



Patchwork and arlequin blankets

Knitting for a baby is a gesture of love. It is a prayer, a meditation .As we form each stitch, we express with our fingers our dreams and hopes for the baby's health and happiness.If we are knitting while pregnant, it is a way of connecting with the baby inside. If we are knitting for the baby of a friend or family member, it is a way of sharing in their joy. When babies wear what we have made for them they are wrapped in our love—safe, warm, and protected.

MATERIALS

Brown Sheep Lamb's Pride Worsted

(4 ounces/190 yards;

85% wool, 15% mohair)

FOR PATCHWORK BLANKET

(40 INCHES LONG X 30 INCHES WIDE)

4 skeins oatmeal

3 skeins Burt's blush

2 skeins antique mauve

FOR HARLEQUIN BLANKET

(35 INCHES LONG X 28 INCHES WIDE)

4 skeins blue magic

3 skeins misty blue

4 skeins Aran

FOR BOTH BLANKETS

1 pair size 9 knitting needles,

at least 10 inches long

Yarn needle

G A U G E

16 stitches and 32 rows = 4 inches

on size 9 needles in garter stitch

Both of these blankets are made by knitting and assembling garter-stitch squares. For the Patchwork Blanket at left, large squares are sewn together in straight rows. For the Harlequin Blanket , smaller squares are turned to look like diamonds, then sewn together for a blanket with a zigzag edge. If you are a beginner, your squares/diamonds may not all be exactly the same size. With a little fudging when you're sewing the pieces together, you should still finish with a beautiful blanket. In addition, blocking can even out some of the size differences. Patchwork and Harlequin Blankets are wonderful group projects, with friends and family of the new baby each providing a square and one person sewing them all together. To give a baby shower a new twist, enlist a friend or hire a teacher (or be the teacher yourself, if you're ready) to show the guests how to knit squares, and then sew the squares together to make a blanket to present to the baby and the adoring parents. Although some of the squares may turn out more "primitive-looking" than others, after blocking and sewing, the blanket will become a beautiful testament to the spirit of the shower and the love and good wishes of the makers—a true heirloom

PATCHWORK BLANKET

To make this blanket as shown in the photo at left you will need to make 12 garter-stitch squares in the following colors: 6 oatmeal, 4 Burt's blush, and 2 antique mauve. Start as many squares as possible with enough yarn to complete the entire square. Each skein of yarn will make about 13/4 squares. If you run out of yarn mid-square, start a new ball . To make a square, using size 9 needles, cast on 40 stitches. Work in garter stitch (knit all stitches) for 10 inches. Bind off all stitches. Weave in loose ends of yarn along edges. If you are knitting to gauge, each square will measure 10 inches along each side

Arrange the squares in the color order that you like. Using the mattress stitch , the oatmeal-colored yarn,

and a yarn needle, sew the squares together using the Rows to Bind Off seam so that the garter ridges of each square alternate between running right-to-left and up-and-down. The blanket is sewn together in this way to create stability (to keep it from stretching out). Block the blanket to even out the stitches and give it a finished, professional look.

HARLEQUIN BLANKET

To make this blanket as shown in the photo at left you will need to make 32 garter-stitch squares in the following colors: 12 blue magic, 12 Aran, and 8 misty blue. Start as many squares as possible with enough yarn to complete the entire square. Each skein of yarn will make about 33/4 squares. If you run out of yarn mid-square, start a new ball of yarn as explained at right. To make a square, using size 9 needles, cast on 28 stitches. Work in garter stitch (knit all stitches) for 7 inches. Bind off all stitches. Weave in loose ends of yarn along edges. If you are knitting to gauge, each square will measure 7 inches along each side. Turn the squares so that they are oriented as diamonds and arrange the colors as shown in the photo at left or in any way that you like. Using the mattress stitch, the Aran yarn, and a yarn needle, sew the diamonds together using the Rows to Bind Off seam so that the rows of adjacent diamonds alternate the direction of the garter ridges. The blanket is sewn together in this way to create stability (to keep it from stretching out). Block the blanket to even out the stitches and give it a finished, professional look

Tips:

STARTING A NEW BALL OF YARN

You will need to start a new ball of yarn when you come close to the end of the one you are using or when you want to change colors. Try to plan it so that you are changing to the new yarn at the beginning of a row.

Cut the old yarn, leaving an approximately 4-inch tail. Tie the new yarn to the old yarn with a knot, sliding the knot as close as possible to the last stitch knitted with the old yarn and leaving an approximately 4-inch tail of the new yarn. Start knitting with your new yarn. When you are finished knitting the project, weave the loose ends along the side seams or edges of your work.

