

Cotton Yarn



Cotton typically surges forward as the yarn of choice for our summer wear. If you haven't tried cotton on your knitting machine yet, jump in the water is fine! The thing to remember is that cotton is not as forgiving as wools and acrylics. Be sure to cast on loosely and err on the side of a looser vs. a tighter tension to start. I've broken many needles thinking I could knit a cotton yarn at the same tension as I would a similar weight of acrylic or wool.

Cottons and cotton blends have some of the most fabulous colors I've ever worked with – from deep rich color to the palest of colors. However, especially with those deep rich colors, these can fade quickly in the wash. Here are some tips to keep your colors bright and to prevent them from fading as much as possible.

Tip A

1. You'll need

- i. 1 Cup White Vinegar
- ii. ½ Cup Salt
- iii. Color Safe Detergent

2. Set your washing machine to cold water wash/cold water rinse
3. Fill your washing machine tub to half full
4. Pour in the vinegar, salt, and detergent
5. Engage the agitator for 2 minutes to dissolve the salt and integrate the solution
6. Add garment(s) to the washing machine one at a time to ensure they're fully soaked in the solution
7. Repeat until the wash water remains clear

Tip B

Use Dharma Dye Fixative, which can be found at www.dharmatrading.com. This dye fixative will increase wash fastness, offers resistance to perspiration staining, and seawater fading. It's used to fix dyes so fabrics won't bleed. It enhances the actions of soda ash (if you're doing your own dyeing) for darker fiber colors in the dye bath technique.

Tip C

Use Color Safe Detergent and Shout Color Catchers to ensure colors do not bleed. For example, Fairisle or weaving with two different colors such as red and white could possibly bleed into each other when washed. These new products help prevent this from happening.

Cotton yarn works really well in all our machine knitting techniques. One of my favorite patterns, included in this issue, is the tone on tone woven placemats made with cotton. Although the weaving technique lends itself to a vast array of color combinations, I've done many of these placemats in white on white as shower gifts. Pick the lucky couple's favorite colors and have some fun!

Many are afraid to try lace with cottons but they're so well worth the effort! Just remember while you're practicing, cotton doesn't like to stretch. Never to force your carriage lest you break several needles!