

Knotty Lady YARN S

Lost Yarn Label - HELP!

With the unique times we are currently in, we are all finding ways to keep some sort of "normal" in our lives. Us yarn lovers never fear of getting bored since we always have a project, or ten, on hand. Each project is a different story, form of therapy, and dream we soon make into a reality. With the projects starting to fly off our respective needles or hooks, we can't help but think of that ball of yarn in our stash that we have been waiting to use up! The only hiccup is...the yarn label is no where to be found!

Have no fear! Here are a few ways to determine the weight, yardage and fiber content of that mystery yarn. From the yarn weight we can also determine approximate stitches per inch and needle/hook size. Starting with yarn weight and using the wraps per inch method, all you will need is the yarn in question, a pencil/dowel/broomstick, and a ruler.

1. Loosely wrap the yarn around making sure not to pull to tight. Leave no gaps and don't overlap the yarn.
2. Make sure you have at least 1 inch of wraps
3. Count the wraps with in 1 inch and follow the chart to the right

	Yarn Weight	Wraps per Inch	Gauge (Stitches per Inch)
0	Lace	>35	> 8.5 sts/inch
1	Fingering	19 - 22	7 - 8 sts/inch
2	Sport	15 - 18	5.75 - 6.5 sts/inch
3	DK	12 - 14	5.5 - 6 sts/inch
4	Worsted	9 - 11	4 - 5 sts/inch
5	Bulky	7 - 8	3 - 3.75 sts/inch
6	Super Bulky	< 6	1.5 - 3 sts/inch

Wait...what size needles or hook should I use. Well, check out the next chart and adjust sizes until you have the gauge you are looking for!

	Yarn Weight	Needle Size - US	MM	Hook Size
0	Lace	000 - 1	1.50 - 2.25	000 - B
1	Fingering	1 - 3	2.25 - 3.25	B - D
2	Sport	3 - 5	3.25 - 3.75	D - F
3	DK	5 - 7	3.75 - 4.50	F - 7
4	Worsted	7 - 9	4.50 - 5.50	7 - I
5	Bulky/Chunky	9 - 11	5.50 -- 8.00	I - L
6	Super Bulky	13 & Larger	9.00 & Larger	M & Larger

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Well, now that we know the weight and what needle/hook to use, we can find a pattern for the weight of yarn we have. Keep in mind these are rough calculations and may not be 100% accurate.

Now, using the rough calculation above, we can use several methods to determine approximately how much (yardage) yarn we have to work with. The first method has you weigh your mystery yarn in grams. You can use that information in your pattern search.

The second method has you weigh your mystery yarn in grams, This gives us the TOTAL WEIGHT. Then, weigh out 10 grams of the yarn and measure how many yards it is (remember: 3 Feet = 1 Yard). This gives us **YARDS per 10 Grams**. Time to calculate:

TOTAL WEIGHT multiplied by YARDS PER 10 GRAMS = ???

Now divide that number by 10!

The last method, requires a scale (that measures in grams), ruler and a calculator. First, cut a sample of your yarn, for fine yarns cut 36 inches, or 1 yard. For medium weight yarns cut 18 inches, or 1/2 a yard. For bulky yarns cut 9 inches, or 1/4 of a yard. Weigh the sample yarn. Next, weigh the entire amount of mystery yarn. Lastly, follow one of the following equations depending on your sample length:

Sample length of 36": Weight of ball / sample weight

Sample length of 18": Weight of ball / sample weight / 2

Sample length of 9": Weight of ball / sample weight / 4

These methods will give you an approximate yardage for your mystery yarn. There are several other methods out there and we are always interested in what method works best and most accurately for you.

Last factor to determine is content. Now knowing how many different fiber types and sources are out there, it may be hard to completely determine what the mystery yarn is made of. Using caution, here are a few techniques that you can use on a small sample of the yarn to narrow down your options.

The first several tests you can run do not require a cut sample of the mystery yarn for a resistance test. While holding the end of the yarn grab a single strand, pull firmly then quickly release. Wools and some acrylic will stretch and bounce back. While cotton, linen and silk will not. Next is the rub test. Fold the yarn back on itself and rub together about a dozen times. Cashmere and some acrylics will start to pill or ball up.

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These next few tests require a small length of yarn to be cut off and some water. First, soak a length of yarn in really hot water. Does it smell like a wet dog or farm animal? If yes, you have a wool or alpaca yarn. Now, cut a third of the wet sample and set it aside. Toss the remaining length of yarn in a sock then into your next load of laundry... yes the dryer too. After you remove the sample from the dryer, is the sample matted? If the sample is matted, or felted, then you do not have a superwash wool or alpaca. If the sample still resembles what you put in to the wash to start with, then you have a superwash.

Remember that third piece we set aside? After letting it air dry, take out your reading glasses or a magnifying glass and take a close look at the individual fibers. Cotton, linen, bamboo and silk will all lay straight as a board. Acrylics will be wavy and very fine. However, some fine acrylics will have a predictable curl to them. The curl is important because if it is unpredictable and has a kink, curl, twist or bend to it, then you have an animal fiber. Even with the animal fibers going any which direction, they will still mostly go in one direction. Well, unless the sample has mohair, then it will go any direction.

These next two tests involve bleach and fire and both must be handled safely and carefully. These test will be a little more accurate and be easier to tell you if you have a blended fiber or not. For the bleach test you will need a clean glass or plastic container, well ventilated area, gloves, bleach and a sample of your yarn. First, secure one end of your sample yarn to the side of your container. Next, fill the container with bleach covering up most of your sample and seal it. Lastly, leave your container in a safe place away from children, animals, or where it could get knocked over. Leave alone for 12 - 24 hours but check on it as much as you would like.

Results:

Animal fiber will dissolve within 24 hours

Silk will dissolve in 2 days

Plant based fibers will last days to potentially a week

Acrylic and Nylon will be left over

Checking on your sample every couple of hours can help you narrow down what fiber content percentages you will be working with. For example, Plymouth Yarns Viento is 70% Baby Alpaca and 30% Bamboo. If placed in a bowl of bleach, within 24 hours the 70% of Baby Alpaca will be completely dissolved in the bleach. The remaining 30% of Bamboo could take upwards of a week to completely dissolve.

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Last test is the burn test! Please use caution when burning yarn since all yarn is flammable. Use a safe area such as your kitchen sink or a metal bucket outside with your hose at the ready. Use a pair of tweezers, tongs or long metal pliers to hold one end of your yarn. The burn test will simply tell us if the yarn is either animal, plant, or a synthetic fiber. Watch carefully as you burn a length of yarn. Animal fiber will smell like burning hair, plant fiber will smell like burning paper and synthetics will melt and form a bead. Both plant and animal fibers will create ash. Another difference between animal and plant fibers is plant fibers will keep burning. Check out the chart below for a more details on how each fiber will burn. PLEASE BE SAFE!

FIBER BURN CHART

