

# VP Bag

Melissa Deutsch Scott

## Materials

**Version A** Panda Magnum 8-Ply (100% acrylic; 310 m; 100g). Colour 392 (dusty rose), 2 balls. Patons Loopy Mohair (83% mohair, 17% acrylic; 40 m; 50 g). Colour 13 (pale pink), 1 ball. Optional: small amount Sullivans 4-ply chenille (pink) and two groovy beads for the ends of the bag ties.

**Version B** Panda Magnum 8-Ply (100% acrylic; 310 m; 100g). Colour 393 (purple), 2 balls. Panda Rhumba Boucle (79% acrylic, 20% mohair, 1% nylon; 36 m; 50 g). Colour 8576 (purple multi).

## Needles

1 set of five 2.75 mm double-pointed needles (using a fifth needle of a different size won't affect the pattern)  
2.75 mm circular needles (40 cm)  
3.25 circular needles (40 cm)

## Tension

In order to create a solid, durable fabric, both the base and body are knitted on needles at least 1 mm smaller than normal tension for 8 ply yarn. It can be a bit rough for the first few rounds on double-pointed needles, but soon you will find yourself loosening up on the reins. Don't stress too much about the tension—as long as the fabric feels sturdy, you're on the right track.

**Base medallion tension in stocking stitch**  
25 stitches per 10 cm square knitted in the round on 2.75 mm needles

**Bag body tension in broken rib stitch:** 9 ribs and 40 rows to 10 cm on 3 mm circular needles.

**Broken Rib** (sometimes called **Mistake Rib**):

Round 1: K 2, p 2

Round 2: K 1, \*k 2, p 2. Repeat k 2, p 2 ribbing until the last stitch. K 1.

**Skills set** knitting in the round, optional knitted hem, broken rib stitch. No major sewing up besides sewing the tie casing in place.

The design guidelines for this circular bag came from co-workers, mums of young girls who are authorities on what makes a good kid's bag. Requirements included: 1) backpacky or longish straps—gotta have your hands free; 2) must have a secure closure—no tabs or buttons will do; and 3) must be **very pink** or **very purple**. I also had to account for durability, flexibility and—important in a kid's bag—washability. A well-knitted bag should stand up to tough treatment without coming to resemble an old dishrag, floppy and useless. Broken rib stitch gives this bag structure without making it too stiff.

## Circular base

Cast on 8 sts. Join for circular knitting and k 1 round on 8 stitches, distributing 2 sts on each double-pointed needle. (A small safety pin to mark the beginning of the round may be helpful.) The small number of sts per needle is a bit awkward for the first few rounds, but as the base grows, it seems to sort itself out. Don't stress about the small opening at the beginning—it's useful later for finishing your bag.

Begin increase rounds as follows:

**Round 1:** Increase one stitch in each stitch (16 sts). I used the increase I like best: knit into the front of the stitch below the next stitch, then knit the next stitch as usual. Knitting into the front and back of a stitch (Kfb) works as well, but creates a slightly different look due to the 'bump' created.

**Round 2:** K 1 round.

**Next round:** M 1, k 1 (24 stitches).

**Next Round.** K 1 round.

Continue in this manner, increasing 1 st per grouping on odd-numbered rounds and knitting all stitches on even-numbered rounds.

Boiled down: what you're doing, in simple terms, is increasing 8 stitches evenly every other round.

**NOTE:** Switch to a 40 cm or 60 cm circular needle when there are too many stitches to handle on the double points. I prefer to use an extra set of double points, 8 in all, to keep my stitch groups separate, but this is a personal matter, between you and your fingers.

When you have 160 stitches (8 groups of 20 sts each), p one round. Cast off in stocking stitch.

Lay your knitting flat on a table, smooth it out, and marvel at the beauty of geometry and knitting. The base of this bag is known as a medallion. For an excellent description of the medallion's versatility and design potential, I urge you to read Barbara Walker's *Fourth Treasury of Knitting Patterns*.

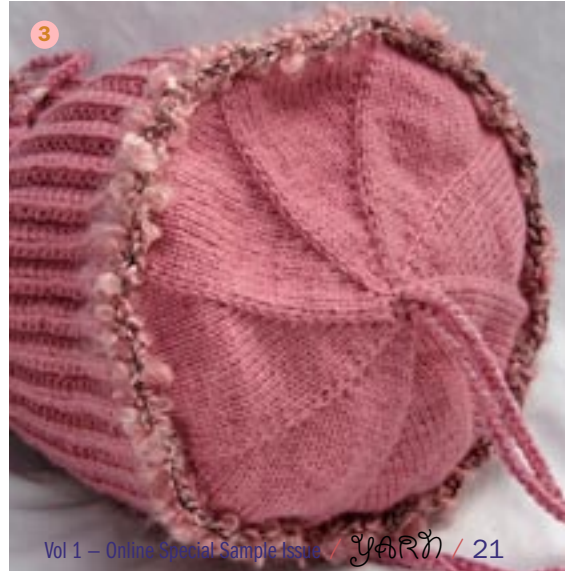
## Bag body

Using the 3 mm circular needle, pick 160 sts around the bag base. (See? No sewing up!)

Knitting circularly, begin using the broken rib stitch (see box at left) and continue until the bag measures about 25 cm or you are sick of knitting this stitch or you run out of yarn. P 1 round, then k 8 rounds in st st for your hem/tie casing. Cast off in st st.



**1** Personalise the VP bag with the perfect beads. **2** The small opening left in the base by the eight-stitch cast on leaves enough room to attach and securely knot Version A's backpack-style straps, **3**.



## Finishing

### Version A

**Bag straps** Using 1 strand of Magnum 8 ply and 1 strand of Sullivans 4 ply chenille, crochet 158ch. Make 2 straps. If you prefer a super-strong strap and are feeling extravagant, make a braided cord instead.

**Bag ties** Using 1 strand of 8 ply and the optional strand of 4 ply chenille, crochet 100 chains. The chenille adds a bit of glam to the plain acrylic, but it's not essential.

**Finishing** Using a fairly long length of 8 ply, sew the hem down to the inside of the bag to form a casing for your tie, using the last row of st st bumps on the inside as your guide.

Sew the tops of the bag straps to the hem, fairly close to the inside.

Remember that small opening at the beginning of your medallion? Thread the 2 bag strap chains through the bottom from the outside and knot them securely on the inside of your bag bottom, stitching for extra security if you feel you need it. Presto! Groovy backpacky straps for your Very Pink/Purple Bag.

### Version B

For those who want to finish QUICKLY and can't stand casings and sewing: work bag as for Version A up until the end of the broken rib portion.

P 1 round; k 2 rounds st st.

Work 1 increase row: \*YO, k2tog and repeat from \* around to form strap eyelets.

K 2 rounds st st.

P 1 round.

Cast off in st st.

**Bag ties** Using 4 mm hook, crochet a very long chain using 1 strand of Magnum and 1 strand of Rhumba. Length may vary according to taste, but it should be long enough to be threaded into the eyelet round and serve as both the closure and straps.

**Trim** Using a 4 mm crochet hook, double crochet 1 round of trim (Loopy for Version A and Rhumba for Version B) into the purl bumps at both the base and top of the bag. This may look simply like extra work, but it provides a substantial amount of stability, particularly at the base.

**Both versions:** Sew in any loose ends and give your favourite girl her new bag.