



Tip of the Month

Yarn Weight/Ply



Several questions have come our way regarding yarn weight/ply. Many of the patterns are written in other countries and invariably use a different measure for yarn weight than what we do in Australia. Additionally the term ply has different meaning in the USA (meaning the number of strands that are twisted together) than in Australia., where we use it to refer to the thickness of the yarn.

A number of tables exist explaining the relationship that exists - the most comprehensive one I've found is included in Yarn magazine. However it is copyright and cannot be reprinted here. Instead, I have included below the yarn classification sourced from the Craft Yarn Council of America [www.craftyarncouncil.com] and what this means [referring to Ravelry and Nancy's Knit Knacks]. They have also introduced a new 7 weight category within the past year. Note that this table doesn't include the threads finer than 10, which have their own classification.

Yarn Weight Symbol (CYCA)	Type of yarns in category	Wraps per inch	Ply (AUS, NZ)	Knit Gauge*/ needle size	Crochet Gauge**/ hook size
	Fingering, Lace weight, Fine, Bedspread weight, #10 thread	20-23	2 ply 3 ply	33-40 sts 1.5 – 2.25mm	32-42 sts 1.6-1.44mm
	Sock, Fingering, Baby	19-20	4 ply	27-32 sts 2.25-3.25mm	21-32 sts 2.25-3.5mm
	Sport, Baby	15-18	5 ply	23-26 sts 3.25-3.75mm	16-20 sts 3.5-4.5mm
	DK, Light Worsted	12-14	8 ply	21-24 sts 3.75-4.5mm	12-17 sts 4.5-5.5mm
	Worsted, Afghan, Aran	9-11	10 ply	16-20 sts 4.5-5.5mm	11-14 sts 5.5-6.5mm
	Chunky, Craft, Rug	7-8	12 ply	12-15 sts 5.5-8mm	8-11 sts 6.5-9mm
	Super Bulky, Roving	5-6	Over 12 ply	7-11 sts 8-12.75mm	6-9 sts 9-16mm
	Jumbo, Roving	5 or less	Over 20 ply	6 and fewer sts 12.75mm plus	5 and fewer sts 16mm plus

* Stockinette stitch over 4 inches

** Double crochet over 4 inches (Aus terminology)

The above is only a guide and some types of yarn are included in more than one category. Additionally, there is some variation between manufacturers as to how they classify their yarn. For example, many patterns call for worsted yarn which could be a size 3 or 4 yarn. What is most important is to take time to do a gauge swatch for the project and adjust accordingly.

I often use 8ply yarn when a pattern calls for yarn category 4 or worsted weight yarn and adjust my tension/stitches based on the gauge swatch.