

Yarn Tail Estimator for Long Tail Cast On

By Nancy Wynn

All knitting, regardless of what you're making begins with casting on a specified amount of stitches. Although, there are several ways of achieving this, the most common method is called the long tail cast on.

Knitters' often prefer this method because it produces a firm, yet elastic edge and is suitable for most of your projects.

Before you can begin your project, you must first determine how many stitches you need to cast on. This is necessary because as the name implies, you will need to estimate a long tail. Too little and you won't have enough yarn, too much and you'll be wasting yarn. Some simple math will help you avoid the pitfalls.

The amount of tail yarn you need to estimate will depend on the weight of yarn you're working with. Below is a list of yarn weights, accompanying needle size and estimation guide.

PLEASE NOTE THAT THESE ARE ESTIMATIONS ONLY

Sock/Fingering Weight: (Needle sizes 1 to 3)	¼ inch per stitch	plus 10 inches
Sport/Baby Weight: (Needle sizes 3 to 5)	½ inch per stitch	plus 10 inches
DK/Light Worsted Weight: (Needle sizes 5 to 7)	¾ inch per stitch	plus 10 inches
Worsted/Aran Weight: (Needle sizes 7 to 9)	1 inch per stitch	plus 10 inches
Chunky Weight: (Needle sizes 9 to 11)	1 ¼ in. per stitch	plus 10 inches
Bulky Weight: (Needle sizes 11-13)	1 ½ in. per stitch	plus 10 inches
Super Bulky Weight: (Needle sizes 13-19)	1 ¾ in. per stitch	plus 10 inches

As an example, pretend you are using worsted weight yarn and casting on 68 stitches. Based on that information we can formulate how much yarn tail you'll need for a successful cast on.

Multiply the amount of stitches (68) by 1 inch per stitch equals 68 inches plus 10 inches of extra tail yarn for a grand total of 78 inches.

Now that you've determined a tail length of 78 inches, you're ready to cast on.

This method will also work for German Cast On and Long Tail, Knit & Purl Cast on
Here's a tip: The length of your arm from fingertips to nose is just shy of a yard and our fingertip to the first joint on our finger is about an inch. So when don't have a tape measure available, just use your arm!

For more information on how to use this cast on method, visit my video tutorial for a live demonstration.