

YARN WEIGHT (THICKNESS)

The yarn weight is a category of thickness that a specific yarn belongs to (rather than the weight of the ball itself). Yarn weights range from very thin, to really thick, and the thickness of the yarn will also determine the needle size used. For every ball of yarn, the yarn label will hold all the information you need about the yarn weight/thickness and then needle size that is recommended (see page 20), so all the information you need is provided with the yarn.

The table below shows the different categories of yarn thickness and their names. The recommended needle sizes for each yarn type are given opposite.

Yarn weight category	Also called	US name
Lace weight	2- or 3-ply	Fine
4-ply	Sock yarn	Fingering
5-ply	Baby	Sport
Double knitting	DK or 8-ply	Light worsted
Aran	10-ply	Worsted
Chunky	Thick	Bulky
Super chunky	Big	Super bulky or extra bulky

Tip

If you're not sure of how your chosen yarn will look when knitted up with a specific stitch pattern, it's definitely worth knitting up a small sample to get a good idea of the finished appearance (see page 48). Your yarn may look quite different if you are knitting garter stitch, compared to knitting stocking stitch or a more textured knit/purl combination.

Sewing up using mattress stitch with garter stitch

The main difference between vertically sewing up with garter stitch and stocking stitch is putting the needle into the 'bumpy' part of the stitch rather than the 'V' or bar of the stitch.

The best way to sew up horizontal cast-on or cast-off edges in garter stitch is to whip stitch the edges together – see page 46 for more on this.



1 Cut a piece of yarn (approx 1.5 times longer than your seam) and thread it onto a yarn needle.



2 Work in the same way as for the vertical stocking stitch (page 40), but insert your needle under the bump of the end stitch.



3 After working a few mattress stitches, gently pull the working yarn to close the seam.

Tip

When sewing up stripes or two different coloured squares or seams, choose the lighter colour to sew with.

TENSION SQUARE



Knit a square to practise stocking stitch and to check your tension.

With your chosen colour and 6mm (UK 4, US 10) knitting needles, cast on 21 sts using your preferred method of casting on.

Row 1 (right side): k every st to end.

Row 2 (wrong side): p every st to end.

Last 2 rows form the stocking stitch (ss) pattern. The smooth side of your knitting is the right side and the textured side of your knitting is the wrong side.

Repeat rows 1 and 2 until you have worked 30 rows.

Cast off and weave in your ends (see page 47).

Measure your work to check your tension/gauge.

You can keep this square as a reference for future use. Add a tag to your square to note the yarn used and store it somewhere safe.

Your square should measure 15 x 15cm (6 x 6in) and you should be able to check your 10 x 10cm (4 x 4in) tension within the stitches of the square.

If your square is smaller, then your stitches are too tight.

Try again with larger size knitting needles.

If your square is larger, then your stitches are too loose.

Try again with smaller size knitting needles.

The knitting needle size required to achieve the 10 x 10cm (4 x 4in) tension is the knitting needle size to use throughout.

You will use stocking stitch (stockinette) for this fun headband. You'll practise whip stitch and mattress stitch to create the central twist.

Pattern

HEADBAND

Use 6mm (UK 4, US 10) knitting needles (or size needed to achieve correct tension).

With your chosen colour, cast on 25 sts using your preferred method of casting on.

Row 1 (right side): k every st to end.

Row 2 (wrong side): p every st to end.

Last 2 rows form the stocking stitch (ss) pattern and are repeated throughout.

Repeat rows 1 and 2 until work measures approximately 43 (47)cm/17 (18½)in, making sure that you have the right side of your work facing for casting off.

Cast off and weave in your ends.

Your knitted strip should measure approximately 18 x 43(47)cm (7 x 17(18½)in).

Techniques

SWITCHING BETWEEN KNIT AND PURL STITCHES TO CREATE RIB STITCH

When you are combining knit and purl stitches along a row to create a stretchy rib stitch, you will need to make sure that the working yarn (the yarn attached to the ball) is in the correct position, ready to work either the knit stitch or the purl stitch. That means that when you are switching between the two stitches within a row of knitting, you are constantly changing the position of the working yarn by taking it between the needle tips.

SWITCHING FROM KNIT STITCH TO PURL STITCH



After knitting a stitch, the working yarn is sitting behind the needle tip (above, left). If your next step is to purl the next stitch, you will need to bring the working yarn in between the needles, to the front of your needles, ready to purl (above, right).

SWITCHING FROM PURL STITCH TO KNIT STITCH



After purling a stitch, the working yarn is at the front of your needles (above, left). If your next step is to knit the next stitch, you will need to take the working yarn in between the needles, to the back of the needles, ready to knit the next stitch (above, right).



Tip

When working with rib and switching between knit and purl stitches, it is important to take the yarn in between the needles (as shown above) and not over or around the needles, as this will add a stitch, as well as creating a hole in your knitting.