

by [Angela Hahn](#)

Years ago I knitted my then-boyfriend, now-husband a sweater. He's not an especially big man, but he's significantly larger than I am, and I remember that it seemed like it took months to finish. On top of that, I inserted a simple geometric stranded pattern on the lower body, but my floats were too tight, which created an unfortunate gathered effect -- accentuated because my gauge was a little too loose, giving the sweater's fabric too much drape. All in all, it's probably no surprise that that sweater disappeared a year or two after it was finished, never to be seen again.

So when I decided to design a knit for a man, I wanted to keep two simple things in mind: knitter-friendly, and wearer-friendly (assuming that in most -- but not all -- cases, knitter and wearer would NOT be the same person). Here are the details that I considered to be knitter-friendly, wearer-friendly, or both as I incorporated them into my design for Twist Collective's Summer issue, [Laredo](#):

1) **Sleeveless!** Faster than a long-sleeved sweater to knit, multi-season, versatile, fashionable and fun to wear -- I see a lot of men wearing vests, and love to wear them myself.*



2) **Medium gauge** (in my original concept, DK to worsted). I don't picture most men wearing something knitted with bulky yarn; on the other hand, although the machine-knit sweaters my husband wears are almost all of a fine gauge, even a sleeveless man's sweater would take a lot of

knitting if worked in fingering weight yarn. So this item is somewhat of a compromise.

3) **Worked in the round.** I know, this is a matter of preference (for knitters-- I doubt most men would care if their vest had seams or not!), but I find working in the round easier and funner than working flat.

4) **Minimal finishing.** Once again, not of concern to the wearer, but adding neckbands and armhole bands takes a lot of time, relative to knitting the body, so I decided to use stitch patterns that were self-finishing for the neck and armhole edgings.

5) **Enough details to keep it interesting.** Functional details, if possible! I originally spotted a larger version of the Twisted Diamond stitch pattern in Vogue Knitting's Stitchionary 2, and thought a bold panel like that would be a great accent for a man's sweater or vest. After I started swatching it, I realized I could split the panel up the middle to form a V-neck, with the twisted stitches just under the point of the "V" handily reinforcing the fabric in that area. Then I serendipitously discovered that the twisted stitches cause the fabric to lie flat along the edges of the "V"-- even better.



I did notice that the stitch pattern on each side of the "V" would be asymmetrical, because the edges of the "V" go in different directions across the twisted diamond columns-- so I decided to make the two sides of the front neckline symmetrical by reversing one of the three columns, making it a mirror image of the other two. I prefer the way this looks at the neckline, and don't mind the asymmetry on the lower part of the front (in fact I bet a lot of people won't even notice it). Anyway, this is why the panels are slightly different for front and back (the three columns within the back panel are all identical).



For the stitch patterns for the side panels, I started from the top: that is, I knew I wanted a twisted stitch pattern in the center, to reinforce the bottom of the armhole and to coordinate with the front and back panels, and I knew I wanted a self-finished edge at the armholes, which required

something that would lie flat, like a rib. Fiddling with the decreases that shape the bottom armhole edges led me to start off with three twisted stitch columns separated by single ribs, which transitioned nicely into 1X1 ribbing along the armhole edges.



And finally, 6) **Fit!!** Incorporating the neckline split into the stitch pattern meant that, unless I wanted to start the stitch pattern at the bottom with a partial rep for some sizes (which I didn't), changing the vest length in small increments would require changing the armhole depth-- which would then affect the depth of the V-neck and the width of the shoulder pieces. So instead I decided to write the pattern for three different lengths in all sizes-- adding a full pattern repeat is what changes the length, which allowed me to calculate the depth of the V-neck without worrying that the vest would be too long or too short overall. Eight sizes and three lengths...there should be a Laredo that fits almost anyone!



*I donned Laredo to shoot a few photos before sending it off to Twist, and loved it! The sample is a little too small for my husband, so after it's returned to me, I guess I'll just have to wear it myself.

Angela's pattern is in good company in the men's section of the pattern shop. [Check it out.](#)