

# 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.

## 1-3-PLY (FINE/LACE WEIGHT)

Extra-fine yarns, often mohair or high-quality wool to make them strong as well as fine. Most often used for delicate lace. Use 2-3.5mm needles (UK 14-9/10, US 0-4), unless you want to work an open lace, where you can use much bigger needles for effect.

## 4-PLY (FINGERING)

A lightweight yarn, used most commonly in children's clothing and socks. If used in socks, it will usually have some man-made fibre included, for strength. Usually uses 2.5-3.25mm (UK 12/13-10, US 1-3) needles.

## 5-PLY (BABY, SPORT OR FINE)

Also commonly used in baby clothes, but also a fabulous weight for adult garments. Use 3-4mm (UK 11-8, US 2/3-6) needles.

## DOUBLE KNITTING (8-PLY/LIGHT WORSTED)

A double knitting, or DK, weight yarn is possibly the most popular weight as it is a versatile and very common thickness of yarn. It is usually worked on 4-4.5mm (UK 8-7, US 6-7) needles.

## ARAN (10-PLY/WORSTED)

The weight traditionally used for cables and aran knitting, it is a great thickness for homewares and cozy adult garments and accessories. Works up very quickly on medium-sized needles of around 5-5.5mm (UK 6-5, US 8-9).

## CHUNKY (BULKY)

A much thicker yarn, used mainly for winter clothing and heavier accessories with 6-8mm needles (UK 4-0, US 10-11).

## SUPER CHUNKY (SUPER BULKY)

The thickest of weights, worked on very large needles, over 8mm (UK 0, US 11), it can be quite difficult to handle these very thick yarns due to their unwieldiness, but once mastered, super chunky yarns are great for oversized weighted blankets.





### 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.

## SEWING UP WITH BACK STITCH

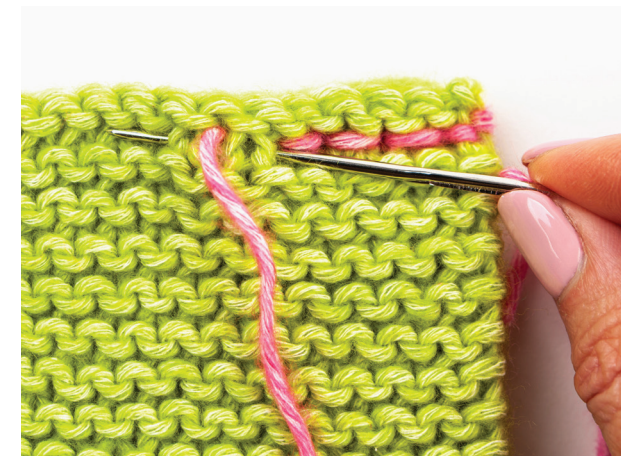
A back stitch is worked on the wrong side of the piece and gives a strong, neat finish. Again, I've used a contrasting colour in these steps for clarity.



**1** With the right sides together and wrong sides facing out, pin the seams of your knitted pieces together. Cut a length of matching yarn and thread it onto a yarn needle. Join the yarn to one end of the seam by working a couple of stitches over the top of each other to secure the yarn end.



**2** Insert the needle down into the first layer and continue through the second layer then bring the needle back up through both layers, a few stitches along the seam.



**3** Pull the yarn through. Insert the needle back into the same place as the first stitch then bring it back up through both layers, a few stitches along from where it first came out. Continue working in this way along the seam, keeping your stitches even in size. When you reach the end of the seam, secure the yarn end by working a few stitches in the same place, then weave yarn end into work and trim.



6 ABBREVIATIONS

With knitting, most designers use industry standards for abbreviations, and these are always listed within the pattern or book, either at the beginning, or at the end. It is worth checking through the abbreviations used, so that you don't have any surprises when you start knitting.

7 REPEAT SEQUENCES

Most knitting patterns will used their preferred method to identify the stitches or pattern that you need to repeat. The most common options are:

- Asterisks \* or \*\* (any number of asterisks can be used).
- Pattern will say: 'repeat from \* to end' or 'repeat from \* a further six times'.
- Brackets (either square or round).
- Pattern will put the instruction to be repeated in brackets, for example: [k2, p2] to the end.

8 FINISHING

Here you will find the information you need so that you can finish your project neatly, including sewing up and any recommended sewing-up methods to provide the best finish. Sometimes, the finishing instructions may be in the form of bullet points or steps, and will also include instructions on how to add any final embellishments or decorations.

SPECIAL STITCHES OR TECHNIQUES

If there are special stitches that are not standard, or that need additional explanation, you will find these in the special techniques, or special stitches section. I recommend reading them thoroughly and even trying the techniques before you begin your main project.

The more you knit, the more familiar you will become with knitting patterns, knitting terminology and writing styles of different brands.

Example pattern

HAT

Knit your beanie hat according to the size required. Use 6mm (UK 4, US 10) needles (or needles to achieve tension).

With your chosen colour, cast on 81(89) sts.

Row 1 (right side): (k2, p2) to last st, k1. 6

Row 2: p1, (k2, p2) to the end.

Rows 1 and 2 form the rib pattern, with an extra stitch at the ends for sewing the seam, so that you can join using mattress stitch.

Repeat rows 1 and 2, until your beanie hat measures approximately 7cm (2¾in) from the start, ending after a row 2.

Change to 5.5mm (UK 5, US 9) knitting needles.

Repeat rows 1 and 2 until your beanie hat measures approximately 14cm (5½in) from the start, ending after a row 2. Mark the end of the last row with a piece of waste yarn.

Change to 6mm (UK 4, US 10) knitting needles.

Repeat rows 1 and 2 until hat measures approximately 25(27.5)cm (10(11)in) from the start, ending after a row 2.

Decrease for crown:

Note that on each decrease row, the stitch count will change and this is shown in brackets at the end of each row.

7 Row 1 (decrease row): (k2, p2tog, k2, p2) to last st, k1 (71(78) sts).

Row 2: p1, (k2, p2, k1, p2) to end.

Row 3 (decrease row): (k2, p1, k2, p2tog) to last st, k1 (61(67) sts).

Row 4: p1, (k1, p2) to end.

Row 5 (decrease row): (skpo, p1, k2, p1) to last st, k1 (51(56) sts).

Row 6: p1 (k1, p2, k1, p1) to end.

Row 7 (decrease row): (k1, p1, skpo, p1) to last st, k1 (41(45) sts).

Row 8: p1 (k1, p1) to end.

Row 9 (decrease row): (skpo) to last st, k1 (21(23) sts).

Row 10: p1, (p2tog) to end (11, 12 sts).

Cut yarn, leaving a long tail.

Thread the long tail of yarn onto a yarn needle and thread it through the remaining sts, taking them off the needle.

Pull tight to gather and fasten off securely. Do not cut the long tail of yarn.

Finishing 8

Using the long tail of yarn and mattress stitch, join the seam as follows:

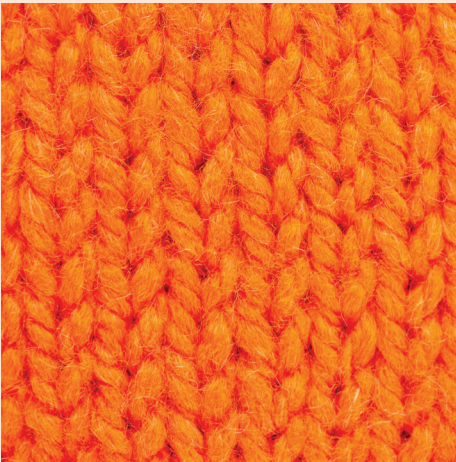
Working from the right side, join the seam as far as the marked row.

Now turn hat inside out and thread needle through to wrong side. Sew the remaining seam with mattress stitch, working from the inside so that the seam is not visible when the brim is turned up. Fold up brim to the marked round and remove marker. If desired, secure the folded brim with a few stitches.

Weave any yarn ends into the wrong side and trim.

If desired, add a medium or large faux fur pompom and attach it to the centre top of hat. Shop-bought faux fur pompoms usually have an elastic loop on them, which you can use to attach it onto your hat.

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).

Finishing

Follow the steps below to sew up your headband with a twist.



1 Join the long side seam using vertical mattress stitch (see page 40).



2 Whip stitch each short open end to close each seam (see page 46).



3 Lay the sewn piece flat (either side can be facing upwards). Pinch the short ends together and bring them towards each other.



4 Slot the ends together.



# 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.

## CASTING OFF IN RIB STITCH

If you need to create a stretchy fabric at your cast-off edge, then you will need to cast off in the rib stitch pattern. This will create an elastic edge, unlike a knit cast-off, which creates a tight edge.



**1** While you are casting off, you knit the knit stitches and purl the purl stitches as you are looking at them.

**2** When you reach a purl stitch, bring the yarn between the needles, ready to purl the stitch. After casting off, take the yarn to the back, ready to knit the next stitch.



**3** Continue to follow your rib stitch pattern as you cast off.