

Smoking Needles Machine Knitting By "10" Theory

Rachelle Moffett, © Copyright 2008, all rights reserved
Visit on the web @ <http://www.smokingneedles.net/>

How often have you picked up a pattern that read "gauge must be matched exactly before starting garment?" In my 20+ years of machine knitting I've only reached the phenomenon (exact gauge) three times. I usually rechart purchased patterns using my own gauge but schematics are not always included. In that case, charting becomes a tedious and time-consuming ordeal. A few years ago I stumbled onto an idea that really works. After knitting several swatches, I noticed I was often able to obtain or at least come very close to the row gauge more often the stitch gauge required by a pattern. Instead of knitting hundreds of swatches to try to get closer to the stitch gauge I decided to try an experiment.

As an example let's say the pattern you want to knit calls for a 6.25 sts/ 16.7 rs per inch gauge. Your gauge is 5.75 sts/ 17 rs per inch. The stitch gauge is different enough to either make your sweater too small or too large. The row gauge is acceptable. To determine if either gauge is acceptable use my "BY 10 THEORY." My "BY 10 THEORY" is better explained as if you multiply your gauge and the pattern gauge by 10, what is the difference between the two? In this case 62.5 st vs 57.5 sts is a difference of 5 sts. Five sts is no big deal if we were only dealing with 10 inches. But over a 22 inch sweater (Size 44) it will be a big deal. Your sweater will wind up being about 2 inches too big. Then do the same with the row gauge. With a difference of only three rows over 10", six rows over 20", and nine rows over 30" this number of rows could be easily subtracted at the beginning or right before the end of a garment piece or it could simply be left as it is.

The finished width you need for your sweater is 21" (Size 42). Below is a table with size and number of sts to be used. Multiply your stitch gauge by 21 (or one half of the finished sweater measurement). The answer is 120.75 st. Round either up or down. I always round to the nearest even number--120. Now look at the table and see what size use 120 needles. The size 38 is nearest. Because it is an oversize sweater it should fit. Just remember to highlight all the numbers pertaining to size 38. If you wanted a wider sweater than the pattern allows, maybe a 52, divide by 2 (26). Now multiply by your stitch gauge. The answer is 151. You would cast on and knit as for size 48.

This method works in a lot of cases especially when you've knitted lots of swatches and are about to give up on a pattern you otherwise like. Try it. you may find it works for you and now you have more time to knit sweaters.

SIZE	36	38	40	42	44	46	48	
# OF STS	112	118	124	130	136	144	150	