

The
Baby
Blanket

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My dear Therina:

Bunny Miller showed me your letter about the baby blanket, and I am very glad to send you the directions. But I learned to make them by just watching a girl a few minutes, and this is the first time I have ever tried to describe the process by long distance! It is a very simple matter when I am just showing someone what I am doing.

I am sending you a little pattern to go by. And when you have gotten a little accustomed to doing it, you can make all sorts of variations and take short cuts very easily. Simply start at one end of the border with the color you want for your border and put the number of stitches on that will make the blanket the width you want. You had better experiment for a few minutes beforehand with about ten stitches on the needles you are going to use and with the wool you are going to use, and see if after you have done eight or ten rows of the ten stitches you can tell how many inches your ten stitches make, and then you can simply divide that into the number of inches wide you want the blanket, and multiply it by ten for the number of stitches you want.

Make the border for one end as wide as you like, of plain knitting, and when you are ready to begin the double center part, decide how wide you want your side border, - whether the same width as the bottom or narrower. Then knit back with plain knitting the width of that border from the side edge.

Since the double part will of course take twice as many stitches as the single part, you have to add on an equal number of stitches across that portion. Do this by knitting one and then before casting off the old stitch, swing your thread around to the front and purl one into the same stitch. Cast that off and knit one and purl one into the next stitch. Then of course when you get across to within as many stitches of the further side as you took in your border at the near end, you just plain knit them off to make the other border.

At the end of that row, return with plain knitting through this second side border; and then knit the first stitch of the double part; and ~~then~~ keeping the point of your right-hand needle behind the thread you are knitting with, simply slip off the next stitch, (which is the one you purled into the second half of the stitch on the preceding row.) Then bring the point of the right hand needle out to the fore and knit the next stitch. Then slip the next one off behind; and proceed the whole way across to the border, knitting one, slipping one. *last*

Then knit plain the first border across and back again.

When you return through the double part, do exactly as when you came over, except that you knit this time into the stitch you slipped before, and you slip the stitch you knitted on the preceding row. You go all the way across to the border,- which of course you always plain knit,- and go across and return to the inner edge of the border.

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There are a number of possible ways of proceeding from here. And I strongly recommend your experimenting with a little one the size of my sample, more or less. Perhaps you know some one with a little doll !

I should make the first one,- or your first rows of experimenting,- double, but all one color. Then you don't have to bother with two threads.

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With that, when you get to the double part and have your two sets of stitches on, you simply knit one, slip one across to the border; plain knit the border and back; and then knit one slip one on return; row after row, until it is as long as you wish.

In this the only thing you have to watch is that the double part and the border keep the same length, and to accomplish this you must stop for a moment as you reach their division, and with the two kinds of knitting on separate needles hold them up and note if the border is really appreciably shorter. When it is, run back on another row and return of it, before going on with the double.

And when you've begun doing that, you want to count your rows sometimes, or you will find one border has more than the other. Like my little blue sample, where I need hastily to let a couple of extra rows of border come in on one side !

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(2) What should really be the second variation after doing one of both sides alike (but you really don't need to do this, probably) should be like the second or unfinished part of my sample.

In that, after you have gotten your double rows of stitches set for the double part of blanket,- you take a blue thread over as before, and do the border, and come back in just the same way on the other side and do that border. Then you tie an end of a ball of white to the blue and do the identical thing with white,- omitting the borders. In this way you have a plain border, but a striped double on both sides ! Not so effective, but a pleasant change.

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(3) But to come to the blue on one side, white on the other -- or whatever color combination you like. The starting of the border is just like the others, and the putting the double row of stitches on the part that is to be double.

The way I do it now is a technique I developed for myself, not the one I was shown. I think it easier.

After the blue is tied to the white, I put both the blue and white wool together over my forefinger of my left hand, just as you do in crocheting. Then I go across the double part with the two threads, knitting (say the blue) through the blue stitches that you had knitted the first time across, and purling the white thread through the blue stitches which you had knitted the second time, back. Thus your blue stitches will be making a second row of stocking-stitch knitting facing you, and the white will be making a similar row on the opposite side (if you turn the whole thing around to look at the other side !)

When you get across the double part, loop the threads over each other so the white will be linked to the blue, and plain knit the blue across the border and back.

Then return across the double part doing just the reverse from what you did coming over, - that is, knit the white into the white stitches facing you, and purl the blue into those blue stitches behind.

The only thing you have to be careful about in all this is to keep your two threads together between the two rows of stitches. And not to let them get twisted around each other, - for in that case your two sides of the double would be linked together ! This is just a little awkward at first, but soon becomes automatic.

Very shortly you will automatically know whether in order to keep the stocking stitch surface you will purl or knit the color you are doing, and knit or purl the other one to the front or to the back.

And as a matter of fact, if you do get the two thicknesses knotted together and go some distance before discovering it, it is very easy to correct, without ripping the whole thing back to it. Just knit to the row straight above where the mistake occurred, and then, leaving that stitch loose between the two needles, rip that row straight down to where the trouble was. Straighten it out down there, - and with a crochet needle or a hairpin, or even the end of one of your knitting needles, crochet the row back up to where it was, put it on the needle, and go ahead !

So the most important point to watch about the whole thing is that of not letting the threads get twisted inside and of keeping the thread away from the slipped side, - so that you don't hook the two together sometimes. The next important thing is always to be sure that the white gets looped around the blue at the border at each turn, so it is a part of the whole and doesn't have to be threaded on to it afterwards.

(But again, this is easy to correct. If you discover long afterwards that you did forget to do that looping at some place, it is easy with a darning needle or just a big crochet needle, or even your own knitting needle, to take a bit of that color wool around the two stitches concerned, tie a simple knot and draw the ends in between the two thicknesses. In fact, this double business is the easiest thing I ever knew for joining two threads ! Just

make all your joins in the double part and not in the border. Only make a simple plain knot behind any stitch and tuck the two ends into the double thickness,- and you don't have to worry about splicing or anything !)

Then the third very important point is, quite often when your needles are at the juncture between the double part and the border, and with all the double part on one needle, and just one border on the other needle, either hold them up or lay them on the table or sofa near you and see if the two parts are the same length. If the border is shorter, then turn around and go over and back once more before taking the border wool across the double part. The border eats up more yarn per number of stitches than the center does, so every now and again you will have to put in an extra row in the border, using your judgment and ingenuity as to when that should be.

Then when you have made the blanket as long as you wish the double part to be, you make one row all the way around of the border color,- on both the blue side and the white side; and then as you leave the border the next time, take your knitting stitch through a stitch from each side at the same time. This will again give you the right number of stitches for your end border, and you can plain knit your border as deep as you want it.

The blankets are really great fun to make, and after you have got into the swing of it, you will vary it a great deal. That is, you will make many different blankets, slightly varied from one another.

And all through this letter I have been wondering if perhaps you are knitting this for yourself, so I won't have to turn to and knit one for you?!

With the best of wishes,

I am,

Yours with affectionate remembrances,

I haven't told you the way I was shown to make it with one color on one side and another color on the other. But the way I developed it, as explained under (3), where I carry the two threads across together, I much prefer myself. If you find that too awkward, you may prefer the way they show,- which was to take one color, say the white, all the way over and back,- knitting the first stitch and slipping off the second going over,- and going back slipping off the first (blue) stitch and purling the next white. Hence you get two rows of white; and then repeating the

operation, two rows of blue. And of course plain knitting across the border and back with the border color. But you can remember in either case that you always knit and slip the row facing you, - and purl and slip the row at the back.

But in this last technique the border is even more complicating, for it is usually of a single color, - and so you don't get the rows of the other color tied in on the far side. Usually this doesn't really show. But with some wools it does, and then when it is all finished you simply have to take a strand of wool on a darning needle and run up the edge, inside the double, catching a stitch of the border to a stitch of the other color at the turning of each of the latter's rows. This does not really show at all.

By the way, a thing that I think always improves them that I did not do to my little sample I am sending is to crochet a plain stitch around the edge. Of course you can give the same effect if you don't take the added stitch at the turn of the row. But I think that turning the row as I have done, with the stitch of the new row taken through, makes the knitted edge stronger, while if one crochets on the nice looking chain finish instead of knitting it in it makes a great protection if that outside edge gets a little worn there or if there is a broken thread, as sometimes happens early. With the extra thread of chain stitching around the outside, it means that if that outside thread breaks it isn't going to run way back toward the middle before being spotted.

Another thing I find so useful, - I wonder if you do, - is to put the finished work on a wet bath towel on the bathroom floor, and put another wet towel over it. After it has lain there for some hours I take the top towel off and see if the blanket or garment is lying perfectly symmetrical, - that one corner or the margin isn't a little wider than another, or that one sleeve is not stretched out longer than another, or that there aren't two or three big stitches showing somewhere. If you straighten out all those little crookednesses, or draw in the big stitches, or stick any knots between the double folds, and then let the blanket or garment dry between the two towels, it does a perfectly amazing job of finishing.