

Frankie's Knitted Stuff

Spools



The blocks for this blanket were inspired by a traditional patchwork design representing cotton reels or spools. Unlike the patchwork block though, these spools are made up of two identical shapes, knitted in contrasting colours and then sewn back to back. The blocks can be laid out in various ways, each one giving a different finished blanket.

Facts and Figures

- I used Sirdar Escape Chunky yarn (65m / 50g) for my blanket in two shades, 176 (dark) and 198 (light).
- My blanket took about 400g of each colour for all the blocks and then another three balls (150g) for the border.
- I worked to a tension of about 14 sts and 28 rows to 10cm / 4"² using 6.5mm / US size 10½ needles.
- My finished blocks measure about 17 cm / 6½"² and the finished blanket is about 110cm / 43"².

Having said all that, these blocks are pretty stretchy so don't waste too much time worrying about tension, just choose whatever yarn and needles suit you and make a start.

Knitting the Spools

You will need two spools for each block, one in the darker colour and one in the light. Leave ends of about 25cm / 10 " at the start and end of each piece; these will be used to sew the block together.

Using the cable method and 6.5mm needles cast on 20 sts. Make sure you've left a long end for the sewing up later.

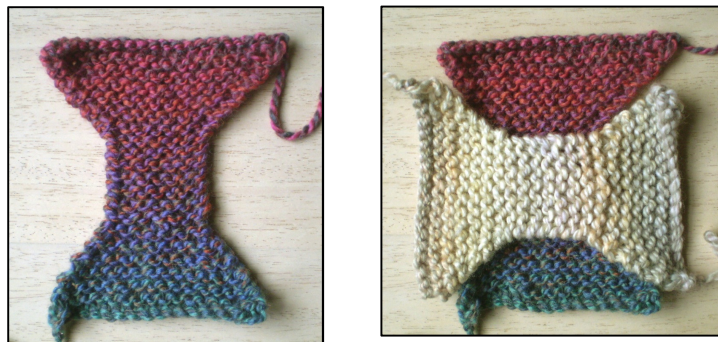
Next row: K to last 2 sts, K2tog.

Repeat this row until you have 8 stitches left on your needle. Now knit 15 rows. I slipped the first stitch of every row knitwise for this section but you may choose not to.

Next row: Kf&b, K to end.

Repeat this row until you are back up to 20 stitches. Cast off, again leaving a long tail for sewing up. I found that casting off with a smaller needle, size 6mm, stopped this edge spreading too much.

That's one spool knitted. Now knit another with the other colour and lay one across the other as in the second picture below.



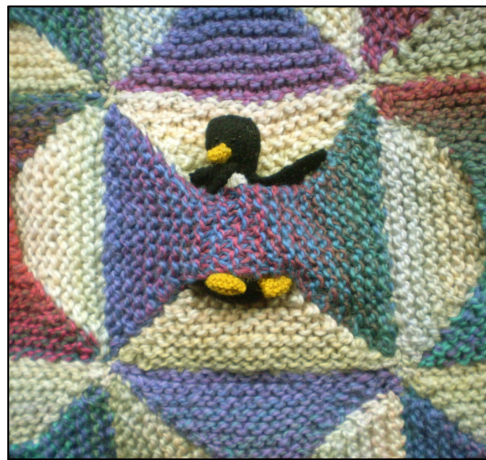
Notice that the four ends of yarn are at the four corners of the block, all ready to sew the spools together. Join the angled sections

of the spools, one at a time, stopping when you get to the central square. This will be left open and you can darn in your yarn ends inside it.

The finished square, after blocking (more of that later) ...



... and Penguin kindly demonstrating how the centre of the blocks is left open, making a sort of pocket ...



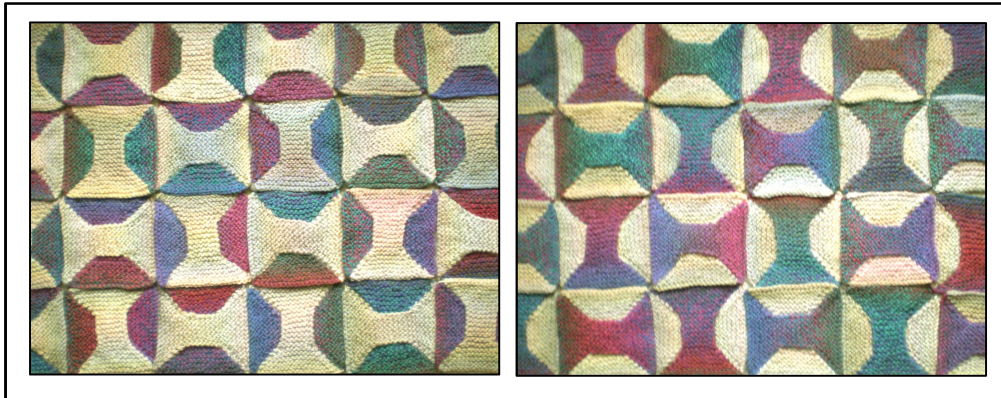
Blocking

What with the garter stitch and the knitting in two different directions these blocks will not come out as perfect squares, or even necessarily all the same size! I decided to save myself a lot of trouble when it came to sewing them together by blocking them first. This was not as difficult as it sounds once I'd worked out how

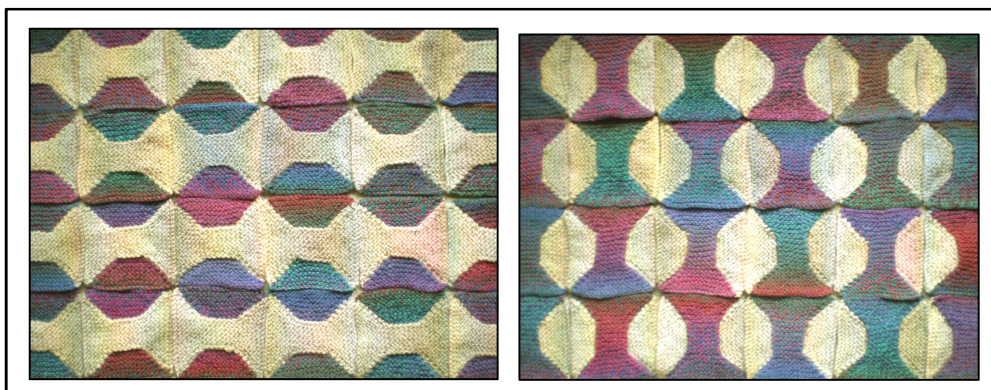
to use plastic canvas to make this quicker. I cut a square of plastic canvas to the size I was aiming at and then pinned the damp block to it, pinning it through the outside holes of the canvas. This cut out all that tedious measuring and made sure that all the blocks ended up the same size.

Sewing the Blocks Together

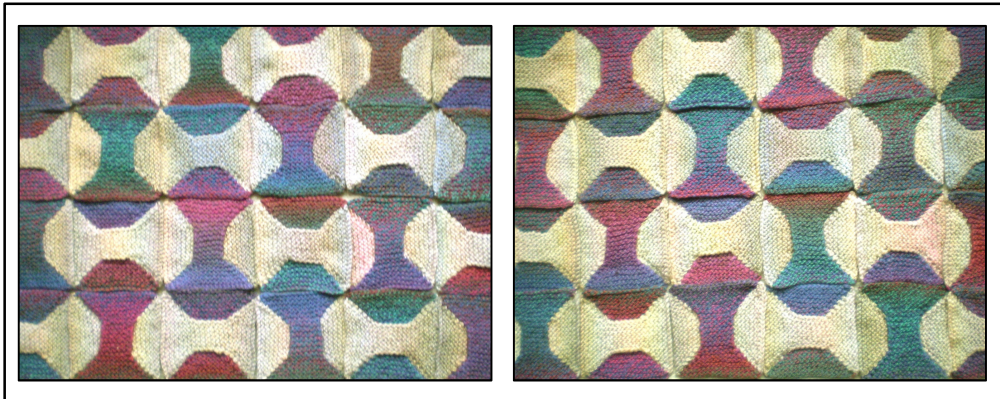
This is a fun bit! Well, perhaps not the actual sewing, but deciding which pattern to arrange them in is definitely exciting. Here are a few ideas, showing the pattern as it will appear on each side of the blanket.



This is the arrangement I used. Can you see the pinwheels in between the spools – dark on one side, light on the other?

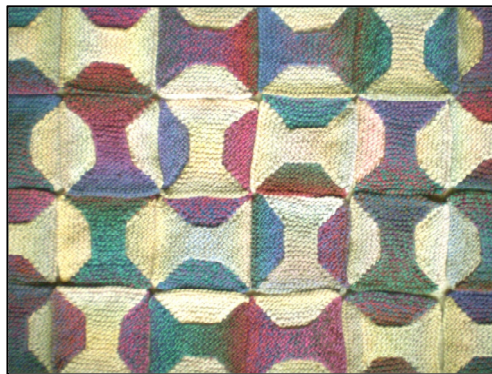


I was very tempted by this one, like strings of beads.



Ok, so this one is pretty much the same on both sides.

Or you could use a mixture of any of the above, like this ...



... or this ...



I used the lighter colour to join my blocks but you could also use a thinner, neutral coloured yarn.

Adding the Border

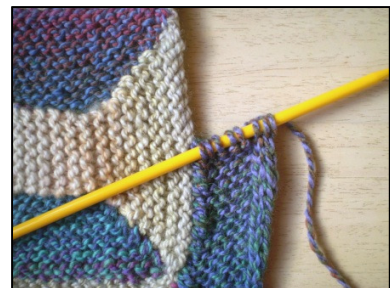
This made a huge difference to my blanket and really brought it all together. I decided to use a combination of a knitted garter stitch border, attached as you go, with an outside edge of I cord. This is much easier to knit than it sounds.

First of all, a word about needle sizes for this sort of border. To test if you are using the right size needle, have a look when you've worked a few rows. If you're brave about such things you can take the stitches off the needle to do this so that they relax but you don't have to if the very thought of it makes you come over all faint.

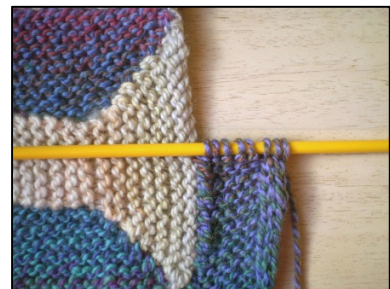
If your stitches are angled down towards the outside edge of your border, try going up a needle size.



If the stitches are angled up towards the outside edge, go down a needle size.



This is what you're aiming for. I found that I needed to use a 7mm needle to get the right tension for the border.



Yes, I know – it's the same needle in all three pictures. Ok, so I pulled the stitches about a bit to illustrate my point!

So ... cast on 8 stitches, 3 for the I cord edging and 5 for the garter stitch border. The border is joined to the blanket by picking up and knitting one stitch from the edge of the blanket at the end of every right side row. The following two rows are a variation of the joining ridges used in my Ten Stitch patterns.

Row 1: K7, sl 1 kwise pick up and knit 1, psso, turn.

Row 2: K5, yf, sl 3 pwise, turn.

Keep working these two rows along one straight edge of the blanket until you get to a corner.



There will be a raised bump where the border joins to the blanket on the right side and a smooth join on the other. Aren't the corners nice? We're just getting to them ...

When you've got to this point, you're ready to start working the corner. This is worked in short rows, keeping the I cord edging to give a little curve.



In the following instructions w&t refers to wrap and turn which is explained at the end of the pattern.

Rows 1 & 2: K7, w&t, K4, yf, sl 3 pwise.

Rows 3 & 4: K6, w&t, K3, yf, sl 3 pwise.

Rows 5 & 6: K5, w&t, K2, yf, sl 3 pwise.
Rows 7 & 8: K4, w&t, K1, yf, sl 3 pwise.
Rows 9 & 10: K3, yf, sl 1 pwise, turn. yf, sl 4 pwise.

That's half the corner done and it should look like this.

The second half of the corner is a reverse version of the first.



Rows 1 & 2: K4, w&t, K1, yf, sl 3 pwise.
Rows 3 & 4: K5, w&t, K2, yf, sl 3 pwise.
Rows 5 & 6: K6, w&t, K3, yf, sl 3 pwise.
Rows 7 & 8: K7, w&t, K4, yf, sl 3 pwise.

Now you're back to using all eight stitches and joining to the blanket. Work the first joining ridge into the point of the corner and then carry on along the next side.



... and that's it!

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Abbreviations

st / sts	stitch / stitches
K	knit
K2tog	knit two stitches together
kf&b	knit into the front and back of the stitch
sl	slip
kwise	knitwise
pwise	purlwise
psso	pass slipped stitch over
yf	yarn forward, as if to purl
w&t	wrap and turn (see below)

wrap and turn

Bring the yarn forward, slip the next stitch purlwise, take the yarn back again, replace the slipped stitch on the left hand needle, bring the yarn forward again and turn the work.

This is used to avoid holes when working short rows.



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