

ESTELLE

YARNS

March 2nd, 2015

Greetings Knitters!

Welcome to the first week of our KAL! We are so excited that you have chosen to participate, and we hope that you will all come away from this experience having learned something new. The rules are simple- join us each week as we knit a portion of a children's sweater. If you finish the sweater within the ten week time frame, then you automatically qualify to win some great prizes! There are three fabulous prizes to be won, and all you have to do in order to be eligible, is finish the sweater in a yarn that [Estelle Yarns](#) stocks!

The purpose of this Knit-A-Long is to make the leap from knitting scarves, cowls, dishcloths and other simple items to knitting a sweater. A child's sweater knits up quite quickly, and since it is still a sweater (albeit a *small* sweater), the same principles will apply when you decide to take the plunge and knit one for yourself! And yes- you can quite easily do this, so *do not panic!*

Should you happen to be a well-seasoned knitter, you are more than welcome to join in on the fun too! Like any good knitting group- the more, the merrier! All skill levels are welcomed here, so don't be shy!

The prizes are as follows- A beautiful chunky throw kit which includes a pattern, and chunky yarn from [Borgo de Pazzi](#), a bag of [King Cole Fashion Aran](#), along with an accompanying copy of [King Cole Aran Book 1](#) and lastly, a bag of [Cascade 220 Superwash](#) along with a copy of [60 Quick Baby Knits](#). You could win any of these great prizes, simply by joining in on the fun! And even if you don't win... you will have a beautiful children's sweater to be proud of! What could possibly be better than that?

So, without further ado, let's get started!

Step 1: Selecting your yarn

The Estelle Yarns Spring 2015 Knit-A-Long begins with yarn selection, and what a selection we have for you to choose from! The sweater is knit in DK weight yarn. You can choose any DK weight yarn, but in order to win one of the fabulous prizes you must knit your sweater using a yarn supplied to your [Local Yarn Store](#) by [Estelle Yarns](#).

[In order to view the rather long list of possible yarn choices, please click here to refer to last week's post all about yarn selection.](#)

Step 2: How much yarn do I need to purchase?

Now, let's choose what size you want to knit.

Age (approx.)	1-2	2-3	3-4	4-5	5-6	Years
To fit chest sizes	20	21	22	23	24	Inches
Actual size (approx.)	24	25	26	28	30	Inches
Length to shoulder	12	13.5	14	15.5	17	Inches
Sleeve seam	8.5	9.5	10.5	11.5	13	Inches

Yarn requirements:

Single colour sweater	2	2	2	3	3	100 gr. Balls
Colour blocked sweater using 4 colours	4	4	4	5	5	1 100 gr. Ball of each colour. Larger two sizes, 2 balls of Main Colour, 1 of each Contrast.
Striped sweater using four colours	4	4	4	5	5	1 100 gr. Ball of each contrast colour, 2 balls of each main colour

[Last week's blog post also discusses how to substitute yarns, so in order to avoid repetition, we suggest checking out that post by clicking here.](#)

What else do I need?

One pair each of knitting needles in 3.25 mm (US size 3) and 4 mm (US size 6), or size required to get gauge. A stitch holder it also required.

Step 3: Swatching your yarn

A gauge swatch is a small sample that one knits up in the same stitch pattern, yarn and needles as specified in the pattern you are working from. The purpose of knitting a gauge swatch is to determine if your gauge matches the requirements of the pattern you are using. If your gauge does not match your pattern, your sweater will end up either too big, or too small.

What affects knitting tension? Several things! The weight of the yarn, the needle size and whether or not you knit loose or tight. A loose knitter may wish to go down a needle size to achieve the desired gauge and vice versa for a tight knitter.

Steps for knitting and measuring a gauge swatch:

1. Cast on the appropriate number of stitches.

Cast on the number of stitches given in the pattern for 4 inches, plus six more stitches. The pattern we are using lists a tension of 22 stitches and 28 rows to 4 inches over stocking stitch on 4mm needles. This means you will cast on 28 stitches ($22+6=28$) with 4mm needles.

2. Work in stocking stitch (knit one row, purl the next row) for the number of rows listed in the pattern to knit a swatch measuring 4 inches, plus six more rows.

In our case, you will knit 34 rows ($28+6=34$).

3. Cast off loosely.

4. Block the swatch.

Place the finished swatch in a small bowl of tepid water and let it sit for twenty minutes (you can add a bit of yarn soap, such as [Eucalan](#) if you wish). Remove your swatch from water and gently squeeze out excess water and then place it inside a folded tea towel and press down to absorb excess water. Using t-pins, pin your swatch to a blocking board, ironing board cover, or something similar, using one pin in each corner of the swatch. Allow to air dry.



Soaking our swatch in some Eucalan

5. Measuring the swatch: Stitches

Lay a ruler along a row of stitches and mark the beginning and end of four inches with pins. **Remember-** you have knit six extra stitches, so you can place your first pin just in from the first stitch. Do not stretch or squish the fabric to achieve 4 inches, just place the second pin at the four inch mark. Count the number of stitches between the two pins.



6. Measuring the swatch: Rows

Lay your ruler along a vertical line of stitches and line up the bottom of the ruler with the bottom of a row. Place a pin at the first row, then place a second pin four inches up from the first pin. Count the rows between the two pins.

7. Checking your gauge against the pattern gauge:

Our pattern requires a gauge of 22 stitches and 28 rows in order for your sweater to knit to the correct size. If your gauge swatch numbers differ from this, then you will want to go up (4.5 mm) or down (3.5 mm) a needle size and knit another swatch. If your swatch is smaller than our gauge, then knit another swatch using 4.5mm needles. If your swatch is larger, then knit another swatch using 3.5mm needles.

[We wrote a blog post in early January all about gauge swatches, so if you are interested in learning more, check out the post here.](#)

Step 4: Colour Play

Swatching is also a great opportunity to play around with colour. You might have chosen a self-striping yarn for this project, which is great! Your swatch will give you an idea of how the colours will work up once they have been knit. It is amazing how a self-striping yarn can look in a ball, and then it can completely transform once knit!



If you have chosen several balls of solid coloured yarn, swatching makes it possible to play around with thick or thin stripes, or maybe even some colour blocking! This is *your* sweater, so you get to be the one to make these kind of decisions! That is one (of many!) great reasons to start knitting garments. Each piece becomes a one-of-a-kind creation, unique to you- the knitter! Before you know it, you will have a line-up of people asking you to make them a one-of-a-kind creation too! (And remember that it's perfectly okay to say "No!")

We have posted three different versions of this sweater on the blog over the past few weeks, each one using different yarns, as well as different ways of playing with colour.

Our first sample was knit out of [King Cole's Splash](#), a fabulous, washable self-striping yarn.



King Cole Splash in shade 893

Our second sweater was knit using four colours of [King Cole's Authentic Cotton DK](#). While you will definitely find yourself with more ends to sew in, should you opt to take this route, we feel as though the end effect will be well worth the extra effort.



King Cole Authentic Cotton Mix in shades 1259, 1258, 1257 and 1261

And lastly, we knit our third sample using [Cascade 220 Superwash wool](#). We played around with stripes of varying thicknesses, which also left us with WAY more ends to sew in than had we simply used a self-striping yarn... but once again, it seemed well worth it in the end.



Cascade 220 Superwash in shades 910A, 892, and 903

So while you are swatching, play around with some striping! You might be surprised at how much you like the look of it. We will be talking about how to avoid cutting the yarn after each stripe next week, but in the meantime, have some fun!

Abbreviations:

Lastly, here is a list of abbreviations used in our pattern. Keep them handy so that you can quickly refer to this list when you come across an abbreviation you are not familiar with.

K = knit	P = Purl	st(s) = stitch(es)
alt = alternate	approx = approximately	beg = begin(ning)
cont = continue	dec = decrease	inc = increase
fol = following	rem = remain(ing)	rep = repeat
sl = slip	st-st = stocking stitch	tog = together
patt = pattern	tbl = through back loop	in(s) = inches
pssso = passed slipped stitch over		

Please let us know in the comments, through our [Facebook page](#), [Twitter](#) or our [Ravelry group](#) how you are making out. We would love to know! Learning from one another is the *best* way to learn, so snap some pictures of your progress, and let's stay in touch!

Until next week- happy swatching!