

The Little e-book of Abbreviations and Knitting

Terms

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Here's a handy e-book that you can save on your mobile device or print off and laminate. Keep it in your knitter's toolbox for those moments when you need a little help.

Most knitting magazines, pattern leaflets, and books provide a list of abbreviations or special vocabulary used in their instructions.

Abbreviations are a type of shorthand to save space and provide clear direction. It is not uncommon to find slightly different abbreviations for the same term. For example, "**kb**" or "**ktbl**" mean knit through the back loop, but more often "**kb**" means knit one in the row below. The following information consists of two common lists: **abbreviations** and **knitting terms**. I've also included two of my favorite techniques: the "**One Row Buttonhole**" and the "**Bind Off Seam**".

COMMON ABBREVIATIONS

alt	alternate; alternately	oz	ounce
approx	approximate	p	purl
beg	begin; beginning	pat(s)	pattern(s)
BO	bind off; sometimes bobble	pb	purl one stitch in row below
C	cable	pfb	purl into front and back of stitch (increases one stitch)
CC	contrast color	PM	place marker
cm	centimeter	psso	pass slip stitch over
cn	cable needle	ptbl	purl through back loop
CO	cast on	p2tog	purl two stitches together
cont	continue; continuing	pwise	purlwise; insert needle into the stitch as if to purl
dec	decrease; decreasing	rem	remain; remaining
decs	decreases	rep	repeat
DK	double knitting (weight)	rev st st	reverse stockinette (stocking) stitch
dp; dpn(s)	double pointed needle(s)	RH	right hand
fol; foll	follow; following	rib	ribbing; rib stitch
g; gr	gram; grams	rnd(s)	round(s) (used instead of "row" in circular knitting)
grp(s)	group(s)	RS	right side
g st	garter stitch	sk	skip
inc	increase; increasing	skp	slip 1, knit 1, pass slip stitch over knit 1
incs	increases	sl	slip; move the stitch to the needle without working it. The stitch is moved either kwise or pwise.
in(s)	inch(es)	sl st	slip stitch
k	knit	ssk	slip, slip, knit decrease: slip 2 stitches kwise one at a time to right needle. Insert left needle into fronts of these two stitches from left to right. Knit them together.
kwise	knitwise; insert needle into the stitch as if to knit	ssp	slip, slip, purl decrease: slip 2 stitches kwise one at a time to right needle. Return these 2 slipped sts to the left needle, keeping them twisted. Purl these 2 sts together through back loops.
kb	knit one stitch in row below; (sometimes knit through back loop)		
kfb	knit into front and back of stitch (increases one stitch)		
ktbl	knit through back loop		
k2tog	knit two stitches together		
lp(s)	loop(s)		
LH	left hand		
m	meter		
M1	make one stitch		
M1L	make one left		
M1R	make one right		
MB	make bobble (more common than BO)		
MC	main color		
mm	millimeter		
mult	multiple		
opp	opposite		

st(s)	stitch(es)
st st	stockinette or stocking stitch
tbl	through back of loop(s)
tog	together
won	wool over needle
wrn	wool round needle
WS	wrong side
w&t	wrap and turn (used in short row shaping)
wyib	with yarn in back of needle
wyif	with yarn in front of needle
yb; ybk	yarn to the back of needle
yd(s)	yard(s)
yf; yfwd	yarn to the front or forward
yfon	yarn forward and over needle
yfrn	yarn forward and round needle
yo	yarn over needle
yo2	yarn over two times
yo twice	yarn over two times
yon	yarn over needle
yrn	yarn round needle

COMMON KNITTING TERMS OR PHRASES

Asterisk *

Repeat directions or sequence of stitches following the asterisk as many times as indicated. For example, *k3, p1; repeat from * to end of row; this means to knit 3, purl 1 in this sequence to the end of the row.

As established

When the instructions have a series of steps or patterns to work, rather than repeating them row by row, it will tell you to continue working in the pattern **“as established”**. For example, if asked to work a 12 row pattern repeat and complete shaping; you shape the piece, but also continue working in the established 12 row stitch pattern. “Keeping pattern correct” or “maintaining pattern” are also phrases that may be used instead of “as established” and have the same meaning.

At the same time

Two or more things are going to take place simultaneously or **“at the same time”**. Work the instructions that immediately follow this phrase at the same time as the instructions that immediately precede it.

Back of your work

The back of your knitting is the side of the piece that faces away from you as you work. Don't confuse this with the right side (RS) or wrong side (WS) of the knit fabric.

Blocking

The process of shaping knitted pieces with moisture, that smooth and even irregularities, and flattens the edges.

Brackets []

The instructions within the brackets are repeated as many times as indicated. As an example; [k2, p3]3 times, means the stitch instructions inside the brackets are worked three times.

Cable

Cables are formed by exchanging the positions of two or more stitches, by crossing a stitch or group of stitches over another stitch or group of stitches. A cable needle or double pointed needle is used to hold the stitches to be crossed. These stitches are held either to the front (cable crosses to the left) or back (cable crosses to the right). Cables are worked on the right side of the knitting.

Continue in pattern

Continue knitting in the pattern stitch as previously described.

Cross

Some pattern instructions use the term “cross” for cable. Typically, a cross is done with two or three stitches. A cross is usually worked without a cable needle. Crossing more than three stitches is considered a cable.

Decrease

This is a shaping instruction to decrease the number of stitches on your needle. One, two, or three stitches can be decreased at one time. Binding off is necessary when decreasing more than three stitches. There are different methods used to decrease, such as knitting two stitches together (k2tog).

End with a wrong side (WS) or right side (RS) row

The last row worked is either a WS or RS row.

Front of your work

The front of your work is the side that faces you as you are holding the needles. This can either be the right or wrong side of the knitting or knit fabric.

Increase

This is another shaping instruction to increase the number of stitches on your needle. One or two stitches can be increased in one place. As with decreasing, there are different methods to increase, such as make one stitch (M1).

Increase (inc) or decrease (dec) every other row

This means to increase or decrease, usually on every right side row, and then work the following row without increasing or decreasing.

Multiple

A multiple is the number of stitches required to form one complete pattern stitch or motif horizontally, whether it be a cable, a leaf, or other motif. The number of stitches on the needle must be divisible by this number. This information is usually given at the beginning of the stitch pattern instructions. The multiple appears as a sequence of stitches between two asterisks.

Parentheses ()

Encloses instructions which should be worked the exact number of times specified immediately following the parentheses. For example, (k1, p1)twice. Parentheses are also used to list garment sizes, measurements, yarn quantities, stitch numbers, and any other additional information needing clarification.

Pass slip stitch over (pss)

This abbreviation appears after a slip stitch, and is a common method of decreasing. It means pass the slipped stitch over; as in “sl 1, k1, pss, k2”; that is slip one stitch, knit

one stitch, then lift the slipped stitch with the left needle over the knit stitch, followed by knitting 2 stitches.

Pick up and knit

Using yarn and needles with the right side of the knitting facing you, a foundation row of stitches are picked up by pulling loops through stitches along a knitted edge, such as the neckline to make a collar, or along cardigan fronts to form borders.

Reverse shaping

A phrase used for pieces where shaping is identical, but reversed. The instructions will usually be given for one piece, then you must remember to work the shaping for the other piece in the opposite order.

Right side (RS)

In most abbreviation lists, this refers to the surface of a garment that will face the outside when worn or the visible side of the fabric. Pattern instructions will often describe the first row as the right side. As a reminder, place a marker or safety pin on the RS.

Selvage

Knitting a selvage creates a finished edge. An extra stitch or stitches at the side edges is used to make seaming easier, or is used as a decorative effect.

When armhole measures

This indicates that the instructions are going to change. Measure an armhole from the marker you may have placed to indicate the beginning of the armhole, or measure from the beginning of armhole shaping, usually the first row of bound off stitches.

With RS facing

This means the right side of your knitting is facing you. This term is often used when picking up stitches, as you usually pick up stitches with the RS facing you, so there is no ridge showing on the RS. Pattern instructions often begin shaping with the right side facing.

With WS facing

This is the opposite of above; the wrong side of the knitting is facing you.

Work as for

Instead of writing out instructions twice, this phrase usually means to work the front piece the same as the back. For example, the instructions may read something like *“work as for back until front measures 17 inches from beginning”*.

Work even or straight

Continue working with the number of stitches on the needle for the required length or number of rows, without any decreasing or increasing.

Work in rounds

In circular knitting or making a seamless item, the term ***round*** is used instead of ***row***.

Work to end

Knit in the established pattern to the end of the row.

Wrong side (WS)

Usually refers to the surface of the garment that will face the inside when worn, or the side of the fabric you don't see. As a beginner knitter, I suggest either marking the RS or the WS as a reminder.

Yarn Over Types:

Yarn forward and over needle (yfon)

The yarn is brought forward, as if to purl. Used to add a stitch at the beginning of a row.

Yarn forward and round needle (yfrn)

Used to make a stitch between a knit and purl stitch. Bring the yarn from the back to the front, then over the right needle to the back, and to the front again.

Yarn over needle (yon)

Used to make a stitch between a purl and knit stitch. After purling, leave the yarn in front. Bring the yarn to the back over the right needle, knitting the next stitch.

Yarn round needle (yrn)

Used to make a stitch between two purl stitches. Bring the yarn to the back of needle from over top the right needle, and to the front again.

My Top Two Knitting Techniques: Best Buttonhole & Sock Toe Seam

One Row Buttonhole

The one row buttonhole is the type I use most often. It is neat, firm, leaves no gaping hole, and is self-reinforcing. This buttonhole can be used for a vertical or horizontal placement.



Steps to making the one row buttonhole:

1. Work in pattern stitch to where the buttonhole is to be placed. With the yarn in front of work slip the first stitch from left needle to right needle, then place the yarn in back of work.
2. Slip the next stitch off the left needle to right needle and pass the first stitch over it; one stitch is bound off. Continue to bind off the total number of stitches for the buttonhole.

3. Slip the last bound off stitch back to the left needle and turn the work.
4. Now place yarn to the back of the work. Using the cable cast on method, cast on the number of bound off stitches plus an extra stitch. *That is, insert right needle between the first and second stitches on left needle, work as if knitting a stitch and draw loop through leaving the loop on the left needle. Repeat from * until all stitches are cast on. Before slipping the extra stitch or loop onto left needle bring yarn to the front so it sits between the last two loops. Finally, place last loop onto left needle. Turn work.
5. Slip first stitch from left needle to right needle and pass the extra cast on stitch over the slipped stitch. One buttonhole is complete; resume pattern stitch and work across the row. Repeat all steps for rest of buttonholes.

Hate the Kitchener Stitch - Here's an Alternative: The Bind Off Seam

The kitchener stitch is a grafting technique that joins two open edges stitch by stitch using a yarn needle. It is often used to close sock toes, where a seam is undesirable. If not properly executed it looks uneven. The bind off seam creates an even and secure finish. It is worked on live stitches as for the kitchener stitch, and is a great method to use when you want to join the two open ends of sock toes.



Steps to making the bind off seam:

1. For the toes of socks transfer the last stitches that are divided on two needles to two safety pins or small holders. Since the seam is worked from the wrong side, carefully turn the socks inside out without dropping any stitches
2. Transfer the stitches from the safety pins to two double pointed needles (dpns), preferably smaller than what you used to knit the sock. Line up the live stitches as you would for the kitchener stitch.
3. Insert a third dpn knitwise into the first stitch on the front needle, then purlwise into the first stitch on the back needle, then slip both stitches off at once to this dpn. Repeat this step until all the stitches are on the third dpn.
4. Turn the work. Slip the first two stitches purlwise. *Pull the first stitch over the second, just as you would for a regular bind off. Slip the next stitch purlwise. Repeat from * until all the stitches have been bound off. Fasten off the last stitch. Weave in yarn ends, and admire the professional finish.

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