Stratus Cowl

Sumptuous Ribbed Neckwarmer

by Sarah Solomon

YARN

Approximately 328 yards DK weight yarn, preferably an alpaca blend

2 skeins Blue Sky Alpacas *Suri Merino* (60% baby suri/ 40% merino; 164 yds/100g)

Sample shown in Fog (Color 413)

GAUGE

25 sts and 30 rnds = 4" in Seeded Rib Stitch in the round, unstretched, before blocking

20 sts and 30 rnds = 4" in Seeded Rib Stitch in the round, blocked and slightly stretched

A note on gauge: Rib gauge is particularly hard to judge by a small swatch. The cowl itself will seem quite large at first and will gradually pull in tightly as the rib progresses. Both this yarn and this stitch pattern will relax dramatically after wet blocking. If you prefer the thick, corrugated look of the piece as you are knitting it, leave the finished cowl unblocked. For blocked dimensions listed below follow finishing directions on wet blocking. Cowl pictured is unblocked.

NEEDLES and NOTIONS

Set of double-pointed needles (DPN's) or 24-inch circular needle in size needed to obtain gauge

Suggested size: US 7 (4.5 mm)

Set of double-pointed needles or circular needle in one size larger than gauge needle, for stretchy cast on

Suggested size: US 8 (5.0 mm)

Adjust needle size if necessary to obtain correct gauge

Stitch marker, tapestry needle

FINISHED DIMENSIONS

Unblocked: Circumference: 19"; Height: 16"

Blocked: Circumference: 24"; Height: 14 ½"

STITCH PATTERN

Seeded Rib (in the round)

Multiple of 4 stitches

Round 1: *(K2, p1, k1); repeat from * to end of round.

Round 2: *(k1, p3); repeat from * to end of round.

Repeat rounds 1 and 2 to form pattern.

ABBREVIATIONS

St(s) – stitch(es)	Rnd(s) – round(s)
K – knit	Yo – yarnover
P – purl	

PATTERN

Using larger needle and long tail method cast on 120 sts. Place marker and join in the round being careful not to twist your ring of stitches.

Work Seeded Rib pattern for approximately 16" ending after Round 1 of pattern.

Bind off using Jeny's Surprisingly Stretchy Bind Off or preferred method for a stretchy bind off (see *Special Techniques* below).

Break yarn and thread through a needle to join the ends of the bind off. Weave in ends invisibly to wrong side.

BLOCKING

Fill a basin with cool water and a small amount of rinseless wool wash. Immerse the cowl and allow to soak for at least 20 minutes. Rinse in fresh water then squeeze as much excess water from the cowl as possible. Wrap in a towel and press on it firmly to remove remaining water. Reshape and lay flat to dry.

SPECIAL TECHNIQUES

Jeny's Surprisingly Stretchy Bind Off

This bind off technique involves working a yarn over (yo) before each stitch.

To make a yarn over before a knit stitch the yarn will begin at the back of the right needle, pass over the top of the needle to the front and return under the needle to the back.

To make a yarn over before a purl stitch, reverse the movement. Bring the yarn to the front of the right needle then pass is over the top of the needle to the back and under the needle to the front again.

To work the bind off in seeded rib:

Work a yo onto empty right needle. Knit next stitch and pass yo over it. One stitch remains on the right needle.

Work another yo onto right needle and knit next stitch on left needle.

You will now have 2 stitches on the right needle; pass the right stitch over the left stitch as for a normal bind off.

Work a yo before the next knit stitch, knit the stitch, pass the yo over and then bind the stitch off as usual.

Work a yo before the next purl stitch, purl the stitch, pass the yo over and then bind the stitch off as usual.

Continue to process the stitches as you see them, making the appropriate yarn over, knitting the knits and purling the purls, passing the yo over the next stitch and then binding off in the usual fashion.