



## An HJS Studio Pattern:

### World War One Simple Vest



#### Introduction

During the First World War, the American Red Cross provided yarn and instructions to knitters all over the US, to encourage them to knit gloves, hats, vests, socks, etc, for the men in the military. These patterns are courtesy of Diane McHose, [owlomen@mindspring.com](mailto:owlomen@mindspring.com), who sent me a scanned copy of the centerfold of the July 1917 Modern Priscilla Needlework magazine. The first pattern, next to each picture, is as originally printed. Below that, I've updated the instructions to modern terminology and knitting in rounds where possible. I haven't had time to test all these patterns, so they are merely my interpretation.

Note: The apparent detailing in the center of the vest is actually just the staple from the original instructions :)



#### Simple Vest

Four hanks knitting worsted, 2 bone or wooden needles No. 5 or 6.

Cast on 72 stitches, rib, knit 2, purl 2, for 3 inches. Knit plain until it measures 30 inches from beginning.

Make neck hole as follows: Knit 24 stitches, finish off 24, knit 24. Knit 4 ribs on each side. Knit 24 stitches, cast on 24 stitches, k 24. Knit for 27 inches, rib 3 inches.

Sew up sides, leaving ample arm hole. Knit or crochet edge 1/2 inch deep around neck hole.

Heavy wool. One pair bone or wooden needles Nos. 6 or 7.

Cast on 60 stitches, rib 3 inches. Knit until it measures 30 inches.

Hole for neck: Knit 20 stitches, bind off 20, k 20. Knit 4 ribs on each side. Knit 20 stitches, cast on

20, knit 20. Knit for 27 inches, rib 3 inches.



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## Modern Instructions for Vest

**Materials:** About 1 pound / 450 grams knitting worsted weight yarn.

**Equipment:** One circular (or two straight) size 5 or 6 (US) or 3 1/2 or 4 mm needles, tapestry needle, scissors.

**Gauge:** A gauge of 4 stitches = 1 inch, or 16 stitches = 10 cm gives a finished chest measurement of 36 inches (90 cm). I guess men were a good bit smaller 90 years ago! I give here the sizes in the original pattern, plus a larger size in parentheses that will finish out to about 44 inches / 110 cm around the chest, allowing plenty of wearing ease for an average medium-sized man today. This is a very simple garment to make, so don't hesitate to change the number of stitches to suit a different gauge or size. For length I've stuck with the original, but if the person you're making this vest for is close to or over six feet / .9 meters, you'll probably need to lengthen the vest accordingly.

**Front body to neck:** Cast on 72 (90) stitches and knit in k2 p2 ribbing for 3 inches / 8 cm, slipping the first stitch of each row. Continue in garter stitch (knit every row) for 27 / 70 cm inches, 30 inches / 78 cm from beginning, again slipping the first stitch of each row.

**Neck opening:** Knit 24 (30) stitches onto spare needle, bind off 24 (30) stitches, knit 24 (30) stitches. Continue on these 24 (30) stitches for 4 right side ridges (8 rows total). Place on spare needle, repeat for remaining 24 (30) stitches.

**Back:** Knit 24 (30) stitches, cast on 24 (30), knit 24 (30) from spare needle. Continue in garter stitch for 27 inches (70 cm) from neck opening. Change to k2 p2 ribbing, work 3 inches / 8 cm in ribbing, bind off.

**Sewing up:** Pin sides together. Sew up sides through slipped stitches about 15 inches/40 cm, starting at bottom (ribbed) edge. Finish off ends.



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