

Charcoal Denise Needle Bag with two pockets

an original design by Cat Bordhi



This felted bag makes a practical and elegant home for your case of Denise Interchangeable Needles, and includes two roomy zippered pockets in which to store your extra cables and small parts. The pocket lining is partly blue and partly green, and the rear handle edging is blue. All four yarn colors show up in the braided and plied zipper pulls. Don't hesitate if you've never sewn in a zipper - this method is truly easy.

Yarn: Cascade Tweed 220 (100% Wool, 100 g/ 220 yds, 11 wpi), color #7607 blue, 1 skein, color #7605 red, 1 skein, color #7634 green, 1 skein, color #7619 charcoal fleck, 2 skeins, several yards of smooth waste yarn in contrasting color

Needles: Denise Needle kit, using size 10.5 (7 mm) tips (or another circular needle 16" - 24" in length)

Notions: tapestry needle, 2 stitch markers, 9" zippers and sewing thread in green and red, sewing needle, straight pins for pinning zippers, sharp pointed scissors for cutting zipper opening in felt

Gauge: 13 sts = 4" (10 cm)

Begin by casting on at the base

Note: Knit with two strands held together throughout. Using a cable from the left side of the case and the correct size tips, cast on 68 sts, and being careful not to twist the cast on, join and knit 1 round, placing marker

before 1st st and another in between 34th and 35th.
Round 2: Knit 1, k1f&b (*k once into front, and once into back of same st*), k until 2 sts before marker, k1f&b, k2, k1f&b, k until 2 sts before marker, k1f&b, k1. (72 sts)
Rounds 3 and 5: Knit.

Round 4: Knit 2, k1f&b, k until 3 sts before marker, k1f&b, k4, k1f&b, k until 3 sts before marker, k1f&b, k2. (76 sts)

Round 6: Knit 3, k1f&b, k until 4 sts before marker, k1f&b, k6, k1f&b, k until 4 sts before marker, k1f&b, k3. (80 sts) Knit until piece measures 12" tall.

Put in waste yarn for handle openings

*Knit 11, k 18 with waste yarn, replace waste yarn sts on left needle, k across 18 waste yarn sts with regular yarn, k11. Repeat from * once more. Knit 5 rounds.

I-cord edging around top of bag

Work applied I-cord edging around top until all edge sts are consumed. (To work applied I-cord, cast on 3 sts to left needle, *k2, k2tog from right to left, replace these 3 sts on left needle and repeat from *.) Join ends by weaving, or binding off and sewing together.

I-cord edging around handle openings

Put narrow tips on two cables and use one to pick up each line of 18 waste yarn sts in one handle opening, plus 2 in each corner. Remove waste yarn. With working needle, work applied I-cord around these sts and join ends. Repeat on second handle opening.

Pocket lining

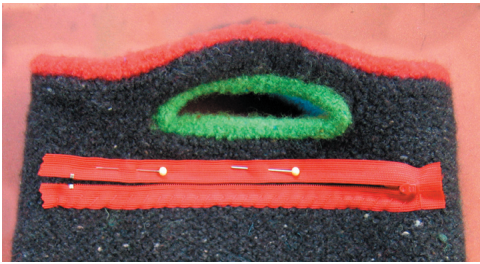
With blue, cast on 33 sts and knit until 4.5" tall. Switch to green and knit until piece measures 10". Bind off.

Felting and blocking

Sew bottom of bag together, and weave in all ends. To felt, fill washing machine with lowest level of hottest water, adding about 1/8 usual amount of detergent, and set for longest agitation. Old running shoes or tennis balls will help bat the knitting around. Set a timer to check the progress every few minutes as the felting may speed up and surprise you. The felting will take anywhere from five minutes to half an hour or longer, depending on many factors, including water, heat, agitation, and soap. Do not abandon the felting to check your email



or you may have a bag sized to fit an iPod instead of a Denise Needle Kit. Be careful not to let a rinse phase begin, but reset for more agitation with the same water, adding a kettle of boiling water if necessary. Remove the separate pocket lining as soon as the fabric ceases to have holes (it is designed to be felted less than the bag). Pull and pat to flatten. Continue felting the bag until it fits around the Denise case with comfortable ease (after the pocket lining is sewn in and later filled, it will take up space). The bag will shrink more length-wise than width-wise, so you may have to stretch it during the felting process. When the size is satisfactory, rinse in warm water by hand, spin dry, and use the Denise case as a form to block the bag, allowing both bag and lining to dry separately and completely before sewing in the lining and zipper.



Zipper and pocket lining

Place zipper upside down on inside of bag as pictured, pin in place, and using overcast

stitch and sewing thread, sew bottom edge of zipper to felt, taking a good bite of the felt with the needle but not poking through to the other side. Unzip zipper before sewing upper edge (otherwise you won't be able to unzip it), then pin it so the teeth lie side by side and sew this edge down. When zipper is securely sewn, use sharp pointed scissors to cut felt evenly along zipper's midline. Place pocket lining over zipper (still working on the inside of the bag) so it just covers top of zipper, and securely sew lining edges to bag with an overcast stitch. If necessary, trim lining to fit bag better; it will not unravel since it is felted. Working from outside, sew lining and bag together just above lower zipper, letting stitches disappear into felt.

Final touches

Cut one 40" length of yarn in each color. Weave ends through zipper pull (use tapestry needle). Pull yarn through so cut ends are even. Braid the 8 strands like 3 strands by grouping 3, 3, and 2 strands. When about 8" of yarn remains, pinch end of braid and twist in one direction until it is *very* tightly twisted. Fold braid in half so it twists around itself. Weave 4 ends through zip-

per pull with tapestry needle and then tie securely to the remaining 4 ends. Use tapestry needle to weave all ends down and out through the bottom of the braid. Trim ends to about 2". Soak just the zipper pull braid in hot water, press dry with a towel, and roll fiercely between your palms for a minute or two until lightly felted. Repeat for second zipper pull.

Handy tricks with Denise Needles

A cure for uneven stockinette

Many knitters purl more loosely than they knit, resulting in uneven stockinette. Try using a smaller tip on the purl end of the needle. Experiment to find out if you need to go down 1, 2, or even 3 sizes, until your stockinette looks perfectly balanced.

Tight knitters knit faster and with less strain

If you are a tight knitter and have to push stitches along your left needle, just replace that tip with a smaller one, going down as many sizes as you like. This will *not* change your gauge, because gauge is determined only by the right tip, which holds the loop and thus determines its size. This works perfectly in circular knitting, where the left tip is always on the left. When knitting in rows, the tips would need to be switched every row, which takes about ten seconds.

Two matching circular needles from one kit

Just use the correct size tip on the ends held by your right hand. Use a smaller size tip on each left end, and you can knit in the round on two circular needles.

Starting over in a flash

If you need to unravel your work, just remove the tip and your stitches will slide off effortlessly.

Easily pick up stitches to be knitted

Use another cable with a very narrow tip to pick up stitches, then knit them off the narrow tip with the proper size tip to make gauge.

Stitch holders become active needles in seconds

If stitches need to be put on holders, use a short cable, and attach ends. To knit the held stitches, replace an end with a tip and knit right off the holder.

Shaping without increases or decreases

Add shaping to an intricately patterned sweater or vest by starting with a large tip size around the hips, and gradually changing to smaller tips towards the waist, then increasing again. No need to adjust stitch patterns!