

Pocket Top Hat



This pattern gets around the pooling effect of a variegated yarn through decrease-avoidance.

Yarn (or equivalent)

Superwash 100% Merino Wool from Biscotte & Cie (at etsy.com or select yarn stores)
 Colourway shown: Watermelon... isn't it fabulous? I love the seeds.
 Yardage: 186 yards for size large, less for medium and small

Gauge (on 3.75mm/US size 5 needles, stocking stitch)

16 stitches = 4"

22 rows = 4"

Needles

Straight needles, plus a set of 5 double-points, in size 3.75mm/US 5 (or size to obtain gauge)

Sizing Note

Biscotte's Superwash Merino is very springy, so my 22" head was about the smallest I'd put into size L. If you're putting it on a head larger than 24", I'd go up a needle size over adding in the few stitches you'd need. Sizes given are for Small (18"-20") – I mean, how adorable would this be on a little girl? – Medium (20"-22"), and Large (22"-24"). I recommend size L if you're planning to use the hat as a tea cosy between outings, unless you favour a small teapot.

Stress-Busting Tip

One thing I don't enjoy about double pointed needles is purling the first stitch on a new needle, but on this project it's unavoidable... so I finally figured out how not to tear my hair out doing it:

When the last stitch on the previous needle was a purl, slip the new right-hand needle into the first stitch on the new left-hand needle purlwise, so that the new right is parallel to, and *behind* (or above) the old right-hand needle. Swing the yarn up from the front of the old right into the space between the old and new rights, then curl the yarn up and over the new right to make the stitch.

When the last stitch was a knit, your yarn is already behind the old right, so just lift and wrap the new stitch with the old and new right needles positioned as described above.

Pocket Top Hat

Cast on 72 (80, 88) stitches (sts) with straight needles and
Slip 9 (10, 11) sts onto first of five double pointed needles (dpn)
Slip 18 (20, 22) sts onto second dpn
Slip 18 (20, 22) sts onto third dpn
Slip 18 (20, 22) sts onto fourth dpn
Slip 9 (10, 11) sts onto fifth dpn

Arrange the dpns like a corral with the bumpy side of your cast-on stitches facing in and the gap for the gate pointed straight at you. Lift your yarn up and over so it feeds into the knitting from the back and above. Then slip on a stitch marker to mark your start.

Border

Row 1 – knit 1 stitch and purl the next (K1, P1) until you reach your marker.

Row 2 – purl all stitches to marker (P)

Repeat these two rows 4 more times for a total of 10 rows.

What you're making here is a rice stitch, wrong side out. The right side is really smooth, which you want against your forehead, while the wrong side looks interesting and adds enough texture to mask any colour-pooling when you get to the decreases later.

Added bonus: if you want, you can make the hat longer to accommodate extra flop or a ponytail (any effort you make with your hair tends to pull a hat up), and just flip up the brim when you want the top of the hat a little closer to your head. The border will still look good.

Body

The body is straight stocking stitch and you'll be keeping that up long enough to reach the middle of the top of your (recipient's) head, since there's no decrease at the crown on this hat. I'm just giving one length here – the one that worked for the adult with the 22" head (me) – but I think you might not want much less even for a child, if that child wears a ponytail a lot. And that length?

38 K rows (6" – the total length will be 7.5" from cast-on) ending at the stitch marker.

Top

First up: closing off the top and cutting the number of stitches in half, in just one row.

Redistribute the stitches so that the first 18 (20, 22) to the left of the marker are on one needle, the first 18 (20, 22) to the right on another, and 18, (20, 22) more stitches on each of the remaining two.

Now line up the dpns so there are two sets of 36, (40, 44) stitches pressed together, with the yarn hanging from the end of the back right needle. Slip a straight needle purlwise into the first stitch on the back dpn, then purlwise through the first stitch on the front needle. Purl these two stitches together (p2 tog). Repeat to end.

Now you get into some fussy decrease stitches at the start and end of each row. Anything that follows in ***bold and italic*** is detailed at the bottom of the next page.

Top cont'd

Row 2: *sl 1, p1, sl1, pssso twice*; K1, P1 to last three sts; P2 tog; slip the last stitch as if to purl it (purlwise) and pass the purled stitch over it as though casting off – 32 (36, 40) sts remain.

Row 3: *sl1, k1, pssso, ret. LH needle, PNSO*; P to last three sts; slip the last stitch purlwise, K2 tog, then pass the slipped stitch over the knit one as though casting off – 28 (32, 36) sts remain.

Row 4: as Row 2 – 24 (28, 32) sts remain.

Row 5: as Row 3 – 20 (24, 28) sts remain.

Row 6: as Row 2 – 16 (20, 24) sts remain.

Row 7: as Row 3 – 12 (16, 20) sts remain.

Row 8: as Row 2 – 8 (12, 16) sts remain.

Row 9: as Row 3 – 4 (8, 12) sts remain.

Row 10: as Row 2 (size S, do not decrease but K1 P1 twice and turn) – 4 (4, 8) sts remain.

Row 11: as Row 3 (size S, M, do not decrease but P to end and turn) – 4 (4, 4) sts remain.

Row 12: cast off knitwise, leaving an 8" tail for finishing.

Finishing

Find a seriously cute button and use the tail to stitch it on either on the flap (sizes S and M) or the point (size L). Run in the remaining tails for cast on and cast off and you're done!

The Fussy Decrease Stitches

(they aren't quite what they seem.)

sl 1, p1, sl1, pssso twice

Slip the next stitch as if to purl it (purlwise) onto the right needle, purl the next stitch, then slip the third stitch as if to knit it (knitwise) – thereby twisting it – and return it to the left needle. Now slip the purled stitch onto the left needle too and pass the twisted stitch over it. Slip the purled slipped back to the right needle again and pass the original slipped stitch over it.

sl1, k1, pssso, ret. LH needle, PNSO

Slip the next stitch purlwise, knit the following stitch, and pass the slipped stitch over the knit one. Put the knit stitch back onto to the left needle and pull the stitch to its left over the knit stitch. Now return the knit stitch to the right needle.