

Lock Knot

Wearable
Fiber art

Wool Wench
Suzy Brown





Join me to create this fun skinny scarf with boa ends, using my new technique for adding in long locks to your yarn as you spin! The usual method for adding in locks is to open up the ends and spin them into the singles, either around a core or integrated into the single itself. The difference with this Lock Knot method is that we actually add in the locks during the plying stage, meaning you can add them exactly where you want them, as well as make full use of the length of the lock without risking it getting spun in.

I used approximately 6-8 ounces of fiber to make this entire project, and spun it on my Majacraft Aura. You can use any wheel but it IS important you have a large or bypassable orifice. If you do not, you can still make this 'off' the wheel following the instructions later in this booklet.

The construction of this yarn begins with spinning a bulky single, using a variety of colours - if you are dyeing your own fiber you might want to dye the locks with the rest of your collection of fibers to ensure they match up well, or you could buy a 'Scrapbox' from Namaste Farms, (used in this project) that will include a variety of fibers including long locks, dyed to a theme.

Start by separating out your locks, make a pile of them ready to use, all laying the same direction, we will come back to them later. Now you should also have a pile of 'other' fiber that you can use to create your first single.

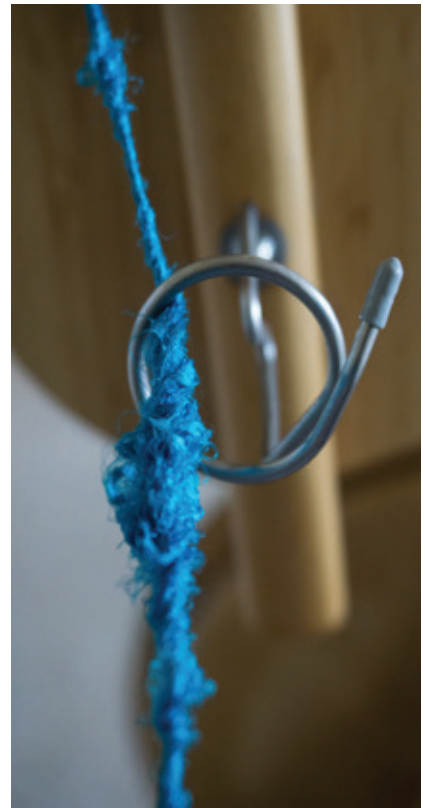


Use all except your separated locks to spin a single.

Make it a nice bulky single! As you spin you can work on keeping in as much of the texture as you like, do this by avoiding pulling your fiber apart before you draft it, allow any stray locks or curls to slip through your fingers without pulling them apart and they will catch into the single and keep that texture intact. You can also guide in any lumps of angelina or silks to keep flashes of sheen and sparkle throughout the yarn.

Keep your single bulky by drafting out larger quantities of fiber, in fact don't try to draft it too much! The single can only be as thick as the amount of fiber you allow out of your fiber supply hand. It can also help to keep your hands further apart than you would for spinning fine yarns, this will force you to allow more fiber into the drafting zone too.

Keep your treadling slow and if you use the larger whorl on your pulley you shouldn't get too much twist, but remember this will also be plied so you need enough twist in the single to allow it to ply and balance.



Wind your single into a centre pull ball or split between two bobbins so you can now ply it onto itself to make a two ply from it.

The idea is that we are going to make a 'cabled' yarn from this bulky textured single. I chose this as part of the design because I wanted to mix up all the colours and textures and create a random look, knowing that the batch dyed colours would all look great together no matter how I mixed the fiber. Doing it this way also tends to distribute the colours all through the length of the yarn, rather than creating blocks of colour.



Ply your single onto itself into a two ply, making sure you add extra twist evenly.

This is very important and the reason for doing it is that you are going to ply this onto itself again in the next step, and to make sure it cables correctly you need enough extra twist now that it will ply back on itself easily when you release the tension from your yarn, it should spring back to form a second ply when you let it go, this is how you test that you have enough tension. Check this frequently as it is very easy to slip back into the pattern of plying for balance!

Wind your overtwisted two ply into a centre pull ball or split it between two bobbins.

You may find it easier to control the overtwist if you split it between bobbins, however you are sure to have no leftover two ply if you take it from a centre pull ball, you just need to keep a check on not pulling out too much yarn as once or it will tangle.



Ply the two ply strands together into a four ply yarn.

It is at this stage that you will really see why it is so important to overtwist at the first plying stage. When you have just the right amount of twist, this four ply will just 'snap' into place and you will see the yarn interlock and fit together, giving your colours a nice flecked look.

If you do not have enough twist in your two ply to do this it will look just like two two plys plied together, not the cohesive linked look of the correctly twisted fibers. If you see that is a problem it is worthwhile putting your two ply back through the wheel and adding more twist to it.

Only cable a short way because now it is time to add your locks!

The idea with this yarn is that you will end up with something wearable almost straight off the wheel. And the beauty of the lock attaching technique we will cover now is that you can very easily select and control exactly where you want your locks to be, which is very useful for designing ready to wear yarn.

In this case, we want all the locks concentrated at either end of the cabled yarn, and we want them very closely spaced so they look lush and weighty at the ends.

‘Knot’ your Locks into the ply. Split your locks into two equal piles, one for each end of the yarn.

What you are going to do now is, holding your two, two-plys in one hand, keeping them open into an upside down ‘Y’ shape (see in my left hand below) take your long lock with the cut end pointing towards your yarn and make a ‘hoop’ shape, you can see in the image below how I have the cut end caught between my fingers of my right hand, the hoop between my left hand fingers, and the length of the lock to the tip held between my forefinger and thumb. Now it is ready to pull the hook under one twoply and into the middle of the opened ‘Y’ shape j





As you can see in the image above, both sides of the hoop travel under the two ply and back up into the middle to form a loop.



Now pull the end of the loop back around the two ply. Pull through the tip end and the remaining cut end of the lock together through the loop, pull them all the way through and tighten by pulling the tip and cut ends up tight to make a knot around the two ply yarn.



Allow your two two-plys to come back together and continue your normal cable ply for about an inch (2.5cm). This will lock your knot into place in the centre of the cable. You should find the lock is now attached securely.



Repeat this step again for the next lock, and continue until you have used up half your total locks. You should also now have an approximate idea of how long this lock section is, this is important because as you near the end you will have to start adding locks and have enough yarn left to ply to be sure not to run out before your locks are used.



Once you have finished adding the first half of your locks, continue cable plying.

But **stop** once you get to about the place you have estimated you will need to start adding the second half of the locks. Don't worry too much if you have over estimated this, any extra yarn following the locks can be doubled back on itself at the end or even cut to fit, it is better than not having enough yarn and a too short area of locks. IF that happens there is a fix! You can do this by following the instructions below for what to do if you can't get the locks through the orifice, you can add more locks to extend the shorter lock area after you remove it from the wheel.

Help! These locks are never going to fit through the orifice!

As you can see (previous page), you WILL need a large or bypassable orifice to be able to complete this yarn. It is possible you will have to wind this onto the bobbin by hand, but it is just for a short section and should not take too long!

IF you are completely stuck and cannot get the lock section through your orifice, you 'can' spin the entire cable, remove it from the wheel, and then open up the cable where you want to add a lock to insert and knot your lock into it. Again, if you have enough twist in your two plies you should have a nice tight interlocked cable which will snap back into place around the locks once added.

The main disadvantage of adding the locks off the wheel is that it is more difficult to hold the yarn and manipulate the lock into it, but it is possible as an alternative to adding locks during the plying stage.



Finishing the Scarf

Once you have added all your locks, there may be some yarn left to cable ply. You can continue this to until you have plyed all your yarn, hopefully there is not so much left that it will hang a long way from the end of the locks. My preference is to cut it and knot the end at about the level of the final locks, or at least so I can loop the end of the yarn back over the locks and secure it into the middle of them.

When your yarn is off the wheel, start as close as you can to the locks and with your fingers, **start chain stitching** (crochet) the cable into a thick chain. Keep your loops fairly small but dont pull it up so it becomes hard or tight, just a comfortable chain is enough. Keep going to the other end and the start of the locks.

When you get to the end, secure your chain with a knot so it does not pull undone. There maybe some unchained cable between the knot and the start of the locks but this is completely fine and helps to let the lock ends sit nicely when the skinny scarf is worn.



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Published by FiberyGoodness

13 Roslyn Rd Napier

New Zealand

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