

## Swatch Matters

I am always surprised when people tell me that they don't like to swatch. Really? It always shocks me. I consider it like an investment plan with a return of about 100 to 1. Anyone who got that kind of return in the financial world would think that they were in a pyramid scheme like Bernie Madoff's.

But it is true for me. For the small effort of knitting a swatch, somewhere in the vicinity of about 6 by 6 inches, measuring it, and then treating it like the wearer will for washing, then remeasuring, I get to understand the fabric's characteristics, whether it will shrink or grow, or become softer and drapier. Then when I knit the project (usually a sweater), all the 100 times the work I put into the sweater will result in a garment that is the right size and shape!

Seriously, I think the crazy people are the ones who do not swatch for sweaters. I, personally, do not have time to knit a garment that won't fit, or will be a failure because the yarn does not act like I think it will.

Case in point, the Guy Sweater that I'm knitting. I've finished the back, and using my handy-dandy swatch gauge calculations, I knit the back (or as I refer to it: my other, really, really big swatch) and decided to treat it like the swatch - just to confirm that it was doing to be close to the right size before embarking on the remaining two-thirds of the knitting.

It looks pretty good:

and the measurements are spot on (whew!).

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(the colors are off in this photo - the yarn is actually a lovely gray-blue that will be very good for the giftee)

In related news, the kitties are enjoying the guest bed as much as I thought they would! Today I take boxes to storage, and papers to shred. The decluttering continues apace.

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