

Recycled Yarn Shawl

Contributed by Stacey

In this era of buy it, wear it once, throw it away, the environmental and ethical benefits of reusing wool from jumpers bought at charity shops, jumbles sales and car boot sales are fairly self-evident. However, as well as doing something that suits your principles there is the financial benefit. The sudden rise in popularity of hand-knitting and crochet has meant the choice of wools has grown to the point where sometimes it's hard to get a ball of bog-standard double-knitting and the prices can be pretty fancy as well. Recycling wool from knitted garments can require imagination, as some of the loveliest yarns have been knitted into some of the ugliest jumpers. However, when these are unravelled they can be made into something beautiful that you can feel proud of for all the right reasons.

Tips for recycling yarn

Don't bother with anything that's made from 100% acrylic as it's only pennies brand-new and isn't really worth the effort of unravelling

Be wary of very fancy/fluffy/bouclé yarns. They can be a nightmare to unravel. If you stretch the jumper between your fingers and it looks quite loosely knit it may be worth a try.

Try not to focus too much on what the garment looks like. As I said, some of the loveliest wool has been made into the ugliest jumpers.

If the garment is crocheted instead of knitted be aware that it may be made up of many different panels and sections which have each been added together and can be fiddly to unravel.

Very fine yarns can also be fiddly to unravel. At the start it may be best to stick to DK and chunky yarns.

So! You have your bag of jumpers, cardis and various knitted goods. What to do now? In my opinion the definitive guide to recycling yarn is here:

<http://neauveau.com/recycledyarn.html>

It's a fun site with lots of extremely useful information and where the original idea for this recycled shawl is.

What you'll need

A 100cm long circular needle. I used an Addi turbo 10mm. I'll put a list of stockists at the end.

About 350 - 400 grams of wool depending on how large you want it to be. The original uses about 15 different colours but it really is up to you how many colours you want in it. Mine used about 10 - 12 but the one I'm working on at the moment is only 3 colours.

All you need to do now is make your shawl. It really is the simplest pattern. You need to know how to do garter stitch (all knitting) and how to knit into the front and back of the same stitch. Knitting into the front and back of the stitch sounds tricky but it's simple once you get the hang of it. Knit a stitch as normal but instead of pushing it off the needle go to the back loop and knit into that as well, then push the stitch off the needle. There's a handy video here:

<http://www.knittinghelp.com/knitting/videos//increase/increase-bar.mpg>

Ready? Here we go.

Row 1 - Cast on 2 stitches

Row 2 - Knit into the front and back of the first stitch, knit 1

Row 3 - Knit 1, knit into the front and back of the same stitch, knit 1

Row 4 - Knit 1, knit into front and back of the same stitch, knit to end

That's it! Just repeat the last row until the shawl is the size you want it. It'll be roughly 200 - 230 stitches depending on the wool used and the needle size.

You can change colours when you like according to what effect you're trying to achieve. Knitting on a circular needle means it's easy to change colours on an odd row. If you do this you'll get a 'fringe' on both sides of the shawl. I changed colour every 5 rows. You can then go back and add more fringing when the shawl is finished. The beauty of this is that

you don't have to try to hide the knots where you've changed colour.

Things to be aware of

Although you're knitting on circular needles you aren't knitting a tube. You'll be using the circular needles pretty much the same as normal knitting needles. The circular needles mean that you have room for the 230 stitches and you can change yarns on odd rows.

The Addi turbo's are made of shiny metal and can be very slippery. You can get bamboo circular needles but I'm not sure they go up to 10mm

Stockists of Addi Turbo

You may be lucky and have them stocked in your local yarn shop. If not, here are some online stockists:

http://www.classic-yarns.co.uk/productdisplay.asp/_ctrl/p/plid/40/cid/3/scid/0/tid/0/_Lpage/1/id/

<http://www.yarn-shop.co.uk/knitting/addicirc.php>

http://www.getknitted.com/acatalog/copy_of_Addi_Turbo___length_80cm.html

<http://www.kangaroo.uk.com/needles/needles.asp>

So there you have it and there it is (as the old farmer down the road says). Have lots of fun and I look forward to seeing the results.

Stacey is a Downsizer regular, visit her site for her collection of hand dyed yarns and felted goods:

<http://www.cledryarner.com/>