

Advice on substituting yarn when knitting the Eco-Spa Designer Facecloth pattern

A design by Vikki Haffenden, author of *Translating Between Hand and Machine Knitting* and *The Knitting Book*.

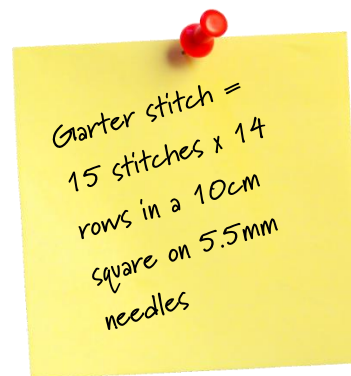
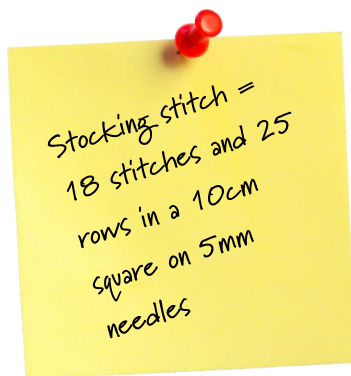
Knitted in simple garter stitch, these stylish recycled cotton face cloths make unique, sustainable gifts for friends and family. Create custom colour combinations that have special meaning for recipients or knit one to match your own bathroom décor as a delightful self-indulgence.

The overall size is not critical, but the easiest substitution is with a cotton or cotton blend yarn that is the same stitch count and length-to-weight measurement. However, do knit a garter stitch sample to test the yarn's suitability before knitting the main cloth.

How to substitute a different yarn in the pattern

The pattern is written to be knitted in King Cole Recycled Cotton Aran. This yarn is labelled as having a stitch tension of 18 stitches and 25 rows in a 10cm square when knitted as stocking stitch on 5mm needles.

However, the pattern is worked in garter stitch on slightly larger needles. This means that the stitch tension comes out at 15 stitches x 14 rows in a 10cm square on 5.5mm needles.

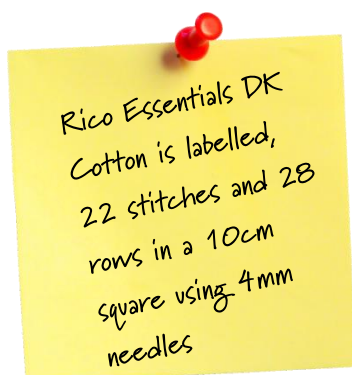


Which is why, before going any further, it is important to knit a garter stitch sample to test any substitute yarn's suitability.

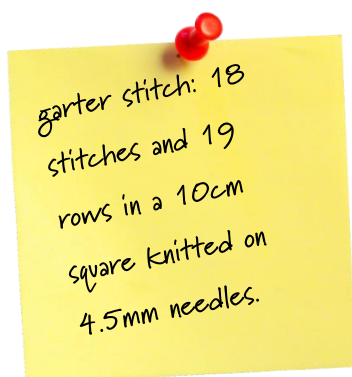
DK cotton is a bit more common than Aran weight so let's use Rico Essentials DK Cotton as an example alternative.

Rico Essentials DK Cotton is labelled, 22 stitches and 28 rows in a 10cm square using 4mm needles, which is a pretty average DK stitch tension gauge. Remember that this is in stocking

stitch, so you must sample it in garter stitch to get a stitch tension gauge to work with. If you want a fluid knit use 4.5mm needles, not 4mm.



Step 1: Knit a tension swatch and count the stitches and rows. Stitches are more important than rows for this, so don't fret too much if these are difficult to count.

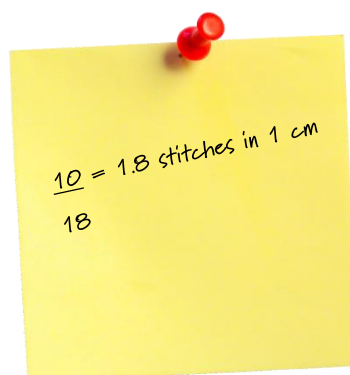


I'm going to use an example stitch tension here, but you will use the one you get from counting the swatch. Example garter stitch: 18 stitches and 19 rows in a 10cm square knitted on 4.5mm needles.

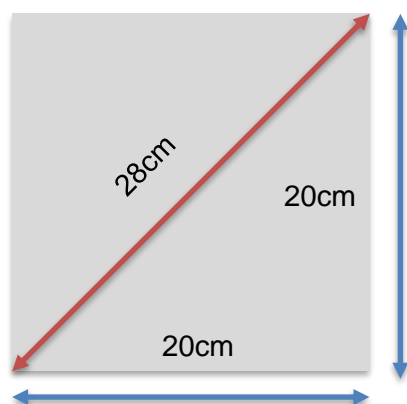
Step 2: Firstly, you need to know how many stitches are in 1cm of the knitting. We know that 10 cm require 18 stitches.

So, we divide the 18 stitches by 10. There are more stitches than centimetres, so the answer is going to be higher than one.

$$\frac{10}{18} = 1.8 \text{ stitches in 1 cm}$$



Step 3: The next thing you need to know is how many stitches to increase to get the right size square. Only 4 stitches are cast on and the facecloth is knitted on the diagonal, with increases taking it out to the correct diagonal dimension of 28cm (shown in the pattern). Because the facecloth is knitted on the diagonal, this 28cm must be calculated as stitches.

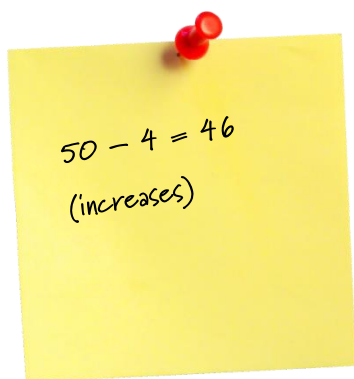


It gets a bit more complicated, but not that much. We already know that there are 1.8 stitches in 1cm. Multiply the stitches in 1cm by the number of cm needed.
 $1.8 \times 28 = 50$ stitches.



Step 3: Now you know how many stitches must be on your needle before you start decreasing to narrow the other side of the facecloth. But - 4 stitches are already on your needle from the cast on, so these must be subtracted from those 50 stitches.

$$50 - 4 = 46 \text{ (increases)}$$



Step 4: This figure tells you that you must increase 46 stitches to reach the full width of the diagonal across the middle of the facecloth. The instruction reads, 'k2, yrn, knit to end', so you are increasing one stitch every row. Therefore, after the cast on and the plain knit row, you need to work 46 rows, with an increase on each row.

That is the substitution done. Once you reach row 47 (the first plain row plus 46 rows), you follow the pattern as written, but substitute your individual stitch count. The decreasing works itself out, as it is a mirror image of the increasing.

'Knit one row

Next Row: k1, k2tog, yrn, k2tog, knit to end (50)

Repeat this row until there are 4 stitches left on the needle

Knit one row'

I hope this helps you understand how to substitute any yarn in this pattern, and indeed in other simple patterns that rely on stitches, than a combination of stitches and rows, to achieve the shape.