

Knotty Lady YARN S

Why Ply?

Plied yarn can mean a lot or nothing to some of us in the yarn world. For our spinner friends, they may know more than the average fiber enthusiast. So let us break down what it means to ply yarn and the benefits of it. Ply is defined as one of the strands of yarn. Meaning there can be upwards of 12 or more plies in our favorite yarn. One of the yarn lover's favorite sites, besides their local stores, is ravelry.com. Ravelry has the following list on how many plies are in each weight of yarn:

Weight	Ply
Cobweb	1
Lace	2
Light Fingering	3
Fingering	4
Sport	5
DK	8
Worsted	10
Aran	10
Bulky	12

This is not to be confused with the yarn weight numbers



Now, it is important to note that this is a generalization. One of the many things that make us crafters stand out, is our ability to push the envelope if you will. One of the most notable ways, in this case, is 1 ply yarn. Depending on the source, you can't have a 1 ply yarn. It is more commonly referred to as single-ply or singles. Single-ply yarn can range from a cobweb weight to a bulky weight, such as the vivid **Malabrigo Mecha**.



Single-ply yarn when spun is twisted in one direction. When knitting with a single-ply yarn, you may notice your stitches tend to lean to one side. Single-ply yarn is most notably avoided because it is easily broken, especially when you have to frog a project. Another downfall is it shows more signs of wear and likes to pill. When working with single-ply, it is important to pick the right project. Single-ply will create a flatter piece, but also show every flaw of your stitches, tension, as well as the inconsistency of the ply thickness.

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Gauging and making a sample with single-ply is highly recommended to make sure you have the right needle and hook to make that project perfect. Single-ply projects should avoid friction, which tends to felt the yarn. However, single-ply yarns are a go-to for some felters as they tend to felt faster and easier.

The concept of plying yarn, either by hand or machine, is simple. Spin single strands of fiber one direction, preferably the same to make things easier. Then, once you have your desired number of single strands, spin them in the opposite direction to ply them together. The concept is easy to understand but the execution, by hand, is an art form in itself. With many methods, techniques, and my general lack of knowledge on the subject, we will explore together the art of plying yarn.

The benefits of plied yarn are much easier to go into. A general rule of thumb is the more plies you add the stronger the yarn. Going up to a two plied yarn, you are already balancing out your stitches so they don't lean, as well as adding texture and density, depending on the thickness of the single-ply strands. Once a yarn is plied, you can then ply it again with plied yarn. Confused? This means if you have 2 individual 2-ply strands, you can spin them together, in the opposite direction, to form a cabled yarn. This is where plying various thicknesses and fiber types gets fun and creative, giving you the ability to create something completely unique.

Another method of plying is chainette. Now, chainette constructed yarn gets mixed reviews across the fiber loving world. Crocheters tend to be more in favor because it eliminates the possibility of splitting the plies. Knitters tend to shy away if their favorite needles are sharp tips since that has the tendency to pierce the chainette. If you use blunt-tipped knitting needles, you are less likely to pierce the chainette. Chainette is made by inserting narrow plies into a knitting machine that simply knits them together. This provides a hollow core that is often airy and creates a lighter weight feel. Another bonus is they provide a little bit of stretch to your project. One of our more obvious chainette yarns is **Plymouth Solstice**.



Also, some may remember the August Knotty Knit Box, where we sent our **Lang Yarns Camille**.



Knowing more of what it means to ply yarn and the characteristics of single and multi-ply can help us choose the right yarn for that new pattern. This can also help open our horizons up and make us a little braver to try something new. Plying yarn can also open a new world of yarn projects and instead of holding two strands together why not ply them and simply have one strand to worry about. The more we know the more we can create!