

Chunky Cable Hat

I love to knit cables. I think they lift any design or garment out of the ordinary and make it something special. When I first learnt to cable, I put them on everything! I always wanted to knit a cable hat but couldn't work out how to do the crown decreases while preserving the cable pattern. So once I was confident enough, I designed my own. The decreases are worked into the cable pattern, which is carried right to the top of the hat. I was so pleased with the design that I knitted loads of them – almost everyone in my family has one! The design is knitted flat and seamed. You could knit it in the round but it gets difficult and very fiddly once you try to decrease and cable at the top. For invisible seaming, there is an extra stitch at each end of the pattern to allow you to seam between the first and second and penultimate and last stitches (because the first and last stitches are hidden once the hat is seamed, there is no need to slip the first stitch on each row for a neat edge). I like to knit chunky, dense and cosy fabrics, so I tend to use a needle size small than the yarn suggested. The pattern as given here, in the suggested yarn and needle size, gives a hat which will even fit me and I am notorious for having a head like a bucket.



In these pictures, the blue hat is knitted in Wendy Mode Chunky in True Navy and Sapphire Blue. The multi-coloured hat is knitted in Sirdar Click Chunky in Heather, Tarn, Fern and Oatmeal (I think).

Materials

- 100g Wendy Mode Chunky 50% Pure Merino Wool (or similar). Sirdar Click Chunky also works really well.
- Pair of size 6 (5mm) needles – they need to be fairly long to accommodate the number of stitches required.
- Cable needle
- Tapestry needle (for seaming)
- Crochet hook (for weaving in ends)

Abbreviations

2x1 rib – K2 P1 rib

Cbl6b – slip next 3 stitches onto cable needle, hold at back of work, K3 then K3 from cable needle

Cbl4b – slip next 2 stitches onto cable needle, hold at back of work, K2 then K2 from cable needle

Cbl2b – slip next stitch onto cable needle, hold at back of work, K1 then K1 from cable needle

K2tog – K next two stitches together

P2tog – P next two stitches together

Ssk – slip next two stitches **knitwise one at a time** onto right needle, then knit together through back loop (insert tip of left needle into front of stitches then knit)

Ssp – slip next two stitches **knitwise one at a time** onto right needle to twist them, then straight back to left needle without further twisting (they will look ‘wrong’ on the left needle, but trust me they are supposed to look like this!). Purl these two stitches together through the back loops. You do this by inserting the tip of the right needle purlwise through the back of the loops, through the second stitch first (between the second of your twisted stitches on the left needle and the third stitch on the left needle which will be a ‘normal’ stitch, i.e. untwisted). This is the most difficult stitch in the pattern, but is easy once you know how. If these instructions are not clear enough, any knitting book or website should be able to give a better and/or illustrated description.

It is very important to use the decrease stitches as described in the pattern rather than simpler ones, which may be tempting, as they ensure that the decreases are slanting the correct way and therefore virtually invisible on the right side of the work, which is crucial to the appearance of the finished product.

Cable Pattern

The design uses a six stitch cable crossed every sixth row. I have written the pattern as a backward (right-spiralling) cable, but if you want a forward (left-spiralling) cable, simply substitute cbl6/4/2f for cbl6/4/2b in the pattern.

Instructions

Using your preferred cast on method, cast on 92 stitches. (I use the knitting on method, but it really doesn't matter how you cast on, provided your cast on method gives a nice stretchy edge. For this reason, I don't suggest cable cast on, but it's really up to you.)

Knit 8 rows in 2x1 rib. You will finish on a K2 on the RS of the work, and on a P2 on the WS.

Begin pattern (rows 9 – 32):

Row 1 and 3: (K2, P5, K6, P5), rpt to last 2 stitches, K2

Row 2 and all even (WS) rows: Work stitches as they appear (K all K stitches, P all P stitches)

Row 5: (K2, P5, cbl6b, P5), rpt to last 2 stitches, K2

Knit 32 rows in this pattern, ending on row 2 of the pattern. Including the rib band, there will be 40 rows in all, and the piece should measure around 18cm. Next, you will begin to decrease the number of stitches for the crown. These decreases start on row three of the above pattern and continue for 8 rows altogether. You start off with 92 stitches and gradually decrease the number on each row. The number given in brackets at the end is how many stitches you should have left after knitting each row – count carefully after each row and if you have too many or not enough, you've gone wrong somewhere!

Row 41 (RS): K1, * ssk, P4, K6, P4, K2tog, rpt from * to last stitch, K1 (82)

Row 42 (WS): *P2, K4, P2tog, P2, ssp, K4, rpt from * to last 2 stitches, P2 (72)

On row 42, you have decreased the number of stitches in the cable from 6 to 4, so the next cable will be cbl4b not cbl6b.

Row 43: K1, *ssk, P3, cbl4b, P3, K2tog, rpt from * to last stitch, K1 (62)

Row 44: Work stitches as they appear – there are no decreases on this row (62)

Row 45: K1, *ssk, P1, K2tog, K2, ssk, P1, K2tog, rpt from * to last stitch, K1 (42)

Row 46: *P2, K1, P2tog, ssp, K1, rpt from * to last 2 stitches, P2 (32)

On row 46, you have decreased the number of stitches in the cable from 4 to 2, so the next cable will be cbl2b not cbl4b.

Row 47: K1, *ssk, cbl2b, K2tog, rpt from * to last stitch, K1 (22)

Row 48: P1, *P2tog, ssp, rpt from * to last stitch, P1 (12)

Cut the yarn, leaving enough to join the seam (I suggest around 30cm). Thread the yarn onto your tapestry needle and pass it through the remaining stitches. Once all the stitches are on the yarn, slide them off the knitting needle. Pull the yarn taut. Starting at the crown, use mattress stitch to join the edges of the hat together between the first and second stitches on each edge. The extra stitch at each end of the work will be hidden and the pattern will appear continuous, creating a seam which is invisible on the right side of the work. Be careful to join the edges level, especially if you have knitted stripes into the hat – if you don't get the seam level, there will be 'steps' in the stripes and the bottom edge will be wonky. Once the seam is finished to your satisfaction, weave the yarn end in on the wrong side using the crochet hook.

Et voila! A beautiful chunky cabled hat which looks like much harder work than it actually is. Seriously, you've no idea how pleased I was with the way this worked out, especially the invisible decreases which gave me more than one headache to work out. Enjoy!