

Hydrogen Shawl

Introduction

Like its namesake, the Hydrogen Shawl is a simple, no-frills basic. Classic and effective on its own, it is also a starting point for a whole world of possibilities.

This pattern is intended as an introduction to working with our self-stripping shawl yarn, and includes an FAQ and suggestions for customizing your shawl.

Skills Required

This pattern is suitable for an absolute beginner and requires basic knitting skills: casting on, knitting, purling, increasing, binding off.

Gauge

20 sts = 10 cm / 4" in stockinette stitch after blocking.

Gauge is not critical, and the stripes will "work" at any gauge. However, gauge will affect the size of the final shawl.

Sizes and Dimensions

Caterpillargreen yarns are available in two put-ups, resulting in regular [large] shawls. At gauge given:

Regular: 127 cm / 50" wide, 84 cm / 22" long

Large: 178 cm / 70" wide, 71 cm / 28" long

Yarn

1 x 115 g / 4 oz [170 g / 6 oz] skein caterpillargreen yarns MCN Fingering Shawl Stripping (70% superwash merino, 20% cashmere, 10% nylon), 370 m / 405 yd [548 m / 599 yd]
The diagram below is for illustration and is not a colourway we sell.

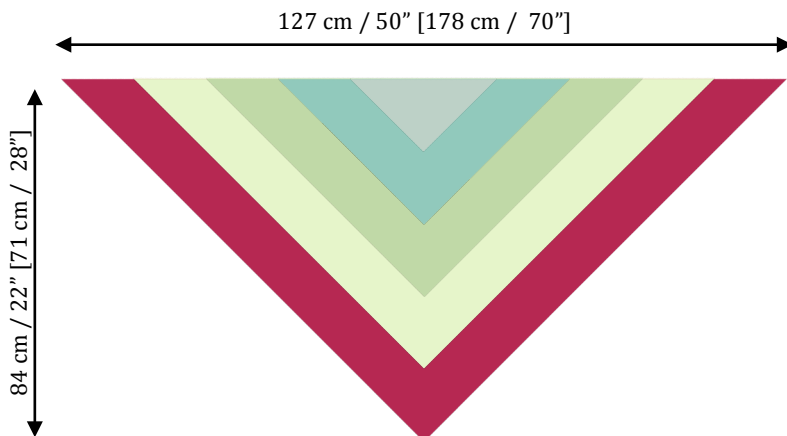
Needles

4 mm / US 6 circular needle 60 cm / 24" or longer

5 mm / US 8 circular or straight needle (optional for bind off)

Notions

Stitch marker, tapestry needle, tape measure (optional), blocking pins and wires (optional).



Abbreviations

k: knit

k2tog: knit two sts together

m1l: make one left (use the tip of the left needle to pick up, from front to back, the strand between the two needles; knit through back loop. 1 stitch increased.)

m1r: make one right (use the tip of the left needle to pick up, from back to front, the strand between the two needles; knit through front loop. 1 stitch increased.)

p: purl

p2tog: purl two sts together

pm: place marker

RS: right side

slm: slip marker

sts: stitches

tbl: through back loop

WS: wrong side

yo: yarn over

DIRECTIONS

Yarn Prep

Discard any scrap white or pale-coloured yarn at the ends of the skein. Find the *top* of the yarn as you wind the hank into a ball. The *top* has shorter lengths of each colour, corresponding to shorter rows in the shawl, while the *bottom* has longer sections of colour.

Garner Tab

Using the *top* of the yarn, cast on 3 sts. Knit 14 rows.

Shawl set-up

Setup row: k3, rotate work 90° clockwise, pick up and k7 stitches along the garter tab selvedge, rotate work 90° clockwise, pick up and k3 sts along cast-on edge. (13 sts)

Row 1 (WS): k3, p4, pm, p3, k3. (13 sts)

Row 2 (RS): k3, yo, k3, m1r, slm, k1, m1l, k3, yo, k3. (17 sts)

Shawl body

Row 1 (WS): k3, p to 3 sts from end, k3

Row 2 (RS): k3, yo, k to marker, m1r, slm, k1, m1l, k to 3 stitches before end, yo, k3.

Repeat rows 1 and 2 until you reach the final stripe colour, ending with a RS row.

Note that the colour changes won't necessarily occur at the beginning of a row. If you wish to control exactly where a colour change happens, you can adjust your gauge accordingly or simply cut the yarn.

Shawl border

Row 1 (WS): k all sts

Row 2 (RS): k3, yo, k to marker, m1r, slm, k1, m1l, k to 3 stitches before end, yo, k3.

Repeat rows 1 and 2 until you have no less than 12 m / 13 yd [15 m / 17 yd] of yarn remaining. (If you have more than 18 m / 20 yd [22 m / 24 yd], you probably have enough for one more row.)

Bind Off

To avoid a tight edge, you may wish to switch to a larger needle to work the bind off.

If the last row you worked was a row 1, bind off as follows:

Bind off (RS): k2, * slip the 2 worked sts back to the left needle, k2tog tbl, k1, repeat from * until 2 sts remain. Slip both stitches to the left needle, k2tog tbl, break yarn leaving a 15 cm / 6" tail, and draw yarn tail through final stitch to secure.

If the last row you worked was a row 2, bind off as follows:

Bind off (WS): p2, *slip the 2 worked sts back to the left needle, p2tog, p1, repeat from * until 2 sts remain. Slip both stitches to the left needle, p2tog, break yarn leaving a 15 cm / 6" tail, and draw yarn tail through final stitch to secure.

Finishing

Weave in ends. Wet block the shawl by allowing it to soak in a sink full of lukewarm water for approximately 20 minutes. Squeeze out as much water as possible without twisting or stretching the piece. Lie flat to dry, stretching to desired dimensions. Optionally, use blocking pins and wires to hold the shawl in place as it dries.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is self-stripping shawl yarn? How is this different than regular self-stripping yarn?

Self-stripping shawl yarn is specifically designed for triangular shawls worked from the top-centre outwards. The sections of colour are dyed to match the rows of the shawl: shorter at the beginning and longer at the end. For example, in the diagram on the previous page, you can see that there is much more red (at the bottom edge) than there is grey-green (at the cast-on).

What's with the white yarn at the ends?

The scrap white or pale-coloured yarn at one or both ends of the skein is a side-effect of the dyeing process. It can be discarded.

What about swatching?

You may choose swatch-as-you-go by simply casting on for your project and working until you have at least 50 stitches on your needles. At that point you can transfer the live stitches to a piece of scrap yarn and block before measuring gauge. If you prefer to do a proper swatch, you should swatch with yarn from the *bottom* of the skein and be prepared to unravel the swatch if needed. Getting a fabric you like is more important than matching pattern gauge.

How do I know when to start my bind off?

You will need at least 12 m / 13 yd of yarn for the regular size, and 15 m / 17 yd for the large size.

Many of our colourways work up into shawls with even widths of stripes. In that case, you can count how many rows are in each stripe and start your bind off when you have worked one row fewer than that number in the final colour.

What shapes can I make and still preserve the stripes?

This stripes will "work" for several variations of triangular and crescent shawls. A simple modification to the Hydrogen Shawl pattern is to move the increases to different locations in the same row. For example, the two central increases can be placed 1/3 and 2/3 of the way along the row, creating a crescent shape. The stripes will also "work" in sideways shawl (e.g. one increase at the end of every 2nd or 4th row), or a bottom-up triangle (e.g. one increase at the beginning of every row).

Can I customize my shawl?

You betcha.

You may find the shawl is too busy if you pair an all-over lace pattern with high-contrast stripes. However, there are plenty of simple stitch patterns that will complement the stripes beautifully. You can also let the stripes dictate the placement of stitch patterns like so:

At each transition: add a row of reverse stockinette, ribbing, or eyelets (pairs of yo/k2tog) on the first row of the new colour.

For each stripe: work different colours in different stitch patterns. One- or two-row textured patterns are particularly effective: garter stitch, moss stitch, broken rib, etc. Geometric lace patterns (e.g. gull lace, mesh) are also a great choice.

Edging: To prevent rolling, this pattern calls for a garter stitch edging, but you can substitute any other stitch that will lie flat. Or, weigh the edge down a bit with beading or a fringe!