

Hannah's Onesie

Designing on the needles

BY AMY CLARKE MOORE

MY HUSBAND, KELLY, and I decided to turn our heat down by about 10 degrees in response to the increased gas bill. I don't mind bundling up with sweaters to keep warm, but my nine-month-old daughter, Hannah, was getting frustrated because she couldn't move around freely when she was all bundled up. So I decided to make her a little body vest that would keep her warm but allow her mobility as she's exploring her world, learning how to roll over and crawl. I used my hand-spun yarn because I wanted her to be wrapped up in warm, soft wool that had been lovingly handcrafted.

I sketched out my ideas on a note card. I wanted it to be a simple construction—basically, a tube with shoulder straps and buttons between the legs

to attach the back to the front, creating leg holes. The design became more complicated when I added short rows and color changes.

Project Notes

Finished size: 18" circumference, 19" center back neck to bottom flap, 3¼ ounces (with buttons). Sized to fit a 6- to 12-month-old baby (12 to 20 pounds).

Fiber: 3 ounces of glacial green 80/20 Merino/silk, 1 ounce of 80/20 silk/cashmere, and 2 ounces of fuchsia 80/20 Merino/silk, all combed tops from Louet Sales.

Yarn: 2-ply slubby, spiral yarn that measures 12 wraps per inch.

Gauge: 18 sts and 29 rows = 4" in k2, p2 ribbing (blocked).

Needles: 12- or 16-inch circular needle, U.S. size 6.

Notions: 5 buttons 5/8" in diameter; locking ring stitch markers.

Spinning

In my basket of handspun yarn, I had a large skein of handspun slub yarn that I had spun the previous summer after taking Judith MacKenzie McCuin's workshop at Shuttles, Spindles, and Skeins in Boulder, Colorado. It was a lovely green and natural tan spun from glacial green 80/20 Merino/silk combed top from Louet Sales and plied with a natural silk/cashmere blend, also from Louet Sales. I had spun the glacial green at about 16 wraps per inch with slubs rhythmically spaced about a staple length apart. I spun it on my Louet S10 wheel using the large whorl (5.5 to 1 ratio). I spun the silk/cashmere evenly and finely using a short-draw drafting technique; it measured 28 wraps per inch. I plied

it on my wheel and let the slub yarn spiral around the silk/cashmere strand for a knobbly-textured yarn. The plied yarn measured 12 wraps per inch. I skeined the yarn and washed it in warm water with a splash of Fiberworks Fiber Wash, then rinsed and squeezed out the water, and hung the skein to dry in the bathtub with a hand towel to weight it down and help it dry faster.

Introducing fuchsia

I reached a point in the knitting when I realized I would not have enough yarn to finish the onesie. I had also run out of fiber—so it was not a simple matter of spinning more. I still had several yards of the silk/cashmere yarn, but I had solar dyed it during a photo shoot (see the blue jar on page 68 of the Summer 2005 issue of *Spin-Off*), and it was now a lovely shade of lavender.

I was fortunate enough to find an online source (www.handknitting.com) that had more of the glacial green from Louet Sales on hand—and I discovered the brilliant pink shade of their fuchsia 80/20 Merino/silk blend as well.

The fiber arrived from Handknitting.com and I couldn't resist the fuchsia so I spun up some sample yarns. I spun a fine, even fuchsia yarn as I had spun the silk/cashmere and plied it with a slubby glacial green, and I spun a slubby fuchsia and plied it with the lavender silk/cashmere yarn; then I knitted up swatches to see what looked good as a knitted fabric. I liked the slubby, spiral fuchsia plied with the silk/cashmere (12 wraps per inch) and decided to add fuchsia to the onesie, rather than spin up

Wanting to create a warm onesie for her active nine-month-old daughter, Amy designed a onesie on the needles that would allow her daughter range of motion while keeping her cozy.





- 1) When she ran out of fiber and yarn, Amy changed the design and added the fuchsia trim at the bottom edge.
- 2) Short rows in the bottom area create a button flap.
- 3) The 2-ply slubby, spiral yarn measures 12 wraps per inch. She spun a slubby yarn using an 80/20 Merino/silk blend from Louet and then plied it using a spiral technique with an 80/20 silk/cashmere blend also from Louet.

more of the glacial green slubby, spiral yarn.

I knitted swatches to find the needle size and stitch pattern that I wanted to use and to also figure out how to start the onesie. I decided on a knit 2, purl 2 ribbing and 16-inch U.S. size 6 circular needle.

Starting at the bottom edge, cast on 20 sts with the glacial green slub yarn. Work back and forth until instructed to join for knitting in the round.

Row 1: *K2, p2; repeat from * across.

Row 2: Continue in ribbing as set and increase by 2 sts at the end of each row by knitting and purling into each of the last two sts.

Repeat Row 2 for a total of 23 rows.

At the end of Row 23, place a marker and use the knitted cast-on technique to cast on 12 sts, and continue in k2, p2 ribbing (78 sts). Join, being careful not to twist the stitches, and begin knitting in the round in k2, p2 ribbing until the onesie measures 12 inches from the original cast-on row at center back. Move the marker up each round, so that you know where the beginning of the round is.

When the onesie was 12 inches long, I had reached the end of the glacial green yarn and needed to transition to the fuchsia. Feeling that just starting the fuchsia would be too harsh, I decided to transition gradually by working one round fuchsia, one round glacial green two times and then working the rest of the onesie in fuchsia.

Armholes

Work 8 rounds with fuchsia (piece is now 13" long), but, when 22 sts before the marker on round 8, bind off 12 sts for the right armhole. Work 34 sts, and bind off 12 sts for the left armhole. Continue in pattern, working back and forth. Work 18 rows on the front (26 sts).

Neck and front shoulder straps

Work 8 sts, bind off 10 sts, sl1, k1, decrease 2 sts (sl1, k2tog, pss0), then work to end of row. Continue to work the strap

for 9 rows, and then shape the top of the strap: k2tog, k2, k2tog. Next row: bind off remaining sts. Cut yarn and weave in tail neatly on WS. Work the left shoulder strap by picking up the stitches at the inside of the neck, sl1, k1, decrease by 2 sts, and then work to the end of the row. Complete as for right front shoulder strap.

Back shoulder straps

Work 20 rows, turn and work 10 sts, bind off 14 sts for back neck, then sl1, k1, decrease 2 sts, work to end of row. Turn. Work 6 sts, decrease 2 sts. Continue to work for 6 rows. Make buttonhole by working 2 sts, k2tog, yo, work to end of row. Work 2 more rows and shape the top of the strap: k2tog, k2, k2tog. Next row: bind off remaining sts. Cut yarn and weave in tail neatly on WS. Pick up the stitches for the right back shoulder strap starting at the inside of the neck, and sl1, k1, decrease 2 sts, work to end of row. Turn. Complete as for left back shoulder strap, including buttonhole.

Bottom trim

With fuchsia, pick up and knit 78 sts matching the k2, p2 rib at the bottom of the onesie and work in ribbing for 6 rounds. Find the center of the back, and place markers 20 sts from each side of the center. Work short rows (see below) between the markers as you work the next 12 rounds to create the button flap.

Short rows

Round 1: Starting at the first marker, work 1 round.

Round 2: Work to the second marker, turn, work to the first marker, turn. Finish round. Move st markers 4 sts closer to the center of the back on each side.

Round 3: Work 1 round.

Round 4: Work to the second marker, turn, work to the first marker, turn. Finish round. Move st markers 4 sts closer to the center of the back on each side.

Round 5: Work 1 round.

Round 6: Work to the second marker, turn, work to the first marker, turn. Finish round. Move st markers 4 sts closer to the center of the back on each side.

Round 7: Work 1 round.

Round 8: Work to the second marker, turn, work to the first marker, turn. Finish round. Move st markers 4 sts closer to the center of the back on each side.

Round 9: Work 1 round.

Round 10: Work to the second marker, turn, work to the first marker, turn. Finish round. Move st markers 4 sts closer to the center of the back on each side.

Round 11: Work 1 round.

Round 12: Work to the second marker, turn, work to the first marker, turn. Finish round.

Bind off with short rows to make the bottom edge more elastic for chubby legs. Work 4 sts, turn, work 4 sts, turn, and bind off 4 sts. *With one st remaining on the needle, work 4 sts, turn, work 5 sts, turn, bind off 5 sts, and repeat from * until all sts have been bound off.

Sew buttons on front shoulder straps, matching them to the buttonholes. Make sure to sew them on very securely so that they can't be chewed off and swallowed. Measure to the center of the front bottom edge, and sew on three buttons. The short rows will have created small holes that you can use as the buttonholes. ☞

AMY CLARKE MOORE of Lakewood, Colorado, is the editor of Spin-Off magazine. She is enjoying her newest role as Hannah's mommy.
