

A FIELD GUIDE TO *bespoke* YARN

building a bespoke strand

Building a *bespoke* strand to a familiar knitting weight involves some very simple math and the number following the name of the *bespoke* yarn. This number indicates the *bespoke* weight and identifies the number of units in the strand. For example, Merino #3 is a *bespoke* #3 yarn and has three units in a strand. The table below correlates *bespoke* weights with handknitting weights and suggests a stitch gauge and needle range that would be appropriate for each *bespoke* weight. A *bespoke* #3 yarn is thus comparable to a fingering or light sport weight and will knit comfortably between 7.5 and 9.5 stitches per inch in stockinette.

To determine the weight of a mixed strand, add the numbers of each of the yarns in the strand. For example, a strand composed of Merino #3 + Silk #2 + Silk Mohair #1 has six units, is a *bespoke* #6, and is comparable to a dk or light worsted weight. When building a strand with two yarns, any proportion of one to the other will work nicely, including an even balance. If the strand contains three yarns, aim for a predominate base or an even balance of the base and a second yarn.

Total Units in Strand	Approximate Knitting Weight	Stockinette Gauge Range	Gauge Needle Range
1	cobweb		
2	lace - fingering	8 - 12 sts	0 - 2 US / 2 - 3 mm
3	fingering - light sport	7.5 - 9.5 sts	1 - 3 US / 2.5 - 3.25 mm
4	sport	6.5 - 8.5 sts	2 - 5 US / 3 - 3.75 mm
5	heavy sport - light dk	5.75 - 6.25 sts	5 - 6 US / 3.75 - 4 mm
6	dk - light worsted	5.5 - 6 sts	6 - 7 US / 4 - 4.5 mm
7	worsted	4.75 - 5.25 sts	7 - 8 US / 4.5 - 5 mm
8	aran	4 - 4.5 sts	8 - 9 US / 5 - 5.5 mm
9	chunky	3 - 4 sts	9 - 10 US / 5.5 - 6 mm

To enhance a textured stitch pattern or to create a denser fabric, knit with one unit more than called for by the gauge range in the table. If knitting with a mix, the additional unit should be the base or predominant yarn in the mix.

By its very nature, Silk Mohair offers an exception to these guidelines. In many instances a single unit will behave in a mix as though it were two, introducing density and structure into the fabric. If a mix already contains a unit of Silk Mohair, adding another unit will usually increase the gauge range by two weights rather than one. Thus, a #7 mix of Merino #3 + Silk #2 + Silk Mohair #2 will be best gauged as a #8 strand, while a #7 mix of Merino #4 + Silk #2 + Silk Mohair #1 should be gauged as a #7. This characteristic of the Silk Mohair can be exploited to create cloud-like fabrics that maintain their integrity and texture or denser fabrics perfect for warm outerwear that retain a supple drape.

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the characteristics of bespoke in the knitted fabric

Understanding the characteristics of each of the yarns in the *bespoke* collection is critical to choosing a weight or creating a mix that will produce a knitted fabric with the desired hand, weight, drape, and ability to reveal texture and maintain its shape. Use the following as a guide for your choices, but remember that the finished gauge of the fabric is as consequential, if not more so, than the yarn itself.

The *bespoke* yarns:

Merino: fabrics with soft drape, excellent stitch definition and a hand that is neither dry nor soft, but offers a faint suggestion of a halo. They are often described as crisp, clean, modern, architectural, perfectly suited to a minimal aesthetic.

Alpaca: smooth, soft fabrics with a gentle sheen, quiet halo and silky drape. They are cozy, casual yet elegant, and subtly romantic. Textured stitch patterns are less defined, but not obscured.

Silk: fabrics that offer superb stitch definition, a characteristic shimmer, a crisp dry hand and weighty liquid drape. They conjure comparisons with polished, smooth minerals, mysterious yet luminous.

Silk Mohair: the lustrous silk core and gossamer halo of mohair yield ethereal, radiant fabrics of surprising structure.

bespoke mixes:

Merino + Silk: combines the warmth and precious hand of the merino with the shimmer and drape of the silk, while maintaining the excellent stitch definition of both yarns.

Merino + Silk Mohair: adds the luster and weight of the silk core and the gentle iridescence of the mohair halo to the precious hand of the merino. The mohair adds structure to the fabric and can increase its heft if knit at a dense gauge, but the mohair halo softens stitch definition and color work.

Merino + Silk + Silk Mohair: the soft liquid hand of merino + silk gains weight and additional structure from the silk mohair, while the mohair halo softens texture, stitch definition and color work.

Silk + Silk Mohair: the liquid, weighty drape of the silk perfectly matches the ethereal, cloud-like quality of the silk mohair; neither yarn obscures the properties of the other when the mix is balanced.

Alpaca + Silk: combines the shimmer and liquid drape of the silk with the warmth and soft hand of the alpaca. The silk adds crisp definition and diminishes the alpaca halo.

Alpaca + Silk Mohair: adds the luster and weight of the silk core and the gentle iridescence of the mohair halo to the warmth and soft hand of the alpaca. The structure provided by mohair adds heft and density to the fabric depending upon the finished gauge; the mohair halo further softens stitch definition and color work.

Alpaca + Silk + Silk Mohair: the smooth lustrous drape of alpaca enhanced by the liquid hand and crisp definition of silk is softened by the mohair halo, yet gains structure, density and radiance.