

Fast Hat Four Ways



The ribbing on this hat makes it super stretchy, so the only measurement you need to worry about is length, and even then, you get some leeway. The ‘four ways’ part depends on how you count it. You could say it’s a toque or a cloche, or a hat for adults or children, or your choice of striped or solid. I say it’s adaptable for adults, children (or petite adults), adults with really good hair they’d rather not crush, and adults with ponytails that make an annoying bump in Every. Single. Hat. These last two categories apply to men as well as women, but in my opinion the resulting hat will probably find more favour in the girl camp.

Yarn of Choice

Patons Classic Wool, Merino or otherwise, worked with two strands instead of just one. The basic hat requires one ball, the cloche a little more. It’s easiest to work from two separate balls, so if you’re doing it with one, roll it into two balls. This yarn tends to stick to itself in the original ball anyway and it’s a drag to untangle it halfway through.

Gauge (on 4.5mm needles)

20 rows = 4”

20 stitches k1 p1 rib = 4”

Needle size determines hat size

5.5 mm needles – cloche

4.5 mm needles – unisex toque

3.75 mm needles – toque for child or petite adult

Sizing note

Based on my random sampling of one man with a head circumference of 22.25”, the hat on 4.5 mm needles with 4.75” of pattern (25 rows) prior to the first decrease row reached the bottom of the head in back, and skimmed the top of the eyebrows in front. If you’re making the hat for a person with a very long forehead, you might go up to 29 rows. 30 can be just a little too much (sorry, Robert!)

Basic Hat Recipe

Cast on 72 stitches (sts) with straight needles and, to ensure insanely easy decreases at the end,
 Slip 8 sts onto first of five double pointed (dp) needles
 Slip 18 sts onto second dp needle
 Slip 18 sts onto third dp needle
 Slip 18 sts onto fourth dp needle
 Slip 10 sts onto fifth dp needle

Not sure how to guarantee your nice clean cast-on edge makes it to the outside of the hat? Thank goodness then, I'm not the only one who couldn't figure it out! But I did eventually. Here's how: arrange the dp needles like a corral with the bumpy side in and the gate opening pointed straight at you. Lift the balls of yarn up and over so they feed into the knitting from the back and above.

Slip on a stitch marker to mark your start. Knit one stitch, purl one stitch, and repeat until you hit the marker again (K1 P1 rib). Repeat until you measure 4.75 inches below the needle, or count 25 rows (see sizing note on previous page.)

Decrease Rows

- Row 1: Work 7 sts in pattern (patt), then work the 8th and 9th stitch together as whatever the 9th stitch is (if 8 and 9 are purl and knit, then knit 2 together; if 8 and 9 are knit and purl then purl two together.) Repeat to the end of the row. 64 stitches remain.
- Row 2: Knit K stitches, and purl P stitches. You will sometimes break the K1 P1 pattern to do this.
- Row 3: Work 6 sts in patt, then work the 7th and 8th stitch together as whatever the 8th stitch is. See how easy this is? You're leaving just one tidy P stitch on the end of every needle. (56 sts)
- Row 4: as row 2.
- Row 5: Work 5 sts in patt, work the 6th and 7th stitch together as whatever the 7th stitch is. (48 sts)
- Row 6: as row 2.
- Row 7: Work 4 sts in patt, work the 5th and 6th stitch together as whatever the 6th stitch is. I know, this is getting boring, but starting from the next decrease it'll just fly. (40 sts)
- Row 8: as row 2.
- Row 9: Work 3 sts in patt, work the 4th and 5th stitch together as whatever the 5th stitch is. (32 sts)
- Row 10: as row 2.
- Row 11: Work 2 sts in patt, work the 3th and 4th stitch together as whatever the 4th stitch is. (24 sts)
- Row 12: as row 2.
- Row 13: Work 1 st in patt, work the 2nd and 3rd stitch together as whatever the 3rd stitch is (16 sts)

Finishing

Once 16 sts are left on the needles, do not knit a 'row 2'. Cut a 6-8" tail and run the end through a needle, then thread it through all stitches, slipping them off the needles as you go. Pull tight and tack on the inside. It's helpful to close off any stubborn gap in the top by stitching straight across it, effectively dividing it into quarters as you go. Repeat for any other tails, like the one at the cast-on, and any stripes you added. To help its wearer remember where the back is, sew a button or pompom on the side.

Variations

The Cloche (for girls with good hair)

Use 5.5mm needles and work in K1, P1 rib until you measure 5.75” (about 30 rows) below your needle, then begin decrease. After the finishing stage, fold up the front of the brim as high as it pleases you, then tack. Add felted flowers, a pompom, or a really cool button to the side for panache.

The Ponytail Hat

To accommodate a ponytail worn high, work in pattern until you count 20 rows below your needle. For a mid-level ponytail, work until you count 15.

Making the hole: Knit the first stitch after the stitch marker on your next row, then cast off five stitches and knit two stitches together. Work to end of row.

Closing the hole: Knit the first stitch after the stitch marker on your next row, then cast on five stitches by knitting into the first stitch on the left needle, drawing out the new loop until it’s long enough to twist and slip back onto the left needle, and repeating the process four times more.

Finish as for the Basic Recipe.

The Striped Hat

Version One:

Work as for Basic Recipe until you count 4-5 rows below your needle, then use one of the following stripe variations or use your own before returning to main colour. Because of the ribbing, each colour needs at least two rows.

4 rows in colour 2
2 rows in colour 1
3 rows in colour 2
2 rows in colour 1
2 rows in colour 2
2 rows in colour 2
4 rows in colour 3
2 rows in colour 2

2 rows in colour 2
4 rows in colour 1
3 rows in colour 2
2 rows in colour 1
remainder of hat in colour 2

Version Two:

Work as for Basic Recipe until you count 4 rows below your needle, then change to a second colour and work five rows in pattern (there will be 4 below your needle.) Change colour either back to the first, or to a third, and work for five rows. Continue with 5 rows of stripe in any sequence that pleases you, bearing in mind that you will begin decrease after about 5 stripes. Continue stripe pattern as set throughout the decrease section.