

Gauge Hat

A hat is a great way to make a gauge swatch for a sweater. Here's a recipe for knitting a simple beanie cap, using your head measurement, your yarn, and your needles. Aim for a fabric you like. If your hat is going to be a gauge swatch, remember to wash and block your hat, so you have a true representation of what your sweater gauge will be. Pattern is for a plain beanie; add your own colorwork if you wish.

This free pattern is provided by PDXKnitterati; it's an easy to print pdf of my blog post about hats as gauge swatches:

<https://pdxknitterati.com/2020/12/15/gauge-hat-free-recipe-pattern/>



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Blocking is magic!

Yarn: 110 yards worsted weight yarn. Sample shown in Berroco Vintage (52% Acrylic, 40% wool, 8% nylon; 218 yards/100g).

Gauge: On larger needles: 20 sts = 4" in stockinette stitch after blocking.

Needles: US 5 (3.75 mm) and US 7 (4.5 mm) 16" circular needles, or size to obtain gauge, and US 7 DPNs or a second circular, to close top of hat. Gauge is not critical; aim for a fabric you like.

Instructions are given for working with your yarn and your gauge.

Notions: Tapestry needle, stitch markers.

Size/Finished measurements: Approximately 20" in circumference, and 8" tall, blocked.

Abbreviations

DPNs – Double pointed needles

K, P – Knit, purl

K2tog – knit 2 together

Rnd – Round

St, Sts – Stitch, stitches

Directions

Hats are pretty simple. Here's a recipe. Measure your head. You want your hat to measure 1-2" less than that. Negative ease keeps your hat from sliding over your eyes. Take your estimated gauge (I'm relying on the ballband guess of 5 sts/inch on a US 7. Multiply that by the number of inches you want (20" in this case). That gives me a cast on of 100 sts. I wanted to add this colorwork pattern which has a repeat of 8 sts, so I cast on 104 (13 x 8 = 104). That would make the hat between 20 and 21", which is fine. I could have used 96 instead, which would make the hat 19.5". Same same.

I like a K2P2 ribbing on the edge, which means my cast on should be a multiple of 4. 96, 100, and 104 are all fine for that. Cast on, using a needle 2 sizes smaller than the needle for the body of the hat (US 5 in this case). Knit K2P2 ribbing to desired height.

Change to larger needles and knit stockinette until piece measures 5.5" from the cast on (I tried 6.5" first, based on the common wisdom that a hat is as tall as your hand before you start the crown shaping, but it was too tall. 5.5" is plenty.)

Start crown decreases. I like a crown divided into 8 wedges. Ooh, look, my cast on was a multiple of 8! Perfect. (If you don't have a multiple of 8, decrease some stitches on the first decrease round so that you do.)

I have 8 sections of 13 sts each. I'll decrease with a k2tog for the last 2 sts of each section.

Rnd 1: *K11, k2tog, place marker, rep from * to end. (You're just knitting the last 2 stitches of each wedge together to decrease.)

Rnd 2: Knit all sts.

Rnd 3: *K10, k2 tog, slip marker, rep from * to end.

Rnd 4: Knit all sts.

Keep decreasing every other round, until 8 sts remain. Move work to dpns or magic loop or 2 circulars when it gets too tight on the circular needle. (Don't knit the final plain round after the last decreases. Pointy.) Cut yarn, use a yarn needle and run yarn tail through all sts, twice. Drop yarn to *inside* of hat, cinch up tight, sew in ends. Done! Block as desired.

When the hat is dry, I'll check my gauge to see if it changed. It's the post-blocking gauge that determines the measurements of the sweater. But you also have to know the pre-blocking gauge, which you're going to match while knitting. Measure twice, knit once! Apologies to This Old House.