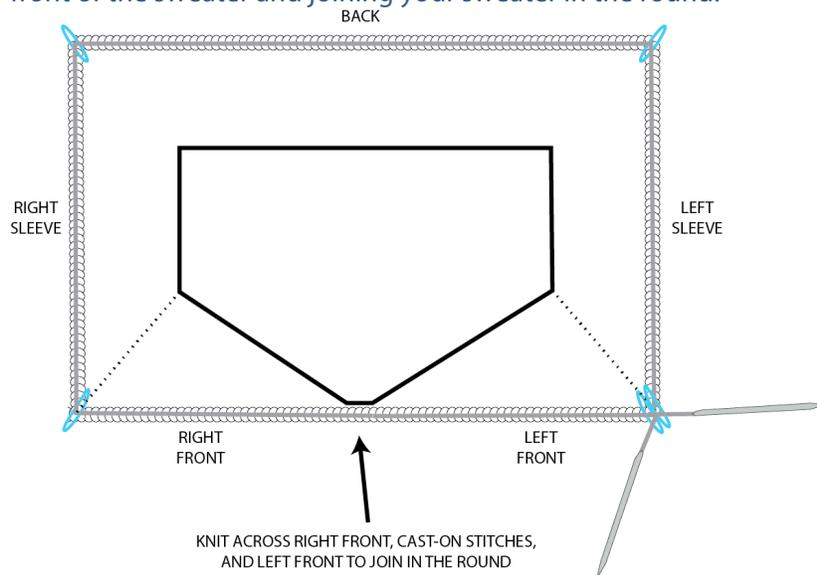
It is now time to stop knitting back and forth in rows and begin knitting in the round. If you're knitting a v-neck, you will have the same number of stitches in your back section as in your front section and can proceed to step 2. If you're knitting a crew neck, proceed as follows:

Step 1: Using the cable cast-on, cast on the required number of stitches, according to your pattern. Note that, having just completed a RS row, you should have the WS facing you as you cast on and that the new stitches are attached to the right front. You can find more information about the cable cast-on method on our website.

Step 2: Cut your yarn, leaving a tail to weave in later. With RS facing, slip the left front stitches to your right needle. You are now at the raglan marker that separates the left front from the left sleeve. This is now the beginning of your round. It's a good idea to place a second marker on the needle at this point to distinguish this raglan marker from the other three.



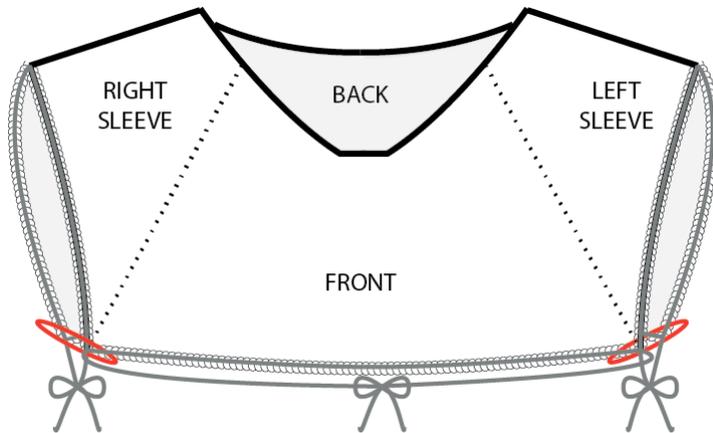
Next, work according to your pattern, and note that on your first round you will knit continuously across the right front stitches, the newly cast-on stitches, and the left front stitches, closing the opening at the front of the sweater and joining your sweater in the round.



You will continue to increase at the raglan markers, according to your pattern, until you have reached the underarm. Note that as your knitting becomes too cumbersome for the 16" needle you cast on with, you will need to switch over to a 24" or 32" long needle.

Separating the Body from the Sleeves

You are now ready to separate the body from the sleeves. 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 four long pieces of scrap yarn. Place the front, back, and each sleeve 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 on your sweater. Simply place it over your shoulders, then use locking stitch markers or safety pins to bring the front and back sleeves together at the underarm.



If the sweater isn't for you and you can't try it on its future owner, you can also lay the knitting flat on a table and measure the chest and sleeve widths so see if they align with your pattern's schematic.

Next, you will work one round in which you place the sleeve stitches onto holders while continuing to work across the front and back. If your sleeve stitches are already on holders because you stopped to try your sweater on, you can leave them as is and transfer only your body stitches to your needle before working your joining round. Also note that, depending on your pattern, you may have to use the cable cast-on to cast on stitches at the underarm, widening the body.

Continue to work only the body stitches, in the round, as per 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, transfer the stitches from one sleeve to your needle. You will begin at the underarm, which will be the beginning of your round. Note that if you cast on stitches at the underarm when you were separating the body and the sleeve, 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.

Work the sleeve in the round according to your pattern. 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 need not have exactly one third of your stitches on each needle, but try to distribute them as evenly as possible.

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 your newly empty needle to knit the final third of your stitches. You've now completed one round. For more information on transferring from circular to double pointed needles, visit our website.

Finishing

If your pattern calls for a neck edging, pick up around the neck and work as per your pattern's instructions. Since you've knit a top-down pullover, you have no seams to sew-in! Simply secure any loose ends and enjoy.