General Information
This article is about Raglans that are knit in the round or as one piece from the bottom up.

Raglan sweaters are known for their hallmark diagonal lines running from the underarms to the neck area on the front and back of the yoke of pullovers and cardigans.

Of the various styles of shoulder shaping for sweaters, Raglans are amongst the easiest. This shaping is simple and the perfect opportunity for knitters new to knitting sweaters to get their feet wet. Because the upper sleeves are generally joined and knit as one piece with the body of the sweater, there is no seaming required as for set-in sleeves or other types of sleeves knit separate from the body.

Raglans are generally knit in the round and the two patterns accompanying this article are both worked in the round. You may also see the Raglan style knit in pieces, with the sleeves seamed to the body along the diagonal lines.

Raglans can be worked from the bottom up or from the top down. The sweaters accompanying this article are both worked from the bottom up.

Because this style of sweater is generally worked in the round, in one piece, once you have bound off your last stitch there is very minimal finishing required. The underarms will need to be joined and your yarn tails will need to be woven in and that’s just about all there is to it, aside from blocking.

Construction
The body is worked from the bottom to the underarms and then each sleeve is worked from the wrist to the underarm. The sleeves can be knit before the body and give the knitter a good opportunity to double-check her gauge before tackling the body. Once all of the pieces are ready, they are joined together in the round. Markers are placed to designate the Raglan diagonal line placement and then decreases are worked on either side of the markers, generally every other round until the preferred neck opening is achieved.

Generally, but not always, underarm stitches are set aside on both the sleeves and the body. The sleeve underarm stitches will be joined to the body underarm stitches as part of the finishing.

The decreases used for the Raglan shaping can be varied depending on the type and placement of the decreases and they can even be ornamental by inserting a narrow lace or cable panel.

The fabric of the Raglan sweater can use any number of stitch designs or body shaping techniques such as bust or waist shaping. The Princess top included in this magazine incorporates waist shaping.

The sleeves can be any style, from full length to cap. For the cap sleeve style, you would not knit sleeves in advance but instead would cast on stitches for the sleeve cap once you have reached the underarm depth on the body.

The neck can also be any style from the standard crew neck to a V-neck, ballet neck or U-neck. If the front neck opening is to be lower than the back neck, this will need to be planned in advance and the front neck will need to be bound off or placed on stitch holders and the shaping will need to be worked in conjunction with the continuation of the Raglan shaping.

Cardigans are worked the same as pullovers except they are open in the center front and worked back and forth rather than in the round. The principles are the same other than the front opening.

Creating Your Own Original Raglan
It is very easy to create your own custom-fit Raglan. You will need to make a gauge swatch and calculate your stitch and row gauge (after blocking the swatch). You will need to know your chest circumference, the length from your underarm to where the sweater will fit on your hip, your upper arm circumference, your wrist circumference, the length of the sleeve from the bottom to the underarm, and the width and style of your neck.

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You will then need to choose the amount of ease you would like on your garment. Standard ease is 2-4" more than the chest circumference. Both of the sweaters with this article employ the standard amount of ease.

Add the ease to your circumference measurements, including the upper arm and chest.

You can draw a schematic similar to the ones shown for the two Raglan sweaters that accompany this article. Put your numbers on your schematic. (Remember: the schematic shows the diameters rather than the circumferences, so you will need to divide your circumferences in half.) This will be your pattern template and really all you will need to complete your sweater.

Multiply your chest circumference + ease by your stitch gauge. This will be the number of stitches you will cast on for the body. You can use a ribbing of your choice and then work into the fabric of the body with your stitch choice for the main fabric. Work up to the armholes.

Multiply your wrist circumference + ease by your stitch gauge. Multiply your upper arm circumference + ease by your stitch gauge. Subtract the wrist count from the upper arm count and this will be the number of stitches that will need to be increased along the arm between the ribbing and the underarm. Divide the increases by two as you will be making them in pairs along the faux seam. Because you know your row gauge and your sleeve length, you can determine how often to make your decreases to evenly space them along the arm’s length as you work.

Once the body and sleeves are worked to the armhole, you will need to either bind off or place on waste yarn the underarm stitches. Using 2 inches worth of stitches is the general rule.

Now you can join the sleeves to the body on the very next round, placing the Raglan stitch markers as you go.

Now the fun begins – you will start the Raglan shaping by working a decrease of your choice on either side of the Raglan markers on every other round. Continue until you reach the point where you want to start your neck shaping. The two sweaters accompanying this article have two different neck styles. The V-neck requires that you discontinue working in the round and work flat from the bottom of the V-neck to the top of the shoulders. The ballet neck of the Princess top incorporates short rows to raise the back neck and thus lower the front neck correspondingly.

Once the neck shaping is finished, add the final neck ribbing and BO loosely (so it will fit over the recipients head). Then join the underarms and weave in the ends.

You can find many styles of neck shaping in design and pattern books as well as on the internet.

For a first time Raglan, the crew neck is the easiest. In that case, you simply continue the Raglan decreases until the neck is the size you want, minus the ribbing which will be added next, before binding off.

Included here, to inspire you, are several types of decrease methods that can be used on Raglans.

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FASHION FRAMEWORK

RAGLAN SAMPLE 1: Knit to 2 sts before Raglan marker, k2tog, slm, ssk.

RAGLAN SAMPLE 2: Knit until 3 sts before m, k2tog, kl, slm, kl, ssk.

RAGLAN SAMPLE 3: Knit until 2 sts before m, ssk, slm, k2tog.

RAGLAN SAMPLE 4: Knit until 3 sts before m, ssk, kl, slm, k2tog.

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