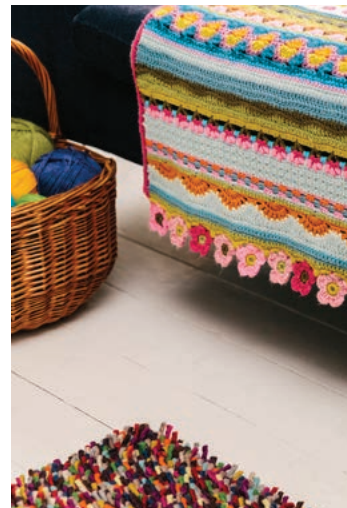


Sunshine & Showers

Crochet Along Blanket



GETTING READY



Follow Jane's crochetalong throughout the year and you'll end up with a beautiful blanket inspired by the changing of the seasons.

JANIE CROW



Sunshine & Showers

Crochet Along Blanket



What is a CAL?

CAL stands for 'crochet-along'. It seems that the concept of mystery blankets or 'make-along' projects originate within the patchwork and quilting craft sector, where 'block a month' or

'mystery blankets' have been commonplace for more than a decade. However, I first came across the idea in relation to knitting when my friend and accomplished hand knit designer Debbie Abrahams released her knitted equivalent in 2007. There are numerous KAL (knit-along) and CAL (crochet-along) projects around these days and many of them are free to join in.

The beauty of a CAL project is that a design is broken down into bite-size pieces. It can feel really daunting being faced with a large project, with many different stitch sequences or techniques to learn as you progress through the design and crocheters can often feel a bit demoralised or lost along the way, especially if they think they are not progressing fast enough. Dividing a large design into doable pieces makes the whole process so much easier and, with the advent of CAL groups on social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and of course Ravelry, crocheters can also now feel less isolated whilst still carrying out the solitary (yet incredibly therapeutic) craft from the comfort of their own homes.

About this project

Unlike all my previous CAL designs, this one is worked as a sampler - so you will be working lots of different stitches and techniques in rows of crochet.

When I design a new project I almost always do so with a theme in mind. There are quite a lot of sampler-style blankets already in existence, so I wanted to design something with a recognisable design element carrying through the whole project. I decided on the idea of making it a seasonal sampler blanket. The CAL runs over the course of the year and so each section of the blanket will have a theme that relates to the month in which you will be making it. The design is called 'Sunshine & Showers'

What level of expertise do you need?

I have designed this blanket so that it starts pretty easy. To complete the first part of the design you will need to know how to make a chain, how to work double crochet stitches, half treble stitches and treble stitches.

This project is not aimed at complete beginners and there is an assumption that you know your basic stitches and terminology. When an unusual or slightly complicated technique is featured the patterns include step-by-step images and short written tutorials. For basic stitch terms and tutorials we advise you to look on YouTube or refer to a crochet techniques book or publication.

I hope you enjoy this seasonal project and at the same time learn some great new techniques.

Janie
x

Jane Crowfoot





MEASUREMENT

Finished size:

186 x 95–96cm (73¼ x 37½–38in)

BLANKET CONSTRUCTION

The blanket is made in four pieces, which will be joined together later on to make one blanket. You need to repeat each stage so that you have the correct pieces of crochet completed to the same point at the end of each pattern stage.

MATERIALS

Stylecraft Special DK

100% Premium Acrylic,
100g, 295m (322yds)

	Spice (1711)	1 ball
	Grape (1067)	1 ball
	Raspberry (1023)	1 ball
	Fondant (1241)	1 ball
	Pale Rose (1080)	1 ball
	Gold (1709)	1 ball
	Meadow (1065)	1 ball
	Lime (1712)	1 ball
	Duck Egg (1820)	1 ball
	Cream (1005)	1 ball
	Graphite (1063)	1 ball

	Khaki (1027)	1 ball
	Petrol (1078)	1 ball
	Storm Blue (1722)	1 ball
	Turquoise (1068)	1 ball

Crochet-along projects are a wonderful way of using up yarn from your stash, and the fact that we have used a true DK weight of yarn for our blanket means that you can easily make yarn substitutions, but just make sure you are using yarn with a similar length to the Special DK (295m per 100g ball), otherwise you could run out of yarn.

YARN USAGE

I advise you to keep hold of all your yarn until the end of the project - by this I mean all the pieces you might undo and any pieces that look a bit frayed. Don't be tempted to use any of the yarn for any other project until you have completed this one and make sure you keep everything in a safe place.

EQUIPMENT

Crochet Hooks:

You will possibly need a combination of the following hook sizes:

- 3.5mm (US E/4)
- 4mm (US G/6)
- 4.5mm (US G/6–H/8)
- 5mm (US J/9)

The hooks you use will be dependent on the tension you achieve. Please read further on for more information about tension.

OTHER ACCESSORIES

Along with the crochet hooks, you will need a few extra pieces of equipment when working through this project:

Stitch Markers

In order to help you through the making-up process of the blanket and so that you don't unravel your stitches between each pattern release, it is a good idea to use a few stitch markers. I tend to use small locking stitch markers - these look like little nappy pins and are really safe as the stitches cannot escape.

Tapestry Needle

You will have a lot of yarn ends to sew in as you work through the project. It is my suggestion that you sew in all your ends as you go along so that you don't end up with a massive making-up job once you have completed all your crochet.

Scissors, Tape Measure and Bag

You will need a sharp pair of scissors and a tape measure. You might also want to sort out a dedicated bag for your project. I like to make sure that I don't muddle up my yarn with other things or misplace any of them. Canvas bags or baskets are ideal.

Contact

If you have any queries regarding the patterns you can email:
mail@janicrow.co.uk

ABBREVIATIONS

*	indicates the start of a repeat
[]	encloses a short repeat
alt	alternate
approx	approximate(ly)
beg	beginning
BLO	back loop only
ch	chain(s)
ch-sp	chain-space
cm	centimetre(s)
cont	continue
dc	double crochet
dc2tog	double crochet 2 stitches together
dc3tog	double crochet 3 stitches together
dec	decrease
dtr	double treble crochet
dtr2tog	double treble crochet 2 stitches together
folll	following
htr	half treble crochet
inc	increase
in	inch(es)
MB	make bobble
MP	make puff
rem	remaining
rep	repeat
RS	right side
RtrB	treble crochet around back post of stitch
sl st	slip stitch
sp (s)	space
st(s)	stitch(es)
st-sp	stitchspace
t-ch	turning chain
tr	treble crochet
tr2tog	treble crochet 2 stitches together
tr3tog	treble crochet 3 stitches together
tr4tog	treble crochet 4 stitches together
WS	wrong side
yrh	yarn round hook

STITCH CONVERSIONS

This pattern is written using UK terminology.

Use the chart below for the US equivalents:

UK		US	
chain	ch	chain	ch
slip stitch	sl st	slip stitch	sl st
double crochet	dc	single crochet	ss
double crochet 2 sts together	dc2tog	single crochet 2 sts together	sc2tog
double crochet 3 sts together	dc3tog	single crochet 3 sts together	sc3tog
half treble crochet	htr	half double crochet	hdc
treble crochet	tr	double crochet	dc
treble crochet 2 sts together	tr2tog	double crochet 2 sts together	dc2tog
treble crochet 3 sts together	tr3tog	double crochet 2 sts together	dc3tog
double treble crochet	dtr	treble crochet	tr
double treble crochet 2 sts together	dtr2tog	treble crochet 2 sts together	tr2tog

TENSION

Crochet is by nature an organic and creative process. It is wonderful to pick up some yarn and a hook and create motifs and decorative pieces that eventually make up a larger project. Many crocheters are used to doing just this without thinking too much about how big their pieces come up and whether things are being worked to the correct tension.

Before you start work on your crochet-along project, I urge you to check that you are working to the correct tension, that is the number of stitches and rows measured over 10cm (4in). If you achieve a tension tighter or looser than the suggested tension you will find that your project will differ in size to mine, that you will use a different amount of yarn and possibly that your pieces will not fit together properly in the making-up stages.

The look of the crochet stitches can also differ - a looser tension is not as neat as the standard tension, whilst a tight tension can make your work stiff or cardboard-like.

WORKING A TENSION PIECE

If you already have your yarn and the correct hooks then you are ready to work your two tension pieces.

Spending an hour or two working these blocks can seem like a waste of time, but it is REALLY important that you are sure you are

working to the same tension as the tension the patterns are written for. As I have said at least twice already, a failure to work to the correct tension will mean that your project will come out a different size and that you will use a different amount of yarn.

If you are using Special DK and have full 100g balls you should have enough yarn in almost all the shades to work your tension pieces and still have enough to complete your project, but to be safe I worked my pieces using a couple of colours I already had.

Before you start your tension piece, have a think about whether you consider yourself to be a tight, loose or 'middle of the road' crocheter in relation to tension. If your work tends to be a little stiff or you have trouble getting your hook through your stitches, chances are you crochet on the tight side of 'normal', however, if your work tends to be a little floppy and your stitches quite open, chances are you are a loose crocheter.

Special DK is a standard DK-weight yarn, however I tend to use a size larger hook for it than I do for other DK weights (I use a 4.5mm instead of a 4mm).

When working a tension piece it is a good idea to work on more stitches and rows than the suggested tension. I used 29 stitches for both of my samples.



Double Crochet Tension (dc)



Using 4mm or 4.5mm hook make 30ch.

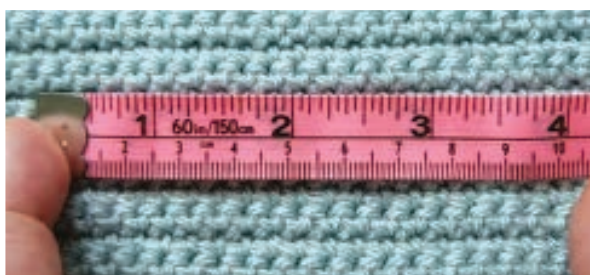
Foundation row: Miss 1 ch, 1dc into each ch to end.

Turn. **(29 sts)**

Row 1: 1ch (does not count as a st) 1dc into each st to end.

Turn. **(29 sts)**

Repeat last row until a total of 32 rows have been worked (including Foundation Row), fasten off.



Lay your sample on a flat surface. Using a tape measure, place pins 10cm (4in) apart along a central row (horizontally) and count the stitches between the pins.

Stitch tension = 20 sts



Using a tape measure place pins 10cm (4in) apart along the central point of the swatch vertically and count the rows between the pins.

Row tension = 22 rows

Treble Crochet Tension (tr)



Using 3.5mm or 4mm hook make 31ch.

Foundation row: Miss 3 ch (counts as 1tr) 1tr into each ch to end.

Turn. **(29 sts)**

Row 1: 3ch (counts as a 1tr) miss st at base of 3-ch, 1tr into each st to end, working final st into 3rd ch of 3-ch made at beginning of last row (tch). Turn. **(29 sts)**

Repeat last row until a total of 15 rows have been worked (including Foundation Row), fasten off.



Lay your sample on a flat surface. Using a tape measure place pins 10cm (4in) apart along a central row and count the stitches between the pins.

Stitch tension = 18 sts



Using a tape measure place pins 10cm (4in) apart along the central point of the swatch vertically and count the rows between the pins.

Row tension = 10 rows

If you have achieved a different tension to the tension in the pattern

If you have done your tension pieces and achieved more stitches and rows to 10cm (4in) this means you are working too tight. Rather than trying to change your crochet method (by consciously crocheting looser) simply change up to a size larger hook. If you are still too tight then try another size larger. Make a note of how many sizes you have had to change by so that you are sure to make the swap for each of the hook sizes.

If you have done your tension pieces and achieved fewer stitches and rows than 10cm (4in) this means you are working too loose. Rather than trying to change your crochet method (by consciously crocheting tighter) simply change down to a size smaller hook. If you are still too loose then try another size smaller. As above, make a note of how many sizes you have had to change by so that you are sure to make the swap for each of the three sizes.

Having trouble with your tension over treble crochet?

Look at the way you work the stitch

Because of the nature of a treble crochet, it is common to find variances in stitch length and width even if the correct hook has been used in relation to the one used to achieve the correct tension over double crochet.

When we make a treble crochet, we wrap our yarn around the hook first and then work three movements, drawing yarn loops through others to create the stitch. The tension achieved over each of these movements and the angle at which we hold our hook can have an impact on the tension of each step of the stitch.

Head to www.pjump.com/trebletension for a video that explains yanking, riding and lifting.

Difference In Stitch Tension

Please note the hook sizes - a smaller hook is used to achieve the treble crochet (US double crochet) tension. The tension is taken from unblocked swatches.

There is a slight difference in stitch tension between the two pieces (see below). A small difference (1 or 2 sts) will not affect the appearance of your piece as repeated rows are rarely worked for more than a couple of rows. However, if you find your work is getting wider when working the rows with long post stitches (such as treble and double treble crochet), then try using a hook another size smaller.



Factors that can affect your tension

Many things can make a difference to the tension you achieve; I have listed five of the most common below:

1. Your level of expertise

If you are a newcomer to the craft of crochet you may well find that your crochet tension will change as your ability improves. When launching into a project like this it is worth making sure you have put in enough ground work to ensure that you are working in the right way and that you have the ability to work consistently.

2. Your mood or situation

If you are a bit stressed or have had a bit of a tough day you may find that this will affect your crochet tension. Equally, having a few glasses of wine or watching a funny or enthralling movie whilst crocheting can also cause your tension to differ. As a general rule try to crochet in the same kind of situation whenever possible to ensure that everything stays as it should.

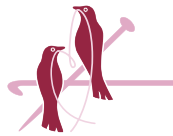
3. Number of stitches

It is quite common to achieve the correct tension on a swatch only to find that it is not correct over a larger piece. This is because tension can change as we relax into the rhythm of a repetitive crochet action.

4. Measuring your tension swatch too soon

It is really important that you measure your tension to at least 10cm (4in) - if in doubt measure over a larger piece, say 15cm (6in) or even 20cm (8in) just to be sure. Putting the ground work in at this stage can save you a lot of unpicking later on.

Make sure that you measure your tension at all the places I ask you to within the pattern just to be sure you are continuing to work with the correct tension



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