

A Mix of Mohair and Wool

for a winter scarf

MARGARET GAYNES

The wonderful array of textures and colors in the knitting yarns at my local yarn shop inspired this warm woolly scarf. Starting with a handpainted mohair and wool yarn that shades from blue to violet to red, I added several textured knitting yarns and a lofty, smooth knitting worsted to the warp.

A mixed warp generally uses only small amounts of any one yarn, so it is a perfect way to use yarns left over from other projects, odd skeins from the bargain bin at your yarn store, or that precious ball of yarn that was so expensive you could only afford to buy one.

Choosing yarns for mixed warps

Almost any fiber, size, texture, or style of yarn can be used in a mixed warp if the yarn is strong enough to endure the abrasion of weaving and it is handled with care. Fine yarns can be doubled or tripled to equal the grist of heavier yarns.

To see if a yarn is strong enough to use for warp, cut a 12" sample length. Tug on the two ends—it should not drift apart. Then rub your thumbnail over a short section of the yarn a dozen times—it



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FIBER GUIDE

MOHAIR BLEND YARNS
(78% MOHAIR, 13% WOOL,
9% NYLON)



Mohair adds texture and shine and allows the surface to be raised by brushing. Wool gives softness and capacity for fulling. Nylon binders add stability.

Warping and weaving considerations

Mohair yarns can be used in the warp or weft or both. Brushed and loop mohair can be clingy in the warp, so beam with care, providing tension as you beam to keep the threads from tangling. Mixing mohair yarns with a smoother yarn in the warp can also help prevent sticking.

Recommended finishing

Hand wash, warm water; air dry. To raise the nap of a mohair fabric, brush in the lengthwise direction using a plastic brush with rounded bristles.







should not produce fuzz or lint. Finally, draw the yarn back and forth through the eye of a heddle—it should move easily. Most yarns that do not pass these tests can still be used as weft.

Designing mixed warps

To avoid differential shrinkage, different types of yarns should be evenly distributed throughout the warp with no more than two or three of the same type adjacent to each other. If too many shrinkers or nonshrinkers are threaded together near groups of the opposite type, the fabric texture can become rippled.

Give textured and lofty knitting yarns a relatively open sett, not only to minimize abrasion, but to show them off to advantage and provide a soft hand.

Keep weave structures simple, such as straight twill or plain weave. Supplementary warp floats on a plain-weave ground focus attention on special yarns. The draft for this scarf is a variation of broken twill. The warp always interlaces in 2-thread floats, but the weft alternates between floats and plain weave (see Figure 3).

Weaving mixed warps

Knitting yarns are usually more elastic than yarns designed for weaving. Wind the warp using as little tension as possible to avoid stretching the yarn.

Achieving clear sheds with a mixed warp can be a challenge. Fuzzy, brushed yarns like mohair are often the culprit: the fibers that form a halo around the core

cling to one another. Combine such yarns with smoother yarns: Alternate a brushed yarn with a knitting worsted, for example, as in this scarf. Another option is to use a brushed yarn only as weft.

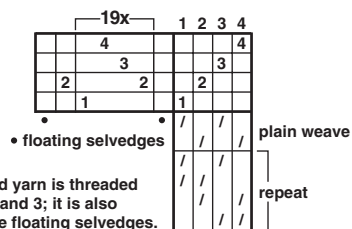
Some changes in the way you weave can also help to achieve clear sheds. Try using a direct tie-up like the one in Figure 1: With the beater forward, open the sheds individually so that a limited number of threads are asked to separate at any one time. Moving the beater back after the shed is open will also encourage wayward warp threads to move to their proper place. If all else fails, use a sword or pick-up stick to clear the shed.

The project scarf

Every other yarn in the warp for this scarf is the handpainted mohair/wool in hues that shade from blue to violet to red. The other three yarns are threaded in between these threads in random order (ABC, BCA, CBA, etc.). All of the warp yarns except the handpainted yarn are blue, and the weft is blue. The contrasting hues of red and violet therefore stand out prominently in the warp floats of the handpainted yarn.

If you choose violet for the other warp and weft yarns, blue and red will stand out; if you choose red for the other warp and weft yarns, violet and blue will stand out. Handpainted yarns in graded colors offer great potential for designing with color!

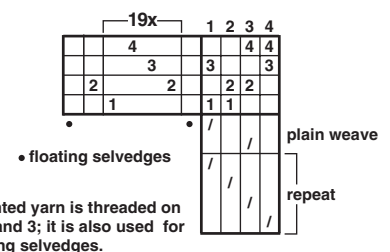
1. Draft for scarf with direct tie-up



To help make a clear shed, depress one treadle at a time (for example, 1 and then 3).

The draft is a clever use of a broken twill. The warp threads form 2-thread floats that, because of the arrangement of the colors, makes the handpainted yarns look like supplementary-warp floats on a plain-weave ground (see Figure 4).

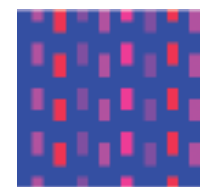
2. Draft for scarf with full tie-up



3. The interlacement



4. The color effect



STEPS FOR WEAVING A MIXED WOOL SCARF

Step 1 These instructions are for warping from front to back (see Note after Step 9). Wind one warp of 40 ends hand-painted mohair/wool 2½ yd long. (Because knitting yarns are stretchier than weaving yarns, keep the yarns relaxed as you wind the warp.) Make one cross and tie a firm choke tie about 28" from the cross. Cut both ends and take the warp to an 8-dent reed.

Step 2 Find the center of the reed and measure 5" to the right of center (left if you sley from left to right). Sley the first end in the marked dent, leave one dent empty and sley the next end in the third dent. Continue slewing 1 end in every other dent, until all ends are sleyed.

Wind a second warp 2½ yd long of the three Valley Yarns (mohair/wool, mohair loop, and knitting worsted). Wind all three at the same time, keeping them separate with two fingers as you wind but placing them together in the cross. Secure the cross and tie the choke tie, cut both ends, and take this warp to the reed.

Step 4 Sley 1 end in each of the empty dents, selecting them in random order from each group of the 3 ends that were wound together. Use a slipknot to secure 1" groups of sleyed ends so that they do not slip out of the reed.

Step 5 Secure the reed in the beater and tie the choke tie to the breast beam. Sitting behind the shafts, thread the heddles following the draft in Figure 1. (Note that the first and last warp ends are used as floating selvages. They are sleyed through the reed but not threaded through a heddle.) After you have finished threading, tie the ends onto the warp beam apron rod, remove the choke tie, and shake out the warp.

Step 6 Beam the warp carefully with smooth, heavy paper between each layer around the beam, checking that the yarns do not tangle or snag as they pass through the reed or heddles. Tug and shake the warp to clear any tangles, and if necessary, open a plain weave shed to separate sticky threads.

Step 7 Tie the warp to the cloth beam apron rod in ½" groups, adjusting so that there is even tension on each group. Weight the floating selvages (a 2–3" S-hook works well). Wind a bobbin with the Navy knitting worsted.

Step 8 Allowing a total of 6" at the beginning of the warp for fringe (include amount used to tie on and amount used for heading), weave a heading in scrap yarn. Weave 2 picks with Navy and hemstitch, encircling 4 warp ends and the first 2 picks in each stitch. Weave

60" at 7 picks per inch (beat gently). Hemstitch the second end as the first. Cut the scarf from the loom, allowing at least 6" at the end for fringe.

Step 9 Wash the scarf gently in lukewarm water with a few drops of dishwashing liquid. Rinse with lukewarm water. Squeeze out excess water by rolling in a towel. Lay flat to dry. With a round-bristled hairbrush, brush lightly in the warp direction to bring up the nap of the mohair. Trim the fringe evenly to 4" at each end.

Note: If you choose to warp back to front, wind the warp alternating 1 end handpainted yarn with 1 end of the other three yarns, using them in regular or varied sequence, for example: 1 handpainted, 1 mohair/wool, 1 handpainted, 1 mohair loop, 1 handpainted, 1 knitting worsted. (You can cut and tie each end after it is wound or you can leave the ends uncut at the beginning and ending pegs, picking each end up as it is needed. This is awkward, but less time-consuming than cutting and tying.) Spread the warp in a raddle for a width of 10", beam, and thread following Figure 1. For detailed warping instructions, visit www.interweave.com/weave; click on Weaving; Special Projects and Articles.

PROJECT AT-A-GLANCE

Weave structure

Twill variation.

Equipment

4-shaft loom, 10" weaving width; 8-dent reed; 1 shuttle.

Yarns

Mixed warp:

2-ply handpainted 55% mohair/45% wool (1,050 yd/lb), Mountain Goat from Mountain Colors, Huckleberry, 100 yd (1½ oz).

Mohair/wool blend (78% mohair, 13% wool, 9% nylon; 1,000 yd/lb), Barrington Mohair from Valley Yarns, Navy YWB 8979, 33 yd (¾ oz)

9/4 wool (1,260 yd/lb), Greenwich

Knitting Worsted from Valley Yarns, Navy YWG 4035, 33 yd (½ oz).

Mohair loop (78% mohair, 13% wool, 9% nylon, 1,000 yd/lb), Stirling Mohair from Valley Yarns, Navy YWST 6005, 33 yd (¾ oz).

Weft: 9/4 wool (1,260 yd/lb), Greenwich Knitting Worsted from Valley Yarns, Navy YWG 4035, 127 yd (1½ oz).

Yarn sources

Mountain Goat handpainted mohair/wool yarn is available from Mountain Colors, PO Box 156, Corvallis, MT 59828; Stirling Mohair, Barrington Mohair, and Greenwich Knitting Worsted by Valley Yarns are available from Webs, (800) 367-9327, webs@yarn.com

Warp order and length

79 ends 2½ yd long (includes 27" for take-up, loom waste, and fringe) in two separate chains: one of 40 ends handpainted mohair/wool; one of 39 ends (13 ends each of mohair/wool, mohair loop, and 9/4 knitting worsted).

Warp and weft spacing

Warp: 8 epi (1/dent in an 8-dent reed).

Width in the reed: 9⅞".

Weft: 7 ppi. Woven length (measured under tension on the loom): 60".

Finished dimensions

After washing, amounts produce one scarf about 8½" × 54" plus 4" fringe at each end.