

## Using Patterns With Needles Out Of Work

When using a pattern that doesn't have every needle working, there are some differences you need to be aware of, especially if your pattern is using both beds. The rules for increasing and decreasing on double beds with all needles in work is to increase or decrease on the front bed and keep the back bed in sync (in effect, you do the procedure on both beds.) Needles that are out of work still count when calculating gauge, or increases and decreases.

First, when calculating your gauge, don't count the number of working needles, you always use the needle scale just like when you have all needles working (this just makes life so much easier).

When increasing or decreasing you always think in terms of needle widths, not working needles. For instance: let's say you are working with 1x1 rib, so every other needle is out of work. If you need to decrease a stitch, you just move the outside stitch from one bed to the outside stitch on the opposite bed and you have decreased one stitch, or you can just put a needle into work on the bed opposite of the current outside stitch (you will be breaking the needle rule).

Full fashion increases and decreases are harder in this situation, because to keep the pattern looking nice, you need to move stitches on both beds. The solution is to not do an increase or decrease until you need to do 2. Then you move each bed separately – move 3 stitches on the back bed over one working needle, then move 3 stitches on the front bed over one working needle. You've now increased or decreased 2 stitches.

So what do you do if you're not working with double bed, but just on the front bed? Let's say that your pattern is 2 needles in work and then 3 needles out of work. How do you decrease (assuming that you have 2 needles working on the edge of the fabric)? Just move both stitches on the edge in one needle. Granted, you now have less than your pattern 3 empty needles between the working needles, but that is how it works. You keep moving those 2 stitches in until you have them next to another set of 2 working needles. Now when you decrease the next time, you just move the outside two stitches in one needle. This gives you 3 working needles on the edge of the fabric, but it will get down to 2 with your next decrease.

Increasing using the above pattern (2 in work, 3 out) is a bit different. You would add one needle to the edge pair so that you have 3 working needles on the edge. The next increase is done the same way so that you have 4 needles. On the next increase, you move the 2 outside stitches one needle out, moving the empty needle to non-working position. At this point, you have 2 needles in work, 1 needle out of work, 2 needles in work and 3 needles out of work. Your next increase will move the 2 stitches on the edge out one needle and now you will

have 2 non-working needles between 2 end pairs of working needles. Your next increase puts you back in pattern with 2 working needles separated by 3 non-working.

The rule is to move stitches out one needle and as you add stitches, to move those new stitches into pattern as you can. The first time you do shaping with a pattern where not all needles are working takes a bit of extra work, but it does get easier and more apparent what you have to do to achieve your goal.

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