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Do you love to knit -- and hate to purl? Have you ever started a sweater without enough yarn from the same dye lot to finish it? When you cast on, do you end up with a tail of yarn that's maddeningly too long or too short? Elizabeth Zimmermann comes to the rescue with clever solutions to frustrating problems and step-by-step instructions for brilliant, timeless designs.

In *Knitting Without Tears*, you'll find elegant designs for:

Color-pattern Norwegian ski sweaters Seamless patterned-yoke sweaters Hooded garter-stitch jackets for babies Watch caps, socks, slippers, mittens, and more!

This classic and influential book is poised to inspire a whole new generation of knitters who have yet to discover the joys and comforts of knitting. As the lady herself once put it, "properly practiced, knitting soothes the troubled spirit, and it doesn't hurt the untroubled spirit either."

Knitting Without Tears: Basic Techniques and Easy-to-Follow Directions for Garments to Fit All Sizes Details

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Author : Elizabeth Zimmermann

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From Reader Review Knitting Without Tears: Basic Techniques and Easy-to-Follow Directions for Garments to Fit All Sizes for online ebook

Als9 says

This is a great little book. A classic for a reason.

EZ's writing is chockful of anecdote and done up in a very conversational style. I love how she stresses freedom and personal choice for knitters--I mean you knit for fun, right? Why be bogged down in a lot of technical rules someone else wrote?

My favorite moment in the book is when she discusses steeking--the actual cutting open of a piece of handknitting in order to add a button placket or zipper, ie. to make it a cardigan rather than a pullover. After detailing the heretofore mystical procedure, she recommends the bold crafter lie down in a dark room for fifteen minutes to recover from the shock of partly destrpying her or his own work!

Highly recommended.

Bunny says

I flipped through this after finishing *The Gun Seller*. And I realized the writing was familiar.

This is how I write when I am condescending to someone. I use my most pretentious voice, and when reading it back, I can see my nose stuck firmly in the air.

Yeah. No thanks.

Jennifer says

Elizabeth Zimmerman is THE knitting guru. No nonsense here. Absolute classic and a total must-have if you ever intend to pick up needles.

Toad says

For me, Elizabeth Zimmerman's writing inspires confidence. She gives you the basics you need to understand. Then she gently shoos you out of the nest to go make your own things. Her insistence that you do NOT have to follow a pattern exactly to get good results was a bit stunning to me. But it's worked, because I have branched out into putting my own "designs" together.

She has a very chatty, narrative style. It doesn't work for everyone, but I love it. She often provides what she calls "pithy directions" at the end of a chapter that are more like traditional pattern instructions. I actually prefer the narrative, because she walks you through the structure of the garment. When you've made the

sweater, you understand how it goes together, how your specific measurements affect the fit, and many other things that have given me greater confidence to put my own things together.

Camille says

I loved this book! It was so inspiring that I pulled some yarn out of my stash and knit Emma a sweater before I even finished reading it. And unlike some previous attempts, this sweater fit! I love how EZ shares the basics about garment construction then sends you off to try it out. Her methods helped me to feel free of that terrible "pattern anxiety" and left me wanting to do my own thing and trusting that I knew enough to be successful at it. Plus, as she reminds gently, you can always rip out what doesn't work!

* As a side note...this was the ugliest knitting book I've ever picked up! No color photos, and the dorky cover didn't get me excited to read it. I was hooked after the first page though. EZ had a knack for writing as well as knitting.

Megankellie says

This is the book that will help you not give a shit.

Danielle says

I can see why EZ was (is) considered such a badass. But today's knitting has taken EZ's plans even further, making this book somewhat dated and superfluous. That said, I like her writing style. And when I'm brave enough to try my own sweater pattern, I will certainly try her percentage method to try and create the right fit.

I learned knitting the American/British method, which was slow and cumbersome. So I took up crochet instead, then went back to knitting because I don't like the way crochet looks on garments. Taught myself continental method using some online videos, which made me hate straight needles with a passion. So I graduated to circulars and haven't looked back. I hate seaming and hate sewing things together. I prefer to work sweaters top-down (so you can try it on as you go) in the round with minimal finishing. I'm not sure who originated this method, but I learned it from stitchdiva.com (Jennifer Hanson). I'm also a huge fan of magic loop knitting, which means I don't have to be impressed by EZ's claim to have fit 1,000 stitches on a 24" circular. I generally stick to a size 48" circular and use it to knit everything, from afghans to baby hats.

This technique of top-down/seamless combined with magic loop is really just a more advanced version of what EZ proposes, and if EZ were around today, I have to think she would embrace this wholeheartedly.

Beth666ann says

Elizabeth Zimmermann is known in knitting circles for seeing patterns in ways that no one else does, for being able to create things that while at first glance seem as if they simply won't work, ultimately end up being very cool projects. She's known for knitting in the round, and lots of these patterns are in the round.

She is conversational and witty in this book and provides lots of helpful advice and patterns. It's a must read for knitters; I'm glad I finally looked at it.

Lise says

This is a very simple book which talks about Elizabeth Zimmermann's experiences with knitting and her knitting patterns. It's an amazingly simple book (the patterns are written descriptively, and often take only a few paragraphs), but it has inspired more knitters than any other I know.

Not only does it give some very good, very basic, instruction, it seems to be able to give knitters the confidence to try new things, to experiment, and to make mistakes.

Annie says

Fun Read! Not your average knitting book.

Rebekka Steg says

When I started listening to knitting podcasts and reading knitting blocks I quickly discovered Elizabeth Zimmermann, or EZ as she's often referred to, and the high esteem everyone held her in. I only wish I had picked up her books sooner. Knitting Without Tears is a classic for a reason, EZ is ingenious, smart, and absolutely hilarious. I ended up reading long passages to my husband and he laughed almost as hard as I did. Even if you're not a knitter I would recommend it (although I would have to warn you, you might end up wanting to pick up your own set of needles).

Elizabeth says

I just picked knitting up again after many years and immediately got this book out and reread it for the dozenth time. At some time or another I made just about every one of her projects.

She's delightful to read and filled with deep wisdom about craft and creativity, and she has -- for me -- answered the age-old question of why people wear the things they do: because it makes them feel cute.

Sarah says

I love Elizabeth Zimmerman! I've had this book for a few years but had never read it.

If you want easy to follow patterns, this book isn't it. But if you want to be challenged to really learn about HOW to knit, and to think about it independently, then this is your book. If you want to be the kind of knitter your grandmother probably was, this is your book. If you like old stories that make you nostalgic for an era that might even be before you were born, this is your book.

Can't wait to dig into more of her.

Elizabeth says

"Most people have an obsession; mine is knitting."

Oh, Elizabeth. I adore thee. I like to think that we would have been friends. At the very least we would have shared the horror that is pearling. Tee hee.

Note:

This is not a "how-to" knit book. It is more of a conversation about knitting (with guidance and assurances that there is no right or wrong way to knit). Be creative, go with your own concepts, AND be your own boss of knitting!

Fiona says

Niche review time! I wish it weren't so niche, actually - I think *KWT* has an awful lot to recommend it, and not just to knitters.

I have read *Knitting Without Tears* cover-to-cover twice in the four-ish years since I got my own copy of it. I dip into it every few months; it's dog-eared and scribbled in, and I've lent it out to at least two other new-ish knitters (usually just after I've taught them to knit for themselves). This is because it is fantastic, in every respect. Clever, readable, fearless.

Knitters - social knitters, at least - know Elizabeth Zimmermann. Born in the UK, swiftly relocated to the US, EZ (as she is affectionately known) revitalised knitting, and especially the genre of books associated with getting better at it. Largely self-taught, she invented or discovered or otherwise put together an astonishing number of techniques, patterns, and recipes for garments - which wouldn't be particularly unusual, except that what makes Zimmermann different is that she wrote a load of them down. What is even more unusual is her writing style: where most vintage patterns resemble nothing so much as the Rosetta Stone, EZ wrote clearly, wittily, engagingly. When you read her books, you feel like you can do anything.

The patterns aren't even the half of it.

"The Books don't know everything," she insists at one point. "They know a great deal, but not everything... If it doesn't make sense in your particular circumstances, pay no attention to it; seek further. There are scores of different ways of doing things in knitting, and none of them are wrong, but they are sometimes unsuitable."

She's right, of course, and the more I think about it, the more I think growing up as a knitter has shaped me as a person. Knitting makes you resourceful. It helps you conceptualize problems, and think around them. It makes you unafraid in the face of failure, because all you have to do is take the needles out, rip it back, and start again. Knitting is the skill of the autodidact: if you're not one when you start, you will be after a few months. This book is a masterclass in that. "This is almost the only measuring and deciding you will have to do for yourself," says Zimmermann, half a page into her instructions for a yoked sweater, "and it is important to do it accurately and conscientiously. Otherwise you may sup the porridge of regret with the spoon of sorrow."

She's talking about shaping the waistline for a sweater. I tell you, I would go for tea with this woman. I would be her friend, by which I mean, I would join her knitting group.

Knitting Without Tears was published in in 1971, at the height of second wave feminism. And while knitting, in Zimmermann's world, might not explicitly be a feminist act, her book certainly has not-so-subtle undertones of taking the expertise of generations of women, and making something powerful with it. She knits because she loves it, she shares information because it's intellectually satisfying, and above all, fun. She admits to borrowing ideas from other knitters when she meets them ("All right; they were going to copy my sweater; I would pick up their weaving idea. Was this resourcefulness or just plain thievery?") and my favourite thing about the whole book is the sense of history, of women doing women's work, throughout the decades and the centuries, sharing it with each other and making it better. We may, these days, have not very much idea about what a woman in 17th century Britain was doing with her day-to-day, but I don't wonder that knitters might know a little bit more than most people.

"Good rigid needles," she notes, about aluminium knitting needles. "A #6 aluminium needle has been known to furnish an excellent emergency shearpin for an outboard motor. It once saved us seven miles of paddling."

I love this book. It's a must for the knitting-conversant, and (I think) also for people with the vaguest interest in women's history. It's far more than a pattern book, although the patterns are good too. (I've made two yoked, two-and-a-half raglan, and one saddle-shouldered sweater from her instructions to date. The last is a bit dodgy at the underarm, but the raglan is one of my go-to favourites. If you're a knitter and you care about such things.)

I wish more people would pick it up, as a piece of history as much as anything else. Perhaps I can convince you.
