Ruthie's Blanket

Worked in mitered squares using linen stitch and fingering weight yarn, this colorful blanket requires some time and perseverance to complete! But the dramatic pinwheels of color are well worth the effort. Choose a self-striping wool or wool blend with long color repeats to snuggle that special baby in warmth and softness.

I designed and made this blanket for Ruthie, my niece's daughter. Tragically, Ruthie was lost to a rare, late-pregnancy complication. As a memorial to her brief life, I have made this pattern available for free and encourage you to share it with others, but I hope you will make a small donation in Ruthie's name to Empty Arms (http://www.emptyarmsbereavement.org/, click on the "Donate" button), an organization devoted to helping families coping with the loss of a baby due to miscarriage, stillbirth, or other cause. Ruthie's parents and I thank you very much.

YARN: 4 balls KnitPicks Chroma (70% wool, 30% nylon; 396 yards/362 m). Shown in colorway Impressionist, now discontinued, but there are many other great choices. Alternatively, choose 1600 yards/1463 m fingering weight self-striping yarn with long color repeats. *Note that if you choose to work a crocheted edge around the blanket you will need an additional ball of yarn.*

NEEDLES: US #7/4.5 mm needles, straight or 24"/60 cm circular, or size needed to obtain gauge

GAUGE: Approximately 26 stitches = 4"/10 cm in linen stitch. This is a blanket, so gauge is not as critical as it would be for a garment. The large squares are approximately 12" x 12"/30 cm x 30 cm; the small squares are approximately 6" x 6"/15 cm x 15 cm; the completed blanket is approximately 3' x 3'/1 m x 1 m.

NOTIONS: tapestry needle for weaving in ends; 2 coil-less locking pins useful but not required

ABBREVIATIONS

CO: cast on
DD: double decrease: sl 2, k1, psso
k: knit
p: purl
psso: pass slipped stitch over
p3tog: purl 3 stitches together
RS: right side

sl: slip
st, sts: stitch, stitches
WS: wrong side
wyib: with yarn in back
yb: move yarn to the back
yf: move yarn forward
**: repeat directions between asterisks

DIRECTIONS

This blanket is constructed from mitered squares. Each square is knit individually and features a mitered corner and ridge. After the first square, stitches for subsequent squares are cast on using the knitted cast-on method or picked up from the edge of previous squares. Refer to the photograph below for the order in which to knit the squares, and as a guide for which way the diagonal ridge formed by the double decreases should lie.

Hint: mark the center stitch with the coil-less pin. Do this by enclosing the entire stitch within the pin, not just putting the pin through the stitch. This way, you will be able to work the stitch without the pin getting in the way. You will have to move the pin every 4 rows or so, to keep it in the right place, but if you are able to see and identify the center stitch, then you won't need to count stitches on every RS row!

Mitered linen stitch is worked over two rows, as follows:
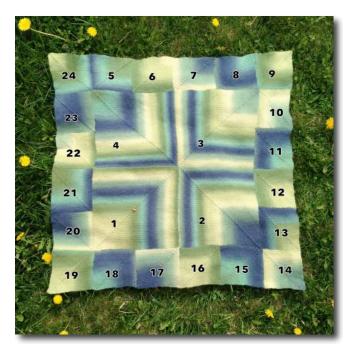Row 1 (RS): *[k1, yf, sl 1, yb] X times, k1*, DD, rep * to * across
Row 2 and all subsequent WS rows: wyib *sl 1, yf, p1, yb* until 1 stitch remains, sl 1
Row 3: *k1, yf, sl 1, yb* X times, DD, yf, sl 1, yb, repeat * to * X-1 times, k1
Row 4: as row 2
Repeat these 4 rows (ending with a RS row) until only 3 stitches remain; p3tog.
The DD (double decrease) is worked over the center 3 stitches on each RS row; the resulting single stitch becomes the new center stitch and can be marked as described in the *hint* above.

Square 1: CO 161 sts. Work 1 WS row.

Continue square 1 as follows:
Row 1 (RS): *[k1, yf, sl 1, yb] 39 times, k1*, DD, repeat * to * across
Row 2 and all subsequent WS rows: wyib *sl 1, yf, p1, yb*, sl 1
Row 3: *k1, yf, sl 1, yb* 39 times, DD, yf, sl 1, yb, repeat * to * 38 times, k1
Row 5: *[k1, yf, sl 1, yb] 38 times, k1*, DD, repeat * to * across
Row 7: *k1, yf, sl 1, yb* 38 times, DD, yf, sl 1, yb, repeat * to * 37 times, k1
Row 9: *[k1, yf, sl 1, yb] 37 times, k1*, DD, repeat * to * across
Row 11: *k1, yf, sl 1, yb* 37 times, DD, yf, sl 1, yb, repeat * to * 36 times, k1
Row 13: *[k1, yf, sl 1, yb] 36 times, k1*, k3tog, repeat * to * across
Row 15: *k1, yf, sl 1, yb* 36 times, DD, yf, sl 1, yb, repeat * to * 35 times, k1
Row 17: *[k1, yf, sl 1, yb] 35 times, k1*, k3tog, repeat * to * across

Continue in established linen stitch and decrease patterns, working double decreases over the center 3 stitches on each RS row and working even on each WS row until only 3 stitches remain, having just finished a RS row.

Next row (WS): p3tog—1 st remains. Pull up this last loop, cut yarn, pull tail through loop. Mark square 1 with a coil-less pin or scrap yarn, so that you can easily identify square 1 as you knit subsequent squares; it is an important reference point.

Square 2: Manipulate square 1 so that the cast-on edges are down the lefthand side and across the top. With the right side facing you, pick up 81 stitches across the top, then CO 80 stitches. Work square 2 as given for square 1.

Square 3: Manipulate squares 1 and 2 so that square 1 is on the left, square 2 is on the right, and the mitered ridges form a ∧. With the right side facing you, pick up 81 stitches along the top of square 2, then CO 80 stitches. Work square 3 as given for square 1.

Square 4: With the right side facing you, pick up 81 stitches along the lefthand edge of square 3, then pick up 80 stitches along the top of square 1. Work square 4 as given for square 1.

The central panel of the blanket is now complete. The mitered edges should form an ✕.

Square 5: With the right side facing you, pick up 41 stitches across the top left edge of square 4, then CO 40 stitches. Work 1 WS row.

Continue square 5 as follows:
Row 1 (RS): *[k1, yf, sl 1, yb] 19 times, k1*, DD, rep * to * across
Row 2 and all subsequent WS rows: wyib *sl 1, yf, p1, yb*, sl 1
Row 3: *k1, yf, sl 1, yb* 19 times, DD, yf, sl 1, yb, rep * to * 18 times, k1
Row 5: *[k1, yf, sl 1, yb] 18 times, k1*, DD, rep * to * across
Row 7: *k1, yf, sl 1, yb* 18 times, DD, yf, sl 1, yb, rep * to * 17 times, k1
Row 9: *[k1, yf, sl 1, yb] 17 times, k1*, DD, rep * to * across
Row 11: *k1, yf, sl 1, yb* 17 times, DD, yf, sl 1, yb, rep * to * 16 times, k1
Row 13: *[k1, yf, sl 1, yb] 16 times, k1*, k3tog, rep * to * across
Row 15: *k1, yf, sl 1, yb* 16 times, DD, yf, sl 1, yb, rep * to * 15 times, k1
Row 17: *[k1, yf, sl 1, yb] 15 times, k1*, k3tog, rep * to * across

Continue in established patterns, as for square 1, until square 5 is complete.

Square 6: With right side facing you, pick up 41 stitches across the top right of square 4, then pick up 40 stitches along the righthand edge of square 5. Work square 6 as given for square 5.

Squares 7 and 8: Work as for squares 5 and 6, across the top of square 3.

Square 9: CO 41 sts. With right side facing you, pick up 40 stitches across righthand edge of square 8. Work square 9 as given for square 5.

Square 10: Manipulate the blanket so that square 9 is now in the top left corner. With right side facing you, pick up 41 stitches along the top left of square 3, then pick up 40 stitches along the edge of square 9. Work square 10 as given for square 5.

Squares 11 – 24: Casting on or picking up stitches as required, work the remaining squares in the manner established. If you are confused which way to orient a square, refer to the numbered photo above so that you correctly match the direction of the mitered ridge.

Finishing: Weave in all ends. Gently block the blanket to smooth and even up the fabric. The edges will not be perfect; they may ripple a bit. If you prefer more finished edges, you can work a round or two of single crochet all the way around, taking care not to work the crochet stitches too tight or two loose, which would further distort the edge.