# Chicks **to Knit**

Sachiyo Ishii

# Chicks

## Materials:

*To make one:*

Small amount of fleecy DK (8-ply/light worsted) yarn in yellow (A)

Small amounts of DK (8-ply/light worsted) yarn in dark yellow (B), light brown (C) and dark brown (D)

Toy stuffing

## Needles:

3.5mm (UK 9 or 10, US 4) needles, 3mm (UK 11, US 2 or 3) needles and 3mm (UK 11, US 2 or 3) DPN

## Size:

5cm (2in) tall

## Instructions:

### Body

Using yarn A and 3.5mm (UK 9 or 10, US 4) needles, cast on 10 sts.

Row 1 **(WS):** p to end.

Row 2: (kfb) to end (20 sts).

Rows 3–11: beg with a p row, work 9 rows in st st.

Row 12: k2tog, (k1, k2tog) to end (13 sts).

Rows 13–16: beg with a p row, work 4 rows in st st.

Break yarn, draw through sts, pull tightly and fasten off.

### Beak

Using yarn B and 3mm (UK 11, US 2 or 3) needles, cast on 5 sts.

Row 1 **(WS):** p2tog, p1, p2tog (3 sts).

Row 2: sl1, k2tog, pass the first st over the second st and fasten off.

### Feet: make two

Using yarn B and 3mm (UK 11, US 2 or 3) needles, cast on 5 sts.

Row 1: k to end.

Row 2: skpo, k1, k2tog (3 sts).

Row 3: sl1, k2tog, pass the first st over the second st and fasten off.

### Legs: make two

Using yarn C and 3mm (UK 11, US 2 or 3) DPN, cast on 3 sts and work an i-cord for 5 rows.

Break yarn, draw through sts, pull tightly and fasten off.

### To make up

Using the fastened-off yarn end, sew the body seam and stuff. Using the cast-on yarn end, work a gathering thread along the cast-on edge and draw up tightly to close the body.

Attach the cast-on edge of the beak to the body. Attach the feet to the legs and then attach the legs to the body. Using yarn D, embroider French knots for the eyes.

# Knitting know–how

## Yarn

The animals are knitted with fleecy yarn in DK (8-ply/light worsted) weight. You don't need much yarn to create each toy. Some of them require less than 5m (5.5yd).

Most fleecy yarn comes in two different weights; DK (8-ply/light worsted) and chunky (bulky). Even though two types of yarn may be categorized as the same weight, their thickness and yardage may differ depending on the brand. You may prefer one brand to another, so try several to find your favourite. If you want to make larger animals, you can use chunky (bulky) weight yarn and larger needles, without having to change the patterns. Most of the animals are knitted using yarn with a yardage of 25g per 83–85m (91–93yd).

Tiny amounts of ordinary DK (8-ply/light worsted) yarn and 4-ply (fingering) yarn are used for the smaller body parts, such as ears and feet, and also embroidering features, such as noses and mouths. If you need to buy yarn, tapestry yarn is a good choice because it comes in small amounts and a huge variety of colours.

## Stuffing

I have used polyester toy stuffing, which is readily available from most craft shops and online craft stores.

## Beads

4–6mm (⅛–¼in) beads are used as eyes for a few of the projects. I prefer to use beads with threading holes and attach them after the head is stuffed; however, if you are making an animal for a child, you may prefer to use safety eyes. If you are using this type, attach them before stuffing the head. Alternatively, you can embroider French knots with DK (8-ply/light worsted) yarn.

## Knitting needles

Throughout the book I used 3.5mm (UK 9 or 10, US 4) needles for the fleecy DK (8-ply/light worsted) yarn, and 3mm (UK 11, US 2 or 3) needles for regular DK (8-ply/light worsted) yarn. I always use bamboo needles as they are less slippery than metal ones and keep your stitches neat and even. Your knitting tension (gauge) needs to be fairly tight, so that when toys are sewn up, the stuffing is not visible through the stitches. If you struggle with knitting fleecy yarn on these needle sizes, experiment with larger needles. Some knitters knit more tightly than others and the tension (gauge) also differs depending on the yarn you use. I have given a general tension (gauge) guide below, but tensions are not specified for any of the projects, as the size of the finished items doesn't really matter.

## Sewing your work together

I recommend that you use a chenille or tapestry needle with a sharp point, as it is easier to work through your tightly knitted toys than using a blunt-ended needle. You can also use the same needle for embroidering features on the toys. Your toys will be sewn up using the same yarn that you knitted them with, so it is a good idea to make a habit of leaving fairly long yarn ends when you cast on and cast off. Join the seams using mattress stitch with right sides facing outwards.

## Stuffing the toys

These knitted pieces can be quite stretchy. Stuff them relatively lightly to keep the finished toys nice and soft.

## Shaping

It is not for all projects, but I find some of the faces look more attractive with an indentation for the eyes. With the fleecy yarn used for the head, work a gathering thread over the eyeline and pull gently to shape it.

## Tension (gauge)

I worked to a tension of 22 stitches x 26 rows = 10cm (4in) measured over stocking stitch (US stockinette stitch); however, it is not essential to stick to this.

## Other tools

### Wooden chopstick

A simple but incredibly effective tool, a chopstick is by far the best instrument for pushing stuffing into your toys. If you don't have one, you could use a large knitting needle or a pencil.

### Scissors

A pair of sharp scissors is essential for trimming yarn ends when sewing up your projects.

### Needle threader

This is not essential but I find it useful to help thread yarn on to my needle when I am sewing up projects.

### Row counter

This can be useful to keep count of your rows when you are working with fleecy yarn, as it's sometimes difficult to see them.

## Abbreviations

The abbreviations listed below are the most frequently used terms in the book. Any special abbreviations in a pattern are explained on the relevant page.

| | |
|---|---|
| beg | beginning |
| cm | centimetres |
| DK | double knitting |
| DPN | double-pointed needle(s) |
| g | grams |
| g st | garter stitch |
| inc | increase |
| in(s) | inch(es) |
| k | knit |
| kfb | knit into the front and back of the stitch, making one more stitch |
| k2tog | knit 2 stitches together |
| k3tog | knit 3 stitches together |
| m | metres |
| mm | millimetres |
| oz | ounces |
| p | purl |
| pfb | purl into the front and back of the stitch, making one more stitch |
| p2tog | purl 2 stitches together |
| rep | repeat |
| RS | right side(s) |
| skpo | slip 1, knit 1, pass the slipped stitch over |
| sl1 | slip one stitch from the left-hand needle to the right-hand needle without working it |
| st(s) | stitch(es) |
| st st | stocking stitch (US stockinette stitch) |
| tog | together |
| WS | wrong sides(s) |
| yb | yarn back |
| yf | yarn forward |
| yd | yard(s) |

## Techniques

### I–cord

I-cords are used for some of the body parts. Using DPN, cast on the required number of stitches. Do not turn. Slide the stitches to the opposite end of the needle, then knit the stitches again, taking the yarn firmly across the back of the work. Repeat to the desired length. Break yarn and thread through the stitches or cast off, as instructed in the pattern.

## Embroidery

### French knots

These are used for many of the figures' and animals' eyes. Thread your needle with yarn and bring it up from the back where you want to make a knot. Holding the needle firmly, wrap the yarn around it twice. Push the needle through to the back of the project, leaving the French knot on the surface.

This project is taken from Pocket Pets by Sachiyo Ishii. To order this book click here or to see the full range of Search Press titles please visit www.searchpress.com

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