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THE ORIGINAL CUSTOM-FIT DOG SWEATER



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PREFACE:

This pattern was inspired by the basic knitted dog sweater pattern by Linda Carvalho found in the Leisure Arts Leaflet #934 entitled *Dog Sweaters: 10 Designs to Knit & Crochet*. Although a perfectly fine sweater, I felt it did not provide sufficient protection for our dog against the snow and wind of an Upstate New York winter and so developed the following sweater to be worn by our "snow puppy" in those harsher conditions.

All comments are welcome! Please let me about your success or problems in using this pattern. Please include your dog's breed and neck & chest measurements as this will help determine how robust the pattern really is. I can be reached via email at ebozak@cs.oswego.edu or by snailmail at 103 E. Sixth St., Oswego, NY 13126.

MATERIALS:

a. YARN:

1. **TYPE:** I strongly recommend using wool (or a wool blend that is at least 50% wool) because a sweater made in wool will remain warm even if it gets soaking wet. Sweaters made from synthetics will not. Your dog will thank you.
2. **WEIGHT:** Sport, DK, or worsted weight are all appropriate. Pick whichever is best for your area's winter weather.
3. **AMOUNT:** Anywhere from 1-12 ounces or more, depending on the size of your dog, split between the colors you are using. Very small dogs will generally need approximately 1-3 oz. total; medium sized, 4-8; large dogs, 9+. Buy an extra skein or two -- it's better to have too much than to run out, and you can use any leftovers to make you a matching pair of mittens.

b. NEEDLES:

You will need three different sizes each in double-pointed and/or circular style. The actual lengths of any needles you use will depend on the size of your dog and your actual gauge, and hence, the number of stitches on your needles (described in the Preparation section below.)

- a. The needles used **for the body of the sweater** should be a size appropriate for the weight yarn you've selected, dp pointed for small dog sizes, circular for medium & large sizes.
- b. **For the ribbing** (neck, bottom edge, and sleeve), use one size smaller than the needle size used for the body.

- c. **For the sleeve's cuff**, use needles that are 3-4 sizes smaller than the ones used for the ribbing.

For example, if I have decided to use a size 8 (American) for the body of the sweater, I will need a size 7 for the ribbing and 3 or 4 for the cuff.

PREPARATION:

1. **Decide what pattern stitch(es)** you wish to use for the sweater. Just about anything goes -- stockinette, striped, Fair Isle or other 2+ color pattern, Aran/cables, mosaic, etc. Also, decide what type of ribbing stitch you wish to use. Two good choices are K1,P1 and K2,P2, although you can get as fancy as you wish.
2. **Decide what type of yarn** you want to use and choose a needle sizes appropriate for the yarn's weight.
3. **Make gauge swatches:** Using the needles you have chosen for your weight yarn, make a swatch:
 - a. of your chosen pattern stitch and determine the st and row gauge;
 - b. in stockinette stitch, if this is not your chosen pattern stitch.
4. **Measure your dog:**
 - a. **Neck** -- around the neck (just collar-level, or midway up the neck, is good).
 - b. **Chest** -- around the biggest part of the chest.
 - c. **Leg width** -- across the side of the upper front leg, at its widest point (just at or below shoulder/underarm area is good). Alternately, you can measure the leg's circumference at the underarm.
 - d. **Leg length** -- along the back of the front leg, from the underarm to the elbow. Alternately, you can measure from the center back (the spine) down the dog's leg to the elbow. The corresponding measurement of the sweater will be from its center back to the bottom edge of the sleeve.
 - e. **Neck-to-underarm** -- down the front, from where you measured the neck to the underarm of the front leg.
 - f. **Neck-to-chest** -- along the front & underside, from where you measured on the neck to the end of sternum/rib cage.
 - g. **Neck-to-tail** -- along the neck & back, from where you took the nec measurement to the base of the tail. This measurement will most accurate if taken with the dog in sit position.
5. **Add ease** to some of these measurements:
 - a. Add 1/2 to 1 inch to measurements 4a & b for ease and convert them to stitch counts, rounding up to a whole number. (The larger the dog, the more ease you probably will want to allow.) Use your pattern stitch's st/inch gauge for measurements 4b; use the stockinette stitch's st/inch gauge for measure 4a. You may need to round up/down 1-2 stitches for measurement 4a to give an even number of stitches for a K1,P1 ribbing. If you are using a K2,P2 ribbing, adjust the number of stitches to be a multiple of 4. (If you are using some other fancy ribbing, determine the necessary stitch repeat multiple and round up/down appropriately.)
 - b. Add up to 1/2" ease to measurements c & f. For measurement c, if you measured the dog's leg circumference, you will need to approximate the leg opening width as follows: $(\text{circumference}/2) + 1/2"$. If your dog is exceptionally large or has very muscular legs, you may need to add more ease.

6. **(Optional) Convert measurements** 4c, d, e, f, & g to row counts using your pattern stitch's row/inch gauge. Round up to a whole number. (Don't forget that measurements c & f should have some ease added in from step 5b.)
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BEGIN KNITTING!

NECK:

Using the needles chosen for the ribbing, cast on the number of sts needed for your dog's neck measurement (measurement 4a plus ease). Place a marker between the first and last stitches of the round. Work rounds in ribbing of your choice for 1-2 inches or desired length of neck ribbing.

YOKE:

Round 1: Changing to largest sized needles, work all sts in K, increasing evenly to 70-75% of total maximum number of stitches you will need based on your dog's chest measurement (measurement 4b plus ease).

Round 2: Work even in desired pattern stitch.

Round 3: Work in pattern increasing 1 st after the round's first stitch and one st before the round's last st.

Repeat Rounds 2 & 3 until you have achieved the total maximum number of sts needed. [The percentage you use in Round 1 will depend on the depth of the yoke (measurement e) and the number of increases you will need to make in this area to achieve the total number of sts. You should plan your increases such that the total max. number of sts has been reached preferably by the time the yoke is completed, or no later than within the first two rows of the leg openings section. Adjust the % increased to in Round 1 accordingly.]

At the same time, when you have reached the desired depth to the front legs' underarms (measurement 4e), cast off for the leg openings as follows: work 9.5% after marker (1/2 of underside section between legs), cast off 8% for leg opening, work 65% for back section, cast off 8% for second leg opening, and work remaining 9.5% sts to end of round. (Round up/down where necessary, keeping the same number of stitches for the two leg openings and centering the back section sts and the underside sections each between the two legs.)

LEG-OPENINGS SECTION:

This next section can be worked as back and forth as two separate sections (back and underside) or with steeks over the leg openings -- your choice. If you decide to work as 2 separate sections, you may attach a second ball and work the back and underside simultaneously, or you may work one at a time, being careful to work the two sections for the same number of rows. This is especially important if you are using any pattern stitch other than stockinette st; the sections' patterns must match when they meet up again.

If you have decided to use steeks, on the next round, cast on 5 sts over each leg opening for the steak.

Working either in rows or rounds, continue in pattern over the back and underside sections for a length equal to the front leg's width (measurement 4c plus ease). It doesn't hurt to knit a couple extra rows/rounds for ease if you feel you want a bit more.

If using steeks, bind off the steak sts on the last round worked; if working rows, back and forth, begin rounds again at this point.

CHEST SECTION:

Work in pattern and over each leg opening, cast on the same number of stitches you cast off for the opening. Work even until sweater length reaches the bottom of the rib cage/sternum (measurement 4f plus ease).

Next round: Cast off 22% of the stitches for the belly stitches.

BACK SECTION:

Again, you may work the rest of the sweater back and forth in rows, or you may work in rounds, using a steek over the belly stitches.

Round/Row 1: Work even in pattern. If working in rounds, cast on 5 sts for the belly steek.

Round/Row 2: Dec one st each side edge; use SSK at beginning of round/row and K2 tog at end.

Round/Row 3: Work even in pattern.

Repeat Rounds/Rows 2 & 3 until 55-56% of total max. sts are left for the lower back. Work even until sweater length, as measured along the center back line, equals 1 inch and 5 rows less than total desired length (measurement 4g). If working rows, end such that right side is facing.

Next round/row: SSK, work to last 2 sts, K2 tog.

Repeat this round/row 4 more times. If using a steek, bind off the steek sts on the last of these rounds. Cut yarn and place remaining sts on a holder. Alternately, you may simply bind off all remaining sts.

Cut any steeks open.

BELLY GUSSET & BACK RIBBING:

Hold the sweater belly up & with right side facing. Using circular needles of the size selected for the ribbing, starting at left-hand side edge, pick up 1 st per row along side, k sts at lower back edge from holder to needle, and pick up 1 st per row along right hand side edge. (If you have cast off the lower back edge sts, then pick up 1 sts per sts along this edge instead.)

Continuing, pick up 1 st for each cast-off sts at the underside -- these sts will be referred to as the belly sts, and the rest of the sts, the side sts.

Place a marker one st after the first belly st and one before the last belly st picked up.

Row 1 (Wrong side): Work in desired ribbing across *belly sts only*. As you work this row, adjust the number of sts by decreasing when necessary so that the resulting number of sts is an appropriate multiple + 1/2 multiple for your ribbing st AND that you end with P sts on each side. (These end belly sts will be K sts on the right side.) For example, if you are using a K2,P2 ribbing, you will need a multiple of 4 + 2 sts and the ribbing will be done as: K2; *(p2,k2); repeat from * to end. For K1,P1 ribbing, you will need an odd number of sts, and the ribbing will be knit as: K1, *(p1,k1), repeat from * across.

Row 2: Turn work to right side; with yarn behind, sl 1 side st from right-hand needle to left, K2 tog, rib to st after 2nd marker, SSK (last belly st and next side st on left needle.)

Row 3: Turn work to wrong side; with yarn in front, sl 1 side st on right-hand needle to left, P2 tbl, work in ribbing to st after

2nd marker, p2 tog (last belly st and next side st on left needle.)

Repeat Rows 2 & 3 for 1" for small dogs, 1.5" for medium dogs, 2" for large dogs, or until desired gusset length is reached. (The gusset should be long enough to cover the "hollow" immediately below the dog's sternum.) End after a Row 3 has been completed.

Turn work to right side. Begin working in rounds, ribbing across all belly and side sts as follows:

Round 1: Sl 1 side st from right to left needle, K2 tog (belly st and slipped side st), rib across belly sts to st after 2nd marker, SSK (last belly sts and next side st), rib across all but the last side st, adjusting side st count to be an appropriate multiple for your ribbing pattern.

Round 2: K2 tog (last unworked side st and first belly st), rib across belly sts to st after 2nd marker, SSK, continue around side sts maintaining ribbing as established to last side st.

Repeat Round 2 until side ribbing is 1" in length (1/2" for small dogs.) Bind off all sts loosely in ribbing.

SLEEVE:

Using the needles chosen for ribbing, pick up 1 st per row and 1 st per cast-off st around leg opening. Work in rounds in the ribbing st you've selected, adjusting (by decreasing) the number of sts to be an appropriate multiple for your ribbing st. When sleeve length is approximately 3/4" from desired total sleeve length (measurement 4d), switch to the needles selected for the cuff. Continue ribbing until desired total sleeve length. Bind off in ribbing.

Repeat for second sleeve. Be sure to adjust the number of stitches, if necessary, to be identical with the number of stitches used in the first sleeve.

APPENDIX A: ALTERNATE SLEEVES

ALTERNATE SLEEVE #1 WITH SNUGGER CUFF:

For K1,P1 ribbing -- Work as for original sleeve to cuff. Switch to smaller needles. On next round you will decrease 25% of the sts currently on the needle, 2 sts at a time, so first calculate what 25% of the sleeve sts is. Round up/down to an even number. Plan the decreases evenly along the round, placing them at (k1,p1,k1) sequences.

Now knit first cuff round as follows: Work in ribbing until you reach the 1st k1,p1,k1 sequence for a 2-st dec, sl 1 knitwise, k2 tog, PSSO (3-st sequence has now been decreased to one k st). Continue ribbing around, performing 2-st decreases at planned points. At end of round you should have only about 75% of original number of sleeve sts left and the ribbing should still be in "perfect" k1,p1 sequence. Continue work on reduced number of sts until desired sleeve length. Bind off.

ALTERNATE SLEEVE #2:

Pick up sts around sleeve opening. Work in same pattern stitch as used for sweater body (or some related variation to it) until ready to begin cuff. Switch to smaller needles for cuff and work in desired ribbing st around, decreasing evenly to about 75% of total number of sleeve stitches on the first round of ribbing. Make sure you end up with an appropriate multiple for the ribbing st you wish to use. Work cuff in ribbing until sleeve is desired length. Bind off.

APPENDIX B: SUGGESTIONS

SUGGESTION #1:

You might want to make the first sweater for your dog without steaks so that you can have him/her try it on at various

points to check the fit. These points are: 1) after the neck ribbing is completed; 2) before you bind off the leg openings; 3) before you bind off the belly sts (checking the length of the leg openings, too); and 4) before you decrease at the lower back edge to round the corners. I have made sweaters using steeks which required ripping out and adjusting *after* I had cut the steeks. Doable, but definitely *not* fun.

(Yes, I am implying you make at least *2* sweaters for your dog. If she/he is anything like mine, she/he'll get one wet playing in the snow and then want to go back out before the sweater has time to dry. Just like a kid, who always needs several pairs of mittens for this same reason. :-)

SUGGESTION #2:

If you are using a K2,P2 ribbing, when you are working on the first round involving all the belly and side sts, you may find the ribbing will lie flatter if you increase one st between each of the sts you picked up over the area of the rounded corners.

SUGGESTION #3:

Write down all measurements (both actual and those resulting after adding in the amount of ease you used), type of yarn used, sizes of needles used, gauges, st/row counts, inches/rows actually knit in sections, etc. Anything that you may need to make your dog a second sweater and have it fit as well or better. This will save you a great deal of time if you decide to use this pattern for your dog or someone else's.

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URL: <http://www.cs.oswego.edu/~ebozak/knit/esb-patterns/dog-sweater.html>