

This balaclava is excellent for cold weather and can even be worn under another hat. It keeps your neck warm and can be worn several different ways - above the chin, below the chin, above the mouth or with the neck rolled up for a cap with a brim. I've made it in wool, a wool blend, and 100% acrylic for those who don't want wool rubbing against their face.

**MATERIALS:** 1 skein of Cascade 220 100% Peruvian Highland wool worsted weight yarn (100 grams/220 yards) in color 9447 (a dark heathered spruce green color)

One row marker

Size 7 (US)/4.5 mm and Size 8 (US)/5.0 mm double pointed needles (You can also use size 7 and 8 circular needles, 12", for all the ribbing but you'll still need the size 8 dpns for the top decreases.)

Tapestry needle for weaving in ends

**GAUGE:** 6 sts = 1 inch, 6 rows = 1 inch over unstretched K2, P2 ribbing. To save time, take time to check gauge.

**FINISHED SIZE:** Men's Medium or Women's Large

With size 8 (US)/5.0 mm dpns or circ, loosely cast on 92 stitches and insert row marker at end of row. Join, being careful not to twist.

Work in K2, P2 ribbing for 3 inches. Change to size 7 (US)/4.5 mm dpns or circ, and continue working K2, P2 ribbing for 4 1/2 more inches (your knitting is now a total of 7 1/2 inches long). Note: The neck length is variable depending on the wearer - I usually do a slightly shorter neck as seen in the above photo for women's balaclavas.

**FACE OPENING:** Start the next row by working in K2, P2 ribbing for 30 stitches, bind off the next 31 stitches, continue working in ribbing over last 31 stitches of row. On next row, work 31 stitches in established ribbing, loosely cast on 31 stitches over the bound off stitches of the previous row using backwards loop cast on, and continue in ribbing.

Make sure you once again have 92 stitches and continue knitting in the round in K2, P2 ribbing until the whole piece measures 12 inches long. Now you're ready to discontinue the ribbing and begin the top of the head decreases.

Change to the size 8 (US)/5.0 mm dpns. K 1 row even. Knit next row decreasing 4 stitches evenly spaced across row (88 sts).

**FIRST DECREASE ROW:** \*K2TOG, K9, rep from \* across row. (80 sts)

**SECOND DECREASE ROW:** \*K2TOG, K8, rep from \* across row. (72 sts)

**THIRD DECREASE ROW:** \*K2TOG, K7, rep from \* across row. (64 sts)

Continue decreasing in this matter having 1 less stitch between decreases until 24 stitches remain. K2tog next row. (12 sts.)

K3TOG across next row. 4 stitches will remain. Cut yarn. With a tapestry needle, draw yarn end through remaining 4 stitches and pull tightly. Secure yarn ends to wrong side of balaclava.

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