

Mitred stripes tote

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Some of my knitting friends think I have an unhealthy obsession with felting. They won't leave me alone with their knitting lest it 'accidentally' fall into the washing machine and shrink, but I would never felt another person's knitting—unless I'd purchased it fair and square at an op shop. Felting is an ideal method for creating a sturdy knitted bag, and for those who haven't tried it, this straightforward pattern is an ideal introduction to the method (and the madness).

Yarn Jo Sharp Luxury 8-ply DK (100% wool, 98 m/107 yds, 50 g). Colour (A): Miro/507, 3 balls. Colour (B): Cyclamen/006, 3 balls. Colour (C): Olive/313, 2 balls.

Needles 5.5 mm straight knitting needles or size necessary to get tension

Tension (in garter st, pre-felting) 17 sts and 34 rows to 10 cm

Measurements (Pre-felting) Front/back: 37 cm square; strap: 9 cm at widest, 6 cm at narrowest, 231 cm long, including bag sides and bottom. (After felting) Front/back: 30 cm x 28 cm; strap: 5 cm at widest, 3.5 cm at narrowest, 169 cm long, including sides and bottom.

Stripe pattern 6 rows A, 4 rows C, 10 rows B, 6 rows A, 8 rows C, 6 rows B, 10 rows C, 6 rows B, 12 rows A, 6 rows C, 10 rows B, 6 rows C, 6 rows B, A to end.

Skills set Double decrease using k3tog.

Front/back (make two identical mitred squares):

Using A, cast on 125 sts.

Row 1 (RS): K 61, k3tog, k 61.

Row 2 and all WS rows: Knit all sts.

Row 3: K 60, k3tog, k 60.

Following the stripe pattern, continue knitting the centre 3 sts together on RS rows, knitting one st fewer on either side of the decrease each time, until 3 sts remain. Last row: k3tog and fasten off remaining st.

Sides, bottom and strap (knit as one piece):

Cast on 16 sts with A. K 124 rows. Use a safety pin, if desired, to mark the place where the top edge of the bag will be attached.

K 12 rows.* Next row: K 7, k2tog, k 7.

K 11 rows. Next row: K 6, K2tog, k 7.



K 11 rows. Next row: K 6, K2tog, k 6.

K 11 rows. Next row: K 6, K2tog, k 5.

K 11 rows. Next row: K 5, k2tog, k 5 (11 sts, 60 rows).

K 183 rows. Next row: K 5, kfb, k 5.

K 11 rows. Next row: K 5, kfb, k 6.

K 11 rows. Next row: K 6, kfb, k 6.

K 11 rows. Next row: K 7, kfb, k 6.

K 11 rows. Next row: K 7, kfb, k 7.

K 11 rows. Next row: K 8, kfb, k 7.

K 11.

Change to Colour B. This marks where the top edge of the bag will be attached to this side of the strap.

K 124 rows. Change to Colour C. This marks the bottom corner of the bag.

K 124 rows.

Cast off all sts.

Finishing

All your row counting will come in handy here: when seaming sts to rows in garter stitch, one st equals 2 rows (or 1 garter st ridge). Using backstitch, sew the two ends of the strap together. Be careful not to twist the strap. Starting at the safety pin on the side of the bag and using backstitch, sew the side to the front of the bag. Proceeding around the front square, sew the bottom section of the strap (Colour C) to the front. Sew the second side section (Colour B) to the front. Repeat this seaming for the back. Weave in ends. Felt, block and air dry (see basic machine-felting instructions on page 15).