By Irene Birk, Spring 2011 – updated may 2011

I have knitted my own menstrual pads.

Yes, you heard right. Knitted menstrual pads. Like the ones we women use once a month.

It all began with Maria Albertsen and Sidsel Rudolph from The Danish Design School contacting me in the beginning of January 2011. In an INDEX project in cooperation with UNICEF they have made a concept about making knitted reusable menstrual pads for women in Third World countries.

Through the project *Knitting For Education*, they have developed a *Knit Kit*, which will equip women in Third World countries with the needed remedies to make their own menstrual pads. For more information about the project watch this video http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bEosJCWnFpg

To create focus and debate on the matter and contribute with a visible comment to the throw-away society, Sidsel and Maria has contacted me, to see my idea of a knitted menstrual pad for 2011. After a lot of swatches, these pads are what I ended up with.

The pad is made of three layers. A soft and absorbent knitted layer of bamboo yarn, an absorbent core and to prevent leakage a layer of polar fleece. The layers are sewn together on a sewing machine.

The pattern instruction is build up as a chart.

The pattern is for private use only.

Size and measurements

Mini Pad (or pantyliner), Small and Large Menstrual Pad.
Lengths 18, 25 and 28 cm (7”, 10” and 11”).

The materials

I have chosen to use bamboo yarn as the top layer against the skin. Bamboo fibres are antibacterial and absorb moisture well. The yarn lets your skin breath and feels cool against the skin on a sunny day. Due to the antistatic fibres the yarn doesn’t stick to the skin. Last but not least, bamboo yarn does not felt, like wool would do in a hot machine wash.

Underneath the knitted bamboo yarn is an absorbent layer of flannel and hemp fabric (leftovers from diaper sewing for my daughters). These layers work as absorbers. You can use any absorbent fabric.

To minimize the possibility of leaking I have chosen polar fleece, which is also used in cloth diapers. This makes the pad as thin as possible.

The yarn I have used consists of 70 % bamboo and 30 % cotton. 100 % bamboo can also be used. With 50 gram of yarn you can knit a pad in each size.

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Gauge

22 stitches per 10 cm (4”) in stockinette stitch on a 3.50 mm (size US 4) needles.

You will need

50 grams of Bommix Bamboo from Hjertegarn, yardage about 104 meters on 50 gram.

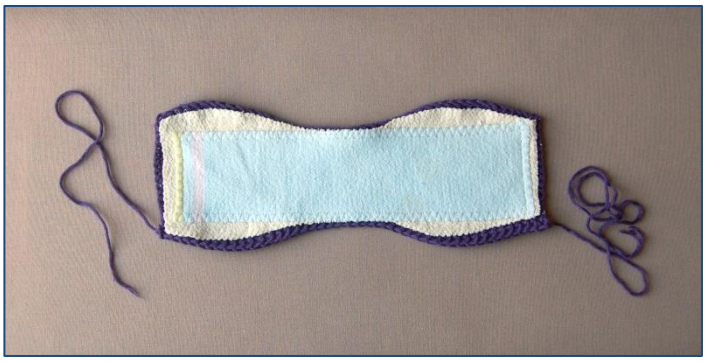
Snaps

Tapestry needle

Polar Fleece

Absorbent leftovers of fabric

Sewing machine



Do it yourself - instruction

Knit a pad of bamboo yarn in the preferred size from the chart (page 3-6).

With the fleece template (page 7-9) cut a fleece layer in the same size. Check that your knitted pad fits the template before you cut, otherwise adjust the template to your own knitted pad.

Cut a couple of absorbent layers. The absorbent layer must be a little bit smaller than the knitted layer. Sew the absorbent layer on the fleece. Afterwards sew the knitted layer on top of the absorbent layer, so they will be hidden between the knitted layer and the fleece layer. For the mini pad the knitted and the fleece layer will be sufficient.

Before placing your buttons check if the wings fit with your underwear. Otherwise adjust the wing size.

Attach snaps and wear your pad.

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Abbreviations in chart

CO	Cast On with long tail cast on – The Cast On counts as 1st row in the chart
	Knit on RS, purl on WS
●	Knit on WS
V	Slip purlwise with yarn in front
MT	Make 1 towards
MA	Make 1 away
╲	SSK
╱	K2tog
BO	Bind off

[-] marks the number of stitches on the row.

The numbers to the right and left of the chart marks which row you are at. Odd numbers are the right side, and even numbers are the wrong side.

Note: The long tail cast on counts as 1st row in the chart. Therefore the first knitted row is from the wrong side.

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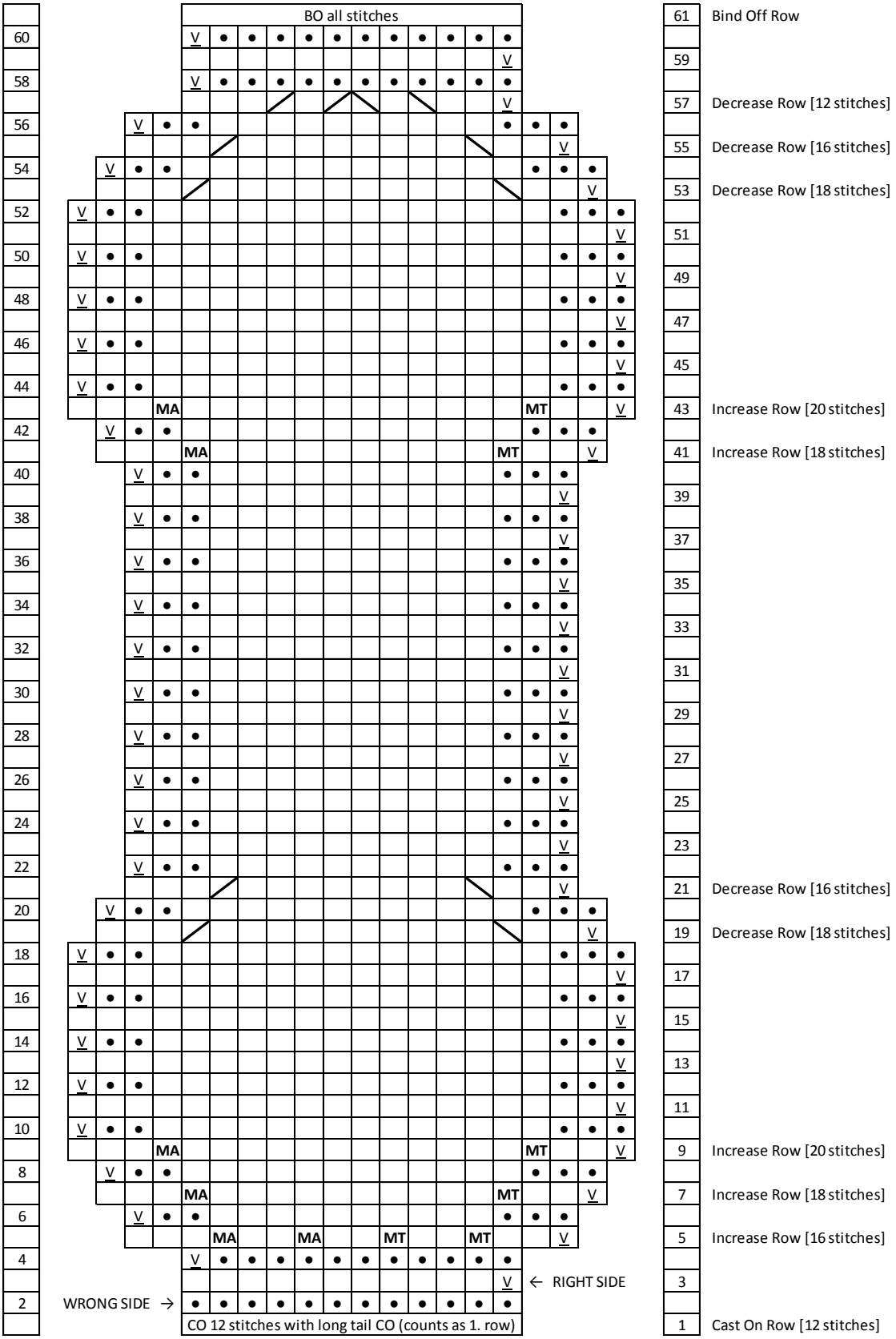
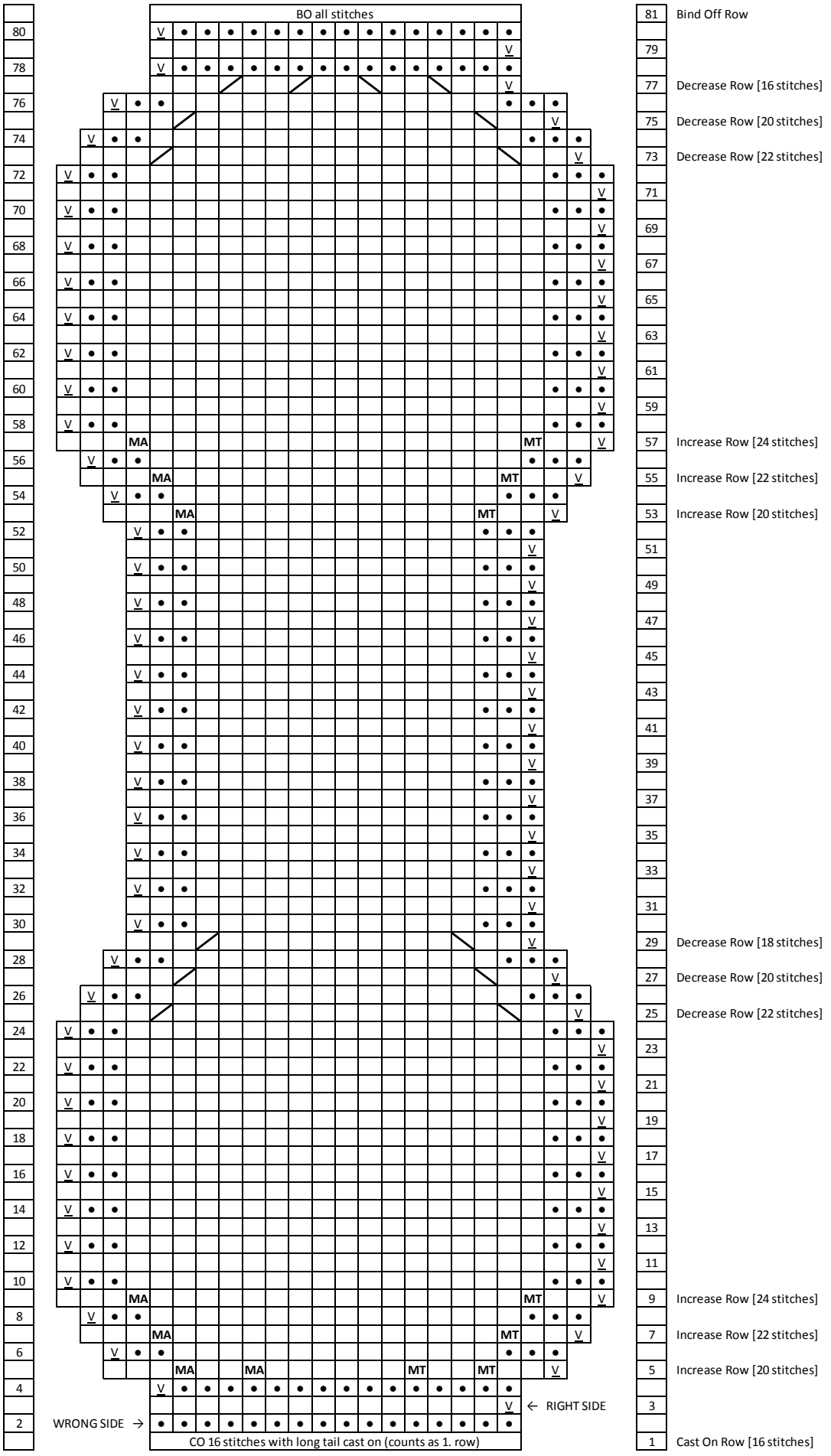

BO all stitches
61 Bind Off Row
59
57 Decrease Row [12 stitches]
55 Decrease Row [16 stitches]
53 Decrease Row [18 stitches]
51
49
47
45
43 Increase Row [20 stitches]
41 Increase Row [18 stitches]
39
37
35
33
31
29
27
25
23
21 Decrease Row [16 stitches]
19 Decrease Row [18 stitches]
17
15
13
11
9 Increase Row [20 stitches]
7 Increase Row [18 stitches]
5 Increase Row [16 stitches]
3
1 Cast On Row [12 stitches]
MA
MT
WRONG SIDE →
← RIGHT SIDE
CO 12 stitches with long tail CO (counts as 1. row)



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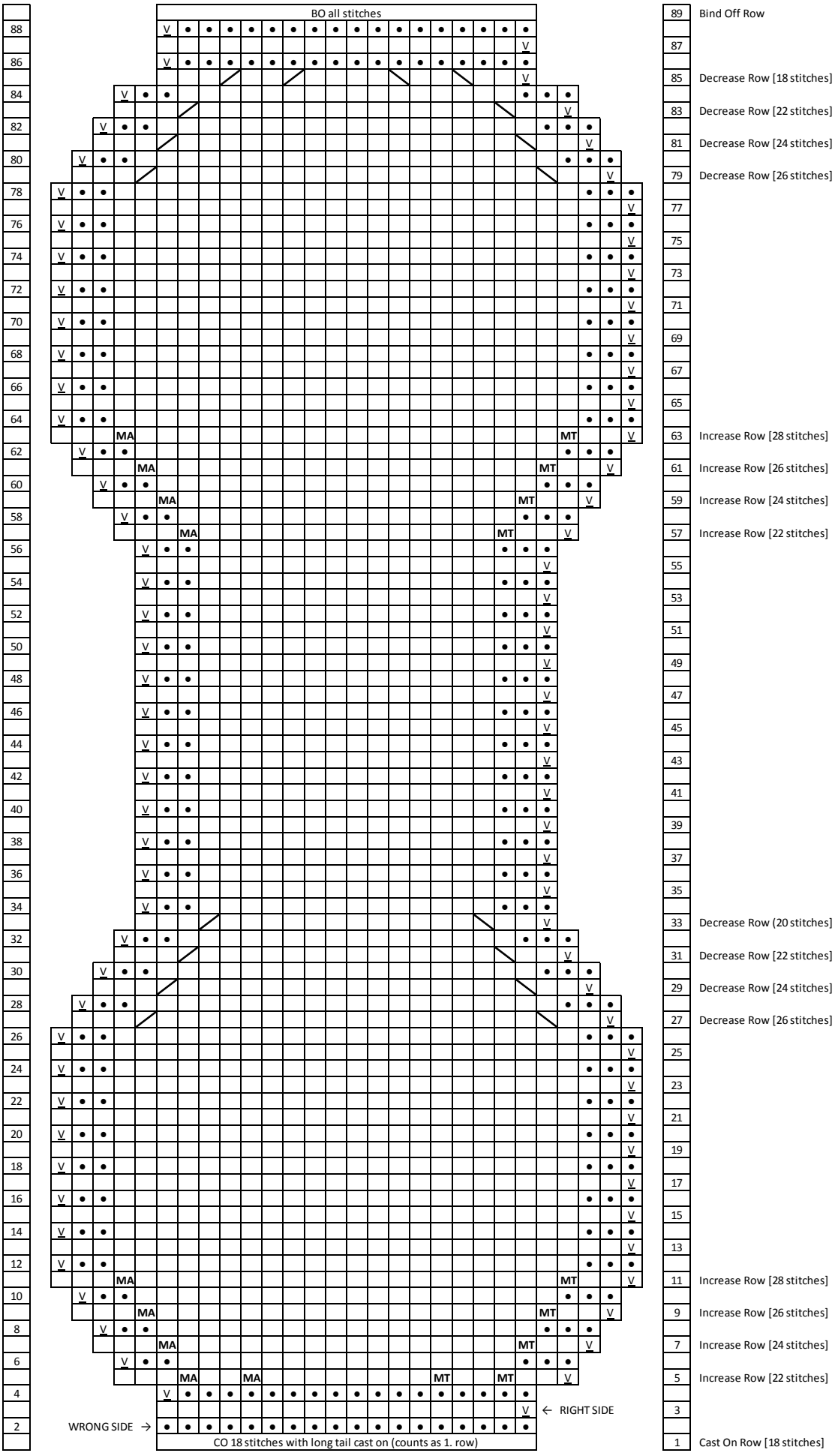
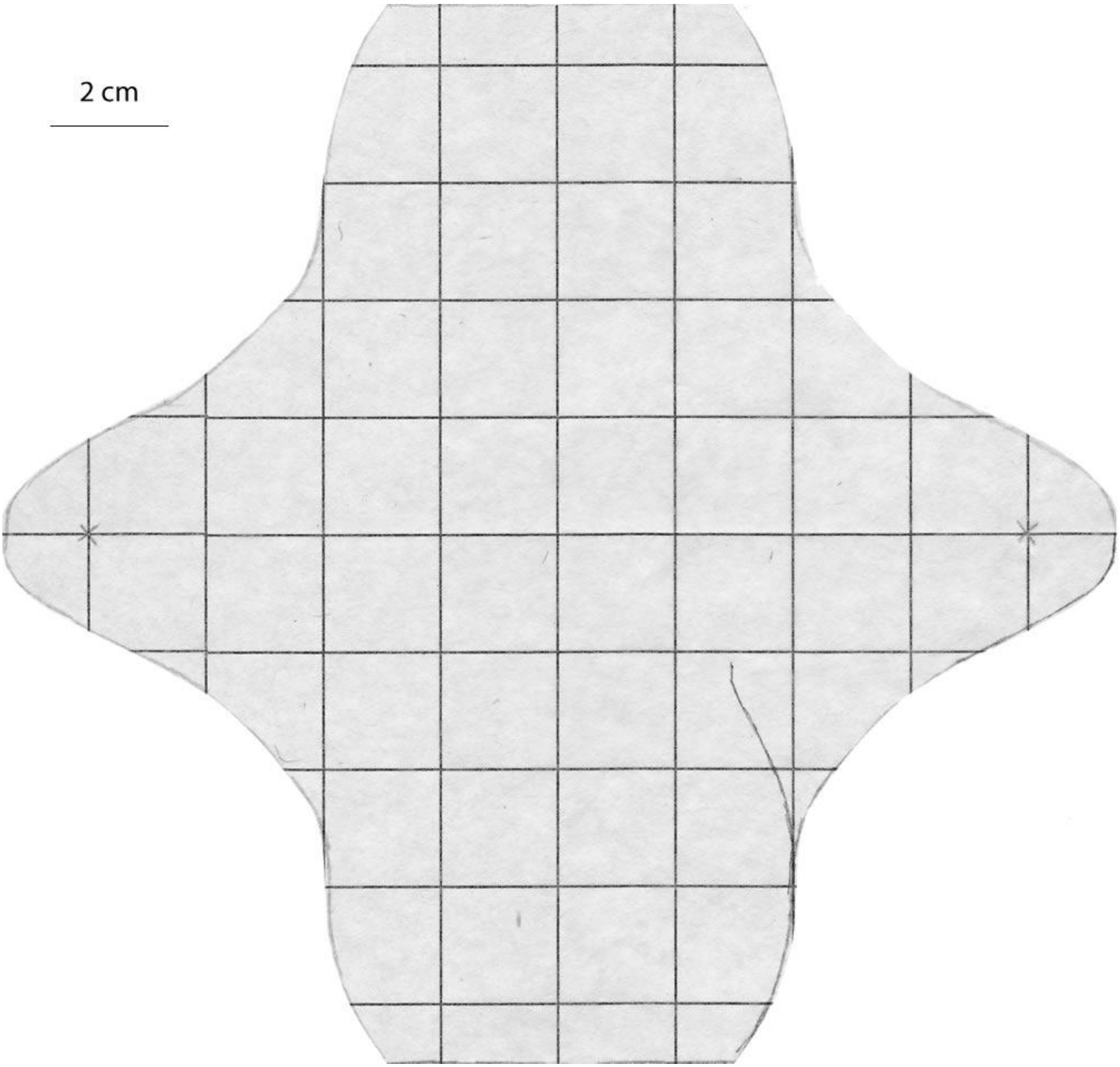
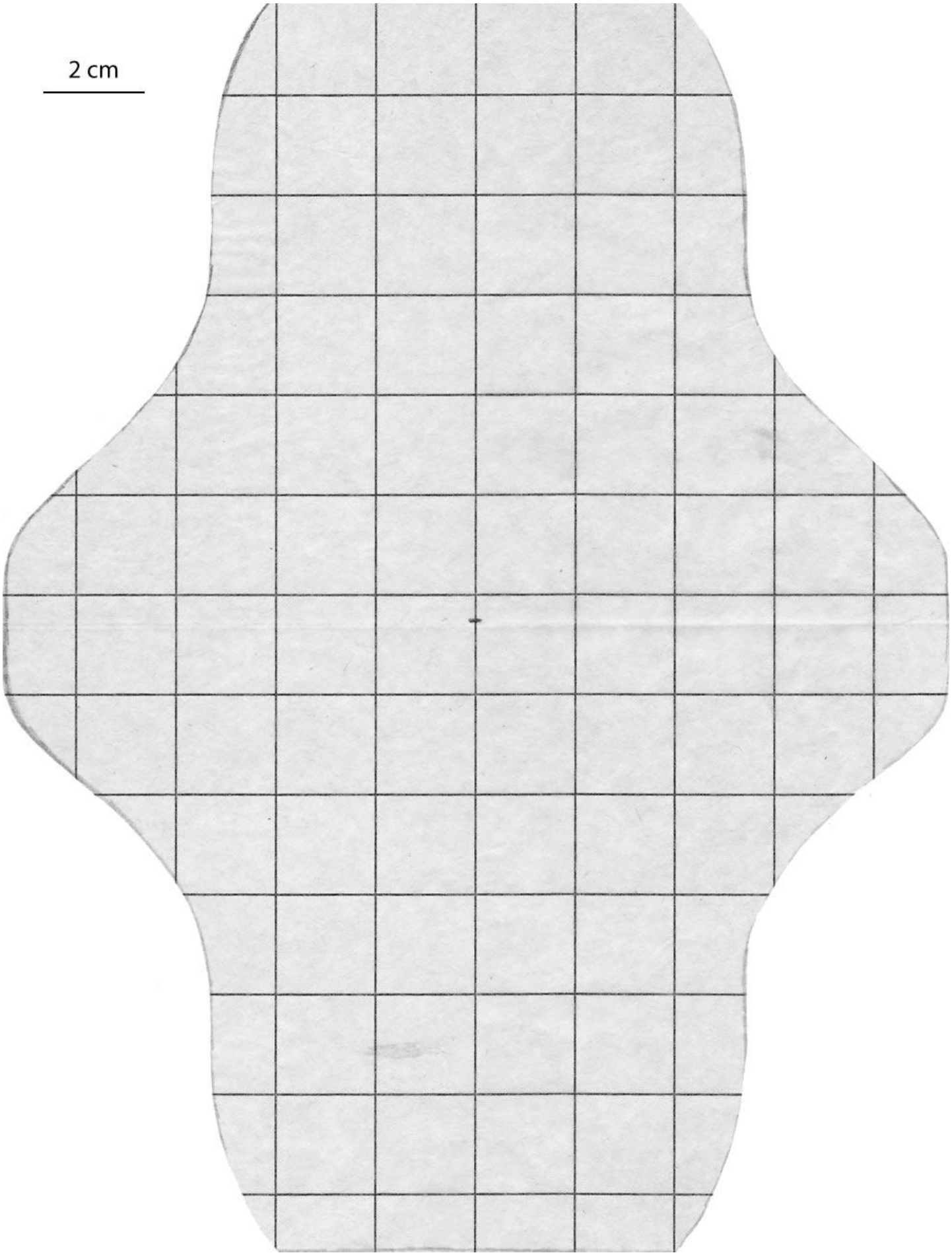
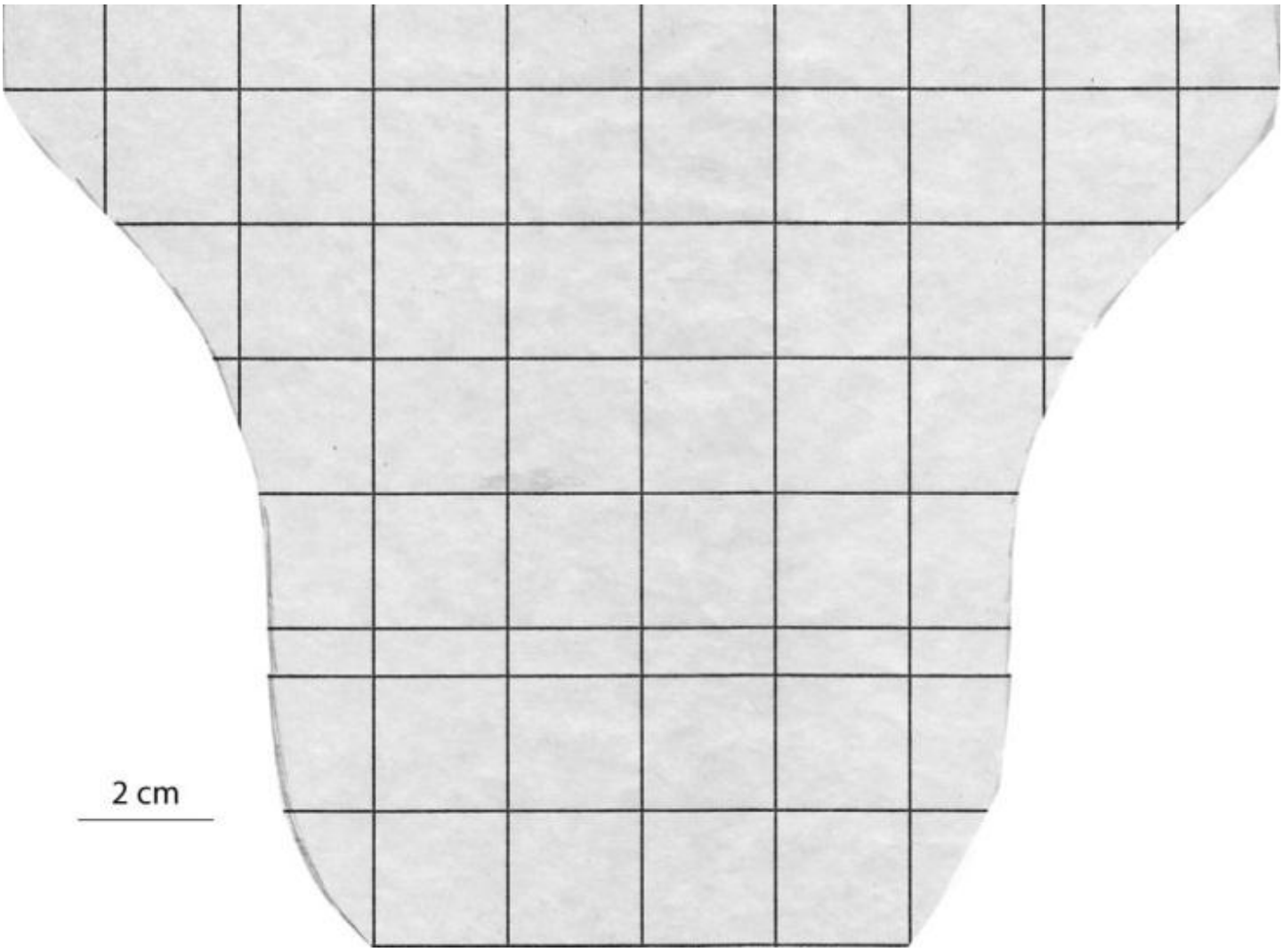

BO all stitches
89 Bind Off Row
87
85 Decrease Row [18 stitches]
83 Decrease Row [22 stitches]
81 Decrease Row [24 stitches]
79 Decrease Row [26 stitches]
77
75
73
71
69
67
65
63 Increase Row [28 stitches]
61 Increase Row [26 stitches]
59 Increase Row [24 stitches]
57 Increase Row [22 stitches]
55
53
51
49
47
45
43
41
39
37
35
33 Decrease Row (20 stitches)
31 Decrease Row [22 stitches]
29 Decrease Row [24 stitches]
27 Decrease Row [26 stitches]
25
23
21
19
17
15
13
11 Increase Row [28 stitches]
9 Increase Row [26 stitches]
7 Increase Row [24 stitches]
5 Increase Row [22 stitches]
3
1 Cast On Row [18 stitches]
WRONG SIDE →
← RIGHT SIDE
CO 18 stitches with long tail cast on (counts as 1. row)


2 cm


2 cm

Due to the size only half of the template is shown.