



# Designing a Knitwear Pattern Checklist

by Tamara Moots

As a professional knitwear designer, this feels like an important time to give back to the crafting and knitting community. Every designer has a different set of steps to take during the process. I'm sharing mine here. I use this checklist to take each pattern idea into a published knitwear pattern. I hope sharing my process can help others design their own patterns.

- Gather all the supplies needed for the sample garment into one project bag. Plan to keep all of these supplies together through the end of writing the pattern in case you need to refer back to double or triple check specifics.
  - Yarn
  - Needles
  - Stitch markers
  - Notions like stitch markers, tape measures, etc.
  - Notebook and pen or pencil
  - Whatever else you know you'll need for this project
  
- Plan to take detailed notes every step of the way through swatching and knitting the sample garment.
  
- Swatch!** Swatch in the yarn you will use for your sample garment and using the needles you will suggest in your pattern.
  - Make the smallest swatch you are comfortable with that includes a small bit of stockinette stitch and at least one repeat of any stitch patterns, lace or cables that will be featured in your pattern.
  - Wash, block and dry the swatch exactly how you expect knitters to treat the final product. *(Note: In a pinch you can unravel and use the swatch yarn if you absolutely must to finish your sample garment. But it is best not to depend on this since the yarn will have kinks from being knit and also be slightly different after washing, blocking and drying the yarn allows it to bloom and change.)*
  - Keep the swatch in your project bag in case you need to refer back to it later.

- Take detailed notes of:
  - stitches per inch in stockinette stitch: \_\_\_\_\_
  - rows per inch in stockinette stitch: \_\_\_\_\_
  - stitches per inch in pattern: \_\_\_\_\_
  - rows per inch in pattern: \_\_\_\_\_
- Determine the final size you want for your design and use the recorded stitches and rows per inch from your blocked swatch to complete the initial pattern math for your design.
- Double check your math.
- Triple check your math.
- Make your sample garment. Be sure to go through all the steps you want knitters to take from cast-on to bind-off and finishing. (*Note: Remember to take detailed notes as you work.*)
- If there is a specific technique or trick you want to explain for your pattern, consider taking excellent quality photos of your process in different stages as you work on the sample.
- Wash, block and dry your sample.
- Measure and record your finished sample measurements:
  - stitches per inch in stockinette stitch: \_\_\_\_\_
  - rows/rounds per inch in stockinette stitch: \_\_\_\_\_
  - stitches per inch in pattern: \_\_\_\_\_
  - rows/rounds per inch in pattern: \_\_\_\_\_
  - finished measurements: \_\_\_\_\_
- If the completed sample garment and the pattern math do not match, either correct the pattern math to match the sample or reknit the sample to match the pattern math.

**Now that you have all the data you are ready  
to start writing the actual pattern.**

- Write the first draft of your pattern. Include all instructions, details, information and pattern notes a knitter will need to complete a project of the design.

- Take good quality photos of your finished sample. At the very least, you will use these photos in the pattern layout, on your pattern listing and for any social media announcements so make sure the photos will work for both print and digital use.
- Add photos to your draft pattern.
  
- Second Draft. Edits, edits and more edits. Print a copy of your draft pattern.
  - As you work, write detailed edits on your printed draft.
  - Check through the entire pattern once reading the text thoroughly for any errors.
  - Check through the entire pattern once for all pattern math.
  - Check all metric measurements included in your pattern.
  - Check the pattern layout.
  - Check the pattern for clarity and logic.
  - Make the edits in your pattern document. **Save the changes!!!**
  
- Third, Fourth, Fifth Drafts. Print a copy of your pattern. Check that all the written changes from the previous draft have been made. Then go back through each of the items listed above again.
  
- Repeat these steps through however many more drafts you need to work through your pattern.
  
- Once you've taken the pattern as far as you can towards perfect, send it to a trusted technical editor for final checks. Work through the pattern back and forth with your editor to complete edits.
  
- After tech editing, set up a test knit for your pattern.
  
- During the test knit, engage with testers to discuss any problems, comments, suggestions or errors testers find. Take detailed notes of any changes needed for the final edits after the test knit is completed.
  
- Complete final edits and drafts as needed to incorporate every approved edit from testers. Depending on your tech editor, they may want you to send them the pattern for one final check.
  
- Save your pattern as a PDF.

**Now you are ready to release your pattern out into the world!!**

*(It's exciting and scary, but you can do it!)*