

LEARNING MADE EASY



Knitting Patterns

for
dummies[®]
A Wiley Brand



Find 50+ projects
from beginner to advanced

Learn the basics of cables,
lace, and color work

Discover how to read
a pattern with ease

Kristi Porter

Knitwear Designer



Knitting Patterns

by Kristi Porter

for
dummies[®]
A Wiley Brand

Knitting Patterns For Dummies®

Published by: **John Wiley & Sons, Inc.**, 111 River Street, Hoboken, NJ 07030-5774, www.wiley.com

Copyright © 2023 by John Wiley & Sons, Inc., Hoboken, New Jersey

Media and software compilation copyright © 2023 by John Wiley & Sons, Inc. All rights reserved.

Published simultaneously in Canada

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, scanning or otherwise, except as permitted under Sections 107 or 108 of the 1976 United States Copyright Act, without the prior written permission of the Publisher. Requests to the Publisher for permission should be addressed to the Permissions Department, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 111 River Street, Hoboken, NJ 07030, (201) 748-6011, fax (201) 748-6008, or online at <http://www.wiley.com/go/permissions>.

Trademarks: Wiley, For Dummies, the Dummies Man logo, Dummies.com, Making Everything Easier, and related trade dress are trademarks or registered trademarks of John Wiley & Sons, Inc. and may not be used without written permission. All other trademarks are the property of their respective owners. John Wiley & Sons, Inc. is not associated with any product or vendor mentioned in this book.

LIMIT OF LIABILITY/DISCLAIMER OF WARRANTY: WHILE THE PUBLISHER AND AUTHORS HAVE USED THEIR BEST EFFORTS IN PREPARING THIS WORK, THEY MAKE NO REPRESENTATIONS OR WARRANTIES WITH RESPECT TO THE ACCURACY OR COMPLETENESS OF THE CONTENTS OF THIS WORK AND SPECIFICALLY DISCLAIM ALL WARRANTIES, INCLUDING WITHOUT LIMITATION ANY IMPLIED WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY OR FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE. NO WARRANTY MAY BE CREATED OR EXTENDED BY SALES REPRESENTATIVES, WRITTEN SALES MATERIALS OR PROMOTIONAL STATEMENTS FOR THIS WORK. THE FACT THAT AN ORGANIZATION, WEBSITE, OR PRODUCT IS REFERRED TO IN THIS WORK AS A CITATION AND/OR POTENTIAL SOURCE OF FURTHER INFORMATION DOES NOT MEAN THAT THE PUBLISHER AND AUTHORS ENDORSE THE INFORMATION OR SERVICES THE ORGANIZATION, WEBSITE, OR PRODUCT MAY PROVIDE OR RECOMMENDATIONS IT MAY MAKE. THIS WORK IS SOLD WITH THE UNDERSTANDING THAT THE PUBLISHER IS NOT ENGAGED IN RENDERING PROFESSIONAL SERVICES. THE ADVICE AND STRATEGIES CONTAINED HEREIN MAY NOT BE SUITABLE FOR YOUR SITUATION. YOU SHOULD CONSULT WITH A SPECIALIST WHERE APPROPRIATE. FURTHER, READERS SHOULD BE AWARE THAT WEBSITES LISTED IN THIS WORK MAY HAVE CHANGED OR DISAPPEARED BETWEEN WHEN THIS WORK WAS WRITTEN AND WHEN IT IS READ. NEITHER THE PUBLISHER NOR AUTHORS SHALL BE LIABLE FOR ANY LOSS OF PROFIT OR ANY OTHER COMMERCIAL DAMAGES, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO SPECIAL, INCIDENTAL, CONSEQUENTIAL, OR OTHER DAMAGES.

For general information on our other products and services, please contact our Customer Care Department within the U.S. at 877-762-2974, outside the U.S. at 317-572-3993, or fax 317-572-4002. For technical support, please visit <https://hub.wiley.com/community/support/dummies>.

Wiley publishes in a variety of print and electronic formats and by print-on-demand. Some material included with standard print versions of this book may not be included in e-books or in print-on-demand. If this book refers to media such as a CD or DVD that is not included in the version you purchased, you may download this material at <http://booksupport.wiley.com>. For more information about Wiley products, visit www.wiley.com.

Library of Congress Control Number: 2022950745

ISBN: 978-1-394-16207-9 (pbk); ISBN: 978-1-394-16208-6 (ebk); ISBN: 978-1-394-16209-3 (ebk)

Contents at a Glance

Introduction	1
Part 1: The Nuts and Bolts (or Sticks and String) of Knitting	7
CHAPTER 1: The Right Stuff: Knitting Supplies	9
CHAPTER 2: Gauge Your Success	21
CHAPTER 3: Do You Measure Up? Size Matters	31
CHAPTER 4: Break the Code: Reading Patterns	39
Part 2: A Primer on Stitches and Color	49
CHAPTER 5: The Simplest Stitches	51
CHAPTER 6: Stitches that Look Tricky but Aren't	59
CHAPTER 7: Colorful Stitches	79
Part 3: Patterns with Rectangles and Related Shapes	99
CHAPTER 8: Rectangles to Wear	101
CHAPTER 9: Rectangles for the Home	123
CHAPTER 10: Almost Rectangles	139
Part 4: Patterns with Circles, Triangles, and More	167
CHAPTER 11: Knitting in Circles	169
CHAPTER 12: Shaping Triangles	189
CHAPTER 13: Putting Together Rectangles and Triangles	209
CHAPTER 14: Knitting Beyond Geometry Class	239
Part 5: The Part of Tens	265
CHAPTER 15: Ten Things You Can Knit with that Aren't Yarn or Needles	267
CHAPTER 16: Almost Ten Things You Can Do with Your Swatches	271
CHAPTER 17: Ten Ways to MacGyver Your Knitting	275
CHAPTER 18: Ten Smart Ways to Care for Your Knits	279
Appendix	285
Index	301

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION	1
About This Book	1
Conventions Used in This Book	2
Foolish Assumptions	2
How This Book Is Organized	3
Part 1: The Nuts and Bolts (or Sticks and String) of Knitting	3
Part 2: A Primer on Stitches and Color	3
Part 3: Patterns with Rectangles and Related Shapes	4
Part 4: Patterns with Circles, Triangles, and More	4
Part 5: The Part of Tens	4
Appendix	5
Icons Used in This Book	5
Beyond the Book	5
Where to Go from Here	5
PART 1: THE NUTS AND BOLTS (OR STICKS AND STRING) OF KNITTING	7
CHAPTER 1: The Right Stuff: Knitting Supplies	9
Unraveling the Basics of Yarn	9
Checking out different types of packaging	10
Reading a yarn label	10
Choosing the right yarn for the job	11
Determining how much yarn you need	13
Getting to the Point of Needles	15
Looking at different kinds of needles	15
Understanding needle sizes	16
Filling Your Knitting Bag with Other Gadgets	17
Measuring tools	17
Markers and holders	18
Tools for keeping track of your knitting	19
Finishing tools	19
CHAPTER 2: Gauge Your Success	21
Calculating Gauge for Any Project	21
How Tense Are You? Tips for Knitting to the Right Gauge	23
Relaxing with your knitting	23
Switching needles if your gauge is off	23
Swatching Before You Begin a New Project	24
Making your swatch	25
Measuring your swatch	25
Practicing different gauges in a single swatch	27
Checking Your Gauge throughout a Project	28
When to check your gauge	28
How to check your gauge	28
Examining the Drapes of Different Gauges	29

CHAPTER 3: Do You Measure Up? Size Matters	31
Deciphering a Pattern’s Size Information	31
The kinds of size information in a pattern	32
The sizing conventions in this book	32
Measuring Yourself	33
Knowing What Size You Should Knit	35
Focusing on essential fit considerations	35
Factoring in ease	35
Trying the “favorite sweater” technique if you’re still unsure about size	36
CHAPTER 4: Break the Code: Reading Patterns	39
Deciphering Knitroglyphics	39
Understanding common terms and abbreviations	40
Following a repeating pattern	42
Reading charts and symbolcraft	42
Try Before You Buy! Spot-Checking Patterns	46
Are all the parts there?	46
Do you understand the directions?	47
Does the pattern come in your size and style?	47
PART 2: A PRIMER ON STITCHES AND COLOR	49
CHAPTER 5: The Simplest Stitches	51
Starting with Garter Stitch	51
Knitting and Purling Stockinette Stitch	52
Mixing It Up with Reverse Stockinette Stitch	53
Staying Simple with Seed Stitch	54
Creating Box Stitch	55
Working Half Linen Stitch	56
CHAPTER 6: Stitches that Look Tricky but Aren’t	59
Lining Up with Ribs	60
1 x 1 rib	61
2 x 2 rib	62
4 x 2 rib	62
Broken rib	63
Two-stitch rib	63
Twisting Away with Cables	64
Two-stitch twist	65
Four-stitch cables	67
Six-stitch cables	68
Horseshoe cable	69
Wave cable and chain cable	70
Seeing Through Your Knitting with Lace	71
Yarn overs	72
Common decreases used in lace	73
Double decreases	74
Other essential lace know-how	74
Openwork	74
Feather and fan	75
Climbing vine lace	76
Arrowhead lace	77

CHAPTER 7: Colorful Stitches79

- Combining Colors with a Careful Eye 79
- Get in Line: Stripes. 80
 - Two-row stripes 81
 - Regularly repeating stripes. 82
 - Random stripes 83
- Classic Color: Fair Isle Patterns 83
 - Simple stranded pattern. 84
- Small Fair Isle motif 85
 - Fair Isle border 85
- Slip in Some Color: Mosaics 87
 - Puzzle piece mosaic. 88
 - Woven cord mosaic 89
 - Little mosaic 91
 - Little boxes mosaic 92
 - Miniature mosaic 93
- Color for Cheaters: Adding Details after You Finish Knitting. 94
 - Duplicate stitch. 95
 - Surface crochet 96

PART 3: PATTERNS WITH RECTANGLES AND RELATED SHAPES . . . 99

CHAPTER 8: Rectangles to Wear101

- Garter Stitch Scarf102
 - New skill: The double wrap (and beyond)102
 - Materials and vital statistics103
 - Directions104
 - Variation: Using beautiful yarns.104
 - Variation: Creating a seafoam stitch scarf104
- Ribbed Scarf105
 - New skill: Switching from knit to purl and back again105
 - Materials and vital statistics106
 - Directions106
 - Variation: Ribbed scarves with any yarn.107
- Box Stitch Scarf107
 - Materials and vital statistics107
 - Directions108
 - Variation: Twins scarf108
 - Variation: Two-yarns scarf109
- Flat Hat110
 - Materials and vital statistics110
 - Directions111
 - Variation: Knitting a garter stitch flat hat111
- Retro Slippers for Baby112
 - Materials and vital statistics112
 - Directions112
 - Variation: Using different yarns.113
 - Variation: Sizing up113
- Longways Multiyarn Stole.114
 - New skill: Changing colors114
 - New skill: Making fringe115
 - Materials and vital statistics116
 - Directions116
 - Variation: Changing yarns.117

Loose Rib Wrap	117
Materials and vital statistics	117
Directions	118
Variation: Make your wrap a poncho	118
Variation: Make your wrap a shrug	118
Box Top	119
Materials and vital statistics	120
Starting with the back	120
Moving to the front	121
Finishing your top	121
Variation: Short and simple	122
CHAPTER 9: Rectangles for the Home	123
Felted Potholders	123
New skill: Making miters	124
Materials and vital statistics	125
Directions	125
Variation: Single-color potholders	126
Variation: Striped potholders	126
Variation: Coasters	126
Variation: Mitered square afghan	127
Throw Pillows	128
Materials and vital statistics	128
Directions	128
Variation: Retro check pillow	129
Variation: Bean sprout pillow	130
Journal Cover	131
Materials and vital statistics	132
Directions	132
Variation: Small journal cover in half linen stitch	132
Nested Squares Baby Blanket	133
New skill: Picking up stitches along a garter stitch edge	134
Materials and vital statistics	135
Directions	136
Variation: Substituting yarns	137
CHAPTER 10: Almost Rectangles	139
Felted Messenger Bag	139
New skill: The cable cast-on	139
New skill: Working linen stitch by slipping stitches	141
Materials and vital statistics	142
Knitting the bag	143
Creating the straps	144
Finishing your bag	144
One-Piece Baby Sweater	145
New skill: Making a buttonhole	145
Materials and vital statistics	146
Directions	147
Deceptively Simple Shell	149
Materials and vital statistics	150
Starting with the back	150
Moving to the front	151
Finishing your shell	151
Shawl-Collared Coat	152
New skill: The three-needle bind-off	152
New skill: Pick up and knit vertically	154

New skill: Pick up and knit horizontally	155
Materials and vital statistics	156
Starting with the back	157
Moving to the left front panel	157
Continuing with the right front panel	158
Attaching the front and back panels	158
Making the sleeves	159
Creating the shawl collar	159
Finishing your coat	160
Variation: A beautiful border	160
Hooded Coat	160
Materials and vital statistics	161
Starting with the back	162
Moving to the hood	163
Knitting the left front	163
Knitting the right front	163
Attaching the front and back panels	163
Making the sleeves	164
Working the shawl collar and sides of hood	164
Finishing your coat	165

PART 4: PATTERNS WITH CIRCLES, TRIANGLES, AND MORE 167

CHAPTER 11: Knitting in Circles 169

Ruffled Cowl	170
New skill: Joining your knitting in the round	170
New skill: Increasing with kfb	171
Materials and vital statistics	172
Directions	173
Variation: Turning your cowl into a poncho	173
Wrist Warmers	174
New skill: Working with double-pointed needles	175
Materials and vital statistics	176
Directions	176
Ruffled Muffatees	177
Materials and vital statistics	177
Directions	178
Basic Beanies	178
Materials and vital statistics	178
Directions	179
Variation: Creating a cabled beanie	180
Storybook Hats	181
Materials and vital statistics	181
Directions	182
Variation: Changing yarns	183
Mosaic Bags	184
Materials and vital statistics	184
Directions	185
Variation: Keeping your bag plain and simple	188
Variation: Striping your bag	188

CHAPTER 12: Shaping Triangles 189

The Most Basic Kerchief Ever	190
Materials and vital statistics	190
Directions	191

The Most Basic Shawl Ever	191
Materials and vital statistics	192
Directions	192
Variation: Changing up your yarn	192
Variation: Making a poncho	192
Fully Fashioned Kerchief	193
New skill: Additional left-slanting decreases	193
Materials and vital statistics	195
Directions	195
Lacy Shawl	196
Materials and vital statistics	197
Directions	197
Variation: Knitting through thick and thin	198
Stretchy Halter Top	198
Materials and vital statistics	199
Knitting the front	199
Making the back	201
Finishing your top	201
Short Row Scarf	201
New skill: Working short rows	202
Materials and vital statistics	203
Directions	204
Harlequin Blanket	205
Materials and vital statistics	206
Directions	207
CHAPTER 13: Putting Together Rectangles and Triangles	209
V-Neck T-Shirt	210
Materials and vital statistics	210
Starting with the back	210
Moving to the front	211
Making the sleeves	213
Finishing your T-shirt	213
Variation: Crew neck T-shirt with garter stitch edging	214
Kid's Top	216
New skill: Picking up neckline stitches	216
Materials and vital statistics	219
Starting with the back	219
Moving to the front	220
Making the sleeves	221
Knitting the collar	221
Finishing your sweater	222
Variation: Short sleeves	222
Variation: Cables	223
Rollneck Pullover	224
New skill: Setting in sleeves in a new way	224
Materials and vital statistics	226
Starting with the back	226
Moving to the front	227
Making the sleeves	229
Knitting the collar	230
Finishing your sweater	230
Variation: Showing your true colors	230

Classic V-Neck Sweater	230
New skill: Binding off in rib	231
Materials and vital statistics	231
Starting with the back	232
Moving to the front	233
Making the sleeves	234
Knitting the collar	235
Finishing your sweater	235
Variation: Crafting a crew neck	236
CHAPTER 14: Knitting Beyond Geometry Class	239
Bulky Zipped Cardigan	240
New skill: Trying the make 1 increase	240
Materials and vital statistics	241
Starting with the body	242
Moving to the sleeves	243
Knitting the collar	244
Finishing your cardigan	244
Half-Ribbed Raglan Cardigan	245
New skill: Fashioning self-facing buttonbands	246
New skill: Decreasing in rib	247
Materials and vital statistics	247
Starting with the body	248
Moving to the sleeves	250
Crafting the collar	251
Finishing your cardigan	252
Variation: Using the perfect buttons	252
Scoop-Neck Pullover	252
Materials and vital statistics	253
Starting with the back	254
Moving to the front	256
Variation: Making a mosaic border	257
Lacy V-Neck Top	258
Materials and vital statistics	258
Starting with the back	259
Moving to the front	260
Making the sleeves	262
Creating the collar	262
Finishing your top	263
Variation: Lengthening your top	263
PART 5: THE PART OF TENS	265
CHAPTER 15: Ten Things You Can Knit with that Aren't	
Yarn or Needles	267
Raffia or Ribbon	267
Kite String	268
Plastic Bags	268
Old T-Shirts	268
Cassette Tapes	268
Licorice Ropes	268
Pencils	268
Chopsticks	269
Skewers or Toothpicks	269
Tinkertoys	269

CHAPTER 16: Almost Ten Things You Can Do with Your Swatches	271
Knit a Set of Coasters	271
Sew Some Cozies	271
Create Cat Toys	272
Whip Up Washcloths and Soap Sacks	272
Make Slippers	272
Stitch a Crazy Quilt	272
Keep a Knitting Journal	272
Stash Away Swatches for Later Mending	273
Store Swatches as Emergency Yarn	273
CHAPTER 17: Ten Ways to MacGyver Your Knitting	275
Winding Your Yarn with Power	275
Crafting Your Own Knitting Needles	275
Using Makeshift Cable Needles	276
Measuring Your Knitting with Handy Items	276
Substituting for Stitch Markers	276
Storing Your Notions	276
Smoothing Out Your Rough Edges	276
Putting Your Stitches on Hold	277
Counting Stitches and Rows the Low-Tech Way	277
Cutting Yarn without Scissors	277
CHAPTER 18: Ten Smart Ways to Care for Your Knits	279
Read the Label	279
Wash Wisely	280
Avoid Hot Water and Agitation	281
Always Air-Dry	282
Clean Your Knits Regularly	282
Store Your Knits Flat or Folded	283
Save Some Yarn for Later (Just in Case)	283
Knit Like You Care	283
Give Care Instructions with a Gift	283
Remember that Not Everything You Knit Is an Heirloom	284
APPENDIX	285
INDEX	301

Introduction

I have great enthusiasm for knitting and for sharing the craft with others. Because you've picked up this book, you clearly share at least some of my enthusiasm. It's hard to put a finger on what it is about knitting that pulls people in. Maybe it's the simple, repetitive motions and the feel and look of the fibers and fabrics that we create; or maybe it's the chance to share in a long tradition that cuts across boundaries of age and background. It's also pretty cool to be able to point to a garment and say "I made that beautiful, warm thing with some string and a couple of sticks!" Whatever it is that attracts you, knitting is something that you can return to your whole life, making all kinds of projects — and friends — along the way.

I love teaching people how to knit. And, even more, I love teaching them to knit the things that *they* want to knit. Putting this book together challenged me to come up with straightforward patterns with broad appeal and lots of room for improvisation. I charged myself with two goals: to make designs that would flatter lots of different people and to think carefully about keeping the shapes simple, relying on basic shapes like rectangles, cylinders, and triangles to create patterns that are knittable and easy to understand.

I hope that you take the patterns in this book and make them your own. Even if you're new to knitting, you can still make design decisions, whether it's the color combination you choose or the yarn and stitch pattern you decide to knit. I firmly believe that all knitters can be their own designers. So, I try to provide opportunities for you to master not only knitting skills but also skills that you need to understand why things are the way they are in a pattern — and how to change them if you want to.

Whether you're a brand new knitter, a seasoned stitcher, or someone returning to the needles after a long absence, this book gives you lots of great patterns to choose from and plenty of help along the way. *Knitting Patterns For Dummies* is filled with classic knits that won't go out of style — and they're all presented in an easy-to-follow format.

About This Book

Knitting Patterns For Dummies is chock-full of knitting patterns. In fact, the book contains nearly 40 basic designs. And with the variations offered at the end of many of the patterns, you have lots of projects to choose from! You'll find that the patterns are flexible, which means that you can knit from the same pattern more than once using different yarns or details. So, each time you knit from the pattern you can come up with something new and fresh.

The offerings in this book have a broad range of appeal. You can find things for adults, babies and kids, and things for your home — there's something for everyone. But more important, perhaps, is the fact that this book has something for every *body*. While many knitting patterns top out at rather diminutive sizes, *Knitting Patterns For Dummies* offers size-inclusive patterns through 3X.

You may have noticed that this is a big book — a big book with lots of writing. Because of all this writing, it may not be as pretty as some of the other knitting books on the shelf. But *Knitting Patterns For Dummies* has room for lots of patterns, with plenty of space left over for me to explain everything I think you need to know to work your way through them.

For instance, Part 2 offers a mini stitch dictionary with practice opportunities for trying different stitches, which is helpful to consult if you want to substitute a different stitch pattern, figure out how to work successfully with more than one color, or turn your first cable. In addition, if you come across a technique that's unusual or a skill that you may not have picked up yet, you can find it right there in the pattern in the “New skill” section. You won't have to run to your reference shelf, consult other sources, or wait until Friday morning for knitting class. I explain things like picking up and knitting right where you need them (with accompanying diagrams even!). Hopefully, you'll feel like you have an expert knitter right there with you.

Don't worry — you don't have to read more than 300 pages to get started on knitting the great projects in this book! If you're familiar with knitting basics, you can dive right in and start knitting. Look through the table of contents or browse through the photographs in the color insert to decide what you want to make. Pick and choose the information you need at any time.

Conventions Used in This Book

I include a few standard conventions to help you navigate this book:

- » *Italics* point out defined terms and emphasize certain words.
- » **Boldface** text indicates the key words in bulleted and numbered lists.
- » `Mono`font highlights web addresses.

Each pattern in this book begins with a photograph of the finished project. And if you have to use any techniques that may be new to you, they're explained in the “New skill” section of the pattern. I also give you the materials and vital statistics needed for the project right up front; look there to find information regarding the size of the finished project, the materials you need to complete it, the gauge you need to knit at, and any diagrams that may help you complete the project. After the directions for the basic pattern, you'll often find one or more variations. These variations provide instructions and inspiration for altering the pattern, which allows you to knit the same pattern in lots of different ways. I suggest that you read the variations before you start the pattern to see if you want to knit one of the variations instead. In some cases, the supplies you need are different from those listed in the basic pattern.

Like most books of knitting patterns, this book uses conventional pattern formatting and some standard knitting abbreviations. You can familiarize yourself with the abbreviations and find out how to read patterns in Chapter 4.

Foolish Assumptions

This book isn't a “learn to knit” book, though I do think it's a “learn to knit better” book. I assume that you're either a beginning knitter who's looking for an easy introduction to patterns or an experienced knitter who wants some new patterns to try and to experiment with. If you've never knit a single stitch, you may want to flip through *Knitting For Dummies* by Pam

Allen (Wiley), take a lesson, or have a friend guide you through the steps of casting on, knitting, purling, and binding off. Once you have the hang of the absolute basics, you'll be ready to jump into the patterns presented in this book.

And despite the title of the book, I'm assuming that you're no dummy and that you're absolutely capable of doing what you set your mind to. I have little tolerance for those people who claim they can't do basic math or can't follow a set of instructions. The directions in this book are broken down step by step and are written without unnecessary jargon or knitterese. Over half the projects are suitable first projects and all of them are within the grasp of the adventurous novice. Sure, you'll sometimes run into frustration along the way, but I firmly believe that doing something a little bit challenging is good for you. Challenges are good for your brain and good for your self-esteem. In fact, science has shown that having the right amount of challenge is what makes a hobby engaging. So go ahead and be ambitious.

How This Book Is Organized

The first two parts of this book contain information that you may want to know before you start knitting, particularly if you're a new knitter. The bulk of the book, Parts 3 and 4, are the pattern chapters. The patterns in these parts are organized by their basic geometry, starting with the rectangle and moving up in complexity to fully shaped sweaters for the whole family. Similarly, each chapter is organized by level of difficulty, so choose patterns at the beginning of a chapter if you're looking for a simpler project and choose ones at the end of a chapter if you want a more ambitious project.

Part 1: The Nuts and Bolts (or Sticks and String) of Knitting

Part 1 is packed with useful information. Chapter 1, for instance, introduces you to the basic tools of the trade: yarn, needles, and the other gadgets that you want to have at hand. Chapter 2 gives you the lowdown on gauge. Understanding what gauge is and how to knit at the gauge specified in a pattern is vital to knitting pieces that fit well and turn out right. If you're a new knitter, or if the garments you knit never seem to fit right, read Chapter 2 and take it to heart! If you take the opportunity to practice gauge and get it right, you'll be richly rewarded. Chapter 3 deals with taking body measurements and knowing what size garments to knit. Because you can't try your sweater on before you knit it, it's imperative to know what size is right for you. Finally, in Chapter 4, I give you guidance on reading knitting patterns. Knitting can seem like a foreign language at times, but after you master the lingo, you'll be ready to read.

Part 2: A Primer on Stitches and Color

Part 2 provides step-by-step instructions for the stitch patterns used in this book and some others you might like to try. If, for example, you need a refresher on how to knit seed stitch in the round or want to try your hand at half linen stitch, Chapter 5 is the place to turn. This chapter is where I cover the simplest stitches. Chapter 6 introduces you to a variety of textures that can be used all over a piece or as accents. Study this chapter to master the basics of ribbing, cabling, and knitting lace. If you want to learn about stripes, Fair Isle, or mosaic patterns, check out Chapter 7, which introduces color work. In that chapter, I also show you how to add a bit of color with duplicate stitch or surface crochet after your handknit is complete.

Part 3: Patterns with Rectangles and Related Shapes

The easiest shape to knit is a rectangle, but the simplicity of the knitting doesn't mean that these patterns are boring — they're anything but! Start off with rectangles to wear in Chapter 8. You'll find scarves here, of course, but you also can choose from stoles, hats, slippers, and even a top — all of which are rectangles. Really. But wait, there's more! Chapter 9 gives you rectangular projects for the home: pillows, potholders, a lovely and smart looking baby blanket, and a journal cover perfect for your knitting notebook. Chapter 10 introduces just a hint of shaping. By binding off and casting on in the right places, you can make a wonderful messenger bag, a baby sweater, a couple of fantastic coats, or a great shell that you'll love to wear. To look at these pieces, you'd never guess that the knitting was so straightforward. These projects are well within the grasp of any knitters who have whetted their needles on their first scarves or dishcloths and are ready for something a bit more ambitious.

Part 4: Patterns with Circles, Triangles, and More

After you've gotten the hang of all things rectilinear, try your hand at the patterns presented in Part 4. This part begins with circles in Chapter 11. Working in the round is no more complex than knitting a rectangle. In fact, it's easier in some cases! So why not choose a storybook-inspired stocking cap, stylish wrist warmers, or a ruffled cowl to warm your neck? If you're feeling ambitious, cast on for the mosaic-patterned felted purse. Chapter 12 familiarizes you with triangles. Easy kerchiefs and shawls help you understand the ins and outs of shaping, and you can practice short rows by making the surprisingly simple short row scarf or harlequin blanket.

The next two chapters — Chapters 13 and 14 — put all the shapes together as you move on to more involved projects: classic sweaters for the whole family. These projects combine the skills used in earlier chapters, but in their basic forms they're fine choices for knitters who are ready to make their first sweater.

In Chapter 13, you find an all-purpose pattern for a kid's top. Make it with short or long sleeves, cabled or not, wool or cotton — the choice is yours. I also include patterns for a T-shirt and sweaters. One of the sweaters is more casual with rolled edges and a bit of color, and another is a fine-gauged sweater with traditional finishing.

Chapter 14 includes two top-down cardigans. One is bulky and zipped — ready for weekends outdoors — and the other is half-ribbed with a wide collar and clean lines. Finally, you can also choose from two pullovers. These pullovers have shaping at the waist, and you can knit either a scooped neck or a wide V-neck. The scoop neck is shown with Fair Isle borders and the V-neck is cropped and accented with lace. However, the details on these sweaters are interchangeable, which allows you to create a top that's just what you want.

Part 5: The Part of Tens

This part of the book is a mixed bag of little chapters that are full of tips and whimsy. They're great to read when you need a break from your knitting. Discover what to do with your swatches, how to knit with some unusual things, and how to care for your knits after they're complete.

Appendix

If you find yourself stuck at some point, look to the appendix, which features basic knitting skills. The appendix can refresh your memory on knitting basics, such as casting on, knitting, purling, binding off, and more. Remember too that the index can point you to pages where skills are described in greater depth.

Icons Used in This Book

See those little pictures in the margins of this book? Those pictures are icons, and they indicate the following information:



REMEMBER

When you see this icon, know that I am pointing out something that you shouldn't forget. It marks information that you can apply to your knitting whenever a similar situation arises.



TIP

This icon highlights the tricks of the trade that experienced knitters have discovered and shared with one another along the way. Following these tips will make your knitting easier.



WARNING

This icon marks points where things can get confusing. When you see text highlighted by this icon, be sure you're reading carefully. This information may save you from making frustrating mistakes.

Beyond the Book

From patterns and abbreviations to instructions and tools, I pack a lot of information in this book, and some of it you may want to find in a snap. So if you need a place to jot down measurements or a quick reference for abbreviations, you can use the online Cheat Sheet for all that and more. To access this informative Cheat Sheet, go to www.dummies.com and type "Knitting Patterns For Dummies" in the search box.

Where to Go from Here

Remember, unless you want to, you don't need to read this book from front to back like a novel. Instead, you can jump around to the parts that you need to read for a specific project. Here are some suggestions as to how to get started:

- » If you haven't already, take a few minutes to look through the photographs in the color insert. Checking out the photos will give you a quick introduction to the many patterns presented in the book.
- » If you've just started knitting or want to improve your knitting skills, I strongly suggest that you read through Part 1 before you start a project. I know it's no fun to get a bit of meat and potatoes before the dessert, but the time that you spend getting to know how to choose

yarn, read patterns, and accurately measure yourself and your knitting will be returned to you with interest when you get satisfying results (with less aggravation!).

- » If you're comfortable knitting and reading patterns, flip right to the project that you want to make and dive in. Each pattern stands on its own, so you can start anywhere you want. Remember that the patterns in Part 3 are easier than the ones in Part 4. If you find that you're having trouble with one of the later patterns, refresh yourself with something easier and then go back to the more ambitious project.
- » If you're looking for a certain kind of pattern or want to gain experience with a certain skill, look to the table of contents. All projects, as well as their variations and the new skills, are listed there.

And don't forget: If you want even more knitting information, be sure to check out *Knitting For Dummies* by Pam Allen (Wiley).



The Nuts and Bolts (or Sticks and String) of Knitting

IN THIS PART . . .

Gathering your knitting supplies

Understanding gauge and measurements

Figuring out sizes and measurements

Getting a handle on reading patterns and abbreviations

- » Getting to know your yarn
- » Choosing your needles
- » Stocking your knitting bag

Chapter **1**

The Right Stuff: Knitting Supplies

Before you start knitting, you need a few supplies. Unlike many hobbies, though, knitting doesn't require a lot of fancy equipment. In fact, one of the great allures of knitting is that the technology is about as basic as you can get: a couple of pointy sticks and some string. With these simple tools you can create even the most intricate projects, just as others have done for centuries. This chapter guides you through choosing the right yarns, needles, and other little gadgets that make your knitting easier.

Unraveling the Basics of Yarn

The first thing you need for knitting is yarn. You can find yarn in lots of places — in drugstores, at craft emporiums, and on the Internet — but the best place to go is your local knitting shop. Hanging out at a yarn store can make you feel like the proverbial kid in a candy shop because you can find so many beautiful colors, textures, and fibers to look at and touch. A yarn store will likely have most of the yarns called for in the patterns in this book. Plus yarn stores have knowledgeable and helpful staff members that can guide you in selecting yarns and projects that are just right for you.

In the following sections, I explain some yarn basics, including the different ways yarn is put up, the important information found on a yarn label, selecting the right yarn for a project (if you want to use something different from the pattern's suggested yarn), and knowing how much yarn to buy.

Checking out different types of packaging

Yarns come *put up*, or packaged, in a variety of ways. They can be wound into balls or skeins, or they may come in hanks, which you wind into balls yourself. It doesn't matter which way your yarn comes put up, so don't worry if you have yarn in skeins and the pattern asks for balls.



TIP

If the yarn you're using comes in a hank, you must wind it into a ball before you can knit it. To do so, take off the label and follow these steps:

1. Untwist the hank so that it opens into a circle.

Place this circle onto the back of a chair, someone's outstretched hands, or a *swift* (a tool that looks like a wooden umbrella, which is specially designed for this task). Untie the short loops of yarn that hold the hank together.

2. Take one of the ends and begin winding the yarn into a ball.

Begin winding around two or three fingers, and then, as the ball is established, wind around the ball. Don't wrap tightly or pull the yarn; it's best to keep the yarn relaxed as you wind. As long as the circle of the hank is uncompromised, you shouldn't get any tangles as you wind. However, mess with the circle and you'll end up with a Girl Scout Badge in knots. Go slowly, and be patient if you have to do some untangling.

Reading a yarn label



REMEMBER

Every yarn you buy comes with a label. The label is filled with really important information, so don't just throw it away. Take a look at the label in Figure 1-1 (or at the ones in your yarn basket) to find the information described in this list:

- » **Name and manufacturer:** Each label gives you the name of the manufacturer and the name of the yarn. Yarn names can be descriptive, evocative, or just silly. If you're looking for a certain yarn, ask for it by its name and manufacturer.
- » **Fiber content:** The fiber content tells you what the yarn is made of. Yarns can be made of wool, cotton, synthetics, exotic animal and plant fibers, or blends of different fibers. If you're looking for a substitute for a given project, consider the fiber content as well as the suggested gauge, because different fibers behave in different ways. I discuss fiber content and weight in more detail later in this chapter.
- » **Gauge and suggested needle size:** Remember that the label's gauge and needle suggestions are just that: suggestions. So, no matter what the label says, you should swatch with the yarn to make sure that you're getting the right gauge for your project before you begin knitting. See Chapter 2 for more on gauge and swatching.

The gauge may be written out like this: "4 stitches/inch on US 10 needles." Or there may be a funny little grid with some numbers. If there's a grid, here are some tips on how to read it:

- The grid always represents 4 inches (10 cm).
- The number along the bottom is the number of stitches per 4 inches. In Figure 1-1, this number is 16.
- The number along the side is the suggested number of rows per 4 inches. In Figure 1-1, this number is 20.

The grid in Figure 1-1 tells you that the manufacturer thinks the yarn will look best if you knit 16 stitches and 20 rows per 4 inches, likely on size 10 needles. So, if you wanted to, you could substitute this yarn in patterns that call for a gauge of “16 stitches/20 rows per 4 inches.” You can probably use it for something that calls for 15 or 17 stitches per 4 inches but probably not for 12 or 20 stitches per 4 inches.

- » **Care instructions:** Most yarn labels contain information on caring for your finished projects (which is one reason to save the label in a notebook or file!). A year from now when you decide to wash your hat, you’ll likely need to reread this information. (Chapter 18 offers lots of tips for caring for your handknits.)
- » **Color name and dye lot number:** The color name may be a specific color, such as fuchsia, or it may be just a color number, such as #322 (or it may be both). Many yarns also offer a dye lot number. Some yarns vary significantly depending on when they were dyed, particularly hand-dyed yarns. Whenever possible, stick to one dye lot when you’re selecting your yarns so that your project will have a uniform color. Sometimes the differences between dye lots are subtle enough that you won’t notice them while you’re knitting, and they’ll become apparent only when you wear your finished garment in the sunlight the first time!
- » **Length and weight:** Yarns are usually packaged in standard weights. A weight of 50 grams (1¾ ounces) is typical, but some skeins weigh 100 grams or more. The yarn label tells you how many yards or meters are in the skein. Use the yardage numbers rather than weight to figure out how much yarn to buy. Check out the section “Determining how much yarn you need” later in this chapter for more on this task.

Choosing the right yarn for the job

Deciding which yarn to use for a project can be a challenge because there’s much more to choosing the right yarn than deciding what your favorite color is! Each project in this book calls for a specific yarn, but that doesn’t mean that you need to use that exact yarn. Part of what makes knitting fun is that by choosing yarns and colors that appeal to you, you make something that’s truly your own.



REMEMBER

Consider the fabric that the yarn will make based on its fiber content and decide whether that fabric is appropriate for the pattern you’ve chosen. A pattern designed for a whisper-light mohair won’t look the same if you knit it in cotton chenille! You’ll also need to consider the weight of the yarn; read more about weight and matching gauge in the “Weights” section later in this chapter.

Find out a bit about the different sorts of yarn in the following sections so that you can choose your yarns with confidence.

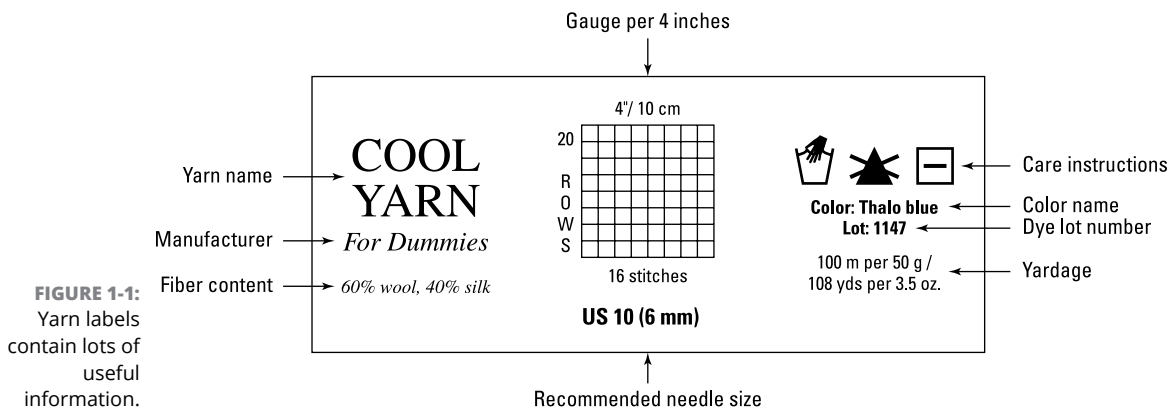


FIGURE 1-1: Yarn labels contain lots of useful information.

Fibers

Talking about the fibers used to make yarn starts like a game of Twenty Questions. Is it animal, vegetable, or mineral? Each of these categories has certain characteristics that influence how the yarn behaves and knits up. Here are the categories:



WARNING

» **Animal fibers:** When you think of yarn, you may first think of wool. And there's a good reason for that. Sheep's wool has been spun into yarn for a long time. It's warm but breathable, is somewhat elastic, wears well, and is probably the easiest to knit with. Other animal fibers include alpaca, llama, mohair, angora, and cashmere. Silk is sort of a special case, because though it comes from bugs, it behaves more like a vegetable fiber than an animal fiber.

Unless they're specially treated or blended with other fibers, animal fibers can turn to felt if you wash them in a machine. Buy superwash wool if you're looking for easy-care yarn. (See Chapter 18 for more tips on caring for knits.)

» **Vegetable fibers:** Many yarns are made from plant fibers. These yarns are most commonly made of cotton, but you'll also find ones made from linen, bamboo, and hemp. Vegetable fibers don't have any natural elasticity and are generally heavier (though cooler!) than their wool counterparts. Still, cotton, linen, and the other vegetable fibers can be wonderful to knit with, and they make great knits to wear year-round.

» **Synthetics:** Not so long ago, synthetic yarns meant that you were stuck with acrylic. If acrylic yarn still makes you think of those indestructible afghans that were knit in the mid-century, look around at what technology has done for yarn! There are many synthetics with exotic textures that knitters call *novelty yarns*. Whether they're shiny, hairy, fuzzy, or bumpy, these yarns can add great texture and zing to your projects.

What's really great about new synthetics is that there are now many blends that mix natural and man-made fibers to create wonderful, knittable yarns. For instance, adding a bit of microfiber acrylic to cotton makes a stretchier yarn; and adding rayon to wool creates a wonderful sheen and minimizes the itch of wool. Synthetic blends can make yarns that are sturdier and easier to care for. They also make luxury fibers easier on the pocketbook.

Weights

Regardless of their fiber content, yarns are classed by weight. This classification can throw knitters off because it really doesn't have much to do with what the yarn actually weighs. The term "yarn weight" is a holdover from the days when most knitting was done with pure wool and there wasn't such a rich cornucopia of yarns to choose from. In those days, you could count on 50 grams of worsted wool measuring just about 100 meters. But with the addition of so many new fibers to the marketplace and new ways to make yarn, you shouldn't assume that 50 grams of one yarn is equivalent to 50 grams of another yarn. Yarn weight classes, such as "worsted" or "fingering," are used to describe how thick the yarn is. So, look at the gauge listed on the label, not the weight of the skein, to determine which weight class your yarn fits into.



REMEMBER

The Craft Yarn Council of America has created a standardized set of six weight classes, which are shown in Table 1-1. You can see, for instance, that bulky yarns knit at a gauge of between 12 and 15 stitches per 4 inches. However, don't be fooled into thinking that yarns within one category are all the same and therefore interchangeable. Instead, these standards simply allow you to have a general sense of whether a yarn is, say, medium or bulky.



TIP

Generally, you use small needles with the thinnest yarns and very large needles with the thickest yarns. Table 1-1 suggests a range of needle sizes that are commonly used with yarns of different weights. But remember that the size of needle that *you* need depends also on what you're making and what your knitting style is. I discuss needle sizes in the section, "Understanding needle sizes" later in this chapter.

Table 1-1 Yarn Classes

Yarn Weight Category Name	Types of Yarn in Category	Knit Gauge Range in Stockinette Stitch per 4 inches	Recommended US Needle Sizes	Recommended Metric Needle Sizes
1 Superfine	sock, fingering, baby	27 to 32 sts	1 to 3	2.25 to 3.25 mm
2 Fine	sport, baby	23 to 26 sts	3 to 5	3.25 to 3.75 mm
3 Light	DK, light worsted	21 to 24 sts	5 to 7	3.75 to 4.5 mm
4 Medium	worsted, aran	16 to 20 sts	7 to 9	4.5 to 5.5 mm
5 Bulky	chunky, craft, rug	12 to 15 sts	9 to 11	5.5 to 8 mm
6 Super bulky	bulky, roving	6 to 11 sts	11 and larger	8 mm and larger

Determining how much yarn you need

Whenever you start a new project, you have to know how much yarn you need. In the following sections, you find out the calculations to make, whether you're substituting one yarn for another in a pattern or whether you just have a general sense of what you'd like to knit, say, a hat or a scarf.



REMEMBER

Patterns usually call for a little more yarn than you'll actually use, but because you want to swatch and account for the unknown (you actually hate three-quarter sleeves, you want to make a larger collar, or there's been some terrible yarn accident), buy a little extra yarn, particularly if it's being discontinued. Buying extra yarn also is a good idea because a ribbed or cabled pattern takes more yarn than stockinette stitch, and your knitting may vary. One extra ball is plenty for a small project; buy a couple of extra balls for a very large project. If you don't use the extra yarn, most yarn shops allow you to return unused balls in good condition for store credit. Just be sure to ask about the store's return policy before you buy, and remember that you can find great uses for odd balls, too.

Calculating yardage when you're substituting yarns

When you buy yarn, you obviously need enough to finish your project. But how much do you need? If you're using the yarn called for in a pattern, the pattern usually tells you how many balls to buy for each size. However, if you choose to use a yarn different from the pattern's suggestion, you may need to do a little calculating.

For instance, imagine that you want to knit a vest from a pattern that calls for eight skeins that each have 75 yards of yarn. But the yarn you want to use (that knits to the same gauge, of course!) has 109 yards per ball. How many balls should you buy?



REMEMBER

This sounds like a story problem from my daughter's math homework. And you can solve it just the way she would — by simply plugging in numbers. Use this general formula to determine how much yarn you need:

Number of skeins called for in the pattern × yards per skein = total yards needed for the pattern

Total yards needed for the pattern ÷ yards per skein of your chosen yarn = number of skeins you need (round up to the nearest whole number, if necessary)

Using my vest example, the math works out like this:

$$8 \text{ skeins} \times 75 \text{ yards per skein} = 600 \text{ yards}$$

$$600 \text{ yards} \div 109 \text{ yards per ball} = 5\frac{1}{2} \text{ balls of yarn}$$

So, because you can't buy five and a half balls of yarn, you need to buy six balls to make your vest.

Estimating your yarn needs when you're knitting on the fly

In the previous scenario, you can easily decide how much yarn to buy, but many times you don't have all the variables decided. For example, if you aren't working directly from a pattern or are working at a different gauge than a pattern recommends, you don't have a tidy way to determine how much yarn to buy. Or say you happen by a really big yarn sale. There's some wonderful wool on sale, but how much should you buy if you know you want to knit a sweater but haven't chosen a pattern yet? One approach is just to buy it all and sort it out later. A more cautioned approach is to decide on the garment you want to make and guesstimate how much you need. Table 1-2 gives yardage approximations for various projects in a variety of gauges.

Table 1-2 Estimates of Yards of Yarn Needed for Projects

Yarn Weight Category	Stitches per Inch	Yards Needed for a Hat	Yards Needed for a Scarf	Yards Needed for an Adult Sweater
1 Superfine	7 to 8	300 to 375	350	1,500 to 3,200
2 Fine	6 to 7	250 to 350	300	1,200 to 2,500
3 Light	5 to 6	200 to 300	250	1,000 to 2,000
4 Medium	4 to 5	150 to 250	200	800 to 1,500
5 Bulky	3 to 4	125 to 200	150	600 to 1,200
6 Super bulky	1.5 to 3	75 to 125	125	400 to 800

If you like more precision, take a look at Table 1-3, which tells you how many inches of yarn you need to knit 1 square inch at a variety of gauges.

Table 1-3 Yarn Needed to Knit One Square Inch

Yarn Weight Category	Stitches per Inch	Rows per Inch	Inches of Yarn Needed
1 Superfine	7 to 8	10	28
2 Fine	6 to 7	8½	26
3 Light (DK)	5½ to 6	7½	24
3 Light (light worsted)	5 to 5½	7	22
4 Medium (worsted)	5	6½	20
4 Medium (aran)	4 to 4½	6	18
5 Bulky	3 to 4	5	14
6 Super bulky	1½ to 3	4	12

You can use Table 1-3 pretty easily if you're making a scarf, but calculations get a bit more involved for something like a sweater. Still, it all comes down to geometry. For each piece of your project, multiply the length of the piece by the width, and then multiply this result by the length of yarn used per knitted inch. Here's how it works:

Length × width × the length of yarn per knitted stitch = inches of yarn needed

Inches of yarn needed ÷ 36 inches per yard = number of yards of yarn

Suppose you're making a scarf that's 60 inches long and 6 inches wide. You're using a medium weight yarn that knits to a gauge of 5 stitches per inch. With this gauge, Table 1-3 shows that you need 20 inches of yarn to knit a square inch. Multiply 60 by 6 by 20, and you need 7,200 inches of yarn. Divide that number by 36 inches in a yard and you get 200 yards.

Getting to the Point of Needles

The other must-have for knitting (besides yarn, of course!) is needles. While there aren't as many kinds of needles as there are kinds of yarn, you still have a lot to choose from and the decision of what to buy (or use) can be a bit bewildering. Read through the following sections to get a handle on your needle options.

Looking at different kinds of needles

It won't surprise you that knitters have preferences when it comes to yarn, but it may surprise you that sometimes their preferences for needles are even stronger. I like to knit on metal circular needles and find it faintly annoying to knit on anything else. Then again, I know tremendously skilled knitters who love straight, wooden needles. There's no right or wrong here. Take the opportunity to try out different needles to see which you like best.

Needles generally fit into a few basic categories, including straight needles, circular needles, double-pointed needles, and cable needles. You can see what they look like in Figure 1-2. Here are the characteristics of each:

» **Straight needles:** The most classic knitting needles are straight needles, which are about 14 inches long and made of metal or wood. They have a point on one end and a stopper of some sort on the opposite end to keep the stitches from falling off. You can knit almost anything on these, except for those projects that were designed to be knit in the round (see Chapter 11) or something extremely wide, such as a blanket. You can get shorter 10-inch length needles also, which are a bit more manageable for something like a scarf. These shorter needles are also easier to tuck into your bag.

» **Circular needles:** These needles have 2 pointy ends connected by a cable. They come in different lengths as well as different gauges. The length of a circular needle is measured from tip to tip. A pattern will specify which length you need for your project. For instance, to knit a hat you need a short length such as 16 inches. A sweater, on the other hand, knits up on a needle that's 24 or 36 inches long. If you're knitting something with a huge number of stitches (like a blanket or the shawl collar on the coats in Chapter 10), you may need an even longer needle.



TIP

Note that you can use circular needles even if you aren't knitting in the round. Just like you do with straight needles, turn the work around at the end of the row and switch the needle tips to the opposite hands. Think of your circular needle as two straight needles that happen to be stuck together. Some knitters prefer circular needles for all their projects because it's more difficult to lose a needle and because it keeps the weight of the knitting more centered in your lap. If you have trouble with repetitive stress injuries, circular needles may lessen the strain on your wrists.

- » **Double-pointed needles:** Double-pointed needles are used less often than straight and circular needles, unless you make a lot of socks. Double-pointed needles look like large toothpicks and come in sets of four or five. These needles are used to knit in the round to create tubes that are smaller than you can make on a single circular needle, mainly socks and the tops of hats.
- » **Cable needles:** Cable needles come in a few different varieties. Some are shaped like U's or J's; others are like short double-pointed needles with a narrow or bent spot in the center. One sort doesn't work better than another, so if you're having trouble with the one you've got, experiment a little with a different type. Read more about cables in Chapter 6.

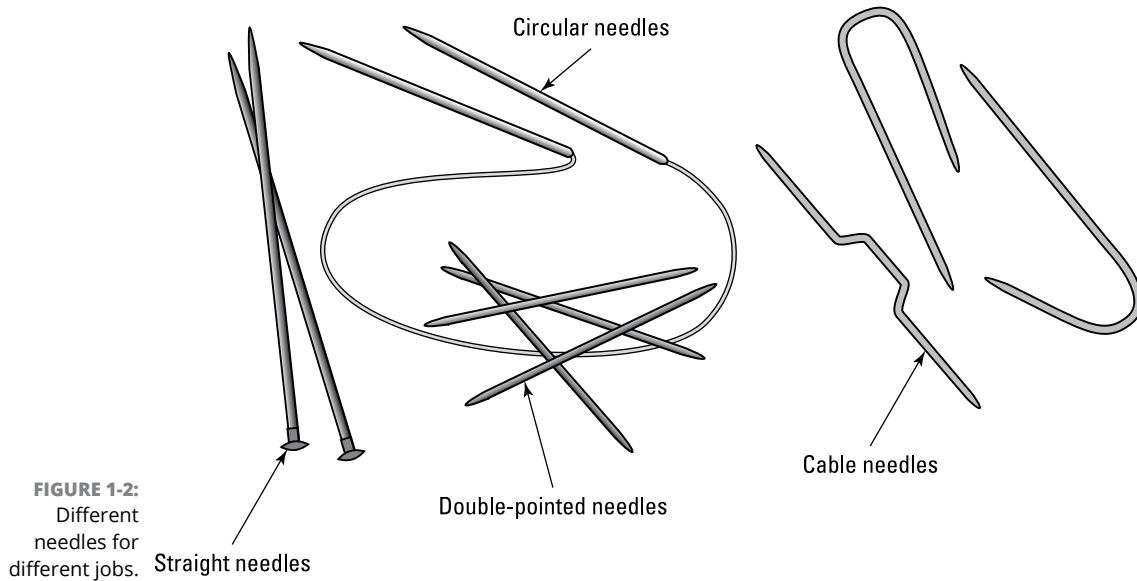


FIGURE 1-2: Different needles for different jobs.



TIP

Needles, whether circular or straight, can be made out of a variety of things: aluminum, steel, bamboo, exotic hardwoods, plastic, and even glass. The weight, price, slipperiness, and even the noise that the needles make can influence which needle is right for you. As a very general rule of thumb, use a slippery needle like metal for yarns that are sticky or catchy, such as mohair or chenille. Conversely, with slippery yarns, such as some ribbons and novelty yarns, try needles that are a little less smooth, like bamboo. As you take on new projects, you're likely to need different-sized needles every now and then. Why not try a needle made from something new the next time you buy?

Understanding needle sizes

Needles come in a range of sizes based on the diameter of the needle. In the United States, needles are numbered according to a somewhat logical but obscure system. It starts out okay with 0, 1, 2, and so on, but then it gets weird later with 9, 10, 10½, 11, 13, 15, and so on. Most of the rest of the world relies on the metric system to size knitting needles, so you'll also see needle sizes like 5 mm and 8 mm. You can compare metric and US needle sizes by looking at Figure 1-3.



REMEMBER

If you're reading a pattern that was written in Europe or you're reading the suggested needle size from a yarn label printed outside the United States, take note of whether the needle sizes are given in metric or U.S. form. That way, you'll be sure to use the right size.