

# The Yarn Conundrum

by Angie

Yarn lovers, especially those who acquire it in thrift stores, eventually face a conundrum - what to do with the assorted 'other' (i.e. non-worsted weight) yarns overflowing their storage bins. After doing scarves, blankets, afghans, shawls and hats from so-called 'scrap' ('remnant' is a more accurate term), what can be made with the sport, baby, sock, boucle, mohair, chenille, ribbon, slub, twist, and various weights of variegated or gradient colours?

Thrifty stores are responsible for the above wealth, because they rarely sort their donations by type, so grab bags may include any or all of the various types of yarn. One recent bag, however, gave inspiration for the use of many of the other remnants (see image on the left, below).



Research indicates that yarn is not usually sold this way, although some yarn shops do make their own versions from yarn at hand. It is an excellent way to combine four or more for bulky yarn projects, a category that is not often utilized for lack of yarn.

So pick four or more kinds of yarn - paying attention to colour, texture and sheen. Put them in a tall basket or bucket, tie the ends together with a knot, and wind them into a ball. When one yarn runs out, replace it with another, or start something entirely different.

Good combinations, as seen in the image above, are satin, boucle, slub, or ribbon, combined with a solid colour or variegated. Mix cottons, wools, nylons, and blends, pair two sock or baby with boucle and satin. The effects possible are limited only by the supply of yarn.

Now, all that remains is a pattern to use this new yarn. The weight will be considered bulky (no need to be exact), so simple one-piece patterns are best, using a large gauge crochet hook (8-10mm) or knitting needles of appropriate size.

The image on the right, above, is a short-sleeved crocheted cardigan or vest made from these new balls. This pattern is worked in one piece, with sides and underarms sewn up at the end. The stitch is an easy mesh, worked vertically, with each remnant ball worked for one row, to make weaving in the ends easier. If you join the new rows leaving a few inches extra, you have a ready made fringe on the bottom. The neckline will need a row of finishing single crochet.

The crochet stitch is best kept simple with bulky yarn. Lemon peel, half-double herringbone, mesh, or plain half or double-crochet work well. The piece will work up quickly and be finished in a few hours. The yarn gives the piece a unique look, with shiny highlights and complementary shades and textures. If doing sleeves, keep the small leftover remnant balls for those. Avoid joining yarns in the middle of a row and always knot the cut end of the ball.

This method being quite addictive, you'll soon be looking for more yarn!