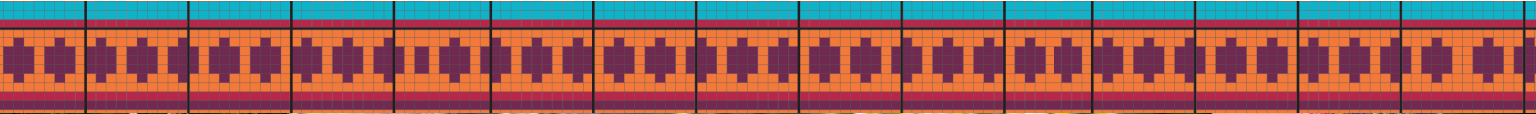


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Cecilie Kaurin & Linn Bryhn Jacobsen

KNIT Yourself IN

Inventive Patterns to Tell Your Story in the Danish
“Hen Knitting” Tradition



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*Inventive patterns to tell your story in
the Danish "Hen Knitting" tradition*



TRAFALGAR SQUARE
North Pomfret, Vermont

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Preface



Hen knitting has nothing to do with chickens, in case you were wondering. The phrase “hen knitting” was coined by the Danish author and knitter Kirsten Hofstätter forty years ago. She was disappointed that it wasn’t possible to buy patterns without also purchasing the associated yarns, and so she made her own pattern book. Her patterns took a stand against the strict knitting traditions of the time. She tried to have the book published by the radical leftwing publisher Red Rooster but the book was turned down. Instead, she started her own publishing company called The Hen Press. The first knitting book was therefore called *Hen Knitting*.

Kirsten Hofstätter’s knitting books have been an inspiration for everyone who likes to fantasize and design with their knitting needles without having to adhere strictly to a pattern. The term “hen knitting” came to signify knitting with colorful yarn, especially leftover yarns, particularly when the knitter designed the patterns; the garments usually featured pattern bands with motifs representing plants, animals, and people. The style symbolized the ’68 generation’s rebellion against the norms of the time and hen knitting was especially popular with feminists. There are undoubtedly many who still have sweaters and skirts in bright colors lying in a box in the attic.

Our goal for this book is to encourage more knitters to open up to these fun ways of knitting! Follow us at facebook.com/honsestrikk.

Creative Knitting



The point of hen knitting is to open up creativity in a simple way. That means you can choose your own colors and motifs and arrange them however you like, depending on your yarn selection. If you make a little mistake along the way, just change the project so it works out. With hen knitting, you can use yarn like colored pencils, and arrange the motifs to express your ideas. You can easily see the way forward, because you work only one pattern band at a time.

Tell a story with your garment. How do you tell a story with a sweater? Arrange the motifs to compose a story, make a statement, or show some of the garment wearer's favorite activities. You can also knit in the name of the recipient. These garments are especially fun to give to others, not to mention how nice it is to knit a garment for someone who will feel happy wearing it!

A knitted garment is a gift with love in every stitch. If you give one away, you will warm the recipient in more ways than one.

ABBREVIATIONS

B0	bind off (British cast off)
cm	centimeter(s)
CO	cast on
in	inch(es)
k	knit
k2tog	knit 2 together
m1	lift strand between two sts and knit into back loop
m	meter(s)
mm	millimeter(s)
p	purl
p2tog	purl 2 together
pss0	pass slipped stitch over
rem	remain(s) (ing)
RS	right side
sl	slip
ssk	slip-slip-knit = slip 2 sts knitwise at the same time, insert right needle into back loops and knit 2 together
st(s)	stitch(es)
tbl	through back loop(s)
WS	wrong side
yo	yarnover

YARN INFORMATION

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www.dalegarnnorthamerica.com

Mango Moon Yarns

info@mangomoonyarns.com

www.mangomoonyarns.com

Ingebretsen's (Rauma too)

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Webs – America's Yarn Store

75 Service Center Road

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800-367-9327

customerservice@yarn.com

www.yarn.com

If you are unable to obtain any of the yarn used in this book, it can be replaced with a yarn of a similar weight and composition. Please note, however, that the finished projects may vary slightly from those shown, depending on the yarn used. Try www.yarnsub.com for suggestions.

For more information on selecting or substituting yarn, contact your local yarn shop or an online store; they are familiar with all types of yarns and would be happy to help you. Additionally, the online knitting community at Ravelry.com has forums where you can post questions about specific yarns. Yarns come and go so quickly these days and there are so many beautiful yarns available.

ABBREVIATIONS

BO	bind off (British cast off)
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Rauma Yarn

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www.nordicfiberarts.com

Rauma Ullvarefabrikk

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www.swedishyarn.com

Sandnes Garn

www.sandnesgarn.no

Viking of Norway

Knitting Fever

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Du Store Alpakka

Du Store Alpakka

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Hifa

Hillesvåg Ullvarefabrikk

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Webs – America's Yarn Store

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Northampton, MA 01060

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customerservice@yarn.com

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Knitting in the round and cutting

All of the designs in this book are knitted in the round when you are working on the motifs, so you never have to knit color patterns back and forth. That's because we think it's quite difficult to control the stitches, pattern, and yarn when you are working on the wrong side. We have also measured how much time it took to work purl rows compared to knit rows. It took 17 seconds to make 15 knit stitches but 33 seconds to work 15 purl stitches. Not really rocket science, but we believe this shows that it really does take longer to purl. It can be exciting and scary to cut seams open when you finish the sweater, but, if you follow the step-by-step instructions in the "Cutting the armholes open" section (see page 132), it will go well.

Which pattern should I choose?

If you have a favorite basic pattern, use it. The sweaters done with T-shirt shaping in book can also be knitted with a round yoke if you make some adjustments. The top rounds after you have added the sleeves to the body in a sweater with a round yoke should be in a pattern arranged so you can easily decrease in single color rounds without disturbing the pattern. Many small panels are easiest here.

You can also use duplicate stitch afterwards, instead of knitting with three colors—see the examples of the elephants and crabs below.



The pattern didn't work!

In many of the sweaters, the pattern panels may not match the stitch count on the sleeves and body. For example, there is one tractor here that "isn't safe for driving" on the farmer's sweater.

It doesn't matter if some of the panels don't work out evenly when the elements are not very big. For most of the panels, you will also notice in the charts that we don't have full repeats for all the panels. We placed the panels together on the charts so that the best overall effect will be achieved. It doesn't mean that you should knit half a crocodile right in the middle of the sweater front. You should follow the repeats for each panel all around the body, and in the end, you might have half a crocodile at the side. It won't be very visible there.

In some of the sweaters the panels have large motifs, so only a few are needed to make it all the way around the garment. These are arranged to be closer to the top of the sweater and centered at the front. In the horse sweater, for example, we worked it out so that you won't have a sweater with half a horse.

We want to emphasize that it can often be just fine if the panels are not completely symmetrical and complete.

Help, I made a mistake!

All knitters make mistakes sometimes and don't realize it until they are several rows above the mistake. Don't waste time ripping out unless the error is so obvious that the pattern is unrecognizable. Most likely, only you will notice it and, as Arne and Carlos say, "You're not making a mistake—you're knitting a variation."

In the Beginning, There Was Helene



Cecilie’s daughter, Helene, was visiting Copenhagen when she saw an amazing handknitted sweater in a display window. She thought there was something familiar about the pattern and took a photo of the sweater. “Mamma, don’t you have a skirt in the attic with the same pattern—and won’t you knit a similar sweater for me?”

The skirt Helen was thinking of was an old hen-knitted skirt that Cecilie had made at the end of the 1970s and had never had the heart to send to the flea market. For Cecilie, it was a memory of playing with colors and combining various panels for a fun garment that had been a delight to knit.

The old hen knitting came down from the attic, and Cecilie began work on the sweater. To make it a little more personal for Helene, who works with media and communications, Cecilie designed some bird, apple, and cell phone motif panels. The sweater was a rousing success! Helene was entirely satisfied and wears the sweater a lot. That just goes to show . . .



Onward with Karpe Diem



Chirag Patel, part of the Norwegian rap group Karpe Diem, saw Helene wearing her sweater at a concert and he thought the sweater was one of the best he had ever seen. He wanted to know where he could get one. Helene said, “You just need to tweet my mother and ask.” Cecilie thought that it was fun to be asked but, although she liked Karpe Diem’s music, she didn’t think she needed to immediately knit a whole sweater for him without more discussion.

But he meant it seriously and some weeks later, he and Cecilie met to design a sweater for the new CD they were working on. “A cross at the neck, 10 knives at the heart and mother and father in death.” Chirag had a little sketch of what children say in Norway when they really have to prove that they are telling the whole truth. For someone who didn’t know much about knitting when he was growing up, it was fascinating for him to see that you can knit whatever you want in a sweater. Starting with the sketch, Cecilie designed a pattern and knitted a child’s sweater as a sample. That was how the Karpe Diem sweater was created.

A Karpe Diem sweater pattern was written up, listed free on the internet, and many people knitted the design. What is most fun is that the knitters can choose their own colors so the sweater has many different variations. Ivana Klavis made one variation for her son Maximilian when he was 3 years old. Since the pattern wasn't sized, she took measurements, and, with the help of Eireen Nordlie, she made the sweater shown below. This is exactly how we had hoped people would use the patterns in this book.

Since there are many people who have asked for the Karpe Diem sweater in smaller sizes and with a round yoke, we have written it out. As an example, we used the same colors and yarn as Ivana did for Maximilian's sweater.

We have also made new styles of the Karpe Diem sweater with T-shirt shaping in 8-, 10-, and 12-year sizes + adult sizes S, M, L, and XL. The adult sweaters are in different color scheme than the original Karpe Diem sweater. In good old hen knitting tradition, we have not centered the motifs in these patterns.



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Animals in Africa



We knitted a sweater in bright, fun colors that children will love. African animals are always popular and children love to dress in brilliant colors that make them happy. Simply said, the combination of colors and animals will put anyone in a good mood. Maybe we adults would be perked up by using more colors?

The sweater is not just fun to look at but also fun to knit. For the most part, it's worked with only two colors per round, but the sections with eyes have three colors. If you think this will be too hard to knit, you can embroider the eyes on later with duplicate stitch.

The lining of the sweater's neckband is orange, a good contrast with turquoise. The neckband is not very high by design, so the orange will show.

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circular as: back, sleeve, front, sleeve = a total of 404 (432, 464, 496) sts. Continue, following the pattern chart and decreasing as indicated on the chart. The number of sts to be decreased in each decrease

round is shown in the table below. Work all decreases as k2tog. After the 7th decrease rnd, make sure the neck will fit the wearer.

Round Yoke—Number of Stitches to Decrease

Sizes	S	M	L	XL
Total stitches at beginning of yoke	404	432	464	496
1 st decrease	36 sts, approx. every 11 th st	45 sts, approx. every 9 th -10 th st	46 sts, approx. every 10 th st	48 sts, approx. every 10 th st
Sts rem after 1 st dec rnd	368	387	418	448
2 nd decrease	36 sts, approx. every 10 th st	40 sts, approx. every 9 th -10 th st	46 sts, approx. every 9 th st	50 sts, approx. every 9 th st
Sts rem after 2 nd dec rnd	332	347	372	398
3 rd decrease	32 sts, approx. every 10 th st	36 sts, approx. every 9 th -10 th st	35 sts, approx. every 10 th -11 th st	40 sts, approx. every 10 th st
Sts rem after 3 rd dec rnd	300	311	337	358
4 th decrease	40 sts, approx. every 7 th -8 th st	40 sts, approx. every 8 th st	45 sts, approx. every 7 th -8 th st	50 sts, approx. every 7 th st
Sts rem after 4 th dec rnd	260	271	292	308
5 th decrease	40 sts, approx. every 6 th -7 th st	40 sts, approx. every 7 th st	50 sts, approx. every 6 th st	55 sts, approx. every 5 th -6 th st
Sts rem after 5 th dec rnd	220	231	242	253
6 th decrease	50 sts, approx. every 4 th -5 th st	55 sts, approx. every 4 th st	60 sts, approx. every 4 th st	65 sts, approx. every 4 th st
Sts rem after 6 th dec rnd	170	176	182	188
7 th decrease	38 sts, approx. every 4 th -5 th st	44 sts, approx. every 4 th st	46 sts, approx. every 4 th st	52 sts, approx. every 3 rd -4 th st
Sts rem after 7 th dec rnd*	132	132	136	136

*After the 7th decrease rnd, make sure the neck will fit the wearer.

Neckband

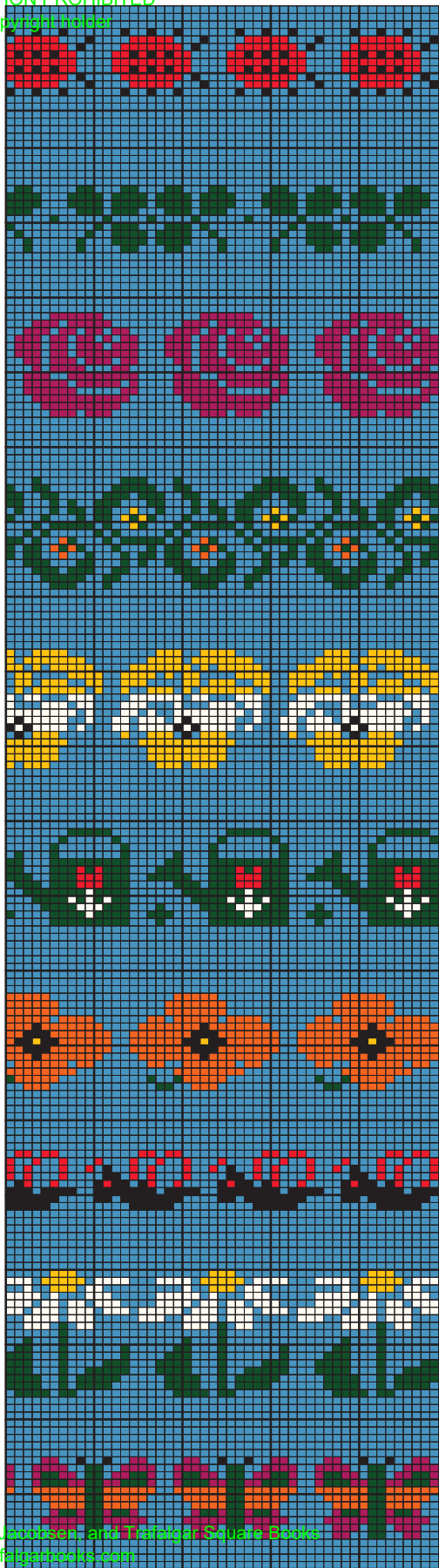
With larger circular, work the neckband following the chart. After completing ladybug panel, knit 2 rnds with MC and then work 1 rnd of eyelets for foldline = (k2tog, yo) around. Work 12 rnds stockinette and then B0 loosely. Fold the facing to WS and sew down.

Blocking

Dampen the sweater in lukewarm water. Gently squeeze out the water. Place a large towel on the floor and put sweater on top. Roll up the towel and press out excess water. Lay the sweater flat on a dry towel or on a sweater drying rack and leave until completely dry.

Finishing

Seam underarms and then weave in all ends neatly on WS.



Neckband
 7th decrease rnd
 6th decrease rnd
 5th decrease rnd
 4th decrease rnd
 3rd decrease rnd
 2nd decrease rnd
 1st decrease rnd
 Place sleeves
 onto circular
 with body here.

For Sizes S
 and M, knit 6,
 instead of 8,
 rnds between
 each of the
 panels.

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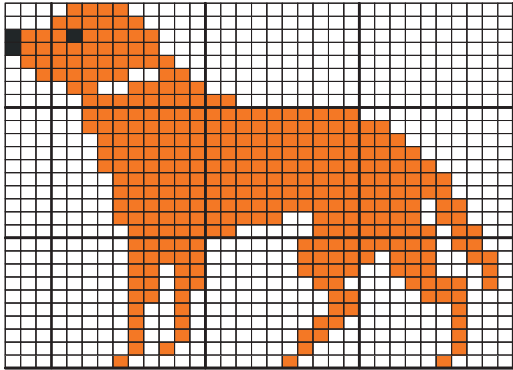


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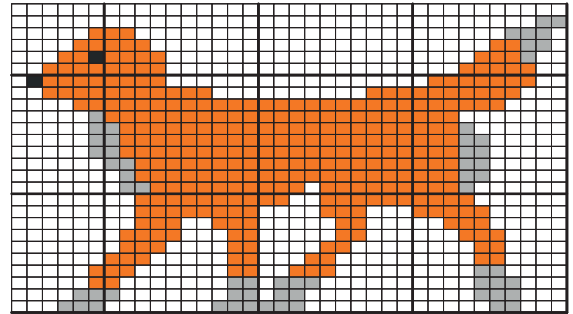


... or a big dog

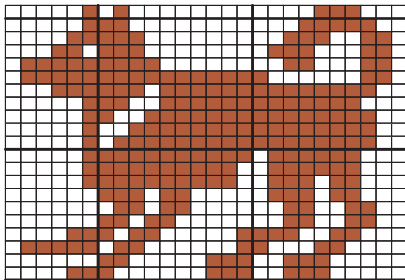
Labrador Retriever



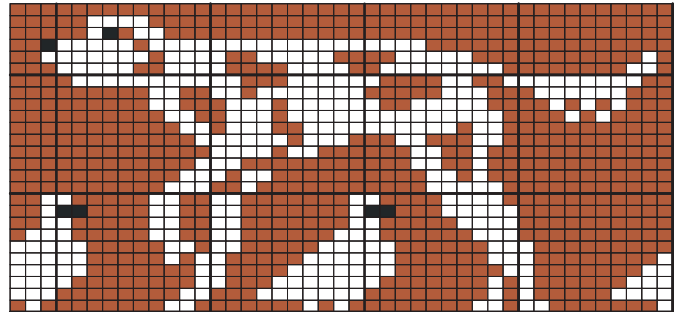
Nova Scotia Duck Tolling



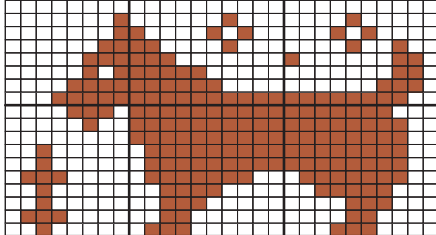
Spitz



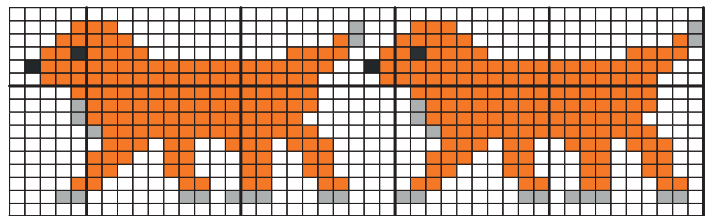
Bird Dog



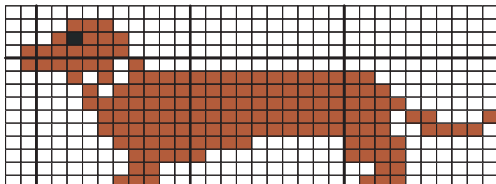
Terrier



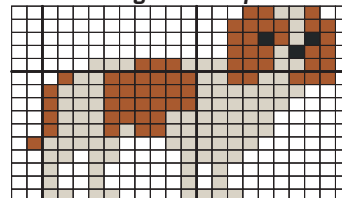
Nova Scotia Duck Tolling Retriever puppies



Dachshund



Cavalier King Charles Spaniel





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Give Me a Pillow of Moss



We chose Norwegian Pelsull (“fur” wool) yarn for these soft and pretty pillows. The yarn is available in the loveliest of nature’s colors. We think these pillows are at their best in a cabin in the woods or in the mountains.

The motifs are also taken from the forest. You won’t see deer and owls very often, but, if you are patient, you might catch a glimpse of them. If you are very determined and get up early in the morning, you might perhaps see a fairy taking its morning bath in the dewdrops from the leaves of a lady’s mantle flower.

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Marvelous Adventure



Cecilie has worked at a nursery school and seen how much fun the children have when they are playing pretend. The nursery school had its own costume box and the children had the most fun when they could dress up for various roles: Superman, Wonder Woman, sorceresses, knights, and ballerinas.

What could be more natural than making little fantasy sweaters for the small princesses and princes in our life? These sweaters feature dragons, white horses, castles, witches, crowns, and swords that will inspire children while they play in their fantasy worlds.

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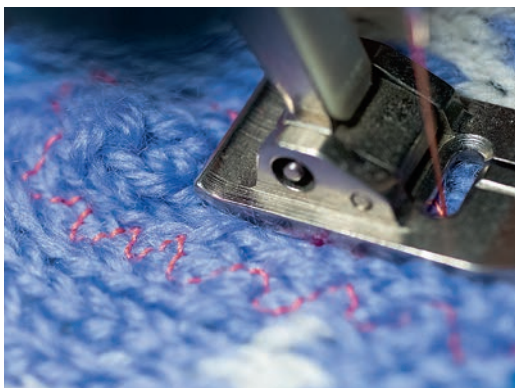
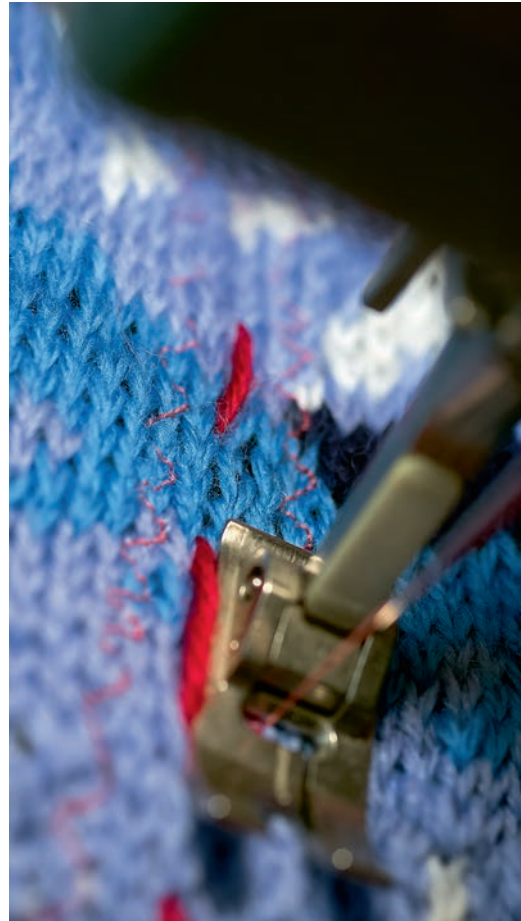


Cutting the armholes open

1. Measure half the width of the sleeve top and then measure down the same length from the shoulder down the side of the sweater. Place a marker at base of armhole.



2. With a contrast color yarn, baste down the center of the armhole to the marker. Now you've marked the line that will be cut open. This marked line makes it much easier to reinforce the cutting line with machine stitching.
3. Machine-stitch on each side of the center basting thread. Place the machine foot along the basting so that you will stitch about $\frac{1}{4}$ in / .5 cm from the basting thread. Using a zigzag (see Step 4 for more information on stitching), stitch on each side of the basting, going around in a U-shape at the top of the shoulder. This might be a little tricky but it will work. At the base of the armhole, stitch back and forth several times for reinforcement.



4. If you have a sewing machine that can make paired zigzag stitches, use it. That way you only have to go once down each side of the basting line. If you don't have that option, use a fine zigzag stitch and stitch down each side of the basting line twice.

5. Remove the basting thread and then carefully cut the armhole open at the center, between the machine-stitched lines. Make sure you don't cut into the top and bottom reinforcement stitching.



8. Fold the facing over the cut edges and sew down loosely with overcast stitches.



6. Attach sleeves: Turn the body inside out and insert the sleeve (right side out) into the armhole so that the facing is above the cut edges on one armhole. Make sure that the sleeve is centered at shoulder and base of armhole. Pin sleeve into place.



9. Attach the other sleeve the same way.

Shaping in the middle of a pattern

In our designs, we have tried to place any decreases on plain rows between patterns. Sometimes, however, a decrease has to be made in the middle of a motif. Try to work the decreases so that they disturb the motif as little as possible but, at the same time, don't be afraid to have small distortions in the motif. These little pattern shifts will make the sweater uniquely special. See, for example, the picture of the café sweater.



7. Use small back stitches to sew in the sleeve securely.



We think it is important for you to try out large and fun motifs even if you think the decreases won't fit in nicely. Check the look as you work and adjust as well as possible. The advantage of knitted garments is that they are so flexible that all will be well in the end.

YOUR NEEDLES Your Pattern YOUR WAY



The history of “**hen knitting**” began 40 years ago with Kirsten Hofstätter’s Hen Press and one simple idea: Why spend all your time knitting other people’s patterns when you could make your own?

Using whatever colorful odds and ends of yarn are at hand and a series of personalized pattern bands, it’s easy for all knitters to express themselves with their needles. Make a statement, send a message, put aside lock-step patterns, and set yourself free.

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