

CONTRAST RACERBRA

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A sporty retro racerback bralette that can be worn as a fun underlayer, a sweet summer crop, or even a full length tank!



Share your project on Instagram using the hashtag #contrastracerbra and tagging me, @jesssiemae

SIZES: XS (S, M, L, 1X){2X, 3X, 4X, 5X} to fit full bust measurement of:

24-26 (28-34, 36-38, 40-42, 44-46){48-50, 52-54, 56-58, 60-62}"

61-66 (71-86, 91.5-96.5, 101.5-106.5, 111.5-117){122-127, 132-137, 142-147, 152-158}cm

Actual measurement of finished garment at bust:

15 (19, 23, 27, 31){35, 39, 43, 47}"

38 (48.5, 58.5, 68.5, 78.5){89, 99, 109, 119.5}cm

To choose a size, take your full bust measurement and subtract 13-15"/33-38cm, unless your full bust is 28-31"/71-79cm, in which case I recommend knitting the size 19"/48.5cm.

Generally, if you are between sizes, size down. If you have a full cup size in relation to your underbust, you may want to size down as well, and compensate by knitting the body longer.

Some 3X-5X testers noted that they would size down for additional negative ease if they were to knit this again.

For your reference, I have compiled a spreadsheet of tester feedback regarding sizing, yardage, and tips that you can find in the pattern notes on the Ravelry pattern page.

Suggested Yarn:

Sweet Sparrow Knits Goldfinch DK - 100% SW Merino, 231yd/100g

Yardage:

MC: 140-230 (150-270, 200-290, 230-353, 340-454){370-561, 400-676, 600-732, 650-750}yds

128-210 (137-247, 183-265, 210-323, 311-415){338-513, 366-618, 548-669, 594-686}m

CC: 6-12 (10-17, 16-29, 21-31, 23-35){25-39, 27-43, 35-46, 45-50}yds

5-11 (9-16, 15-27, 19-28, 21-32){23-36, 25-39, 32-42, 41-46}m

Suggested Needles: US 2 – 2.75mm 16-32” circular needles for band
US 4 – 3.5mm 16-32” circular needles for main body

*If you're not using magic loop, choose a circumference that is several inches shorter than the final circumference of the *garment.**

Gauge: 28 sts & 28 rows per 4x4” square in 1X1 ribbing, blocked and unstretched on larger needles. If you need to stretch a tiny bit for the swatch to measure correctly, that's fine.

Materials: DK weight yarn, circular needles, stitch markers, scrap yarn or stitch holders, removable stitch markers, extra needle for 3-needle bind off or Kitchener stitch, darning needle

Techniques: knitting in the round, decreasing, holding stitches, reading knit and purl stitches

Construction: Garment is worked from the bottom up, front sts are held and underarms bound off, back is shaped and stitches held, front cups are worked individually and straps worked and attached to back held sts using Kitchener stitch or a three-needle bind off. Duplicate stitch is added after blocking.

Special Techniques

Duplicate Stitch: This technique will allow you to add an optional false contrast seam to the lower cups of the bralette. You will work this vertically from bottom to top.

Make sure to watch your tension as you work the stitch. The contrast color should lay loosely on top of the stitch below it with similar tension.

Locate the stitch you want to enter and insert the needle from the wrong side to the right side at the base of the first stitch, leaving a six inch tail in the back to sew in later.

The yarn will come out of the front of the fabric. Follow the stitch up and thread the needle through the two legs of the st from the row above. It does not matter if you do this left to right or right to left, but be consistent with whatever direction you choose as you work up. Bring the needle back out on the front side, and thread it down through the same hole you entered initially.

Now locate the base of the next stitch up vertically. Enter from back to front, above the bar created by the back of the stitch below.

Repeat the above steps until you reach the cup decreases. Cut a six inch tail for sewing in.

If you would like to view video of this technique, see the notes on the Ravelry pattern page.

Modifications

This pattern can also be worked as a fitted tank. Feel free to work the body as long as you want and/or skip the contrast bottom band. You may also chose to skip the duplicate stitch false seams on the cups.

You can adjust upper cup heights to be longer by decreasing at a slower rate. This means you will work more non-decrease rows between the decrease rows.

You can adjust the upper cup heights to be shorter by decreasing at a quicker rate. This means that if you are decreasing once every fourth row for any section of the cups, you can decrease every other row instead. You can also work some of the decrease rows as the Row 1 decrease is worked for the size 1X {2X, 3X, 4X, 5X} cups. In these rows, you decrease by four sts total, and the decreases occur at both the edges *and* the center of the cups.

If you prefer thinner bralette straps, you can decrease the cups to either 7 or 9 sts, rather than 11. You will then work a row with a CSD across the middle three sts of the row to decrease by one st to 6 or 8 instead of 10. For the double stitch i-cord, any even number of sts will work.

Abbreviations
BO – bind off
BOR – beginning of round
CO – cast on
CDD - centered double decrease: with yarn in back, slip the next two sts together knitwise (make sure to slip the two sts <i>*together*</i> as you would if you were to k2tog.) Knit the next st snugly, then take the LN and pass the two previously slipped sts together over the st you just knit. (2 sts dec.)
CSD – centered single decrease: sl1 st knitwise, sl another st knitwise, take the tip of the LN and insert into the two slipped sts from back to front in order to knit them together. Identify the two sts you slipped (below.) Take the tip of the LN and insert it into the second slipped stitch in the row below from front to back and then move working yarn back in order to knit that stitch together with the next st on your needle.
Dec - decreased
K– knit
K1tbl – knit one st through the back loop
K2tog – a right leaning decrease: knit the next 2 stitches together
LN – left needle
P – purl
P2tog – purl 2 together, a left leaning (on the purl side) purl decrease: purl the next two sts together
PM – place marker
RM – removable marker
RN – right needle
RS - right side
Sl1 – slip 1 st knitwise with the yarn in back
Sl1pwyif – slip 1 st purlwise with yarn in front
SM – slip marker
Ssk – slip slip knit, a left leaning decrease: slip one st knitwise, slip another st knitwise. Knit both slipped stitches together through the back loop.
Ssp – slip slip purl, a right leaning (on the purl side) purl decrease: slip 1 st knitwise, sl another st knitwise. Return the two slipped sts to the LN, then purl those two sts together through the back loop.
St - stitch
Sts – stitches
WS - wrong side

Pattern

Before you get started, a couple notes:

- 1) Don't be intimidated by the amount of negative ease in the design. Since the garment is done entirely in ribbing, there will be a ton of stretch in the finished object. Before you block it, it's going to look very small, like a funny little tube with a couple of tight triangles at the top; that's normal! Blocking will open up the ribbing a lot.
- 2) Work in pattern means that you should knit any knit stitches and purl any purl stitches.
- 3) All slipped sts are worked knitwise with the yarn in back *unless otherwise specified*. Slipped edge sts are resolved as purl sts on the wrong side rows.

Bottom Hem Band

On **larger** needles using the Old Norwegian cast on in the contrast color, CO **105 (133, 161, 189, 217){245, 273, 301, 329}** sts and place marker to mark left side front of garment and BOR. Break contrast color and switch to main color and **smaller** needles.

Setup: *K1tbl, p1* for **20 (28, 36, 40, 48){56, 64, 68, 76}** sts, k1tbl, place marker for center front, *k1tbl, p1* for **20 (28, 36, 40, 48){56, 64, 68, 76}** sts, k1tbl, place marker for right side, *p1, k1tbl* to 1 st before BOR, p1. Join for working in the round, making sure not to twist sts.

Note: after working this round, check to confirm that the center front marker is flanked by twisted knit sts, i.e. both sts on either side of the center front marker are twisted knit sts.

Round 1: *K1tbl, p1* for **20 (28, 36, 40, 48){56, 64, 68, 76}** sts, k1tbl, sm, *k1tbl, p1* for **20 (28, 36, 40, 48){56, 64, 68, 76}** sts, k1tbl, sm, *p1, k1tbl* to 1 st before BOR, p1.

Repeat round 1 until bottom band of bralette measures 2"/5cm or preferred underbust band width. Drop main color yarn, but do not break yarn.

Main Body

Round 1: Switch to contrast color. Knit all sts through the back loop.

Round 2: Switch to larger needles. Work *k1,p1* for **20 (28, 36, 40, 48){56, 64, 68, 76}** sts, k1, slip marker for center front, *k1,p1* for **20 (28, 36, 40, 48){56, 64, 68, 76}** sts, k1, slip right side marker, *p1,k1* to 1 st before BOR, p1.

Round 3: Break contrast color yarn and switch back to main color by picking up the main color from two rows below. Work *k1,p1* ribbing to one st before center front marker, k1, slip marker, work *k1,p1* to BOR.

Repeat round 3 for **2.5 (3, 3.5, 4, 4.5){5, 5.5, 6, 6.5}"/[6.5 (7.5, 9, 10, 11.5){12.5, 14, 15, 16.5}cm]** until total length including band is **4.5 (5, 5.5, 6, 6.5){7, 7.5, 8, 8.5}"/[11.5 (12.5, 14, 15, 16.5){18, 19, 20.5, 21.5}cm]**, or preferred length.

I strongly recommend that you try the tube on at this point to make sure it reaches the fullest part of your bust.

We will now separate the front and back and bind off sts for the underarms.

Separate Front and Back

A note about binding off: it's important that you bind the correct number of stitches off in the next section and counting them can be confusing for beginners. A stitch should only be counted as bound off after it's been passed over and can no longer be worked. This means that when you start the bind off, you need to work two stitches before you can bind off one of them. You work the first, then the second, then you pass the first over the second on the RN. You have bound off one stitch. Only count a stitch as a BO stitch after it's been passed over.

Setup round: Work *k1,p1* for **20 (28, 36, 40, 48){56, 64, 68, 76}** sts, k1, slip marker for center front, *k1,p1* for **20 (28, 36, 40, 48){56, 64, 68, 76}** sts, k1, slip right side marker, *p1,k1* to **7 (7, 7, 7, 11){17, 23, 33, 39}** sts before BOR, bind off next **6 (6, 6, 6, 10){16, 22, 32, 38}** sts, remove BOR marker, BO one more st, *p1,k1* to center front marker, slip marker, *k1,p1* to right side marker, k1, remove right side marker, place the **42 (58, 74, 82, 98){114, 130, 138, 154}** front sts you just worked on a stitch holder or scrap yarn, BO **7 (7, 7, 7, 11){17, 23, 33, 39}** sts. Slip the remaining st on your RN to the LN without twisting the st. Count your sts to make sure you have **49 (61, 73, 93, 97){97, 97, 97, 97}** sts on your needles, and that the first and last sts are knit sts.

Shaping the Back

Row 1 (RS): K1, p1, ssk, work in pattern to last 4 sts, k2tog, p1, k1. Turn. (2 sts dec.)

Row 2 (WS): P1, k1, p2tog, work in pattern to last 4 sts, ssp, k1, p1. Turn. (2 sts dec.)

Repeat rows 1 & 2 **6 (9, 12, 17, 18){18, 18, 18, 18}** more* times until 21 sts remain.

Row 3 (RS): K1, *p1,k1* to last two sts, p1, k1. Turn.

Row 4 (WS): P1, *k1,p1* to end of row. Turn.

Repeat rows 3 & 4 for **2.5 (2, 1.5, 1, 0){0, 0, 0, 0}"/[6.5 (5, 4, 2.5, 0){0, 0, 0, 0}cm]** or until back panel reaches preferred length. The exact length of this section is not crucial, provided it is not too long, i.e. that it doesn't reach past the bottom of your back neck. You will be able to knit the front straps as long as necessary in order to reach the back.

Row 5 (RS): K1, *p1,k1* for 8 sts, work CSD, *k1,p1* to last st, k1. (1 st dec., 20 sts remain.)

Break yarn and place remaining sts on holder.

Mark Center Stitch of Each Front Cup

Place the held front sts back onto your working needles.

Lay your bralette flat. The center marker marks the split between the right and left cups. Each cup should have **21 (29, 37, 41, 49){57, 65, 69, 77}** sts. We need to identify the center stitch of each cup and place a RM on each of these sts.

From right to left, count **11 (15, 19, 21, 25){29, 33, 35, 39}** sts. This should be a knit stitch and marks the center of the left cup (left denotes the orientation when worn.) Place a RM *on* this stitch.

Next, from right to left, count **11 (15, 19, 21, 25){29, 33, 35, 39}** sts from the center front marker. This should be a knit stitch and marks the center of the right cup (right denotes the orientation when worn.) Place a RM *on* this stitch.

We will now work the left front cup.

Left Cup

Note that there are separate instructions for each size for the cups. Check to ensure you are following the correct set of instructions for your size.

For each cup, yarn is joined at the purl stitch you approach after you slip the first stitch in Row 1.

Size XS Only

The beginning st count for the cup should be **21** sts.

Row 1 (RS): Sl1, work in pattern to 1 st before marked st, work CDD over the next 3 sts, remove the RM, place it on the st that was created by the CDD (the 1st st on the RN) and flip the RM to the wrong side of the work, work in pattern to 1 st before center front marker, sl1. Turn. (2 sts dec.)

Row 2 (WS): P1, work in pattern to stitch marked with the RM, p1, remove RM, place it on the st you just worked (the 1st st on the RN) and flip the RM to the right side of the work, work in pattern to last st, p1. Turn.

Row 3 (RS): Sl1, work in pattern to RM, k1, remove the RM, place it on the st you just knit, and flip the RM to the wrong side of the work, work in pattern to last st, sl 1. Turn.

Row 4 (WS): Repeat Row 2. Turn.

Repeat rows 1-4 **4** *more* times until 11 sts remain.

Row 5 (RS): Sl1, work 3 sts in pattern, work CSD, work 3 sts in pattern, sl1. (1 st dec., 10 sts remain)

Row 6 (WS): Purl all sts. Turn.

Row 7 (RS): Sl1, *sl1pwyif, k1,* to last st, sl1pwyif. Turn.

Row 8 (WS): *K1, sl1pwyif* to end of row. Turn.

Repeat row 8 until strap is long enough to reach back panel, ending on a RS row, approximately 11"/28cm. Note that this length will vary widely by the length of your shoulders and your preferred fit. I strongly suggest that you try the bralette on at this point to determine strap length.

Break yarn and place 10 strap sts on holder.

Continue to section titled "Right Cup."

Size S Only

The beginning st count for the cup should be **29** sts.

Row 1 (RS): Sl1, work in pattern to 1 st before marked st, work CDD over the next 3 sts, remove the RM, place it on the st that was created by the CDD (the 1st st on the RN) and flip the RM to the wrong side of the work, work in pattern to 1 st before center front marker, sl1. Turn. (2 sts dec.)

Row 2 (WS): P1, work in pattern to stitch marked with the RM, p1, remove RM, place it on the st you just worked (the 1st st on the RN) and flip the RM to the right side of the work, work in pattern to last st, p1. Turn.

Row 3 (RS): Sl1, work in pattern to RM, k1, remove the RM, place it on the st you just knit, and flip the RM to the wrong side of the work, work in pattern to last st, sl 1. Turn.

Row 4 (WS): Repeat Row 2. Turn.

Repeat rows 1-4 **2** *more* times until 23 sts remain.

Repeat rows 1-2 **6** times until 11 sts remain.

Row 7 (RS): Sl1, work 3 sts in pattern, work CSD, work 3 sts in pattern, sl1. (1 st dec., 10 sts remain)

Row 8 (WS): Purl all sts. Turn.

Row 9 (RS): Sl1, *sl1pwyif, k1,* to last st, sl1pwyif. Turn.

Row 10 (WS): *K1, sl1pwyif* to end of row. Turn.

Repeat row 10 until strap is long enough to reach back panel, ending on a RS row, approximately 11"/28cm. Note that this length will vary widely by the length of your shoulders and your preferred fit. I strongly suggest that you try the bralette on at this point to determine strap length.

Break yarn and place 10 strap sts on holder.

Continue to section titled "Right Cup."

Sizes (M, L) Only

The beginning st count for the cup should be **(37, 41)** sts.

Row 1 (RS): Sl1, work in pattern to 1 st before marked st, work CDD over the next 3 sts, remove the RM, place it on the st that was created by the CDD (the 1st st on the RN) and flip the RM to the wrong side of the work, work in pattern to 1 st before center front marker, sl1. Turn. (2 sts dec.)

Row 2 (WS): P1, work in pattern to stitch marked with the RM, p1, remove RM, place it on the st you just worked (the 1st st on the RN) and flip the RM to the right side of the work, work in pattern to last st, p1. Turn.

Repeat rows 1-2 **(12, 14)** *more* times until 11 sts remain.

Row 3 (RS): Sl1, work 3 sts in pattern, work CSD, work 3 sts in pattern, sl1. (1 st dec., 10 sts remain)

Row 4 (WS): Purl all sts. Turn.

Row 5 (RS): Sl1, *sl1pwyif, k1,* to last st, sl1pwyif. Turn.

Row 6 (WS): *K1, sl1pwyif* to end of row. Turn.

Repeat row 6 until strap is long enough to reach back panel, ending on a RS row, approximately 11"/28cm. Note that this length will vary widely by the length of your shoulders and your preferred fit. I strongly suggest that you try the bralette on at this point to determine strap length.

Break yarn and place 10 strap sts on holder.

Continue to section titled "Right Cup."

Sizes 1X {2X, 3X, 4X, 5X} Only

The beginning st count for the cup should be **49 (57, 65, 69, 77)** sts.

Row 1 (RS): Sl1, p1, ssk, work in pattern to 1 st before marked st, work CDD over next 3 sts remove the RM, place it in the st that was created by the CDD (the 1st st on the RN) and flip the RM to the wrong side of the work, work in pattern to last 4 sts, k2tog, p1, sl1. Turn. (4 sts dec.)

Row 2 (WS): P1, work in pattern to stitch marked with the RM, p1, remove RM, place it on the st you just worked (the 1st on the RN) and flip the RM to the right side of the work, work in pattern to last st, p1.

Repeat rows 1 & 2 **1 {3, 5, 6, 8}** *more* times. (41 sts remain)

Row 3 (RS): Sl1, work in pattern to 1 st before marked st, work CDD over the next 3 sts, remove the RM, place it on the st that was created by the CDD (the 1st st on the RN) and flip the RM to the wrong side of the work, work in pattern to 1 st before center front marker, sl1. Turn. (2 sts dec.)

Row 4 (WS): P1, work in pattern to stitch marked with the RM, p1, remove RM, place it on the st you just worked (the 1st st on the RN) and flip the RM to the right side of the work, work in pattern to last st, p1. Turn.

Repeat rows 3-4 14 *more* times until 11 sts remain.

Row 5 (RS): Sl1, work 3 sts in pattern, work CSD, work 3 sts in pattern, sl1. (1 st dec., 10 sts remain)

Row 6 (WS): Purl all sts. Turn.

Row 7 (RS): Sl1, *sl1pwyif, k1,* to last st, sl1pwyif. Turn.

Row 8 (WS): *K1, sl1pwyif* to end of row. Turn.

Repeat row 8 until strap is long enough to reach back panel, ending on a RS row, approximately 11"/28cm. Note that this length will vary widely by the length of your shoulders and your preferred fit. I strongly suggest that you try the bralette on at this point to determine strap length.

Break yarn and place 10 strap sts on holder.

Right Cup

Repeat steps for the left cup, joining the yarn on the right side of the fabric at the center of the front. After finishing the cup, leave the sts on the needle and cut a 25"/63.5cm tail that you can use to join the straps to the back in the next step.

Joining the Straps to the Back Panel

Place the left strap sts back on the working needle, and the held back sts onto a spare needle. Use either Kitchener stitch or a three needle bind off to join the straps to the back.

Finishing

Sew in ends. You may want to fiddle with any loose sts (specifically at the edges around the back join) and tighten them up, making sure any loose areas or slack are pulled through on the wrong side of the fabric and not the front.

Block gently. The garment will stretch a lot, but you want the ribbing to maintain some bounce and elasticity to maintain some support.

Add duplicate stitch detail on lower cups. See special techniques on page 2 for details.

Sharing

I absolutely love seeing and sharing photos of you in your finished objects, so if you're a sharer, be sure to tag me on Instagram (@jesssiemae,) and tag your projects #contrastracerbra!

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Schematic



inches	XS	S	M	L	1XL	2XL	3XL	4XL	5XL
Bust Circ	15	19	23	27	31	35	39	43	47
Body Length	4.5	5	5.5	6	6.5	7	7.5	8	8.5
Upper Cup Height	2.9	3.4	3.7	4.3	4.6	5.2	5.8	6.2	6.5

cm	XS	S	M	L	1XL	2XL	3XL	4XL	5XL
Bust Circ	38	48.5	58.5	68.5	78.5	89	99	109	119.5
Body Length	11.5	12.5	14	15	16.5	18	19	20.5	21.5
Upper Cup Height	7.5	8.5	9.5	11	11.5	13	14.5	15.5	16.5