



Guide to Top-Down Knitting

TOP-DOWN PULLOVERS with SHORT ROW 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.

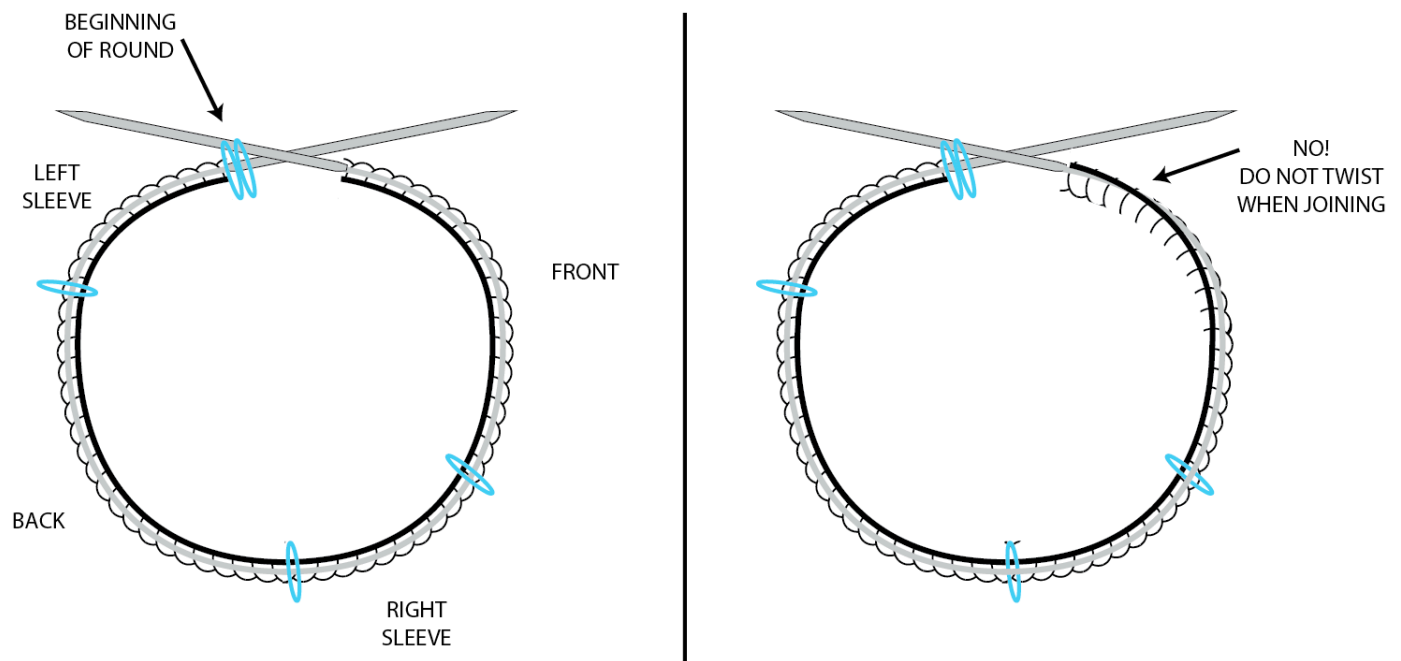
Note the abbreviations key at the beginning of your pattern. Instructional videos for many of the techniques used in your sweater can also be found on our website.

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. Top-down sweaters are usually 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 short row neck shaping.

Short row neck shaping simply means that the front neck, usually a crew neck, is shaped by working short rows, or rows in which you do not work entirely across the row. You will begin by casting on the stitches around the neck. Included in this cast-on are stitches that belong to the left sleeve, back, right sleeve, and front. These four sections of stitches are separated by four stitch markers. Let's call these markers "raglan markers".

The first thing you will do after casting on is to join in the round. To join in the round, knit into the first stitch that you cast on. It is important that your knitting not be twisted when you join.



After casting on, you will knit your neck edging. If your pattern does not call for a neck edging, you will proceed immediately into raglan increasing and short-row neck shaping.

For this next section you will stop working in the round and begin working back and forth in rows. You will start increasing on both sides of each of the four raglan markers (widening the front, back and sleeves), and, at the same time, to begin short-row shaping, you will work across all the left sleeve, back and right sleeve stitches (increasing at each of the raglan markers), but you will not complete the round. Instead, you will work only a few stitches into the right front, 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

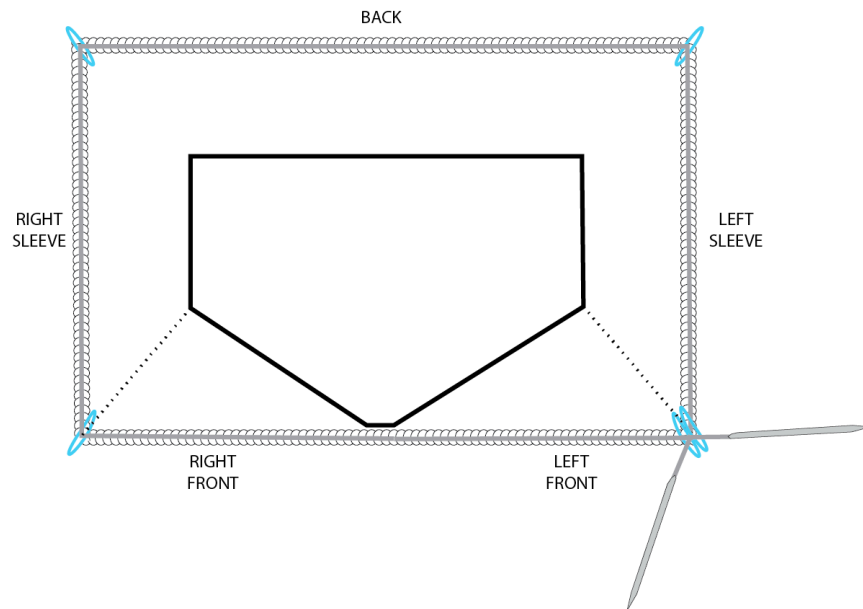
To perform a wrap-and-turn on a purl row:

- 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

To see a video tutorial on short row shaping, visit our website.

Each short row is a little bit longer than the last. As you continue increasing and short row shaping, you will start to see the front neck shaping form. Continue short row shaping according

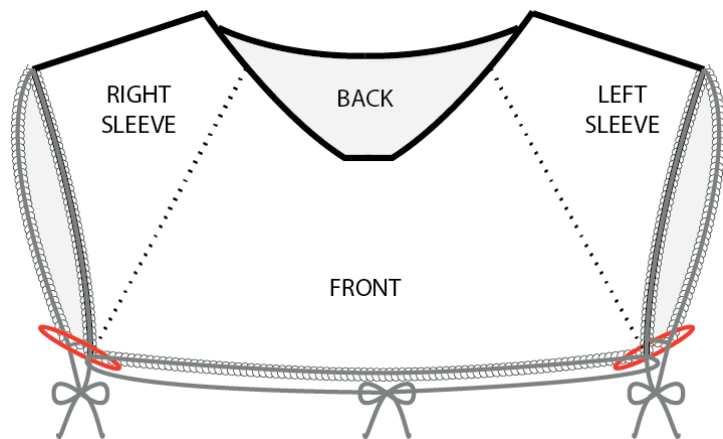
to your pattern. This is what your knitting might look like if, after completing the short rows, you removed it from the needle and laid it flat.



When the short rows are complete, you will begin, once again, working 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 needles you cast on with, you will need to switch over to a longer circular 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 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.



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 to 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. Once the separating round is complete, your knitting will look something **like this:** 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 your stitches 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.

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