

# Selecting Yarn for the Master Hand Knitting Program

Yarn selection is a skill that should be demonstrated in all three levels. It is a skill that the Committee will be reviewing. It is upon the participant to correctly choose project and swatch yarns to meet the requirements of the program.

## Carefully Read the Directions Packet

The Directions Packet contains descriptions of the yarns acceptable for the swatch or project you are working.

Here is a link to an On Your Way to the Master's Article titled [Choosing Yarn](#) (Arenda Holladay) with advice for selecting yarn for the Masters. You will need to be logged in to see the article. Keep in mind this article was written in 2005, so some of the requirements may be different for the 2020 (or 2018) directions — again refer to your directions. This article contains good advice on that will help with your understanding on how to choose a good yarn. There is a more recent article titled [Choosing Yarn for the Master's Program](#) (Joyce Jones) with further advice on yarn selection. We hope you will carefully read both articles.

If you find that a yarn becomes discontinued after you have begun working on your Level, contact either your former Co-Chair or Leslie Gonzalez ([lgonzalez@tkga.org](mailto:lgonzalez@tkga.org)). Do not assume your work will be automatically rejected.

The program requires currently produced, commercial yarns. This means avoid discontinued yarns as well as home-spun and hand-dyed yarns. Single color swatches should be in white, off-white, or pastels.

Contrast colors should be light or bright. When choosing colors for projects, keep in mind that the reviewers must be able to see every stitch. If that is not possible due to your yarn choice, you will be asked to resubmit that item.

## What is White? What is Off-white? What is a Pastel? What is a Bright Color?

White is the complete absence of hue. Off-white is a shade of white that has either black or another hue added but in such a way that it only differs slightly from pure white. Examples include eggshell, cream, ecru, and vanilla. Beiges have even more hue added and are no longer acceptable for this program, along with grays which also include the addition of black. It is often very difficult to tell if a gray or beige is heathered. Heathered yarns can disguise stitches and make it difficult for the committee to review tension, stitch composition, and techniques.

Pastels are colors that have high value but low saturation. This causes them to appear milky or washed out in appearance. Pastels typically make people think of baby colors, such as baby pink or blue, very light chick yellow, and mint green. These very light milky colors are also acceptable for single-color swatches.

Any other color is not acceptable and if used you run the risk of having to resubmit all or some of the swatches. Reviewers must be able to see your work. Choosing the correct color shows an understanding of the principles of color theory that is built on as you progress through the program.

There are a few swatches that require two or more colors. In these instances we ask you to use colors that stand out when placed next to each other. Bright colors are allowed for these swatches. Bright colors can be interspersed with pastels, off- white and white as well. Bright colors are colors with high intensity. Natural colors without additives such as white, black, or another hue, tend to have high intensity. Brightness will diminish with the addition of white, black, and/or other hues. When choosing a bright color to use, be sure that the stitch work is visible.

***When choosing a color always remember, if the reviewers can't see the work, you may be asked to resubmit the item.***

## **Yarn Composition**

There are articles on the TKGGA website that deal with yarn. They can be found by searching for the series titled Yarn 101(Gretchen Hines). [This article](#) discusses yarn in general and will aid in your understanding of yarn composition.

We recommend using yarns that are conventionally plied as shown in the first example. Using other types of yarns often has a negative effect on cable, yarn over, and special stitch patterns and can (and has) led to some of these swatches requiring resubmission. [This article discusses ply](#). This series is published with each issue of Cast On so further articles will be written that may help with your understanding of yarn composition and behavior. [This article from Knitty Fall, 2005](#) discusses how ply affects the finished fabric and more importantly stitch definition.

We also recommend 100% wool (not superwash) as this yarn blocks well and will show off your work the best. This does not mean you are limited to 100% wool. Allergies as well as availability will also affect your choice. It is upon you to demonstrate your knowledge of yarn selection. After the main list we have included alternative yarns that we have seen successfully used in place of wool.

## **Yarns that Have been Successfully Used in the MHK Program**

The following is a list of yarns that have worked for many people going through the program. This does not mean that the yarn is in any way automatically acceptable for your submission. If you find that your yarn choice is not working to the CYC category required for your swatch or project, then it is upon you to recognize this and find a yarn that shows you understand how to select appropriate yarn for purpose and project.

***Again, just because a yarn is on the following list, it does not insure it will be appropriate for your particular swatch or project. This is where you show you understand how to correctly choose yarn.***

This list was compiled following the 2020 Directions Update.  
You are not limited to these yarns. You may use any commercial yarn as long as fits the parameters stated in the directions. These are yarns that have been used with success in the past.

### **Swatches**

#### **#4 Medium Weight**

Cascade Yarns Cascade 220  
Lion Brand Fishermen's Wool  
Plymouth Galway Worsted  
Patons Classic Wool Worsted  
Ella Rae Classic Wool Solids (worsted)  
Brown Sheep Nature Spun Worsted  
Knit Picks Wool of the Andes (worsted)

#### **Level 1 Mitten**

##### **#4 Medium Weight**

Cascade Yarns Cascade 220  
Plymouth Galway Worsted  
Patons Classic Wool Worsted  
Ella Rae Classic Wool Solids (worsted)  
Brown Sheep Nature Spun Worsted  
Knit Picks Wool of the Andes (worsted)

#### **Level 2 Lace Swatches**

##### **#1 Superfine or #2 Fine**

Dale Garn Baby Ull  
Knit Picks Stroll Fingering  
Cascade 220 Fingering  
Knit Picks Palette

#### **Level 2 Wristlet**

##### **#2 Superfine**

Jamieson's Shetland Spindrift  
Jamieson and Smith 2 ply Jumper Weight  
Knit Picks Palette  
Quince and Co. Finch  
Elemental Affects Natural Shetland Fingering  
Cascade 220 Fingering

#### **Level 2 Sock**

##### **#1 Superfine or #2 Fine**

Brown Sheep Wildfoote Luxury Sock  
Cascade Yarns Heritage  
Spud and Chloe Fine  
Louet Gems Fingering Weight Simply socks

Yarn co Simply Socks  
Knit Picks Stroll Solids  
Lorna's Laces Shepherd Sock Solid GGH Merino Soft

### **Level 2 Vest**

#### **#2 Fine, #3 Light, or #4 Medium**

Berroco Ultra Alpaca  
Plymouth Select DK  
Cascade 220  
Plymouth Galway Worsted  
Patons Classic Wool Worsted  
Ella Rae Classic Wool Solids (worsted)  
Brown Sheep Nature Spun Worsted  
Knit Picks Wool of the Andes (worsted)

### **Level 3 Doily**

#### **#0 Lace or #1 Super Fine**

Knit Picks Shadow Lace  
Knit Picks Gloss Lace  
Juniper Moon Findley  
Cascade Forest Hills  
Coats & Clark Aunt Lydia's Crochet Thread Classic 10 (starched)

### **Level 3 Aran Project**

Lion Brand Fishermen's wool  
Cascade 220  
Knit Picks Gloss dk  
Quince & Co Chickadee  
Plymouth Galway Worsted  
Patons Classic Wool Worsted  
Ella Rae Classic Wool Solids (worsted)  
Brown Sheep Nature Spun Worsted  
Knit Picks Wool of the Andes (worsted)

### **Level 3 Stranded Project**

Brooklyn Tweed Loft  
Blue Moon Fiber Arts Laci Dale of Norway Heilo  
Cascade Yarns 220 Sport  
Dale of Norway Falk  
Dale of Norway Baby Ull  
Rauma Finullgarn  
Rauma Strikkegarn Hillesvåg Hifa 2  
Jamieson's Shetland Spindrift  
Jamieson and Smith 2 ply Jumper Weight  
Knit Picks Palette  
Sandnes Garn Peer Gynt

### **Alternative Options**

If you choose to use an alternative to 100% wool, keep in mind, you will need to choose a yarn that can adequately blocked. Swatches should have straight tops and bottoms. Tops and bottoms should be parallel. Sides should be straight, with the exception of some cable swatches. Sides should mirror that is, when folded in half vertically, there should be no overhang. No selvages should roll to the wrong side. There should be no evidence of pins.

**Alternative options to 100% wool for items requiring #4 weight:**

Plymouth Encore, worsted  
Berroco Vintage  
Berroco Comfort, worsted  
Patons Decor  
Knitpicks Comfy worsted

**Alternative options to wool for items requiring #1 and #2 weight:**

Knit Picks Stroll  
Berroco Comfort, sock

**Alternative options to wool for items requiring #0 weight:**

Coats & Clark Aunt Lydia's Crochet Thread Classic 10 (starched)

**Disclaimer: This list was made in good faith and at that time all yarns were current.**