

HOMEWORK
for
A COUTURE METHOD FOR HANDKNITTING – RED ALDER 2022

Please prepare the following swatches and have them completed for the first session of the class. They will be used both as a basis for discussion and for skill acquisition. The swatches must be worked with the yarn described and according to the stitch and row counts indicated. They should be washed and blocked following the directions below. Bring the remainder of the yarn used for the swatches and the additional yarns and notions listed below to class along with the completed swatches.

Work 2 identical stockinette swatches as follows.

With yarn A (see materials list) cast on 38 stitches using your regular cast-on. If you regularly vary your cast-on depending upon the stitch pattern to be worked, use the cast-on you would normally use for stockinette stitch when the first row is worked as a wrong side row.

Foundation Row: (WS) knit the first stitch (to establish beginning of row selvedge stitch); purl 36; purl 1 (to establish end of row selvedge stitch).

Row 1: (RS) with yarn in front of work, slip first stitch as if to purl through back of loop (beginning of RS row selvedge stitch); knit 36; knit 1 (end of RS row selvedge stitch).

Row 2: (WS) with yarn in back of work, slip first stitch as if to knit (beginning of WS row selvedge stitch); purl 36; purl 1 (end of WS row selvedge stitch).

Repeat rows 1 and 2 to work the selvedge stitch pattern along the vertical edges of the stockinette stitch.

Work through row 48.

Row 49: (RS) bind off all stitches knitwise.

Before washing and blocking the swatches, take the stitch and row gauge of the swatches. You will need this information during the class.

Wash and block the swatches following the directions below.

TO WASH AND BLOCK THE SWATCHES

Wash the swatches as you normally would and using your regular fabric wash for wool. Dry them flat, making sure that the corners are square and that the sides are parallel. Do not stretch them or pin them to the blocking surface. Allow them to dry naturally and to achieve their finished shape and gauge without any manipulation on your part. Take the stitch and row gauge of the swatches once they are dry. Note this gauge along with the pre-washing gauge.

Before storing your swatches, allow them to rest for several days on the blocking surface and take the stitch and row gauge once more. Bring this and the other gauge information with you to class.

When you store your swatches, make sure they are thoroughly dry. Please do not press them down or fold them in any way that might affect or alter the shape and gauge they reached after blocking and then resting. We will discuss how yarns respond to the process of washing and blocking; the individual results represented by these swatches will provide the starting point for this discussion.

MATERIALS

yarn:

Use only smooth, solid color, plied yarn. Do not use a variegated, tweed, bouclé, roving, novelty or superwash yarn.

A (used for the swatches): approximately 100 yds / 91 m of a light colored dk weight wool with crisp stitch definition that knits at 6 stitches and 8 rows to 1" / 2.5 cm.

B (to be used in class): 20–25 yds / 18–23 m of the same yarn as A, but in a color that contrasts with yarn A. This yarn should knit at 6 stitches and 8 rows to 1" / 2.5 cm and should not be so dark that it is difficult to read the stitches.

C (to be used in class): 10–15 yds / 9–14 m of a fingering weight wool in a color and hand comparable to yarn B that knits at 8 stitches and 10 rows to 1" / 2.5 cm.

needles:

32" / 80 cm circular needles in the size used to work the swatches. For most knitters this will usually be a 6 or 5 US / 4 mm or 3.75 mm needle; however, use whatever size needle is needed to obtain the gauge.

32" / 80 cm circular needles in 1, 2, 3 and 4 sizes smaller than used to work the swatches.

32" / 80 cm circular needles in 1 size larger than used to work the swatches.

32" / 80 cm circular needles in the size needed to obtain gauge for yarn C, if this size is not already included in those listed above.

0 US / 2.0 mm: 2 32" / 80 cm circular or 2 double point needles at least 8" / 20 cm.

If you do not have 32" circular needles, please bring what you have in the sizes listed. You will need a minimum length of 24" / 60 cm, but you may find a longer needle more comfortable for some of the techniques.

notions:

crochet hook: C/2.5 mm or D/3.0 mm

tapestry needle

scissors

SKILLS AND TECHNIQUES

You should be comfortable with the following:

- the structure of knitted fabric: how yarn moves through the fabric; identify rows and columns of stitches; and locate the running threads in a piece of knitted fabric
- stitch and row gauge: able to determine these gauges accurately
- blocking wires: what they are and how they are used

You should be able to execute the following:

- knit long-tail cast-on
- knit and purl through the back loop of a stitch
- knit-up or pick up and knit stitches (same technique, different names)
- slip stitches, one or more at a time, through the front or back of the loop(s)
- knit and purl open running thread increases; knit and purl raised and slip raised increases
- k2tog and ssk decreases; knit and purl center double decreases
- yarnovers: from knit to knit, purl to purl, knit to purl, and purl to knit
- knit or purl into a yarnover without dropping the yarnover from the needle