Cabled Headband – three ways

By Sarah Thornton

Ready to move beyond knit and purl? Try this simple introduction to cable knitting – and end up with a comfy headband! Here you'll find three versions of a 6-stitch cable panel, both in written and charted form.

Size:
One size, easily adjustable.

Finished Measurements:
Laying flat: 8 cm (3.25") wide, 23 cm (9") long (after being sewn into a loop).

Materials:

Yarn:
Any heavy worsted weight yarn that knits at approx. 16 sts /10cm (4").

Pictured samples knit in Katia Merino Aran Natur [52% superwash merino/48% acrylic, 100g (3.5oz), 155m (169yds)], colourway 307 – Blue. Each headband used approximately 26g / 40m (44yds).

Also suggested: Custom Woolen Mills Mule Spinner 2 ply [100% Canadian wool, 112g (4 oz), 198m (216 yds)].

Suggested needle size:
(always use a needle size that gives you the gauge listed below – every knitter's gauge is unique)

5 mm (US 8), straight or circular needles

Notions:
Cable needle
Yarn needle
(optional) Crochet hook and 50cm (20") scrap yarn

Gauge
16 sts/20 rows = 10cm (4") in stockinette st, worked flat

Pattern Notes

The headband is knitted sideways - you'll knit a rectangle. The length is up to you – just knit until your project is approx. 6cm (2.3") less than the head circumference. Generally, 18-19" is a good length. Knitting is stretchy! The edges are maintained in garter stitch or seed stitch and there's a 6-stitch cable panel in the middle. Options are given for three different cable patterns, two edges (garter and seed), and three finishing techniques – sewing the cast on and bind off edges together, using a three-needle bind off after a provisional cast-on, or grafting the first and last row's stitches together after a provisional cast-on.

CO : cast on
st(s) : stitch(es)
K : knit
P : purl
cn: cable needle
sl : slip stitch as if to purl
C4F : Slip next 2 sts to cn and hold in front of work. Knit next 2 sts, then knit 2 sts from cn.
C4B : Slip next 2 sts to cn and hold behind work. Knit next 2 sts, then knit 2 sts from cn.
C6F : Slip next 3 sts to cn and hold in front of work. Knit next 3 sts, then knit 3 sts from cn.
RS : right side
WS : wrong side
rep : repeat

Directions

For all Pattern Options: CO 16 sts, leaving a ~35 cm (14 in) tail. Do not join. Work back and forth in rows, maintaining the first and last three stitches in garter stitch (knit on both RS and WS).

For all patterns, begin with the Setup Row, and then use the cable charts on p. 5 or written instructions below.

Option 1: Relaxed 6-stitch cable with garter edging
Setup Row (WS): K5, P6, K5

Row 1 (RS): K3, P2, K6, P2, K3

Row 2 (WS): K5, P6, K5

Row 3 (RS): K3, P2, C6F, P2, K3 (cable row)

Row 4 and all WS rows: as Row 2

Row 5 (RS): K3, P2, K6, P2, K3

Row 7 and 9 (RS): as Row 5

Repeat Row 1 - 10, eight more times (or to desired length), ending on a RS row.   (91 rows total; 9 cable crosses).

1: Relaxed 6-stitch cable with garter edging.

Option 2: Eccentric 6-stitch cable with seed stitch edging

Note – this pattern is written for the seed stitch edging, as shown in the project photo.

Setup Row (WS): K1, P1, K3, P6, K3, P1, K1

Row 1 (RS): K1, P1, K1, P2, K6, P2, K1, P1, K1

Row 2 (WS): K1, P1, K3, P6, K3, P1, K1

Row 3: K1, P1, K1, P2, C6F, P2, K1, P1, K1 (cable row)

Row 4 and all WS rows: as row 2

Row 5: as row 1

Row 7: as row 1

Row 9: as row 1

Row 11: K1, P1, K1, P2, C6F, P2, K1, P1, K1 (cable row)

Row 13: as row 1 (plain row)

Repeat Row 3 - 14, seven more times (or to desired length), ending on a RS row. (99 rows total; 16 cable crosses).

2: Eccentric 6-stitch cable with seed stitch edging.

Option 3: Braided 6-stitch cable with garter edging

Setup Row (WS): K5, P6, K5

Row 1 (RS): K3, P2, K6, P2, K3

Row 2 (WS): K5, P6, K5

Row 3: K3, P2, C4F, K2, P2, K3

Row 4 and all WS rows: as row 2

Row 5: K3, P2, K6, P2, K3

Row 7: K3, P2, K2, C4B, P2, K3

Repeat Row 1 - 8, ten more times (or to desired length), ending on a RS row. (89 rows total; 22 cable crosses)

3: Braided cable with garter edging.

For all versions, work to desired length.

Next row: Bind off all stitches. Break yarn, leaving a 20 cm (8") tail.

Finishing

Cables look better when blocked. After binding off your stitches, but before sewing the two ends of the headband together, soak your headband in warm water for 20 minutes, squeeze out the water with a towel, and spread the headband onto a blocking mat or piece of carpet underlay. Stretch the headband both in width and length and pin to size. Let dry.

Once dry, sew the two ends together using the cast-on tail and weave in ends securely on the inside of the work.

Optional Enhancements

Rather than using a standard cast on (LTCO, Knitted, etc), you could try a provisional cast-on. When you have knitted your project to the desired length, put the stitches on a stitch holder in order to block your headband. Once dry, put the stitches back onto the knitting needle. Then, remove the provisional cast on and put those original stitches back onto a needle.

Your choice:

1. Hold the work so the two WS are together, and three-needle bind off (using the remaining cast on tail) the two ends together. This will leave a ridge on the inside of the work.

Or:

2. Graft the two ends together using Kitchener stitch – see linked resources for how to graft purl stitches together. This will give a seamless join for your headband!

Internet / Video Resources

A cable knitting tutorial:
https://brooklyntweed.com/pages/cable-knitting-101

Cables video:
https://verypink.com/2010/07/22/knitting-help-cables/

Cables without a cable needle:
https://verypink.com/2010/10/26/cables-without-a-cable-needle/

Provisional Cast-on – Crochet chain:
https://blog.tincanknits.com/2013/03/10/crochet-chain-provisional/

Grafting in pattern:
http://techknitting.blogspot.com/2012/11/step-by-step-kitchener-stitching-with.html

Charts for Cabled Headband - 3 Ways

Option 1: Relaxed 6-stitch Cable
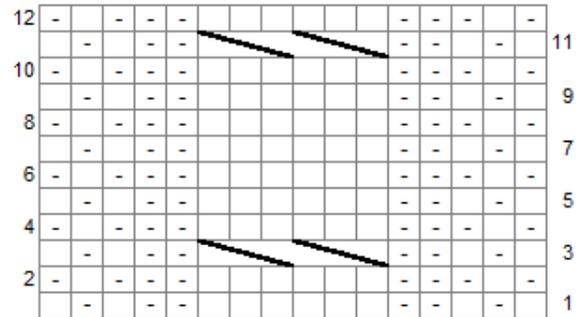### with garter stitch border

Legend:
- ☐ Knit on RS, Purl on WS
- − Purl on RS, Knit on WS
- ╲ C6F: Sl 3 sts to cn, hold in front of work, K3, K3 from cn
- ☐ red box indicates pattern repeat

Option 2: Eccentric 6-stitch Cable
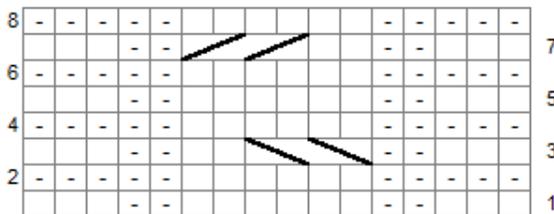### with seed stitch border

Legend:
- ☐ Knit on RS, Purl on WS
- − Knit on RS, Purl on WS
- ╲ C6F: Sl 3 sts to cn, hold in front of work, K3, K3 from cn

Option 3: Braided Cable
with garter stitch border

Legend:
- ☐ Knit on RS, Purl on WS
- − Purl on RS, Knit on WS
- ╲ C4F: Sl 2 sts to cn, hold in front of work, K2, K2 from cn
- ╱ C4B: Sl 2 sts to cn, hold to back of work, K2, K2 from cn