

All about... finger knitting

**STASH
BUSTER**



Write to us!

If you've got a technical subject you want us to cover, write to Kirstie McLeod at *Simply Knitting, Future*, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW.

You don't need needles to create a piece of knitting. Try using your fingers and yarn to make fabulous scarves.

The school holidays are now upon us, and the problem of how to keep the kids amused is rearing its head again. So why not ease summer boredom by getting them hooked on a yarn habit? Or have a go yourself and see what you can make.

Finger knitting was originally a way to get young fingers used to the feel of yarn and how it knots together. It was the perfect way introduction to the art of knitting before children were allowed to work with proper knitting needles.

It has also been stated by neurophysiologist Professor Matti Bergtrom that: "The brain discovers what the fingers explore... If we don't use our fingers in childhood

we become 'finger blind'. The rich network of nerves is impoverished – which represents a huge loss to the brain and thwarts the individual's all-round development." So, as we all knew already, knitting is good for you!

Finger knittin' good!

Not only does finger knitting help with the underlying basics of knotting the yarn for real knitting, but it can show how to keep a constant tension. Pull the yarn too tightly across your fingers (see step 7) and the stitches become too

tight and are difficult to work. If the yarn is too loose big loops can form.

Because you're using your fingers, projects will grow very quickly, which is another bonus for young minds with short attention spans. All that can be made is a long tube, but this can become a scarf, a belt, a headband, a scrunchie or with the addition of a pair of googly eyes, a snake. Keep finger knitting interesting by working two or three different yarns together for great effects. They'll soon be working their way through your yarn stash!

Work different textures of yarn together for interesting effects.



Cast on and get started

Practise with a plain chunky yarn, then move onto more fancy threads.



1

Start with a regular slip knot, but keep the loop big enough to slip a thumb through. If you're unsure of how to do this turn to page 84.



2

Place the slip knot over your thumb with the tail end of the yarn lying to the left and the working yarn to the right.



3

Loosely weave the yarn between your forefinger and middle finger, in front of the ring finger and then behind the little finger.



4

Now complete the line of foundation stitches, by bringing the yarn to the front of your hand to sit in front of your little finger, behind the ring finger, in front of the middle finger and behind the forefinger.



5

Next, bring the yarn back around to the front of the hand, placing it loosely across the front of all four fingers from left to right, ready to start your first row.



6

Now hold the bottom loop of yarn on your forefinger between finger and thumb of right hand, and pull it up and over the yarn that's lying across the fingers. Continue in this way across all four fingers.



7

Now bring the yarn back to the front of your hand and place across your fingers from right to left, ready to start your next row.



8

Starting with your little finger, bring the bottom loop over the top of the working yarn to create a stitch. Continue this all the way to your forefinger.



9

Repeat steps 5 to 8 until you have the length you require, then follow the cast off instructions below. The piece of finger knitting will look like a piece of stocking stitch that will curl in on itself.

Finger knitting isn't just for girls, get the boys involved too!

Cast off for a neat finish

If you know how to knit this cast off will be familiar.



1

Take the loop from the forefinger and place it on the index finger, now bring the lower loop over the top loop.



2

Continue in this manner across all fingers until you get to the last stitch. Cut the yarn and thread it through the last loop and pull it through to fasten off.

TOP TIPS

Headgear

Make short lengths of finger knitting, and join the sides to create a tube. Now insert a length of elastic and join the ends to form a loop. Sew up the ends of the tube and you've made a scrunchie!

Multi-texture

Work different types of yarn such as tufty, furry, and plain together for a thick and snuggly scarf.

Gifted knit

Why not get the kids to make lots of scarves and scrunchies to give as presents at Christmas? Or they can be sold at school fairs and raise money for charity.