



Ian Brock wearing
Ann Budd's knitted
chest protector (vest)
for a child.

Photograph by Joe Coca.

Knit a Child's Vest

A N N B U D D

Only in the Victorian era would someone name a child's vest a "chest protector." That is what *Weldon's Practical Needlework*, England's premier how-to books published in the late Victorian era, calls this child's garment, and it does exactly describe it, but our guess is that calling it a vest will get it worn more often!

I modified the instructions from those in Volume 7 of *Weldon's Practical Needlework* (Facsimile edition, Loveland, Colorado: Interweave Press, 2002). The yarn, designed as a tapestry yarn for needlepoint, has a wonderful spring, which, when worked in garter stitch, gives a thick, padded fabric. The vest is worked in one piece from the lower back, over the shoulders, and down to the lower front. The edges are trimmed with a few rows of garter stitch.

INSTRUCTIONS

Body

With MC, CO 40 sts. Do not join. Working back and forth in rows, work even in garter stitch (k every row) until piece measures 11 inches (27.9 cm) from CO.

Next row: K14, join second ball of yarn and BO center 12 sts for back neck, k to end—14 sts each side. Working each side separately, cont in garter st until piece measures 6 inches (15.2 cm) from BO for back neck. At each neck edge, use the backward-loop method (see Technique below) to CO 6 sts—20 sts each side. Cont even in garter st for 5¹/₂ inches (14.0 cm) more.

Next row (joining row): K across both sets of 20 sts using a single ball of yarn—40 sts. Cont even in garter st until piece measures 5¹/₂ inches (14.0 cm) from joining row and 28 inches (71.1 cm) from CO. Loosely BO all sts.

MATERIALS

Brown Sheep Waverly Wool (worsted weight), 100% Persian wool yarn, 164 yards (150 m)/4 oz (113 g) skein, 2 skeins of #1172 brown (MC), and 1 skein of #5003 olive (CC)

Needles, size 10¹/₂ (6.5 mm) 24-inch (61.0-cm) circular or size needed to obtain gauge

Tapestry needle

Buttons, ³/₄ inch (1.9 cm), 3

Materials are available at needlework and yarn stores or from mail-order or online resources.

Finished size: 23¹/₂ inches (59.7 cm) chest circumference and 14 inches (35.6 cm) long from lower edge to shoulders

Gauge: 14 sts and 32 rows = 4 inches (10.2 cm) in garter stitch

ABBREVIATIONS

beg—beginning
BO—bind off
CO—cast on
ch—chain

cont—continue
CC—contrasting color
k—knit
MC—main color

rep—repeat
RS—right side
st(s)—stitch(es)
WS—wrong side

Backward-Loop Cast-On

*Loop working yarn and place it on needle backward so that it doesn't unwind. Repeat from *.



Neck Edging

With CC, RS facing, and beg at base of right front neck slit, pick up and knit 22 sts along right neck slit, 7 sts across top neck edge, 25 sts along right shoulder, 12 sts across back neck, 25 sts along left shoulder, 7 sts across top neck edge, and 22 sts along left neck slit—120 sts total. K 1 WS row.

Next RS row: BO 4 sts, *use right needle tip as a crochet hook and ch5 for button loop, BO 7 sts; rep from * once more, then ch5 for last button loop (3 ch-button loops completed), BO all sts to end of row.

Lower Edging

With CC and RS facing, pick up and k40 sts across lower back edge. K 1 WS row. BO all sts. Rep for lower front edge.

Side/Armhole Edging

With CC, RS facing, and beg at lower edge, pick up and k118 sts along one side edge. K 1 WS row. BO all sts. Rep for other side.

Weave in loose ends. With CC threaded on the tapestry needle, use a whipstitch to sew front and back together, beg at lower edge and ending about 5½ inches (14 cm) above the lower edge. Sew the buttons to left front opposite the button loops. Block lightly.

ABOUT THE DESIGNER. Ann Budd is a book editor for Interweave Press and author of *The Knitter's Handy Book of Patterns* and *The Knitter's Handy Book of Sweater Patterns* (Interweave Press, 2002 and 2004, respectively).



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