



Nina's Sweater Class

Lesson 7: Finishing

There are only a few things left to do before your sweater is finished. The first is obvious: weave in your ends! Use your favorite method for this.

The second thing we must do is address the armpits. As of our last lesson, they were still relaxing on waste yarn. In order to close them up, I recommend doing a three-needle bind off, as this gives a sturdy seam at the underarm. I hate it when the underarms of a sweater stretch out and bag, so that is why I like to put a seam there. Some knitters do much prefer their sweaters completely seamless, though, so when you follow this next step, feel free to graft the stitches that I instruct you to bind off instead.

To work the underarm seam:

Pick up one set of held stitches, either from the body or the sleeve, with one needle, and the set across the armpit hole from it with the other. The points of these needles should both be facing right, with one needle behind the other. Now, with a third needle and a yard or so of yarn, leaving a nice long tail work a three-needle bind-off in purl. Insert your third needle through the first st on the back needle, as if to purl, and through the first stitch on the front needle as if to purl. With the working yarn, purl these two stitches together and drop the old sts off the left needles. Work the next sts on the left needles in the same fashion, and then pass the first st on the right needle up and over the second one, just as in a regular bind off. Continue until all the sts have been bound off, drawing the rest of the yarn tail through the alt st to secure it.

You will most likely notice little holes at each end of the seam--this is the natural consequence of three pieces of knitting coming together at a single point. All knitters have a preferred way of dealing with these and if you do too then feel free to use it. I like to just sew them closed at the end of my project! You'll use the tails from the length of working yarn in the 3-needle bind-off to close these up. Use a tapestry needle to thread the working yarn through a few sts on each side of the hole, pull tight to close the hole, and then fasten off and weave in the yarn end. Repeat for each hole. Easy!

If you worked a turned hem, you'll still need to knit the inner facing of the hem. To do this, return to the cast-on edge of your piece and pick up 9 sts for every 10 cast on. That means you'll pick up 9, skip one, and repeat until you reach the end of the cast-on sts. You are picking up fewer stitches than you cast on because you want the inner hem facing to be slightly smaller than the outer hem, to prevent bulges. Join the picked up sts to work in the round and knit down from the co edge until the inner hem is the length you like. then, cut your working yarn down to a few yards in length, and fold the hem facing just knit into the inside of the sweater. Thread the working yarn onto a tapestry needle, and sew the live stitches, one by one to the purl bumps on the ws of the sweater, in the same ration as you picked them up. Leaving the stitches live as you sew them will give the seam enough stretch to not distort the shape of the sweater.

Do the same for the sleeve cuffs if you have chosen to give them turned hems as well.

Finally, you'll knit your neckline edging. There are many ways to get creative with this, and whole books filled with instructions for ruffles, fringed, ribbed and bobbled edges which you may avail yourself of here! The simplest edging is a ribbed border, and there are a few things to keep in mind if you are working this.

For a round, crew, or scoop neck: Pick up the bound off sts around your neckline and pick up sts along the selvages at a rate of three sts for every 4 rows of edge. Join to work in the round. Use a needle 1 size smaller than that used on the sweater to work the ribbing, and BO when it reaches the desired length.

For a square neck, pick up the stitches in the same manner described above, and place markers at both of the front

corners. Join to work in the round, and with a needle a size or two smaller than that used to knit the sweater, work in the round. Decrease one stitch on each side of each marker (4 sts total) every other round to preserve the square shape of the neckline.

For a V-neck, follow the instructions above but place the marker at the center of the V. Decrease one stitch on each side of the marker every other round, working the ribbing until it has reached your chosen depth.

If you prefer seed stitch or garter stitch, or any stitch pattern that is wider than stockinette for your neckline edging, use the same directions as above but use a needle 2 or even 3 sizes smaller than the one used on the sweater to prevent the neckline trim from flaring out.

For a turtleneck, pick up the sts around the neckline as described above and work in your chosen stitch pattern until the turtleneck is the length that you desire. You can work in the round for a closed turtleneck, or work flat for one that buttons!

If you are working a cardigan, your neckline and button band will probably be worked at the same time. Pick up stitches for the button band, beginning at the bottom edge, at a rate of 3 stitches to every 4 rows. then work around the neckline as described above, then work down the other side of the sweater to the opposite hem. With slightly smaller needles, work your chosen stitch pattern, and don't forget your buttonholes! Until the button band is the correct length. BO all sts, and you are done!

Now it's time to wear your new sweater! I hope you get many years of enjoyment out of it.