

## Chapter 9

# DECREASES

Up to this point, every knitting operation we've learned how to chart starts and ends with the same number of stitches. Obviously, decreases (and increases, as we'll see in the next chapter) do not start and end with the same number of stitches—that is, after all, the point of a decrease.

Nevertheless, we can chart decreases in all of the following situations as well as others:

- ☉ set-in sleeve caps
- ☉ raglan sleeve caps
- ☉ the tops of hats started at the brim
- ☉ fingertips of mittens and gloves started at the wrist
- ☉ toes of top-down socks
- ☉ square or rectangular items worked from corner to corner
- ☉ triangular items started on an edge and worked to a point

## Types of Decreases

There are three types of decreases: single, double, and what we'll call *higher-order* decreases.

Single decreases include K2tog, SSK, and SKP. Double increases include K3tog, SSSK, SK2P, and S2KP. Higher-order decreases turn four or more stitches into a single stitch.

There are corresponding decreases in purl, which are useful and in some cases mandatory, as we'll see toward the end of the chapter.

## Decreases in Charts

Perhaps you're already thinking about the problems of charting a K2tog. Since a K2tog turns two stitches into one, how do we show that in a chart? Do we use a symbol that's two stitches wide or one that's just one stitch wide?

How do we solve this problem? **We cheat!** Remember that in “Basic Knitted Fabrics” we said one of our first charting rules was that each symbol represents one stitch, but the footnote said that that was a lie? Then in “Cables and Twists” we said each symbol is as wide as the number of stitches it uses, but that that was still a lie?

Here's the truth:

## Charting Rule

Each symbol represents a single knitting operation.

A *knitting operation* is anything that is worked as a unit in itself. A single knit stitch, a single purl stitch, a cable, a twist, a K2tog, an SSK, and various increases all represent a single knitting operation because all of them are worked as self-contained units.

So it may be more precise to say each symbol in a chart represents the outcome **after we complete its knitting operation**. Working a K2tog leaves a single stitch; that single stitch is represented by a one-stitch-wide symbol.

Even for just knitting and purling, the symbols are really showing the **result** of working one knit stitch or one purl stitch.

### Single-Decrease Symbols

Here are the symbols for single decreases, along with the keys we use if we're charting in the computer. Note that traditional **and** mirror-image knitters must use these symbols when **constructing** a chart from written-out instructions. Wherever the instructions say "K2tog," **all** knitters must use a right-leaning symbol.

/		K2tog (or other right-leaning decrease)
\		SSK, SKP, or K2tog tbl (or other left-leaning decrease)

The decrease symbols' diagonal lines show the direction the resulting stitch will lean when looking at **the public side of stockinette stitch**.

### For Mirror-Image Knitters

Nothing changes for MIKs until they pick up needles and yarn. At that point, they have to reverse the definitions of the symbols, working a K2tog for a left-leaning decrease and an SSK (or SKP or similar) for a right-leaning decrease.

If we think about it for a moment, it makes complete sense that MIKs must swap which decrease they do to get the desired lean, because they're approaching the pair of stitches from the left instead of the right. But while they're charting, they have to use the symbols that correspond to the decreases traditional knitters will work because of the unwritten assumption that public-side rows are worked right to left.

Symbol Key for Mirror-Image Knitters	
	K2tog (or other left-leaning decrease)
	SSK, SKP, or K2tog tbl (or other right-leaning decrease)

### Charting Rule: Mirror-Image Knitters

MIKs must **chart** a “K2tog” in written-out instructions as a right-leaning decrease and an “SSK” (or “SKP” or similar) as a left-leaning decrease. Wherever a chart has a right-leaning decrease, MIKs must **work** an SSK (or SKP or similar), and for each left-leaning decrease in a chart, they must work a K2tog.

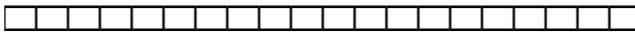
### Decrease Example: Mitten Fingertip

Let’s work a mitten fingertip, doing the shaping two different ways.

For mittens worked in the round, the fingertip shaping often consists of decrease rounds alternating with plain rounds worked evenly, that is, simply working every stitch without any shaping. So we work a decrease round by making decreases on both the palm side and on the back-of-hand side. Then we work a plain round by simply working around on both the palm and back of hand. These two rounds would be repeated as needed.

To avoid the additional complexity of trying to show a chart for a project worked in the round, we’ll think of—and chart—only the mitten’s palm side, and we’ll imagine working it in rows instead of in the round. We’ll decrease on public-side rows and work evenly on private-side rows.

Suppose the palm side of the mitten is twenty stitches wide, and we have to decrease to ten stitches at the fingertips by decreasing one stitch at each end of the public-side rows. Let’s start the chart with the last row on the palm side, which is at the tip of the pinkie finger. We’ll think of it as “fingertip foundation row A” to make future discussion easier. Since we’re treating rows without decreases as private-side rows, the row number goes at the left.

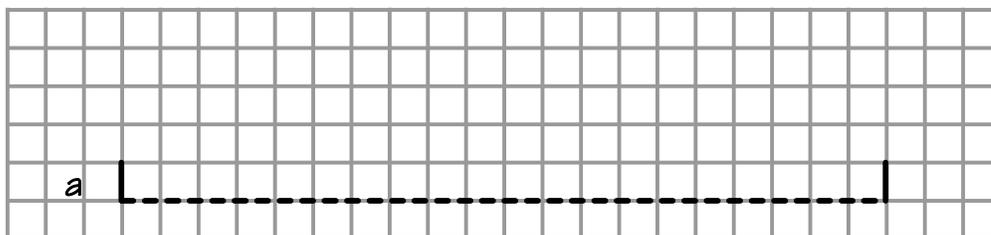
a 

### *On Paper*

Since the book shows charts constructed in the computer, the row boundaries come out naturally in each row’s symbols. On paper, though, we can’t simply draw a rectangle like we did

with the swatch charts in “Basic Knitted Fabrics,” because the rows keep getting shorter instead of staying the same length.

Since I’m lazy, I let each grid cell represent a public-side knit stitch. That means I must draw each row’s boundaries explicitly, using vertical lines to separate its first and last stitches from the surrounding grid. The dotted line shows where the fingertip portion is connected to the rest of the mitten.



### *Which Decrease Goes Where?*

We usually want paired decreases to mirror-image each other, so we have to do a right-leaning decrease at one end of the row and a left-leaning decrease at the other end.

It’s completely optional which one goes where, so let’s make a command decision to do a left-leaning decrease at the right end of the public-side rows and the right-leaning decrease at the left end of the public-side rows.

Let’s also do the decreases on the second and third stitches from each end. That means we work one stitch, do the left-leaning decrease, work to the last three stitches, do the right-leaning decrease, then work the final stitch.

### *Row One*

Since our first shaping row is a public-side row, the row number goes at the right because instructions assume we’re all traditional knitters who work public-side rows from right to left. We start with the first stitch and the left-leaning decrease.

☐☐ 1

That symbol, one stitch wide, represents a knitting operation that turns two stitches into one stitch. When we have only three stitches left on our source needle, we do a right-leaning decrease, which also turns two stitches into one stitch, then work the last stitch.

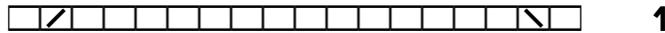
☐☐☐ ☐☐ 1

### The Center of Row One

The question now is, How many stitches will we work between the two decreases? We started with twenty, and at both ends of the row, we will have used three stitches (two for the decrease and one for the edge stitch). From the twenty, we subtract both groups of three, which means we need fourteen knit symbols in the center of the row.

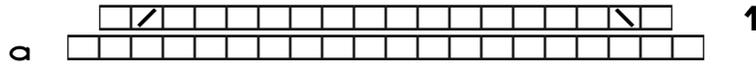
Here’s another way to think about it. In the partial row above, we have four symbols, each representing the single stitch that remains after we work the knitting operation the symbol means. Since we start with twenty stitches and decrease a total of two stitches, we will have eighteen stitches when we finish the row. Since the partial row already has four symbols, then we subtract those four symbols from the eighteen we’ll finish with, which again tells us we need fourteen knit symbols between the decreases.

So the chart for row one will be, which we chart according to the unwritten assumption that written-out instructions are always written for traditional knitters, a knit symbol, the left-leaning decrease, fourteen knit symbols, the right-leaning decrease, and the final knit symbol.



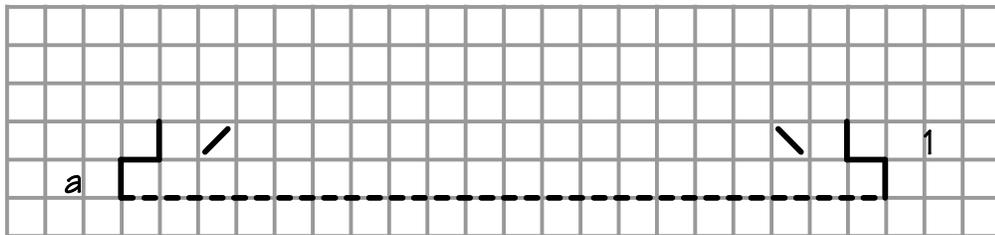
### Combining the Initial Rows

Let’s combine fingertip foundation row A with this first shaping row, just so we can see how the two rows look together.



The fact that there are two fewer one-stitch-wide symbols on row one compared to foundation row A is showing us that the stitch count has gone down by two.

In the paper chart, the vertical lines separate row one’s stitches from the grid, just as they did for foundation row A, and they must be one grid cell closer to the center of the chart.



The chart also has horizontal lines connecting the top of row A’s vertical boundaries with the bottom of row one’s vertical boundaries. They’re not really necessary to show

where the two rows start and end, so some of us might choose to omit the horizontal segments if we think they clutter up the chart for no real purpose.

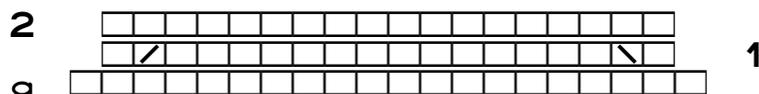
### *The Chart Tells All*

In the computer or on paper, we can always use the chart itself to figure out how many central stitches there should be. Since we lose one stitch on both ends of each decrease row in this project, then

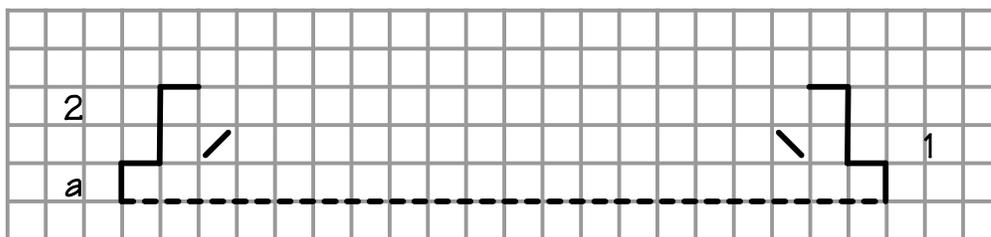
- ☉ in the computer, after we type the pair of symbols at each end, we put the cursor between the second and third symbols and type `k` until row one is two stitches narrower than row A, or
- ☉ on paper, if we're letting grid cells represent public-side knits, we move both vertical boundaries on each decrease row one cell closer to the middle of the chart and let the center take care of itself.

### *The Plain Row*

The shaping occurs on every other row. That means row two will simply work all eighteen stitches that remain. Since it's a private-side row, the row number goes at the left.

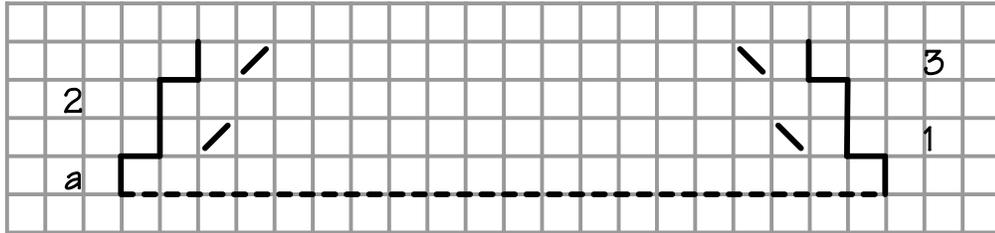


In the paper chart, we only need to extend the boundary lines at both ends of row one straight up through row two, since row two is worked evenly. In preparation for row three, we'll add the horizontal segments as well. We know that they are one grid cell wide, since each decrease row eliminates one stitch at each end.

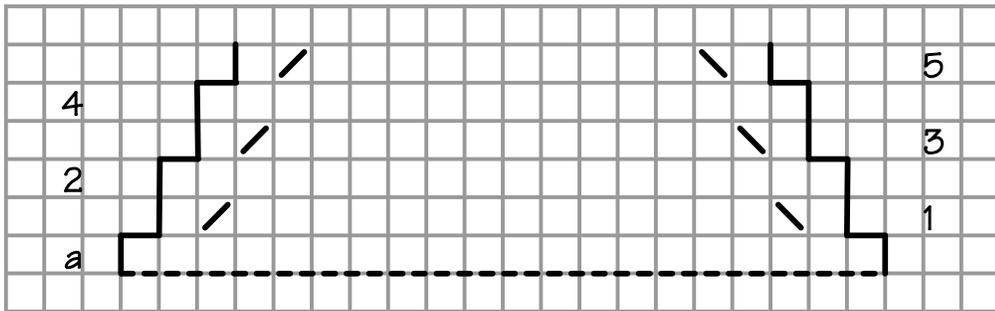
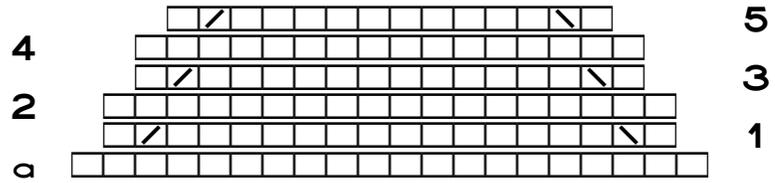


### *The Rest of the Shaping*

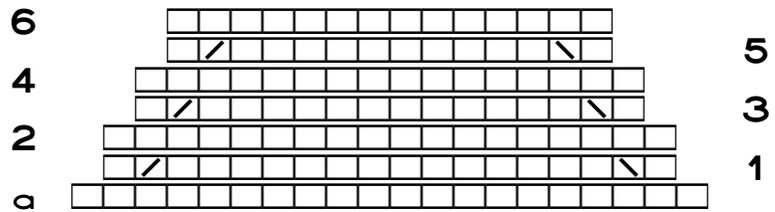
On row three, we again make the decreases at the beginning and end of the row. Since those two decreases remove a total of two stitches, we need to show that both ends of row three are one stitch shorter than row two. Remember that we keep the left-leaning decrease at the beginning of the row and the right-leaning decrease at the end of the row.

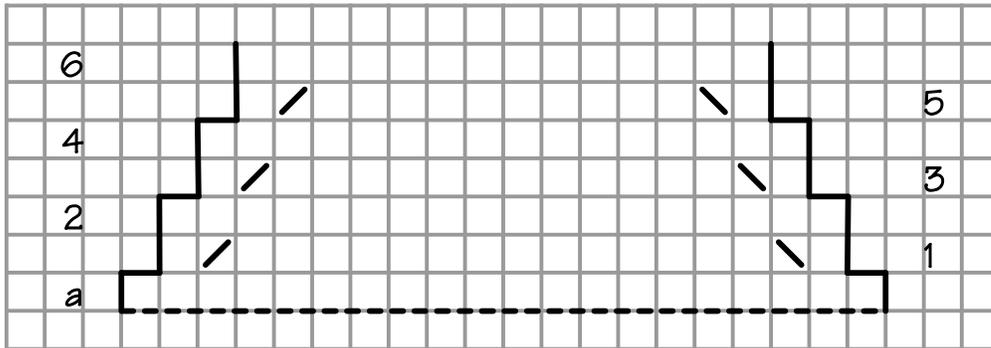


Row four just works each stitch, and on row five, we decrease at each end again.



Row six just works each stitch.

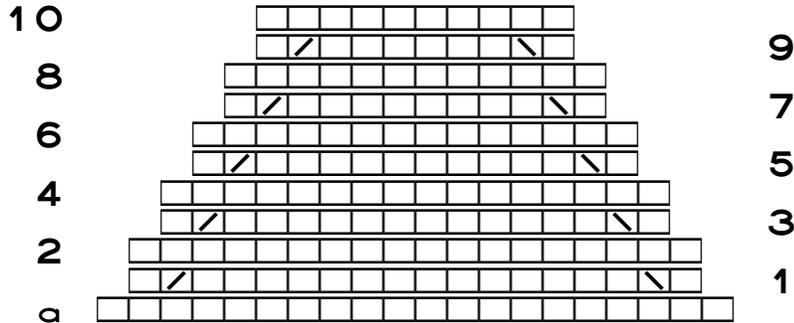




At this point, how many stitches are left? Counting the stitches on row six, we have decreased to fourteen stitches. We are supposed to decrease to ten, so we have a couple more decrease rows to add, with plain rows in between.

### *The Complete Shaping Chart*

Here's the final shaping chart, where row nine leaves us with the ten stitches we're supposed to have when we finish the shaping. We'll work one final plain round, because it's easier to work with ordinary knit stitches, rather than stitches resulting from decreases, no matter which method we use to join the palm and back-of-hand sides at the fingertips.



The paper chart looks fairly similar.



Now I add at least **two** blank rows to the top of the table

<b>2</b>		
	/	\
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select and copy the first two pattern rows

<b>2</b>		
	/	\
<b>1</b>		
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click in the correct cell

<input type="checkbox"/>		
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and paste them in.

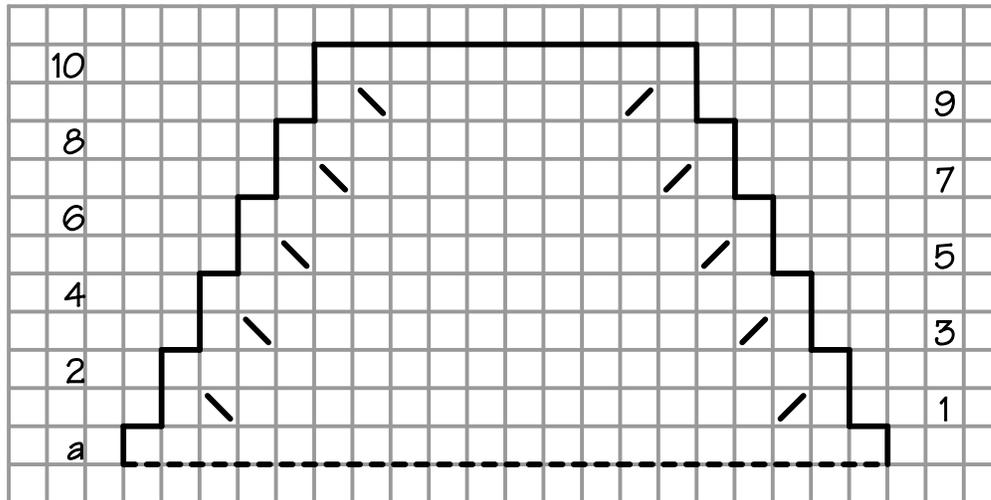
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In the section “Duplicating Rows Already Charted” in “Charting in the Computer,” we probably needed to add only one blank row at the **bottom** of our word processor table, no matter how many rows we were going to paste there.

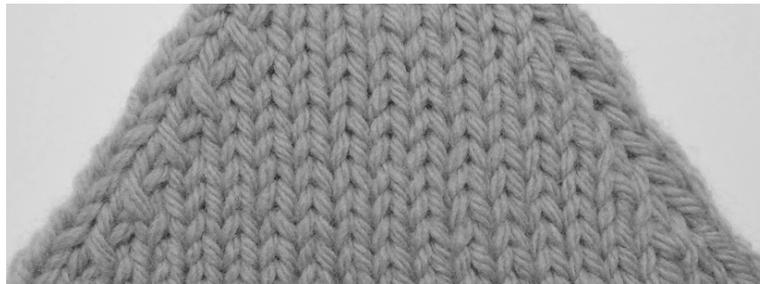
But here, if we don’t have as many blank rows above the existing symbols as we’re about to paste in, we’ll overwrite whatever’s already in the table. If we wanted to paste in ten rows above the highest row with symbols, we’d have to add ten (or more, if we wanted to be sure) blank rows above that row before we paste. If we add only one blank row, then when we



and the paper chart becomes

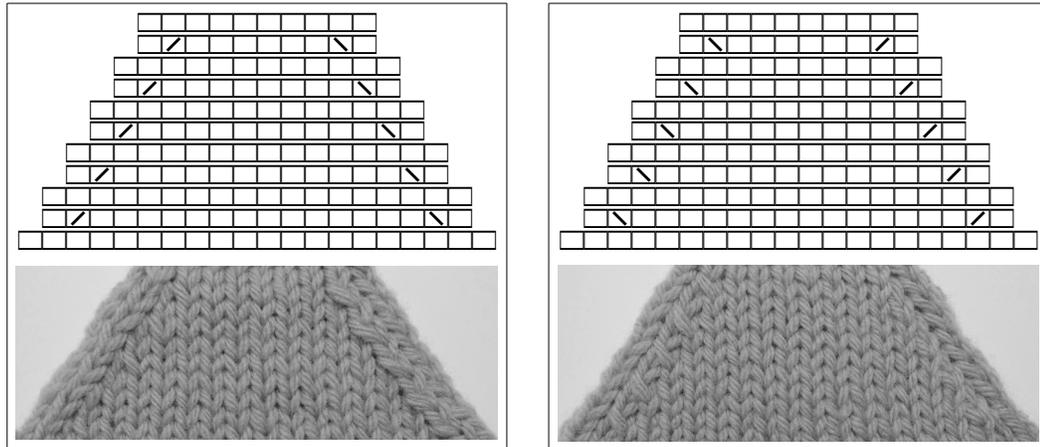


Here's a photograph of the mitten fingertip decreased this way, just for comparison.



## Surprise! The Charts Don't Match the Knitting

Let's look at the charts and sampler photos all in one place.



We've now hit a situation where the charts don't actually look like the resulting work, at least not in the fine details. One might think, from looking at both charts, that putting the decreases on the edge that matches the decrease's lean would result in the least visible decreases, while putting the decreases the other way, so that the decreases point at the edge they're making, would make the decreases very obtrusive.

What we see, in fact, is just the opposite. If the decreases point at the edge they're next to, they almost disappear. Only the very first and last stitches of each row noticeably lean in the sampler on the right. But in the sampler on the left, we see pairs of quite bold stitches on both edges, the outer being the first and last stitches, and the inner two the decreases themselves. When decreases run parallel to the adjoining fabric edges, they seem to almost jump up and down shouting "Here I am!"

### Lesson Learned

If decrease symbols near the edge of the fabric are **pointing at** the edge, they will not be very noticeable in yarn. If the decrease symbols lean in **the same direction** as the fabric edge, they will be very prominent.

### *Using Decreases to Our Advantage*

Imagine taking these two very different results to anywhere we need to do matched shaping, like underarm decreases on a garment's front, back, and sleeves; sleeve caps for set-in sleeves; toes on top-down socks; and sweaters with V-necks or raglan sleeves. Which option we pick is really a matter of the final effect we want, especially when we're working in the flat.

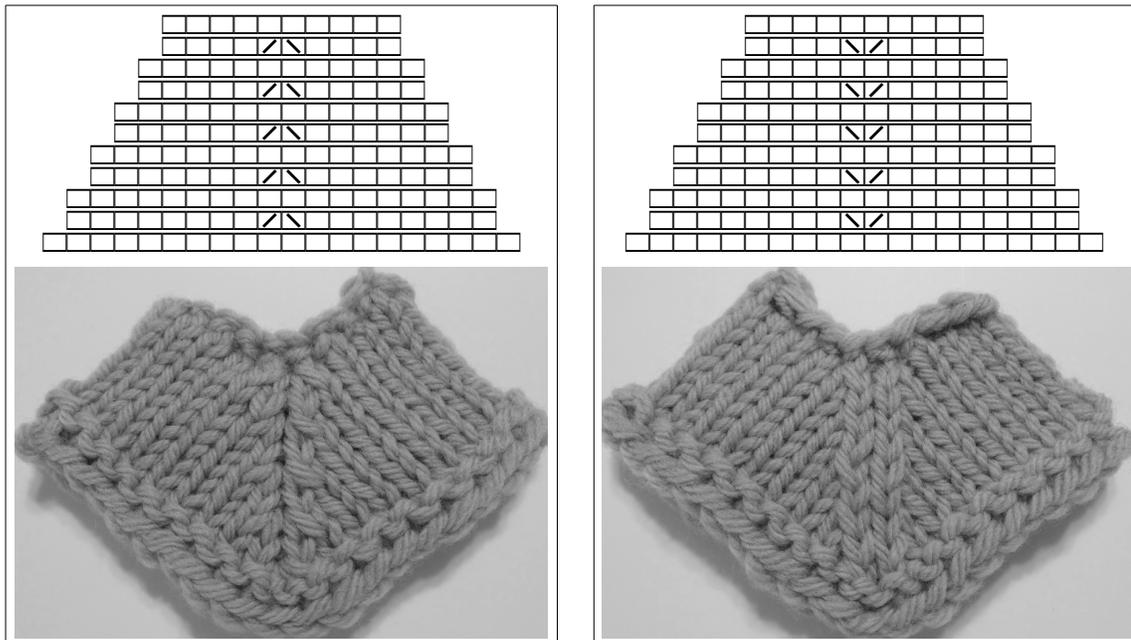
Suppose we're making a sweater with set-in sleeves and that we'll use a seaming method that takes a full stitch from the edges being sewn together. As we work the sleeve cap, we make the decreases with the second and third stitches from each edge, just as we did here with the mitten fingertip, and we use the second option, making the decreases point at the edges of the fabric. As the photo shows, the only stitches that lean, and are therefore fairly noticeable, are the single stitches right on the very edges of the fabric. When we sew the sleeve cap into the armhole, those slanting stitches will disappear into the seam, and the decreases will hardly be noticeable.

If we want to emphasize the shaping as part of the sweater's style, then we have to do two things.

- ☉ We need to swap which decrease we do at each edge so we make stitches slant parallel to the edges of the fabric.
- ☉ We need to work the decreases at the proper locations so that the bold strips are the desired width in stitches, allowing for the fact that one stitch will disappear in the seam. If we want strips three stitches wide, then we must have four stitches before the first decrease and another four after the last decrease. One stitch disappears in the seams, and the three that remain will slant quite prominently. So we need to work the decreases on the fifth and sixth stitches from each edge.

## One Other Option

What if we did the decreases in the center of the work, not at the edges of the piece, like the next two charts show?



The decreases pair up on the left sample to give an appearance that almost looks like two separate pieces were sewn together instead of being worked as seamless fabric. The sample on the right shows the bold lines that result when we reverse the order we do the decreases.

Because directional decreases change the slant of the fabric, and because this slanting is much more obvious when the decreases are not near the fabric's edge, these paired decreases worked in the center force the outer portions of the project to tilt. The novelty is interesting, but such fabric might be awkward to wear in any kind of garment. In other projects, the slanting effect might be just what we want.<sup>1</sup>

## Using Wider Symbols for Single Decreases

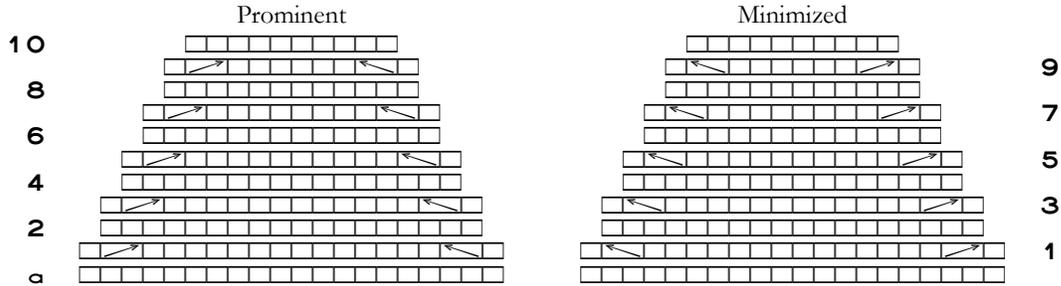
If it would make more sense to us to show a decrease with a symbol that's two stitches wide, there are symbols in the knitting font that we can choose with our word processor's Insert | Symbol or Insert | Special Character dialog box.<sup>2</sup> There are quite a few symbols that might be used in this way, including



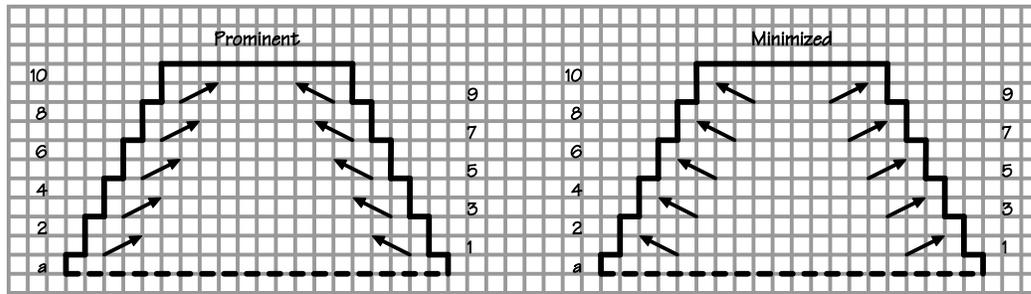
<sup>1</sup> We'll look briefly at such a situation in a later chapter.

<sup>2</sup> Using this dialog box to find symbols that are two or more stitches wide can be tricky, because the dialog box isn't set up to show "letters of the alphabet" that are such wildly different widths. It may be easier, or much easier, to copy and paste such symbols from the knitting font catalog at the end of part four.

If we choose to use the first pair of two-stitch-wide symbols, we'd get these two charts, depending on whether we want the decreases to be prominent or minimized.



We can chart this way on paper as well.



If charting decreases like this makes sense to us, then we should use it! The chart symbols are supposed to help us work more quickly, more easily, and with fewer errors, so we each need to use whichever symbols we want in whatever way works best for us.

## Double Decreases in Charts

Double decreases can sometimes be substituted in places where we might use a pair of single decreases, as on the tops of hats or along raglan lines.

So if we're making a sweater with raglan sleeves in the round from the bottom up, we might do a double decrease at each raglan point instead of doing a matched pair of single decreases in those same four places.

Here are symbols we can use for charting common double decreases, starting with one whose resulting stitch stands straight up, which is useful if we want the decrease to not draw attention to itself by leaning.

=		S2KP: sl 2 tog K-wise (as though starting a K2tog), K1, pass 2 sl sts over
-		K3tog
-		SSSK: just like an SSK but worked on 3 sts

When we chart written-out instructions, we **all** must use a right-leaning symbol where we're told to work a K3tog. Likewise, an SSSK (or similar) in the instructions must be charted with a left-leaning symbol. Both of these requirements stem from the fact that written-out instructions assume public-side rows are worked right to left.

Traditional knitters will work the decreases as shown above, but mirror-image knitters, once they pick up needles and yarn, have to swap which decrease is represented by which symbol.

Symbol Key for Mirror-Image Knitters	
	K3tog
	SSSK: just like an SSK but worked on 3 sts

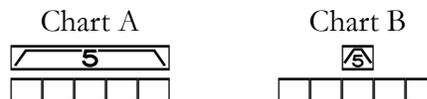
There are additional symbols available if we prefer one with a different look, and we could use our word processor's Insert | Symbol dialog box to find other one-stitch-wide symbols. The easiest way to use three-stitch-wide symbols for double decreases is by copying and pasting them from the knitting font catalog.

## Higher-Order Decreases

When we're charting a K2tog or SSK/SKP, it's quite common to use a symbol that's the width of the single stitch that results. It's also common for double decreases to be charted with symbols that are one stitch wide. But we can, if we prefer, use two-stitch-wide decrease symbols for single decreases and three-stitch-wide symbols for double decreases. We have the same two options when we need to decrease three or more stitches at once.

On one hand, we can use a symbol that's as wide as the number of stitches we start with. So if we need to chart a decrease that turns five stitches into one stitch, we could use a symbol that's five stitches wide, as shown in chart A.

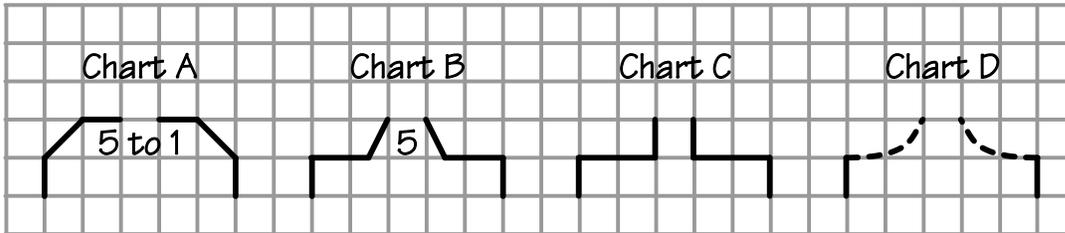
On the other hand, we can indicate five stitches being decreased to one stitch by showing the result of the decrease with a symbol that's only one stitch wide, as shown in chart B.



Either way is fine. We might tend to always show such decreases one way, but in a partic-

ular project, or for a particular decrease in a particular project, it may make more sense to show a higher-order decrease the other way.

On paper, we have lots of options, whether mimicking the computer charts, as in charts A and B, or doing something the knitting font can't do, as in chart D.



## Purling Decreases

There are purling decreases equivalent to their similarly named knitting counterparts. We'll look at just the equivalent single decreases.

A **P2tog** is as easy to do as a K2tog.

An **SP** is the equivalent of an SKP, so we slip one, purl one, then pass the slipped stitch over.

The purl equivalent of an SSK, an **SSP**, can be an absolute bitch until we've done a few of them.<sup>3</sup> [This video](#) shows very clearly how a traditional knitter works an SSP.

### *Surprise!*

And believe it or not, if we're having trouble working an SSP (I have to be exceedingly careful so that I don't split either stitch as I try to insert the working needle into the backs of the two stitches), we can actually work it as an SSK on the other side instead. How?

1. Work the row to the point of the SSP.
2. Slip the next two stitches to the other needle.
3. Turn the work.
4. Work an SSK. At the point of wrapping the yarn around the working needle, the yarn will be coming from the wrong place. It feels a bit awkward, but just carry on.
5. Slip the resulting stitch to the other needle.
6. Turn the work, and continue along the row.

<sup>3</sup> I apologize for the word, but really, no other word applies. After we do two or three (or four or five, or ten or twenty), it does get easier.

When we get to that resulting stitch on the next row (or round), we have to work it in such a way that we don't twist it. Usually, we would work it in the leading leg, but we need to pay attention, because with all the slipping back and forth between needles, it's quite easy to wind up twisting that stitch not just once, but twice. We may have to slip it back and forth between the needles several times to get the stitch's legs completely untwisted.

## **Sometimes We MUST Do Purling Decreases**

When would we need to make purl decreases? Two situations come to mind immediately.

### ***Purling Decreases on the Public Side***

First, imagine an Aran sweater. In between all the cable and twist patterns, there are stretches of reverse stockinette. It might be only one stitch of purl, or we might have two or more purl stitches between patterns (if we need more width but want to save yarn and decrease the sweater's weight). We'll need to do decreases in the reverse stockinette portions for underarm, neckline, and shoulder shaping.

In this situation, the reverse stockinette between the patterns **is** the public side of those portions of the project.

### ***Purling Decreases on the Private Side***

Second, suppose we come across a pattern that requires us to decrease every third row. If we're working in the round, no problem. We do a decrease round, work two rounds evenly, do a decrease round, work two rounds evenly, and so on.

But what if we're working flat, back and forth, to make stockinette? Say the first decrease row is a public-side row. Then we work two rows evenly, the first being private side and the second being public side. Now we need to do a decrease row, and we're on the private side. That means we have to do purling decreases. And of course, the resulting lean of the purling decreases we do will show up quite clearly on the public side of the work. If they lean the wrong direction, they'll stand out big-time.

In this situation, the reverse stockinette side remains the private side of the work.<sup>4</sup>

## ***Figuring Out Which Purling Decrease to Do Where***

There was only one way to understand how purling decreases looked depending on whether

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<sup>4</sup> One such situation is described in the section "Tweaking the V-Neck Slope" in part three's "Optional Shaping Tweaks."





creases at all was that the smooth flow of purl bumps had a little hiccup (oh, and the piece got narrower).

## *The Result*

The big surprise was when I turned the new reverse stockinette sampler over. **It looked exactly the same as the stockinette sampler I'd made years before.** In fact, I so distrusted this result that I frogged the whole thing and made it again, just to be sure I hadn't swapped which decrease I did where.



Where I had done a P2tog on the reverse stockinette's public side, it looked like a K2tog on stockinette's public side. Same thing with the reverse stockinette public-side SSP: it looked exactly like an SSK on the public side of stockinette.

Note that the tags indicate which public-side SSPs were worked as private-side SSKs. They look identical in yarn, but an SSK is of course much easier to work.

## *The Amazing Take-Away*

What does this result mean? If we come across (or create) a pattern that needs private-side decreases when making stockinette stitch in flat, back-and-forth rows, we do the same style of decrease on both the public- and private-side rows.

So if we work a **K2tog** at the **beginning** of the **public**-side rows, then we'll work a P2tog at the **end** of the **private**-side rows. If we work an **SSK** (or SKP or similar) at the **end** of the **public**-side rows, then we'll do an **SSP** (or SPP or similar) at the **beginning** of private-side rows. This small table summarizes the results for all knitters.

	worked at the		look like	worked at the	
K2togs	beginning	of public-side	P2togs	end	of private-side
SSKs	end	rows	SSPs	beginning	rows

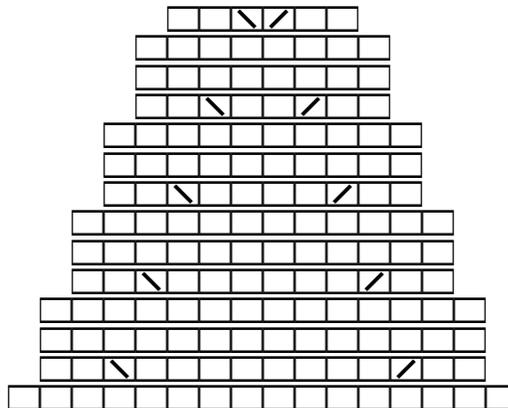
If we were to switch the K2togs to the end and the SSKs (or SKPs or similar) to the beginning of the public-side rows, then we would likewise switch the locations of the P2togs to the beginning and the SSPs (or SPPs or similar) to the end of the private-side rows. Again, the table summarizes these results for all knitters.

	worked at the		look like	worked at the	
SSKs	beginning	of public-side	SSPs	end	of private-side
K2togs	end	rows	P2togs	beginning	rows

These rules are true for MIKs as well as traditional knitters. The only difference is that MIKs' decreases will lean in the opposite direction than they do for traditional knitters.

### An Example

Here's a chart showing shaping worked every third row in stockinette.



The symbol keys are similar to the earlier ones, but we add additional information for working on the private side. MIKs must swap which decrease is done at each point.

	Traditional Knitter Symbol Key
<input type="checkbox"/>	K on RS, P on WS
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	K2tog on RS, P2tog on WS
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	SSK on RS, SSP on WS

	Mirror-Image Knitter Symbol Key
<input type="checkbox"/>	K on RS, P on WS
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	K2tog on RS, P2tog on WS
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	SSK on RS, SSP on WS

Here's the swatch.



Pop quiz! Did you notice the chart doesn't have row numbers? It's clear in the swatch that the decreases were worked every third row, but which decrease rows were worked as K2togs/SSKs on the public side and which as P2togs/SSPs on the private side? Hard to tell, isn't it?

### ***Turning the Chart Upside-Down Changes Nothing***

This is a great example of a situation in which we might want to work private-side rows with the chart upside-down so that we read the chart in the same direction that we work. Our initial thought might be that we would have to re-define the decrease symbols on the private-side rows, switching the locations we work the P2togs and SSPs. But as it turns out, when we rotate the chart 180 degrees, the decrease symbols still lean the same direction.

Here are two little charts to help us see this effect, with headings reminding us which decrease is which. If we turn this page upside-down, we see that the symbols still lean the same direction, so we don't have to re-define or swap their meanings on paper, in a device, or in our heads as we work with needles and yarn.

Leans to Left	Leans to Right
	

## Charting Rule

Directional decreases lean the same direction whether the chart is upside-down or right-side up. No mental, needle-and-yarn, or other gymnastics are required if we must make directional decreases when we're working private-side rows with the chart upside-down.

### *The Bottom Line on Purling Decreases*

If we need to make purling decreases in an area of reverse stockinette (meaning the reverse stockinette is the public side of the work), it really doesn't matter whether we do a P2tog or an SSP/SPP. Well, as far as appearance goes, it doesn't matter. But a P2tog is way easier to execute than an SSP, so we can save ourselves some aggravation.<sup>6</sup>

If we have to do matched decreases on both the public and private sides of stockinette, we do a "2tog" decrease at the same edge of the fabric on both the public and private sides, and we do an "SS" decrease at the other edge on both the public and private sides.

If we have to decrease at only one edge of stockinette, we still do the same type of decrease on both the public and private sides.

If we put "K2tog" or "SSK" markers at the fabric edges as reminders, then when we need to work purl decreases on the private side of stockinette, the markers tell us—correctly—to work the purl equivalents.

## Charting Rule

If we must make directional decreases in the same location on both the public and private sides of stockinette, we do the same type of decrease on both rows. Wherever we do a K2tog on the public side, we do a P2tog at that spot on the private side. If we're doing an SSK (or SKP or similar) at a particular spot on the public side, we do an SSP (or SPP or similar) at that same spot on the private side.

<sup>6</sup> OK, there are some of us—*cough*—who, when putting on a sweater with shaping in the reverse stockinette portions, would be bothered by purl decreases that lean the wrong way on the private side. If you want to be official, go for it. Do those SSPs where needed so even the private side is perfect!