

Heads are Round from the Top Down

by Christy Cooper

Introduction

I knit socks from the toe up, I knit sweaters from the top down, and I knit hats from the ... bottom edge? That didn't make sense to me, and the decreases on most hats weren't round enough for my head, leaving little scrunchy bits at the top I couldn't block out, so I created this hat pattern.

Important bits

Yarn: Around 100g of light worsted weight yarn.

Needles: I used size 6 US (4mm) needles, but I am a loose knitter. Use the needles that get gauge for you.

Gauge: 22 sts/4 in (22 sts/10 cm)

Finished size: Approx 22" in circumference

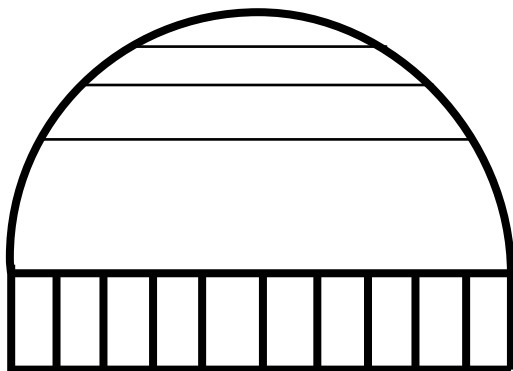
Please note: You may want to use DPN's, Magic Loop, or 2 circs while the hat is small, and change to a single circular needle for the ribbing. For tight ribbing, go down a needle size.

Abbreviations

KFB: Knit in the front and back of the stitch.

PM: Place Marker. Place a stitch marker in the work.

SM: Slip marker. Slide the marker from the left needle to the right.



The key to this pattern is the increases. You increase rather quickly to start with (every round) and then slower and slower, to make the top of the hat round. This takes more rows than most hat patterns allow for their decreases, but part of why top-down hats are cool is that you can thread some string through your stitches, and try the hat on.

Using Judy's Magic Cast-On (or your favorite provisional cast-on), cast on 3 sts to each of 2 needles.

Increase quickly (every row!):

Round 1: KFB every stitch (12 sts)

Round 2: *KFB, K1* repeat to end. (18 sts)

Round 3: *KFB, K2* repeat to end. (24 sts)

Round 4: *KFB, K3* repeat to end. (30 sts).

Increase every other row:

Round 5: *PM, KFB, K4* (36 sts)

Round 6: Knit plain.

Round 7-12:

Odd rows: SM, KFB, knit to next marker, Repeat to end. (42, 48, 54, 60 sts)

Even rows: Knit plain.

Stitch count will be 60 stitches at this point.

Increase every three rows:

Round 13-27:

First round: SM, KFB, knit to next marker. Repeat to end.
(66, 72, 78, 84, 90 sts)

Second Round: Knit plain.

Third Round: Knit plain.

Increase every four rows:

Rounds 28-47:

First round: SM, KFB, knit to next marker. Repeat to end.
(96, 102, 108, 114, 120 sts)

Second Round: Knit plain.

Third Round: Knit plain.

Fourth Round: Knit plain.

Knit your preferred ribbing:

Round 48: *K2, P2*, Repeat to end.

Continue in pattern until the hat is long enough, usually around 4.5-5" for a plain brim, up to 7" for a folded brim.

Cast off *LOOSELY*. I've been casting off by knitting one last round with 2 needles held together, then going around passing one loop over the next.

This way of increasing gives a nice round top to the hat, and a 2x2 rib will pull in to keep your head warm.

Feel free to experiment with different rib patterns. 120 is divisible by 2, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10, and 12. A rib fitting in any of these stitch counts will come out even. For example, I have made a hat that has ribbing in *K2, P1, K1, P2*, which is 6 sts, and looks pretty darned cool. I've also used 2x2 ribbing, and 1x1 ribbing successfully.

Feel free to knit these for gifts or charity projects, but please let me know if you want to sell finished objects.