

VERY EASY CARDIGAN

For American Girl® or 18" Doll



By Cecelia Riehl

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For 18" (American Girl) Doll

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This is an easy way to knit a cardigan all in one piece, except for the sleeves. The entire sweater body is knit with one circular needle. (If you are an experienced knitter and prefer working with straight needles, you can certainly knit this sweater on straight needles using stitch holders when necessary. You will have to reinterpret some of the directions. If you are willing to try something new, I strongly suggest you use a circular needle and follow these instructions as written. I think you'll be pleased with how easily this little sweater comes together at the end.)

Yarn: Baby, Fingering or Sock yarn -- one 50 g. ball or approx. 30 g. Approx. 120 yds.

Needle: No. 2 circular or size needed to obtain gauge. (A 16" needle works well, but you could use a longer one. You will be knitting back and forth, not around.)

Other aids: Small crochet hook or second needle for binding off. Two small stitch markers.

Notions: Five buttons ¼" to ½". **Note:** The only tricky part about making this sweater is getting the buttonholes evenly spaced. If you use ¼" buttons, you can probably push them through the seed stitch band thus eliminating any need for buttonholes. If you can find buttons small enough you may ignore the buttonhole instructions. I suggest making a gauge swatch by casting on 24 stitches and knitting four of them as a seed stitch band. (See instructions for body) Try to push the buttons through the band. If they go through you may knit the sweater without buttonholes. (**Note:** When my husband has worn out a dress shirt that can no longer be used, I cut the buttons off. The smaller collar and sleeve placket buttons are perfect for doll sweaters.)

Gauge: Stockinette stitch: 13-15 stitches = 2 inches.

For beginning knitters, not familiar with these terms:

Stockinette stitch: Knit across on the outside, purl across on the inside.

K1 p1 ribbing: Alternate knit and purl stitches across. On the inside knit the knits and purl the purls. This results in vertical columns of knit stitches separated by purl stitches. (A knit stitch on the front is a purl stitch from the back, so if you knit the last two stitches, then turn the work the first two stitches will be purl stitches, even though they were knit when you made them.)

Seed stitch: Alternate knit and purl stitches on the outside. On the inside knit the purls and purl the knits. This results in a checkerboard of purl stitches on both sides. A border done in seed stitch will lie flat and not roll.

Sleeve: Cast on 30 stitches.

Work 4 rows in k1 p1 ribbing, increasing 6 stitches evenly spaced along last row to make 36 stitches. Continue the sleeve in stockinette stitch, increasing 1 st at each end of a knit row every 8 rows until sleeve is 5" long. Bind off all stitches. Sleeve should be 5 ½" to 6" wide at top.

Body: The body of this sweater is worked all in one piece, starting at the bottom. When you reach the armholes the back and two fronts will be worked separately.

Buttonhole band is worked along with the body of the sweater in seed stitch. Work buttonholes in 3rd row and then every 1 1/8" or every 10 to 12 rows. The last buttonhole will be worked in the neck band. Buttonholes will be worked at the beginning of an outside (knit side) row. This will result in the buttonholes being in the right front band. The left front band is worked the same way but without buttonholes. **Note:** The first and last stitch of every row (both outside and inside) is a knit stitch.

Cast on 91 stitches. Work 4 rows in k1 – p1 ribbing, keeping the 4 stitches at each edge in seed stitch. Increase 9 stitches in the 4th row. (100 st)

If that is unclear—follow these instructions carefully for the first 4 rows.

Row 1: (k1 p1) repeat to last stitch - k1

Row 2: k1 p1 k1 p1 (p1 k1) to last 4 st. p1 k1 p1 k1

Row 3: k1 p1 yo k1 p1 (slip second stitch on right needle over first stitch and drop.) (One button hole made.) repeat (k1 p1) to last stitch k1

Row 4: Keeping in k1 p1 pattern, increase 9 stitches evenly spaced (every 8-10 stitches) across row, ending row with p1 k1 p1 k1. (100 st)

Row 5 and subsequent rows: Keeping the bands at each edge in seed stitch, switch to **stockinette** stitch for the body of the sweater. **Every** row (both inside and outside) will begin **k1 p1 k1 p1** and end **p1 k1 p1 k1**.

Continue this pattern, working buttonholes every 10 to 12 rows, at evenly spaced intervals of about 1 1/8".

Armhole slits: When sweater is 2 3/4" long add two stitch markers where armhole slits will begin. (You should have 3 buttonholes made.) Put the first marker between the 26th and 27th stitches and the second between the 74th and 75th stitches. This will result in 48 stitches for the back and 26 for each front section.

Next knit (outside) row: (Right front) Continue in pattern to the first marker. Turn. Keeping to the pattern as established and working buttonholes as needed, continue front until it is 4 3/4" or until you are ready to work the 5th buttonhole. Work buttonhole and continue to the armhole edge. Turn.

Shape front neck: Beginning with a purl side row work to within 8 stitches of end of row. Turn. Slip first stitch, knit next stitch, pass first stitch over second and drop. (one stitch decreased.) Knit to end of row. Purl next row.

Continue to decrease 1 stitch at beginning of each outside (knit) row, until 14 stitches remain on needle. End with a knit row. Cut yarn, leaving about 18 inches. Do not bind off. Slip the back stitches to the right hand needle.

Left front: Attach yarn at armhole slit and work across in pattern. Continue left front until the band is the same length as right front band. This is easy to determine. Just slide the left front along the needle till it lies next to the right front. End with a **purl** row. Knit across to within 8 stitches of the end. Turn. Work across. Decrease one stitch at **end** of next row and every outside row, by knitting the last two stitches together. Continue until 14 stitches remain. End with a purl row. Cut yarn, leaving 18".

Back: Join yarn at armhole slit. Work across to other slit. Turn. Continue back in stockinette stitch until it is the same length as front at armholes. End with a knit row. Do **not** cut yarn.

Bind off and join front and back left shoulder stitches in one step: (This is the 3-needle bind-off.) To do this you need to line up the shoulder stitches on both ends of the circular needle, so that the tips of the needles are together and the left shoulder stitches lie on top of each other with the wrong sides (or purl sides) out. Using a crochet hook (or another knitting needle) and the yarn you have been knitting with, pull a loop of yarn as if to knit through the first stitch on each needle, Drop these two stitches off the needles. Pull the loop so it's not too tight. In the same manner pull a second loop through the next two stitches, one from each needle, then through the first stitch, or if you are using a knitting needle, pull the first stitch over the second. Continue binding off one stitch from each needle until all 14 are bound off and seamed together. Make sure you don't pull this too tight. You will have a nice flat shoulder seam. Put the last loop on the needle with the other back stitches.

To **bind off the right shoulder stitches**, move the stitches on the needle till you can line up the right shoulder stitches as you did the left shoulder stitches on the ends of the two needles. Using the 18" tail of yarn, bind these stitches off in the same manner as for the other shoulder.

Neck band: You now have **20** back stitches, **2** loops and **8** stitches for each front on the needle. Slip the back stitches and loops to the other end of the needle. Then with the working yarn that is still attached at the left shoulder, pick up and knit **6** stitches along the bound off front neck edge. Then pick up the **8** center front stitches as follows: Knit the first 4 then work the last 4 in pattern p1 k1 p1 k1. Turn work. Keeping the band in seed stitch work the next row in k1 p1 rib till you reach the other shoulder. Drop the working yarn and working now from left to right pick up **6** stitches from the bound off edge and slip them onto the left hand needle so they lie on that needle next to the center front stitches that are already there. Pick up the working yarn again and knit these stitches (from right to left now) in ribbing up to the last 4. Work the last four stitches p1 k1 p1 k1. Turn. Work next row in k1 p1 rib keeping the bands in seed stitch. Turn. Bind off all stitches. Cut yarn leaving a tail to weave in.

Finishing: Sew sleeves into armholes. Sew sleeve seams. Weave in loose ends, pulling yarn up to close any holes at shoulder and neck edges. Sew buttons on left band.