

# a guide to ease and measuring

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CROCHET

By Hannah Cross

When it comes to getting the perfect fit for your crochet garments we always talk about gauge but what if I told you the most important thing to start with is choosing the right size?

It's all because of these magical things called *ease*.

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Let's find out more about ease how it can dramatically change your crochet!



# A guide to crochet & ease

by Hannah Cross

It often seems that crocheters are really frightened of making garments because of the fear of them just not fitting as they ought to. There's always lots of focus on getting your gauge right for each project (which is of course important) but I think the key to a successful fit is choosing the right size to make in the first place. Let me explain what I mean...

## It's all about the ease

If you've ever read a crochet pattern you'll know that it will tell you what the gauge is for the design.

Whether you're making a blanket, scarf, hat or sweater then you'll be given instructions for how many stitches and rows you need in a set space (usually 4 in by 4 in) to make sure that your version turns out to the size intended in the pattern.



### ease

The difference between your body measurements and those of your finished garment or project.



This is great and definitely something that you need to do but before you even get that far I want to take a step back and make sure that you are **making the right size** from the pattern!

If you were shopping in a store you'd be able to see at a glance that a top in the size you normally wear would be either fitted or loose on you.

You can pop into the changing rooms and try them on to see how tight or baggy they are and work out if it suits you.

Unfortunately with crochet patterns you can't really tell until the end exactly how it's going to look on you so to avoid a disaster (I speak from experience) it's definitely worth the effort of figuring it out before you start.

The key to understanding what ease is and how it can affect what size you choose to make can be a little daunting at first so let's break it down and figure out what it really means.

The first step is to look at what the spectrum of ease looks like below with negative ease being tighter and positive ease being looser.

## What does ease look like?

much smaller than body measurements



about the same as body measurements



much bigger than body measurements



Negative ease

Positive ease

slightly smaller than body measurements



slightly bigger than body measurements



## Choose the right size for you

When it comes to choosing the right size to make from a pattern you'll need to look first at what ease pattern is designed to have. This can be:

- negative ease
- no ease
- positive ease

**Negative ease** - this means that the project will be smaller than your measurements forcing the fabric to stretch and be tight fitting.

**No ease** - this means that the project is the same size as you and will therefore be neither tight or loose.

**Positive ease** - this means the project will be bigger than your measurements giving room for your body to move around inside.

**Go do this now -**  
Take your body measurements and note them down somewhere safe. That way you can refer back to them when you look at each schematic.

### Checking the pattern

Each pattern will generally either tell you the amount of ease that is intended for each size, for example;

*'the sweater is designed with 4-5" positive ease for all sizes'*

This means that each size will be either 4 or 5 inches bigger than the body measurements it's intended for.

What I'd encourage you to do though is really dive into what the schematic is telling you. They have so much more information that will help you decide which is the right size for you.

The simplest way to choose a size is to look at the pictures of the modelled design and see if you like the way it sits on the person wearing it. If you like it then you could simply select the size that is nearest your measurements on the size chart and go for it!

For this example I would go for the M as it's my size of 38".

| Size | To fit bust   | Garment bust  |
|------|---------------|---------------|
| XS   | 30" / 76cm    | 34" / 86cm    |
| S    | 34" / 86cm    | 36" / 91.5cm  |
| M    | 38" / 96.5cm  | 40" / 101.5cm |
| L    | 42" / 106.5cm | 44" / 112cm   |
| XL   | 46" / 117cm   | 49" / 124.5cm |
| 2X   | 50" / 127cm   | 50" / 127cm   |
| 3X   | 54" / 137cm   | 56" / 142cm   |
| 4X   | 58" / 147cm   | 60" / 152.5cm |
| 5X   | 62" / 158cm   | 63" / 157.5cm |



## Same design, different amounts of ease!

Here I am wearing an XS version of the top that is 4 inches smaller than my body measurements.

**Finished garment** 34"

**Body measurement** 38"

**Negative ease** 4"



Here is my niece (Chloe) wearing exactly the same top that is bigger than her body measurements.

**Finished garment** 34"

**Body measurement** 30"

**Positive ease** 4"



Here I am wearing the M version but with tied sides which is much bigger than my body measurements.

**Finished garment** 43"

**Body measurement** 38"

**Positive ease** 5"

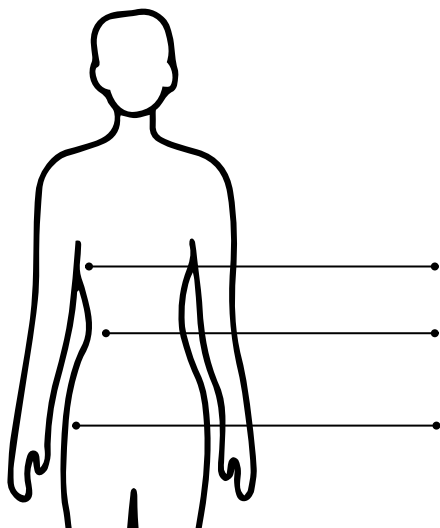


Find the pattern for the Chloe top here.

## How to measure yourself

Now I know this might sound obvious but it's really important that you measure yourself properly to make sure you make the right choice of size!

You basically need to get as many measurements as possible but the chest measurement is key. This is the one that will really help you decide.



### Measurements

**Chest** - measure around the fullest part of the chest.

**Waist** - measure around the smallest point of your waist.

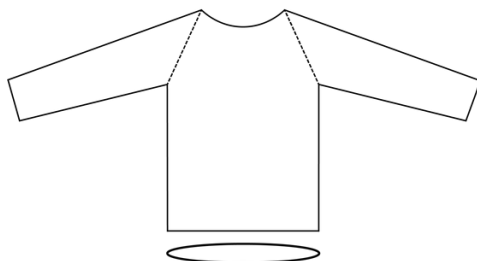
**Hips** - measure around the widest part of your lower hip.

## How to read a schematic

Every schematic in crochet holds the key to telling you how the garment will fit you. The measurements represent the finished garment so you can just check them to your own measurements to see how much ease is intended for each size.

The sizes here are given in parentheses as we do with all of our designs. They follow the sequence:

XS (S, M, L, XL) (2X, 3X, 4X 5X)



34" (36", 40", 44", 49") (50", 56", 60", 63") /  
86cm (91.5cm, 101.5cm, 112cm, 124.5cm)  
(127cm, 142cm, 152.5cm, 157.5cm)

## Compare them

Once you have your measurements you can compare them to the schematic. Which size will give you the ease you want?

It might be a different size than you would buy from a store but that's ok!

The beauty of making your own clothes is that you can make them however you'd like them.

## Conclusion

Ease is simply how tightly or loosely an item will fit you once you've crocheted it.

If you like the look of the fit in the pattern images then you can leave it up to the designer and just go with the size designed to fit your nearest body measurement.

If you really love the design but would like it a little tighter or looser then using your body measurements you can figure out from the schematic which size will give you the ease you'd like.

Choosing the size to make to get the ease you want is only the first part of the puzzle however!

The next vital step is to work a gauge swatch and make sure that your project will actually turn out the size you want.

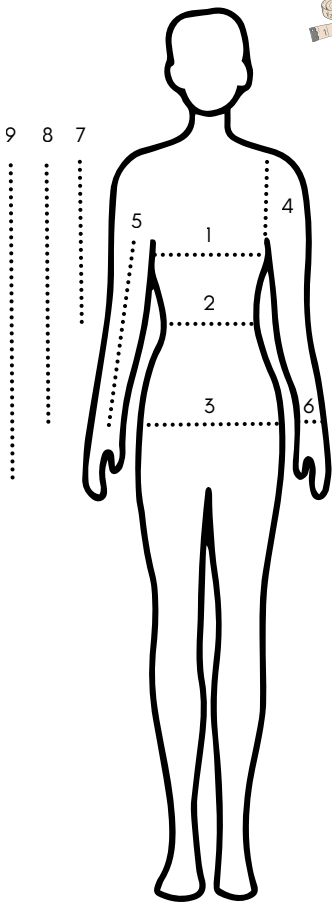
Skipping either part of the process might not be catastrophic (although it has been for me on occasions!) but you will definitely come away with a more professional and accomplished piece of crochet!



# measurement worksheet



my measurements | date: \_\_\_\_\_



|   |                       |       |
|---|-----------------------|-------|
| 1 | Chest/Bust:           | _____ |
| 2 | Waist:                | _____ |
| 3 | Hip:                  | _____ |
| 4 | Armhole Depth:        | _____ |
| 5 | Arm Length:           | _____ |
| 6 | Wrist:                | _____ |
| 7 | Neck to Waist:        | _____ |
| 8 | Neck to Hips:         | _____ |
| 9 | Neck to Under Bottom: | _____ |

Knowing your measurements is essential so that you can make exactly the right size of garment to fit you beautifully. Your measurements will most likely fluctuate over time so make sure to print another copy and note your details before starting a new project. It doesn't matter if the numbers change - it will just help you to find the right size to make.

## measuring tips

**Chest/Bust** Measure around the fullest part and don't pull the tape too tight.

**Waist** Measure around the smaller part of your natural waist where you crease when you bend.

**Hip** Measure around the widest part of your lower hip.

**Armhole Depth** Measure from your shoulder to armpit and note a comfortable measurement for sleeves.

**Arm Length** Measure from your armpit to wrist.

**Neck to ...** Measure from your neckline to where you would feel comfortable having a garment end.