



"...It's better not to make mittens in a hurry . . . let's make them in May; let's take our time over them; let's venture into new approaches and designs; let's enjoy them."

— Elizabeth Zimmermann, in [*Knitter's Almanac*](#)



a newsletter from
Meg Swansen

Dear Knitters,

Here is the first issue of the online-Newsletter you signed up for—remember? It is my intent to write about things of general interest to handknitters, using your feedback as my guide. Also, with each issue, I will offer some kind of *special* to you signer-uppers.

Needles

Many of us knit only with circular needles: either round and round, or back and forth (with the weight of the garment in the middle of

On the Website

[Cardigan Details](#) DVD



the cable instead of hanging out on the end of a long single-point needle and taxing your forearm muscles).

When knitting around—say a cap or mittens—one may choose to begin on a 16-inch circular and switch to a set of 4 or 5 double-pointed needles in order to decrease the top.



When I was a kid, still honing my skills, double-pointed needles were very tricky for me to master. At that time, there were rather nasty little plastic 11-inch needles, which could barely make a circle, had an exceedingly short business-end and gave me cramps down the outsides of my little fingers. But even the 11-inch only temporarily postponed the inevitable dps.

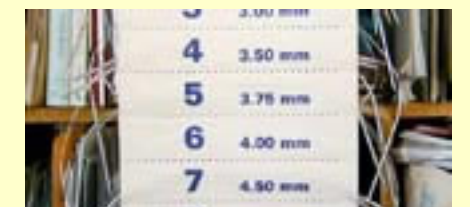
So when the stitches of my hat had been reduced to a number that would no longer fit comfortably around a 16-inch needle, I would cheat (guiltily) and pull out the nylon cable in the middle; knit up all the stitches on the left-hand side, then slide the new stitches around and repeat from asterisk. (*remind me to tell you Barbara Abbey's poem about that word).

Eventually I became comfortable with dps and have never publically revealed my early little secret until now—didn't even tell my mother. You can imagine how amused I was when, a few years ago, I saw a booklet on a revolutionary technique called the Magic Loop;

Latvian Dreams
by Joyce Williams



[24-inch circular needles](#) and
a [circular needle storage solution](#)

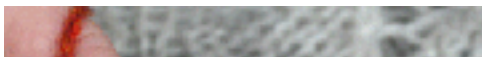


a method of working a small number of stitches around on a 29-inch or 40-inch circular by pulling out the cable, etc., etc,...

Another method, which I have now adopted, was taught to me by Joyce Williams about 15 years ago as I watched her knitting glove-fingers around on two 24-inch circulars. Joyce has now given away her enormous stash of all needles except circular 24-inch and longer. And those she has been accumulating in pairs of pairs as she keeps multiple projects going at once. At one point, she was ordering so many dozens of needles from us that Eleanor considered cutting her off...

A few days after we finished taping the 30 new additions to *A Knitting Glossary DVD*, I realized I had omitted a demonstration of the two-24-inch circular method. Although it is now quite widely used (shown in Joyce Williams' book *Latvian Dreams* as well as in our *Sweaters From Camp* plus books by Cat Bordi and Charlene Schurch), I will show it here with Joyce's permission. Please note that Joyce has a video available which shows her knitting a pair of socks from the toe up; Turkish cast on, two 24-inch circulars and her own design for a short-row heel. It is called *Socks T- to -T*. Let me know if you'd like her address.

I will use an enamel-coated grey needle and a nickle-plated silver one so you can see more easily what is going on.



[Knitting Glossary DVD](#)



[Sweaters from Camp](#)

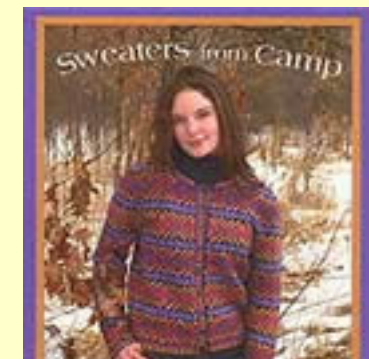




Photo A

(Photo A) Either cast on all stitches to one (grey) needle and divide half of them onto the second (silver) needle, OR (photo A) cast on half the wanted stitches to one needle, then half to the second needle.



Photo B

(Photo B) Pull the grey needle through the sts and let it dangle. Slide sts to tip of silver needle.



(Photo C) Grab other end of silver needle ... **note:** always use the beginning-and-end of the SAME NEEDLE (sorry to shout at you, but that part is critical, or all sts will end up on one needle). Knit all sts. Pull silver needle through the sts and let it dangle.



[The Opinionated Knitter](#)



**Special for
Newsletter Readers:**

**25% discount on the
EZ-Quote Tote**



Photo C



(Photo D) *Slide stitches to tip of grey needle and knit all. Pull grey needle through the just-knitted stitches and let it dangle.

Slide stitches on silver needle around to the tip, grab other end of silver needle and knit all stitches. Repeat from *.

Photo D

Round and round you go to the sound of needle-tips gently clicking as they dangle from your work.

Having plenty of needles available to you at all times is a basic necessity for all obsessive knitters. It may seem a large(ish) investment initially, but then, There They Are when a sudden casting-on impulse seizes you—and they will last for decades. Don't stint.



I must mention that two people knitting around on two circulars has been well-established in Scandinavia; knee-to-knee, each participant must knit with one end of each needle and work every-other-



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round. My ma and I knitted several garments in this manner and would clip along at great speed; luckily, our pace and gauge were similar. Chris took several photos of us for *Knitting Around* and he called it "4-Handed Knitting". At Camp one year, we knitted a circular shawl for our administrator and as it increased in circumference, more knitters (with their needles) were added. I believe, near the periphery, we had 4 or 5 knitters going at once, each one knitting every 4th or 5th round. The photo shown here is from *Sticka Mönster* by Inga Wintzell.

Special Offer

Many knitters who visit our website are familiar with Elizabeth Zimmermann (my ma). For this first Newsletter special, I would like to offer you a 25% discount on our silk-screened tote bag (natural canvas) which says (in EZ's handwriting with dusty-rose ink), "Knit on, with confidence and hope, through all crises. Elizabeth". Reduced from \$18 to \$13.50. [You may order from the image in the right-hand column.](#)

Bits and Pieces

Although (rather surprisingly) video tapes continue to sell, we are gradually switching all our videos to a DVD format. A detailed menu has been added, making it easy to hop from technique to technique; plus it is less expensive to replicate. For instance,

Elizabeth's PBS- TV series, *Knitting Workshop*, was on three 2-hour video cassettes for \$95. It is now on two DVD discs for \$48. You save enough money to be able to buy a new DVD player. At present, we have on DVD:

- *A Knitting Glossary* (30 "new" techniques added to the existing 100 on the video series. 4 hours, \$40)
- *EZ's Knitting Workshop* (we added a 45-minute optional audio track of Cully and me talking about our grandma and ma respectively. 6 hours, 2 discs, \$48)
- *Cardigan Details* (90 min, \$25)
- *A Swedish Dubbelmössa* (60 min, \$20)

Next in line: *A Mimbres Vest* and the *Russian Prime Sweater*.

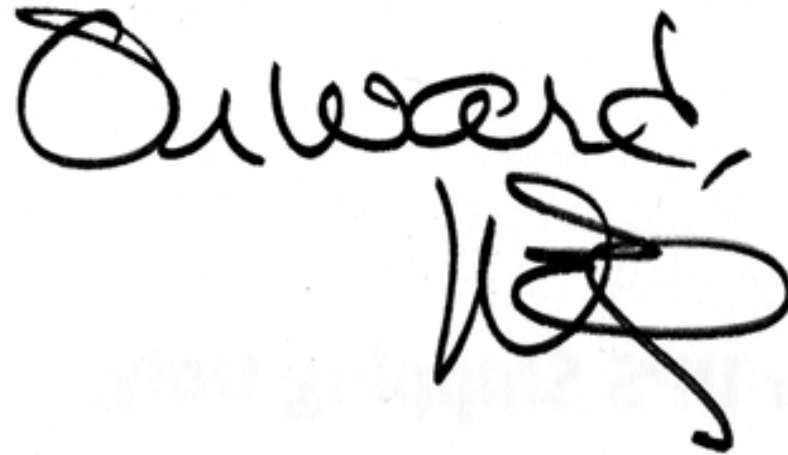
Oh yeah, Barbara Abbey's poem. During her teaching years, Barbara* heard the word "asterisk" constantly being mispronounced, so she made up a little poem which, once learned, will eliminate the problem:

*Mary had an aero-plane
In which she liked to frisk.
Wasn't she a foolish girl
Her little ass-to-risk?*

*author of *The Complete Book of Knitting*, *Barbara Abbey's Knitting*

Lace, and 101 Ways to Improve Your Knitting.

Well, there you are—a rudimentary issue no. 1. It has occurred to me that we have just made a pleasant circle: Elizabeth began this knitting business in September 1958 by mailing out Newsletter no. 1, a seamless Fair Isle yoke sweater design (now reprinted in *The Opinionated Knitter*). It feels nice to begin a Newsletter series once again; from typewriter to computer.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Elizabeth". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial 'E' and a decorative flourish at the end.