Sheepfold

Corner to Corner Cushion

WOOL SACK

The Woolsack project is making cushions from British Wool to give as a welcome gift from the people of Britain to each of the Olympic and Paralympic athletes at the London 2012 Olympic Games. This will require up to 20,000 cushions! Each cushion will be a standard size of 16 inches (40 cm) square. The cushions will be directly stuffed with clean new or recycled British wool at one of the many 'stuffing events' taking place nationwide. Each cushion will be accompanied with a personal gift card from the individual or group who made it saying "I/we made this for you …" and telling the story of the particular cushion. We hope this will be a comforting physical memento and recognition from us of the enourmous personal effort each athlete has made to get to and take part in the Games. This pattern gives a basic design that can be adapted and developed to create your very own very individual cushion.

Materials used:

- Approx 250g aran weight pure British wool. It must be British in every way! The photographed cushion is made with wool from a variety of different British sheep breeds. It is possible to use different thickness of yarns provided you use an appropriate number of strands to give the same wraps per inch as your main aran weight wool, eg 2-3 strands of 4-ply or 2 strands of DK.
- 4.5 mm or 5 mm circular needle.
- Wool needle to sew in yarn ends then sew front and back together.
- Appropriate 'stuffing' wool, available at the publicised 'stuffing events' happening nationwide.

Finished size:

16 inches (40 cm), of course!!

Instructions:

This cushion is knitted from one corner to the opposite corner, by increasing the number of stitches on your needle until the correct size is reached; then by decreasing in a similar way. This way your exact tension is irrelevant – you will be able to get it the right size simply by measuring the sides as your work grows.

The pattern on the front of the photographed cushion was achieved by using a variety of different natural coloured British breed wools and some basic texture stitches, listed at the end of this pattern.

Front of cushion: Before you start, work a swatch in your yarn using your needle(s) to ensure that the knitting is an appropriate tension. The cushion will be direclty stuffed with British fleece, with no lining, so it is important that the

stitches in your work are not loose so not allowing the fleece to pass through! We recommend that you use a circular needle simply to ensure that you can fit all the stitches on your needle when working the widest part – diagonally across the cushion, so approx 22.5 inches (57 cm).

Once you have decided the correct needle size, using a circular needle cast on one stitch. You will use this needle as if it were a pair of straight needles, in other words turning your work after every row.

Next row: incr once in the stitch (2 sts on needle).
Next row: Turn work, incr in first st, knit (or purl, or pattern) to end.
Repeat last row, increasing in the first st of every row, until the sides measure 16 inches (40 cm).

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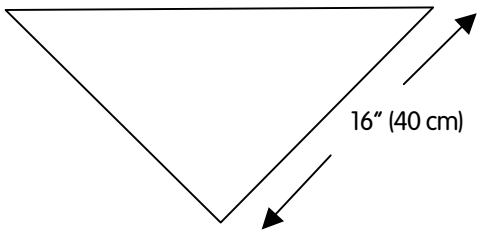

Next row: decr in first st, knit (or purl, or pattern) to end (if a knit st then decr by k2togtbl; if a purl st then by p2tog).
Repeat last row, decreasing in the first st of every row, until 2 sts remain.
Next row: knit both sts together and fasten off.

Back of cushion: Work similarly to create the back of the cushion – again 16 inches (40 cm) square. This can be identical, plain or even a different design!

Finishing: Finish off all ends of yarn by weaving into the work. Block the two pieces to ensure they are exact 16 inch (40 cm) squares, as sometimes the pieces can be a little skewed. Now sew the two pieces together on three sides, leaving most of the fourth open ready for stuffing. Then take or send to one of the many stuffing events happening nationwide, along with a length of the wool you have used so the fourth side can be sewn up neatly when filled.

Suggestions for Pattern stitches:

1. *garter stitch:* knit every row.
2. *stocking stitch:* knit 1 row, purl 1 row.
3. *moss stitch:* *k1, p1**, repeat * to **. Next row repeat, ensuring the knit stitch is over a purl stitch (as sts face you) and the purl stitch is over the knit stitch (as sts face you).
4. *bobble:* k1 then incr 3 times in this stitch. Turn work, purl these 4 sts. Turn work, k2tog twice and pass first st over the second, so returning to a single stitch.

Please note: This pattern is available free of charge to enable you to make a cushion that can be given to one of the many splendid individuals participating in the 2012 London Olympics. A little bit of British wool and British heritage to take home after the event!

To see more designs and ideas, visit www.sheepfold.co.uk. Our website also gives advice on some of the techniques used and lots of information about particular native British sheep breeds.

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to purchase wonderful knit and felt kits containing British wool, visit www.sheepfold.co.uk