

# Knitted base for your own one-of-a-kind freeform neckpiece

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## Overview:

This base section is best knitted quite firmly, using 4.50mm needles and 2 strands of sportweight yarn held together throughout. I generally prefer to use cotton yarn, but cotton/linen and cotton/silk blends are also suitable, as are good quality acrylics. Even though I love wool and wool blends, in this case I would normally avoid them unless they were particularly soft and non-itchy. Suggested yarns: Appalachian Baby's Organic Cotton, HiKoo's Rylie or CoBaSI, Schoeller Stahl's Hit, or similar.



You could work with 2 strands of the same color, but it adds to the overall design if you choose 2 different yarns in colors that go together well, and use one strand from each. 50g in each colour will be more than enough, and some of the leftover yarn can also be incorporated into the surface embellishment later.

When using 2 different colors I like the subtle, mottled effects that can be achieved by using 2 yarns that are fairly close in intensity. The yarns can be quite different colors, but one yarn should not be very much lighter or very much darker than the other (i.e. choose either 2 fairly light colors, 2 mediums or 2 darks). Since you will be working in garter stitch (i.e. all plain knit stitches), using very light and very dark colors together would, unfortunately, create quite a 'bitsy' look, which often gives the appearance of having created 'wrong side' rows.

Gauge is not vital, and you can adjust the pattern to fit your neck after Row 40. Just note that, because you will be using fairly small needles with a double strand of yarn, you will be creating quite a firm base at a reasonably tight tension...but garter stitch is very forgiving and the resulting piece should still feel quite 'springy'. If you feel that you are normally an extremely tight knitter, you could go up to the next size needles, or just try to relax and knit a bit more loosely than you normally would; the knitting should be firm and stable but also enjoyable, so take a few deep breaths and try not to put any strain on your hands.

Since the crochet embellishment (which will be added later) will cover the edges, increases can be made by simply knitting twice (front and back) into the relevant first or last stitches as given in the pattern below. Do not feel concerned if this results in edges that look a little misshapen or if some of the stitches are a bit untidy; you will be able to even everything up in the workshop, once you start adding the various freeform embellishments.

## Method:

With the yarn double, and using 4.50mm needles, cast on 4 stitches.

**Row 1:** Knit to the last stitch, then knit twice into the last stitch to make an increase (5 stitches).

**Row 2:** Increase in the first stitch, knit to the last stitch, increase in the last stitch (7 sts).

**Rows 3 to 11:** Continue in garter stitch (*plain knitting*), making 2 increases per row (*by knitting twice into both the first and the last stitch in every row, as you just did in Row 2*), until you have a total of 25 stitches on the needles.

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**Row 12** (*this is a wrong side facing row*): Knit one row with no shaping (*still 25 sts*).

**Rows 13 to 19**: Continue in garter stitch, increasing at each end of the first and every alternate (*right side facing*) row, until you have a total of 33 stitches.

**Row 20** (*a wrong side facing*): Knit 14, bind off the central 5 stitches (very loosely), then knit 14.

**Row 21**: Continuing for the moment on just one side of the neckpiece, increase in the first stitch, knit to the last 2 stitches, knit 2 together (*still 14 sts*).

**Row 22**: Knit 2 together (*this will be on the inside neck edge*) then knit to the end of the row (*13 sts*).

**Row 23**: Knit to the last 2 stitches, then knit 2 together (*12 sts*).

**Rows 24 and 25**: Repeat the last 2 rows once more (*10 sts left at the end of row 25*).

**Row 26**: Knit 2 together, then knit to the end of the row (*9 sts*).

**Knit the next \*14 rows on these 9 stitches with no further shaping.**

You are now just about ready to begin shaping for the back of the neck...but before you do, hold the piece in position at your throat and look in a mirror.

Your knitting should now have reached the point where you need to begin increasing at the inside edge, to create a curve that bends around towards the centre back. If you think that the inner circle's circumference needs to be a little larger, feel free to add a few extra rows to the pattern at this point – i.e. work \*16 (*or 18, or 20, or 22*) more rows, instead of just the 14 rows specified above, and then, once this first side section is long enough, start the inner edge shaping as follows:

**Row 41** (*a right side facing row*): Knit to the last stitch, increase in the last stitch (*10 sts*).

**Row 42**: Increase in the first stitch, knit to the last 2 stitches, knit 2 together (*still 10 sts*).

**Rows 43-46**: Repeat the last 2 rows twice more (*there will be 11 sts at the end of rows 43 and 44, and 12 sts at the end of rows 45 and 46*).

**Row 47**: Knit to the last stitch, increase in the last stitch (*13 sts*).

**Row 48** (*a wrong side facing row*): Cast on 5 stitches, knit to the last 2 stitches, knit 2 together (*17 sts*)

**Row 49**: Knit 2 together, knit to the last stitch, and then increase in the last stitch (*still 17 sts*).

**Row 50** (*a wrong side facing row*): Knit to the last 2 stitches, knit 2 together (*16 sts*).

**Row 51**: Knit 2 together, knit to the end of the row (*15 sts*).

**Row 52**: Knit to the last 2 stitches, knit 2 together (*14 sts*).

**Row 53** (*a right side facing row*): Bind off 4 stitches, knit to the end of the row (10 sts).

**Row 54**: Knit to the last 2 stitches, knit 2 together (9 sts).

Turn, bind off all remaining stitches and finish off, then re-join the yarn at the end of the bind off section made in Row 20, and work the other side, reversing all shaping as follows:

**Row 21** (*this will be a right side facing row, and the decrease will be on the inside neck edge*): Knit 2 together, knit to the last 2 stitches, increase in the last stitch (*still 14 sts*).

**Row 22**: Knit to the last 2 stitches, then knit 2 together (13 sts).

**Row 23**: Knit 2 together, then knit to the end of the row (12 sts).

**Rows 24 and 25**: Repeat the last 2 rows once more (10 sts left at the end of row 25).

**Row 26**: Knit to the last 2 stitches, then knit 2 together (9 sts).

**Knit the next 14 rows on these 9 stitches with no further shaping** (*or change the pattern here if you changed the number of rows knitted to create the other side edge – i.e. knit the next 16, 18 or 20 rows, so that this section duplicates the number of rows worked for the other side*).

Now begin to increase for the back of the neck as follows:

**Row 41** (*right side facing row*): Increase in the 1<sup>st</sup> st, knit to the end of the row (10 sts).

**Row 42**: Knit 2 together, knit to the last stitch, then increase into the last stitch (*still 10 sts*).

**Rows 43-46**: Repeat the last 2 rows twice more (*there will be 11 sts at the end of rows 43 and 44, and 12 sts at the end of rows 45 and 46*).

**Row 47**: Increase in the first stitch, knit to the end of the row (13 sts).

**Row 48** (*a wrong side facing row*): Knit 2 together, knit to the last 2 sts, increase in the last stitch (*still 13 sts*).

**Row 49**: Cast on 5 stitches, knit to the last 2 stitches, knit 2 together (17 sts).

**Row 50** (*a wrong side facing row*): Knit 2 together, knit to the end of the row (16 sts).

**Row 51**: Knit to the last 2 stitches, knit 2 together (15 sts).

**Row 52**: Knit 2 together, knit to the end of the row (14 sts).

**Row 53**: Knit to the last 2 stitches, knit 2 together (13 sts).

**Row 54** (*a wrong side facing row*): Bind off 4 stitches, and then knit to the end of the row (9 sts).

Turn and bind off all remaining stitches.

Bring your knitted the base to the workshop, together with any leftover yarns (plus small quantities of other yarns that you feel might look good on the surface). You will then begin the freeforming that will enable you to turn your design into a unique wearable-art neckpiece.

