

Get It Right: Swatching and Gauge Made Simple

DAY 3 Introduction

Today we're going to talk about **swatching and gauge — made simple!**

We'll cover:

- What your gauge numbers really mean
- How to make a proper swatch (and avoid common mistakes)
- What to do if your gauge doesn't match the pattern

Don't forget to grab your Bingo Card: <https://programs.knittingwithchopsticks.com/YtWSBingo>

The Replay will be available on the Replay page asap:

<https://programs.knittingwithchopsticks.com/YtWSReplay>

Why Gauge Matters

Gauge is how we make sure your garment turns out the **size you planned**.

Even with the right pattern, size, and yarn — if your stitches are bigger or smaller than the designer's, your finished piece won't fit as intended.

Getting gauge right means your hard work won't end in disappointment.

What Does Gauge Mean?

Your **pattern gauge** tells you how many stitches and rows you should have in a **10 cm / 4" square** of the specified stitch pattern.

Example: 16 stitches x 20 rows = 10 cm / 4" square

If your swatch doesn't match that, your finished project won't either — it will come out bigger or smaller than planned.

→ *Have you ever skipped a swatch... and regretted it later?*

How to Make a Proper Swatch (and Avoid Common Mistakes)

Step 1: Swatch

Start by chaining / casting on more stitches than the gauge calls for — add 5-10 extra. Edges behave differently than the middle, so we want to measure from the center.

Work in the **same stitch pattern** the gauge is given in (if not specified use the main pattern stitch).

If your pattern is worked in the round, swatch in the round.

Work more rows than the gauge states — about 5-10 extra rows is good.

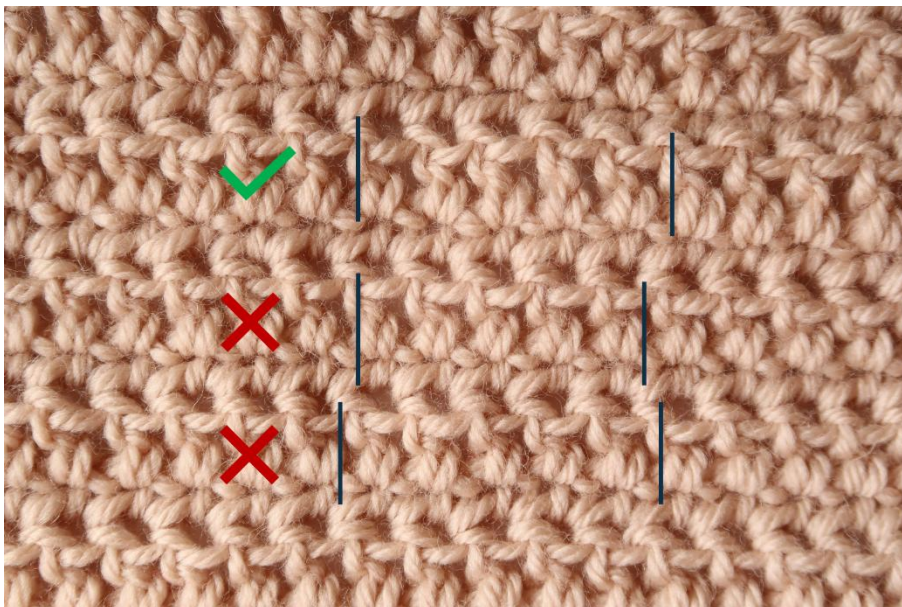
Once done, **block your swatch** (steam, wet, or whatever blocking method you will use for your final project). This makes a huge difference for accuracy.

Step 2: Measure

Measure across the **center** of your swatch — not at the edges.

Count how many stitches fit in 10 cm horizontally and how many rows in 10 cm vertically.

Make sure you measure entire stitches, including the empty space before/after it. With thicker yarns, this can make a big difference.



Step 3: Adjust

What if your gauge doesn't match the pattern?

- **If you have too many stitches (your square is too small):**
Go up a hook or needle size.
- **If you have too few stitches (your square is too big):**
Go down a hook or needle size.
- **For small adjustments:** switch hook/needle material or shape/brand

You might need to make several swatches before finding the best fit.

If your stitch count is fine but your rows are off by a little — don't panic. Most patterns use measurements, not strict row counts, so focus on width first.

Why This Matters

Even a small difference in stitch count adds up across a whole garment. One extra stitch every 10 cm can easily turn into an extra 5 cm at the bust — and that can mean the difference between a sweater you love or one you never wear.

Taking the time to swatch now saves you time (and frustration) later.

Wrap-Up & What's Next

Gauge isn't exciting — but it's essential.

If you want your garment to fit, taking 30 minutes to swatch is absolutely worth it.

Homework

Make your swatch, block it, and measure it.

If you need to, adjust your hook/needle size until you're close to the pattern's gauge.

Head to the **Day 4 homework thread in the Facebook Group**:

<https://programs.knittingwithchopsticks.com/YtWSFacebook> and share a photo of your finished gauge swatch (*bonus points if it's getting blocked*)

Want to Dive Deeper?

If you'd like to keep building on what we talked about today, start your free 14 days inside the **Chopsticks Stitching Squad** — my membership designed to support you as you grow your skills.

Inside the Squad, you'll find full-length workshops like:

- **Mastering Gauge,**
- **The Ultimate Guide to Blocking** that go deeper into how to get gauge right and
- **Adapt Your Pattern to Any Yarn** to learn how to adjust patterns when you need to.

You also get to download **two patterns of your choice** as part of your membership — so if the pattern you've picked is one of mine, this is a great way to grab the ad-free PDF version.

Grab your 14 days inside the Squad here:

<https://programs.knittingwithchopsticks.com/14DaySquadTrial>

Q&A

Tomorrow, we'll talk about **reading patterns with confidence** so you can move forward with clarity, not confusion.