

KIDS KNITTING

by Melanie Falick

Looking for a new hobby? Knitting may be the answer. Not only is it lots of fun, but it is also easy to learn, and you can make all sorts of projects—from bean bags, bookmarks, and blankets to puppets and dolls and nearly every kind of clothing. Complete any one of the six quick projects presented here and you will have learned the three most important skills in knitting: casting on, the knit stitch, and binding off. Before you know it you will be ready to move on to more advanced projects. For other project ideas, check your local library or bookstore for the book *Kids Knitting*.

MATERIALS

1 ball worsted-weight or bulky wool yarn in a color you love (handspun or machine-spun)

1 pair 10-inch smooth, lightweight needles, approximately size 8

BOOKMARK

Cast on approximately 10 stitches. The more stitches you cast on, the wider your bookmark will be. Knit for about 5 inches or until the bookmark is the desired length. Bind off. To make your bookmark extra-stiff, use very bulky yarn and needles that are no larger than size 8.

DOLLHOUSE DOORMAT OR RUG

Using very bulky yarn, cast on 10 to 20 stitches. The more stitches you cast on, the wider your doormat or rug will be. Knit until the doormat or rug is the desired length. Bind off. Again, use bulky yarn and needles that are no larger than size 8 for knitting that is tight and stiff like a rug.

CHANGE PURSE

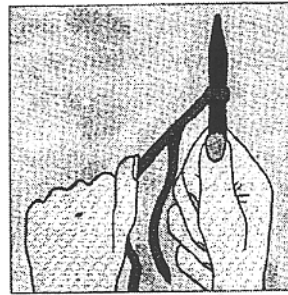
Cast on 10 to 20 stitches. Knit until you have a rectangle that measures approximately 6 1/2 inches. Bind off.

Fold the rectangle up from the cast-on edge so that it is approximately 1/2 inch away from the bind-off edge. Sew the overlapping side edges together. The top 1/2 inch is the change purse flap. Turn the change purse inside out (so that the sewing stitches are on the inside). If you like, pin the center of the flap to the body of the change purse to keep it shut. Or attach a small button that will fit through a stitch and keep the flap closed.

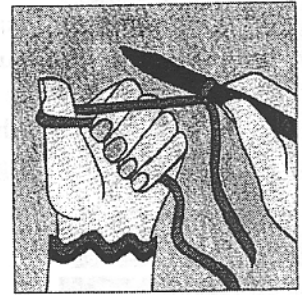
BEAN BAG

Cast on approximately 20 stitches. Knit until you have made a square. Bind off. Make a second square. Sew 3 sides of the square together. Turn the bean bag inside out (so that the sewing stitches are on the inside). Place a handful of beans inside the foot of a thin old sock. Knot the sock so that the beans won't fall out. Place the sock

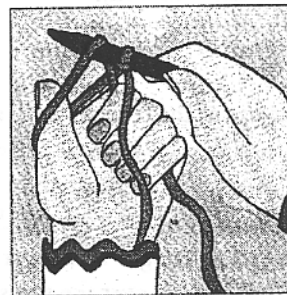
Single Cast On.



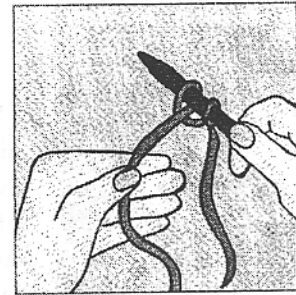
1. Slide a slip knot onto a knitting needle and tighten enough to keep it from falling off.



2. Rotate your left wrist so that the working yarn wraps once around your thumb.



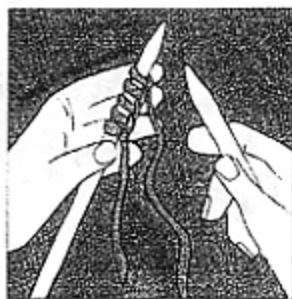
3. Insert the tip of the needle in an upward direction through the center of the the loop of yarn that has formed on your thumb.



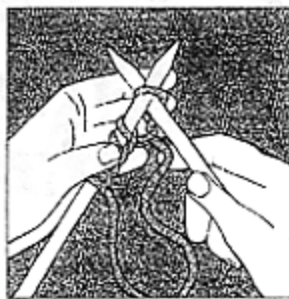
4. Slide your thumb away so that a new stitch is added and pull the working yarn so that the new stitch is snug but not tight. Repeat steps 1 through 3 until you have the number of stitches you want. Include the slip knot when you are counting your stitches.

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The Knit Stitch.



1. Hold the needle with the stitches on it in your left hand with your ball of yarn behind the needle.



2. Insert the tip of the right needle up into the center of the top loop on the left needle so that the 2 needles cross each other to make an X shape.



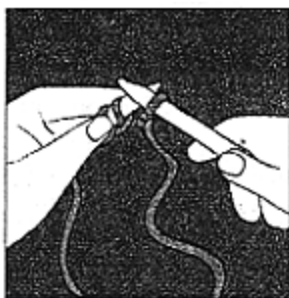
3. Hold the 2 needles in your right hand by placing your right thumb on top of the front needle and your right forefinger and middle finger underneath the needle.



4. Pick up the working yarn with your left hand and wrap it around the back needle from back to front to back, ending by gently lifting your right forefinger so that the yarn can be placed underneath it.

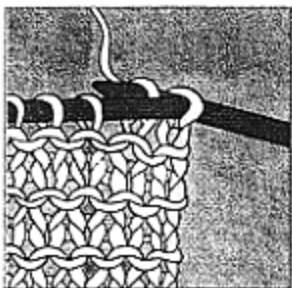


5. Gently grasp the top needle with your left hand. Without letting go of the yarn under your right forefinger, insert the tip of the back needle down into the center of the stitch on the needle in your left hand, then toward your body.

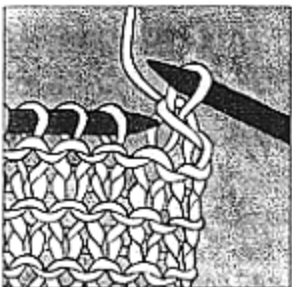


6. Pull the needle in your right hand up so that the stitch on the needle in your left hand slides off the tip of the left needle. You now have 1 stitch on the right-hand needle. This is your first knit stitch. Repeat with the remaining stitches on the left-hand needle.

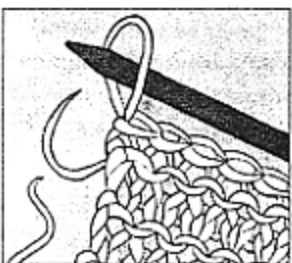
Binding Off



1. Starting at the beginning of a row, knit 2 stitches. Insert your left needle down into the bottom stitch on the right needle. Hold the top stitch in place with your right forefinger and lift the bottom stitch over the top stitch and off the tip of the right needle.



2. Slide the left needle away from the stitch. You now have 1 stitch on the right needle. Knit the next stitch from the left onto the right needle as usual. Repeat steps 1 and 2, never working with more than 2 stitches on your right needle. Continue until there is 1 stitch remaining.



Cut the working yarn about 4 inches from the needle. Pull gently on your right needle to make the remaining stitch larger. Insert the end of the yarn through the stitch on the needle and remove the needle. Gently pull on the end of the yarn to tighten.

inside the bean bag and check to see if you need to add or take away beans; it should be puffy but not bursting. Once you have the right amount of beans, cut away any excess sock material. Place the sock inside the bean bag and sew the open edge shut.

PATCHWORK BLANKET (NOT SHOWN)

Make an even number of squares (2, 4, 6, or 8, etc.) in 2 or more colors following the directions for the bean bag. Sew the squares together side by side to make a blanket.

SCARF (NOT SHOWN)

Cast on 20 to 40 stitches. The more stitches you cast on, the wider your scarf will be. Knit until the scarf is the desired length. Bind off.

To add a pocket to the scarf, knit a square and sew it along 3 sides about an inch from one of the edges. Remember to leave the top of the square open so that you will be able to put your hand inside the pocket. ♣

Melanie Falick is passionate about knitting and other textile arts. A writer and editor, she is the author of Knitting in America and more recently Kids Knitting (see review page 13). Melanie lives in Accord, New York.