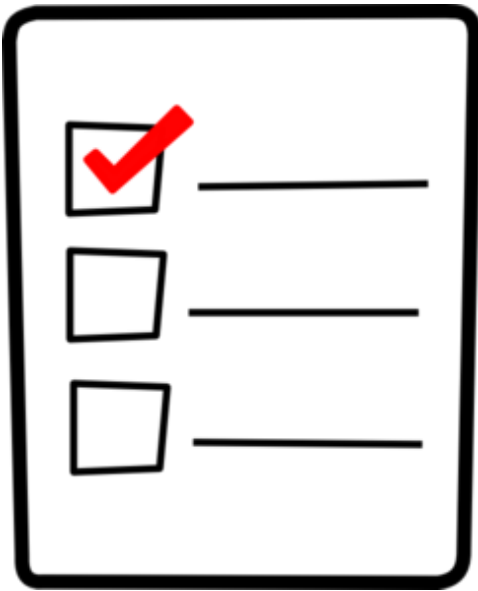


Running a Test Knit Checklist

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 follows a different set of steps. I'm sharing my steps for running a test knit here.

Once you've taken your pattern all the way through extensive edits and technical editing, you are ready for test knitting. It is super important to remember at every step of the way that test knitters are spending their valuable time and yarn to help you! Tester eyes and hands on your pattern are important and they deserve your gratitude.

- Post a call for testers. Possible places to post your test knit include: The Testing Pool on Ravelry, Free Pattern Testers on Ravelry, Yarnpond and many others. Once you've chosen where to host your test knit, take some time to read through the rules and other test knit threads to follow expected protocols.
- Post clear details about the pattern, your expectations and the compensation you are offering testers you accept into the test knit.
- Make certain the test knit deadline is far enough out that testers will have plenty of time to complete the project around their already busy lives. Never expect a tester to be able to drop everything to meet a too-quick turnaround time.
- Reply to every person who participates in your test knit thread as promptly as you can manage and always be polite. In general, testers will follow your lead and keep the test knit thread polite and respectful. If you ever feel someone is veering away from the tone you want to maintain, a respectful quick reply to reframe the discussion will generally pull things back. I try to treat a test knit thread as I would a knitting group or book club in my living room and pretend I'm the host making sure everyone is treated respectfully and allowed to present their opinions.
- Plan to touch base with your testers on a regular schedule to see how the project is going. Ask if they have any questions, problems, suggestions or comments as they work. And always, always make sure they know you truly value their time and work. I do a weekly "Monday Test Knit Ping" on all of my test knits to pull testers back to the thread.

- ❑ As the test knit progresses, include your final questionnaire some place easy for testers to find and complete as they finish their projects. Below I've given a short list of questions that I almost always post at the bottom of my weekly Monday pings. Feel free to use my list of questions as is or to use my list as a base for creating your own questionnaire.
- ❑ Acknowledge the comments, participation and any finished projects in the thread as they happen.
- ❑ As the deadline approaches, make sure testers know and remind them of any steps they've agreed to take to finish out the test knit.
- ❑ As a courtesy, post at least one final time in your test knit thread shortly after the pattern is released to let your testers know the pattern is now live, to look for their gift copy of the pattern and any final instructions.
- ❑ If you've offered additional compensation, let your testers know when and how to expect it.
- ❑ At the end of a test knit, make sure to thank your testers again for all of it!!!

End of Test Knit Sample Questionnaire

At the end of a test I always ask my testers to please post pattern details to their project page. I also ask they complete this short list of questions (either in the thread, on their project page or as a PM depending on where feels most comfortable for the tester):

- What yarn did you use?
- What size needles did you use?
- How much yarn (yardage or weight) did you use?
- What is your final stitch and row gauge?
- What are your final measurements?
- How are the pattern instructions? Any problems, errors, questions or suggestions?
- How is the pattern layout? Intuitive? Confusing? Suggestions to improve?
- Anything else you think I need to know to make my final edits?