



blue bee studio

Fitting a top-down set-in-sleeve sweater

A good fit through the shoulders is essential for a good fit overall. To choose which size to make, check the pattern schematic and find the size whose shoulder width most closely matches your own. To take this measurement, stand up straight and place your fingertips on the bony points on your shoulders, then have a friend measure between your fingertips.

When you've found the shoulder measurement that's closest to your own, compare the bust measurement for that size to your own. Adjustments can be made to the bust size of the garment by adding or subtracting stitches from the underarm shaping. In many cases, you can simply use the shaping instructions for the next size larger or smaller than the one that you are making, and begin the underarm shaping a little higher or lower to achieve the proper armhole size. For a more detailed explanation, read on:

Let's say you are making the 87 cm size, because that's the one that most closely matches your shoulder width. But your actual bust measurement is 92 cm, and you'd like to have the sweater fit with zero ease through the bust. Already you know that you'll need to add 5 cm worth of stitches to the total circumference of the garment. So, if our gauge is 26 stitches = 10 cm, then:

$5 \text{ cm} \times 2.6 \text{ stitches per cm} = 13 \text{ stitches needed}$. We'll round that down to 12, then divide by 2, allocating 6 extra stitches to each armhole.

Where to add or subtract stitches

Stitches are increased in 3 different ways to shape the underarms. These are:

- Single stitch increases worked a few stitches in from the edge.
- Multiple stitches cast on at the end of rows.
- Multiple stitches cast on on the joining row at the bottom of the underarm.

To adjust the bust measurement, generally, the single stitch increases are left as is, and changes are made to the number of stitches cast on at the ends of rows and on the joining row.

Using our example, we'll add 1 stitch to the end-of-row cast on for the back, 1 stitch to the end-of-row cast on for the front, and 4 stitches to the underarm joining row, giving us 6 extra stitches.

How bust adjustments affect the sleeves

The sleeves are designed to fit with 2.5—5 cm of *positive* ease through the widest part of the arm. Because the sleeve stitches are picked up from the armholes, the size of the armhole determines the circumference of the sleeve. If more stitches are added to the armhole, the overall width of the sleeve will be increased. This can be adjusted if necessary. Here's how it works:

Measure your upper arm at the widest point, then compare that measurement to the pattern's schematic. Add the extra width to the measurement on the schematic, and check to see if you are still within the recommended 2.5—5 cm of positive ease.

Say your upper arm measures 29 cm around. The schematic gives the sleeve circumference as 33 cm. If we add 2.5 cm to that, you'll end up with a sleeve that's a bit too loose.

To compensate for the extra bust stitches without creating a baggy sleeve, shift the armhole shaping a bit higher up on the garment, effectively removing rows from the straight part of the armhole. *For each stitch that you want to remove from the overall stitch count, begin the shaping 2 rows higher.*

If we take 4 stitches away from the overall sleeve circumference, we'll be back within our recommended 2.5—5 cm of ease. We can remove 2 stitches from the back and 2 stitches from the front by beginning the armhole shaping 4 rows higher on each side.

Big adjustments

If you are adding more than 5 cm to the bust circumference, you may wish to add an additional row of cast on stitches towards the bottom of the armhole. You might also wish to shift some of the extra stitches to the front of the garment, rather than adding stitches evenly to the front and back.

Watch your rows

If you add or subtract rows from the armhole, be sure that you have the same number of rows on the fronts and back when joining at the underarms.