

# Knitting Instructions for Shawls

- 1. Decide what size needle you will use.** Size 11 (8) create a slightly denser shawl and K3, P3 pattern will be more noticeable. Conversely, size 13 (9) needles create a slightly looser, less definable pattern. Approximate finished sizes, not counting fringe, are 26" X 60" on size 11 needles (66 cm X 152 cm on 8) and 30" X 64" on 13 needles (76cm X 162 cm on 9). You may use smaller or larger needles as well, depending on the yarn that you have chosen; knit up a sample and do the math so that your shawl is the size you desire. The smaller the needle, the more stitches you will need; the larger the needle, the fewer.
- 2. Select your yarn.** You might pick a yarn for its color, for its name, or for its texture. A standard shawl requires three skeins of yarn that are six ounces (170 g) net weight and 185 yards (166.5 m) each.
- 3. Cast on.** Cast on 57 stitches for size 13 (9) needles, 63 for size 11(8). The pattern is K3, P3 every row. This means you will always begin each row with K3 and end each row with K#. The pattern is a modified seed or moss stitch. Any odd multiple of three will work for your shawl, depending on how wide you want to make it: 57, 63, 69, 75, 81, and so on. Follow this pattern until you achieve the desired length. You also may decide to knit every row, which is called a garter stitch. Before you begin the third skein, make your fringe.

**An alternative for men:** If the gift is going to a man, making a lap blanket may be a good alternative to the shawl. In this case, cast on 87 stitches (size 13(9)). This gives you a blanket approximately 45" (114cm) wide. Use four skeins for this project. Rather than fringe, consider creating a selvage edge by crocheting as single crochet around the entire blanket. If you decide to do this, make sure you reserve yarn for that.
- 4. Attaching the next skein or ball.** An alternative to tying a knot and then weaving the ends of the two strands of yarn into the shawl when you are all done is to weave the new end into the old with a darning needle. This eliminates knots and having to weave in all those ends. Clip the ends of both pieces of yarn. Thread the needle with the end of the new skein. Beginning at the end of the skein you are finishing, hold the end taut and insert the needle. Take tiny stitches in a slightly spiral fashion, maintaining firm and even tension. When you have woven through about three inches, pull gently to test the yarn. It should hold. If it slips or pulls out, continue to take tiny stitches through the old yarn or start again. The result should be a joined piece of yarn that is smooth and slightly thicker than a single strand; it disappears easily into the fabric of the shawl. Take care as you knit the joint. Once you have knit the joint into the shawl, you can clip the ends that have frayed in the knitting process (generally quite short). This process works with thin or thick, smooth or nubby yarn.
- 5. Selvages.** You may want to create a selvage edge for your shawl. This creates a smoother finish for the sides of your shawl. At the beginning of each row, slip the first stitch purlwise; the yarn will be in front of your work. Carry the yarn to the back, K2, and continue with the pattern to the end of the row.
- 6. Make fringe.** The length of the fringe is an individual decision. It can be long or short. You can put a piece of fringe through every stitch, or you can skip several stitches. Some people tie or sew beads to fringe, especially if the shawl is for a child. Whatever your preference, here is what you do:

Decide how long you want the fringe. Because the fringe is doubled when you fasten it to the shawl, you must cut the fringe twice the desired length: for 6" (15cm) fringe, each piece must be cut 12" (30 cm) long; for 12" (30cm) fringe, cut pieces 24" (60 cm); and so on. A stiff piece of cardboard cut to the finished length of the fringe helps with this process. Wrap the yarn around the cardboard as many times as you want pieces of fringe, and cut only one end.

For standard fringe, cut 57 (63) lengths for each end of the shawl, or 144 (126) total. Reserve fringe until you have finished knitting the shawl. I tie each bundle with a slipknot to keep from losing them and getting them tangled, and put them in a sealed plastic bag for safekeeping.

7. **Finish the shawl.** Attach the inside end of the third skein of yarn to your shawl and continue knitting until all the yarn is used up, or until you have achieved the desired length.
8. **Attach fringe.** Double the yarn and, using a small crochet hoop, pull the loop through the stitch; insert the ends of the fringe through the loop and pull tight creating a knot.

Victoria A. Cole-Galo creates fringe with a tassel effect. She uses two strands of yarn that she doubles and then inserts in every third stitch where the trough or ridge is created when you change from knit to purl or vice versa. This creates fringe that is eight strands thick, spaced every third stitch. You may find the details of this process on her website.

9. **Knot the ends of the fringe.** Some people knot the ends of each strand to keep the fringe from fraying. This is an individual decision. Some people would rather leave it alone. I prefer to knot the ends when I am using any yarn that frays easily.
10. **Give away your shawl** If you are making the shawl for a particular person, you may want to include the history of the shawl-making ministry and a prayer. May people wrap the shawl in tissue paper and tie it with a left over piece of yarn.