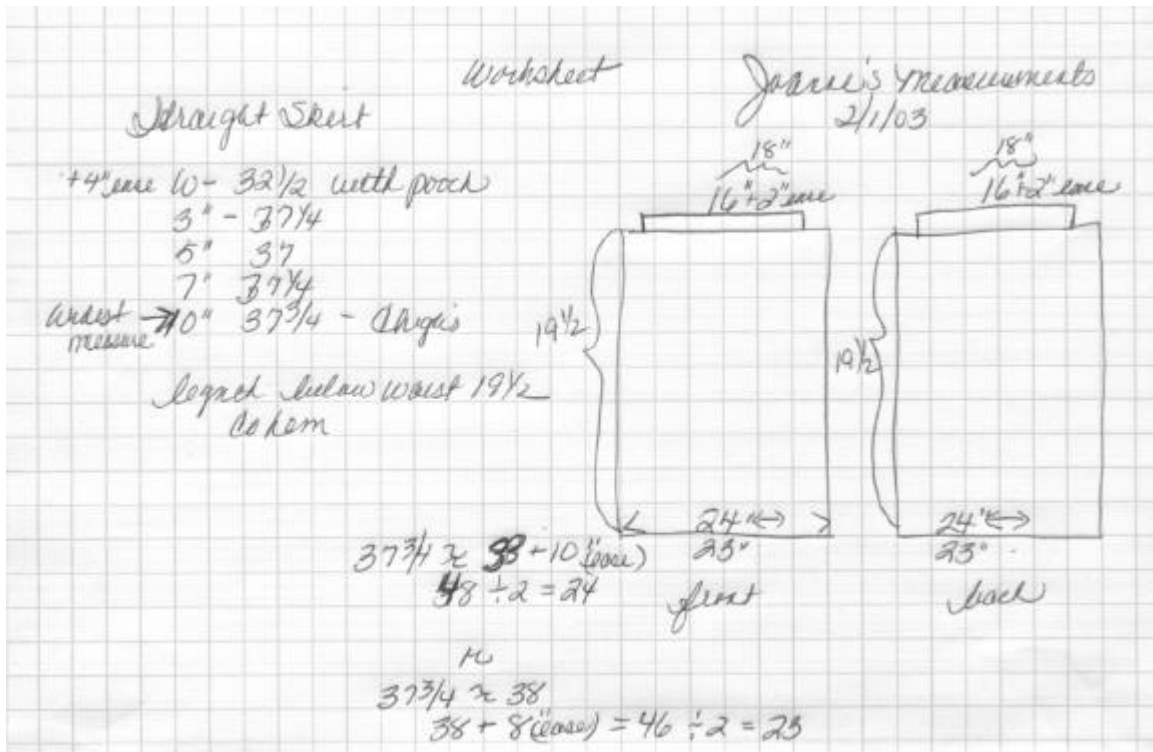




Charting Your First Straight Skirt Part 2

Now that you have your measurements we will translate them into a pattern for the knitting machine that you can follow. In this lesson we will convert your measurements to a schematic diagram to follow. This type of pattern reading is important to learn for the machine and hand knitter. Many worldwide publications present these types of notations within their patterns. It is a universal language that transcends any culture or language when used. By simply following the notations, the knitter converts the schematic information to a readable pattern that can be used over and over again.

Working with the measurements obtained in the previous lesson is used to figure the finished skirt width and length. Your worksheet should look similar to mine.





First, organize your measurements from the waist down. The next thing to do is add the ease you want to the widest hip or thigh measurement. Next add at least a 4-inch ease for the waist. The length was measured from the waist down, excluding the waistband. In the end I decided I wanted a tighter skirt (4 inch added) with a little extra ease at the waist.

These were my finished widest measurements with added ease:

W-36.5 = 37 inches

H- 42 inches

My length remained the same at 19 1/2 inches.

My finished gauge was 8 1/2 sts and 13 rows per inch

Writing Your Diagram- Sts-Rows-Times

When writing out the directions for your diagrams you will often see the notations at the sides written as **Stitches – Rows - Times** or **2 – 4 – 10**. It may say Dec 2 – 4 – 10 or in some publications Dec 2 sts x 4 R x 10x or even **2 – 4 -10x**. This would mean decrease 2 stitches every 4 rows 10 times. Know your abbreviations. Once in a while you may see them also listed as **Rows- Stitches- Times** as in dec 4-2-10 which would mean decrease every 4 rows, 2 stitches, 10 times. Make sure to read your directions first to make sure they make sense. In my diagram I will be using, **Stitches – Rows- Times** for my notations.

Next divide your measurements in half. Make a diagram for both the front and back even if they are the same. You may use the second half for making other notations such as for patterning, hems, or for any special changes you may want to make. This way your original diagram does not get too busy. No matter how you write your notations, the most important thing is that **you** understand them.

Multiplying my stitches x inches wide at bottom = stitches to cast on

Multiplying my stitches x inches wide at top = stitches to end with

Multiply rows x length of hem = rows of hem

Divide rows of hem into 2 = turning row of hem

Multiply rows x length of skirt = rows required to knit skirt

Multiply rows x length of waist band = total rows required to knit waist band



I have decided my widest point starts from 7 inches down from the waist because my 10 inch measurement is the same. I do not want to start my decreases yet or my skirt will be too narrow at the 3, 5, or 7-inch measurement. Conversely if I were knitting my skirt from the waist down, I would stop my increases shortly before or at the widest point I came to first, my 7-inch measurement.

Widest point of hips = 7 inches = 7×13 rows per inch = 91 rows I will round this number even to 90 as it is easier to work with and 1 row will not make a difference with this gauge.

Total rows to knit the skirt (265) – rows to knit over 7 inches (90) = Row 170 start my decreases, or if knitting the skirt from the waist down, R 70. I will knit to row 170. This point is where my last widest measurement is before the waist.

Subtract the total number of stitches to cast on (178) – total number of stitches for the waist line (158) = 20 sts

Discussion

At this point we have a few schools of thought we can consider. It is generally known as a rule that if you evenly distribute your decreases across the knitting your skirt will hang more naturally and have a better fit. This can be done in three increments (rule of thumb) spaced evenly across your knitting ending $\frac{1}{2}$ inch before the waistline or ending row of your knitting. The reason for this is that if you are adding on a separate waistband, the additional stitches plus the bulk created by the seam of the band may add inches to your look. It also may be a bit uncomfortable. In this case the 8 stitches adds up to almost an inch. Multiply that times two and you have two extra inches to deal with plus the band's seam at the waist. Stopping a half an inch does not usually interfere with the needed width to accommodate the hips natural flair from the waistline down.



This is a picture of a continuous knit waistband with a 4-inch ease gathered in.

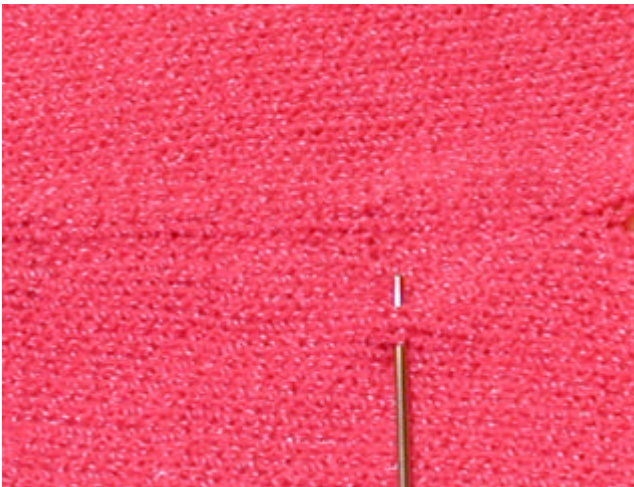
Another way to do this is to make full-fashioned decreases at each side of the skirt. We have two sides to the skirt so divide 20sts by 2 = 10 stitches to be decreased on each side over 6 inches. We get the 6 inches from subtracting $\frac{1}{2}$ inch from the 7 inches for less bulk at the waistline, and an additional $\frac{1}{2}$ inch to



accommodate the last widest measuring point to make sure I have the ease to go over the hip since this is a slender tight fitting skirt. $7 - 1 = 6$ inches. $6 \text{ inches} \times 13 \text{ (rows per inch)} = 78$ rows. I will round this up to the nearest ten (80) if possible because 10's are easier to work with, however this is determined by the next results.

Next, divide the rows (80) by stitch per side (10) = stitches (1 each side) to decrease over number of rows = (8) written as Dec 1 st each side every 8 rows 10 times, or 1-8-10x. An alternative is I could decrease 1 stitch each side every 8 rows 9 times, and 1 stitch each side every 6 rows 1 time (1x) written as 1- 8 - 9x, then 1 - 6 - 1x. As a general rule when finding your results try to round up or down to the nearest even number. A half a stitch is difficult to divide into two, and rounding up to or down to an even number makes adding and subtracting easier.

This is a picture of full-fashioned decreases made at the side seam.



Difficult to Fit Figures

For the more difficult to fit figure, there are many options to the above calculations. Short row knitting is a way to add ease in areas where you most need it such as at the back waistline, hips, thighs, stomach, buttocks and hemline. We will not cover these aspects in this class because there are numerous excellent pattern drafting books and software packages available for you to use. If this is the case for you, find a teenager or child you would like to knit for and draft them a skirt as though you were going to knit it for them with the gauge you have obtained with the practice yarn you are going to use. This exercise may be applied to other quick pattern alterations you may have to do in the future and help the knitter to better understand the charting process in its relationship to stitch row gauge and sizing.



Marking the sides of your skirt for proper stitch placement for seaming is an important step for nicely fitted seams and hems. Note the turning row for the hem and the yellow placement row marked for hand seaming.

Take a look at my diagram on the next page to see the final results of a tight fitting straight skirt.



As you can see I have made lots of reminders and notations so I won't forget what type of hem and band I used on this skirt. As you progress you will find that you will start to use different techniques and forget "exactly" what you did the first time around. Consequently, what may be considered redundant information today just might be important information to know later on. If you are thinking to keep the pattern add little references so that later on you will remember what you did.

I hope that some of this information will be useful to you. I look forward to working with you on making beautiful sweaters and tops to match. If you have any questions or comments please email me at Jsag77@cfl.rr.com.

Happy Knitting!

Joanne
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