

HOW TO ADAPT A PATTERN/WORK TO GAUGE

Some Notes on adapting patterns and using Gauge

Many of you might hear over and over again 'Knit a gauge swatch and work out your tension'. Many of you might then have thought, ok so what? If I know what my tensions is what do I do exactly when I apply it to a standard pattern?
Here's how:

Do knit up a swatch for any pattern, well worth it, this what I do.

1. **Measure how many stitches** there are in 2 inches of my swatch by putting a ruler on the knitting along the bottom of a row of stitches.

2. e.g. I might have 8 and a half stitches per 2 inches so for 4 inches it would be:
 $8.5 \times 2 = \mathbf{17\text{sts per 4 inches}}$

3. This was to get an average, so now I want to know the average no of stitches per inch so it would be:

$17 \text{ divided by } 4 = \mathbf{4.25 \text{ stitches per inch}}$ **This is my tension so what do I do next?**

Applying your gauge to an existing pattern

Now I have a 40 ins bust so I need to know how many stitches to cast on to go around my bust so it would be

$4.25 \text{ (stitches per inch)} \times 40 \text{ (inch bust)} = \mathbf{170 \text{ stitches}}$

However, that's my whole body and the sweater I want to knit has a Back and Front parts, the pattern starts with the back so number of stitches roughly to go across my back would be:

$170 \text{ sts divided by } 2 = \mathbf{85\text{sts}}$ to cast on for the Back only.
(More stitches remember if you want it to have a lot of wear allowance i.e. a baggy fit)

I go back to my pattern, this is what the person writing the pattern has written:

To fit bust 34 (36, 38, 40, and 42)

BACK

Cast on 76 (80, 84, 88, and 92) stitches and work in K2 P2

rib for 4 inches.

The pattern is telling me that I need to cast on 88 stitches but that is more than I need? What should I do? Well, I would ignore the sizing as the experienced knitter obviously is a much tighter knitter than me and her pattern is getting more stitches to the inch. My swatch tells me exactly what sort of size my own knitting is likely to come out at.

I would follow the instructions for the number of stitches closest to the number I got in my calculations when I worked out what my BACK needed. Obviously if there is ribbing at the bottom, then an even number of stitches is needed so that is why the pattern is going up on increments of 4.

So I would choose to cast on **84 stitches** even though it is for the smaller (38 ins bust) size than my own on the pattern. My knitting comes out bigger than the person who wrote the pattern.

When it comes to adjusting length, that is easy, just add rows where you have plain knitting up to the armholes. if there is a repeat pattern for lacy or colour work, then if the repeat runs over 6 rows then try to lengthen by adding on multiples of this e.g. 6 rows extra 12 rows extra etc.

Same goes for the sleeves.

If you found this useful let me know. If you found it even more confusing, and would like to come and practice this on some real live knitting, do see if you can come to one of my workshops. I hold them regularly at my home for a max of 5 students and for levels beginner to Intermediate. I can show you how to be in control of your own knitting and follow patterns with more confidence in the results.

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