



## Monkster's Raglan Sweaters

**"Monkster Gets Stranded"**, at left.

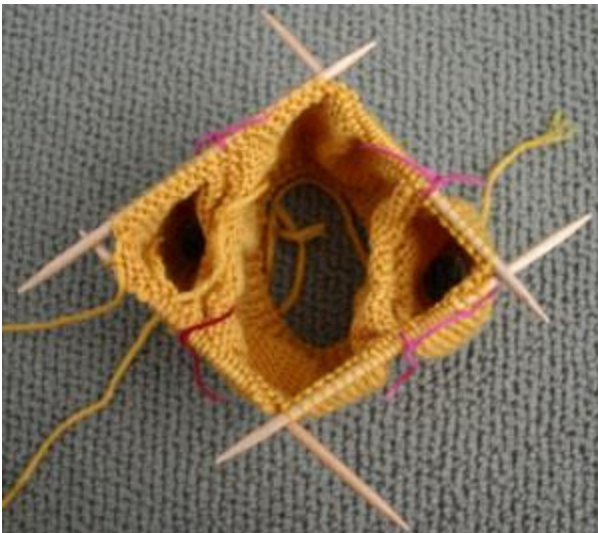
**"Monkster's Sweater"**, at right.

Two free knitting patterns that quickly show you the basics of knitting raglan shoulders. You'll find them both on the [free pattern page](#) here on MaryAnnStephens.com.



Long ago, I published two free patterns for raglan teddy bear sweaters to fit my youngest son's "Build-a-Bear" friend, "Monkster". I've moved "Monkster Gets Stranded" and "Monkster's Sweater" to my [free patterns page](#) here on MaryAnnStephens.com. Here are some of the notes that went along with the original publication of these designs. Read through them to get a better understanding of the differences between these two types of simple raglans:

Both of these wee sweater patterns use essentially the same construction method, with a few minor differences. "Monkster's Sweater" is made with worsted weight yarn; "Monkster Gets Stranded" uses sport weight yarn. The original "Monkster's Sweater" is solid-colored, but you can add any stripes or motifs your heart desires; "Monkster Gets Stranded" obviously uses stranded knitting technique, but you can create your own stranded motifs, opt for stripes, or keep it simple and solid-colored, too. Both patterns are worked circularly, from the bottom up, with raglan shoulders, in this fashion:

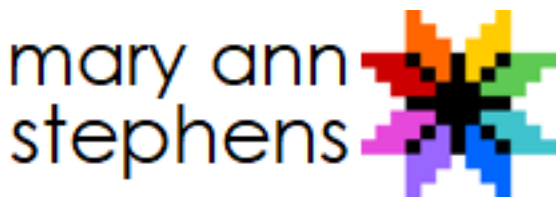


The fully-fashioned decreases in "Monkster's Sweater" were chosen to highlight the points at which the raglan shoulders were mitered. That method is especially nice for solid-colored knitting - the diagonal decrease lines form an interesting feature on an otherwise blank canvas. The decreases in "Monkster Gets Stranded" were chosen to minimize the visual disturbance of the raglan miters within the color work. I typically opt for such subtle decrease methods for multi-colored, Fair Isle / Norwegian knitting so that my shaping and my motifs don't visually compete with each other.

“Monkster Gets Stranded” uses the same technique you'd find in most any life-sized raglan sweater: a few stitches at the base of the armholes are put aside on stitch holders while the yoke is worked as one circle. Once you're all but done, those few held stitches are grafted together at each armhole base. This helps in two ways: it provides more flexibility at the underarm for the wearer (although I'm not sure guys like Monkster really appreciate that fact) and it makes the joining round, wherein the sleeves and body become one, a good bit more manageable. But, it also leaves a little bit of grafting work to take care of at the end. (No problem! See my "Grafting" photo tutorial, under "Technique".)

In the original, plain Monkster's Sweater, to keep it super-simple, I did not cast off any stitches at the base of the armhole. So, the joining round for that version has to be worked with the "circular" knitting flattened for a round or two, and, although avoiding the grafting makes it simpler on one hand, it's a bit trickier to wiggle your yarn and needles in and out of the flattened work. The most saintly among you may find yourselves cursing like sailors at that point, but it does save you a good bit of finishing work, in the end. It's a nice shortcut for a quick toy sweater, but it's not something I'd recommend for the opinionated, comfort-seeking, self-propelled types. Personally, I prefer the method in the stranded design. You can certainly combine the fully-fashioned raglan decreases used in Monkster's Sweater with a grafted armhole base, as used in Monkster Gets Stranded. And these are only the tip of the iceberg, as far as raglan varieties go. But, they're a nice, quick way to start you down that road.

Have fun!



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