

# Learning knitting as a creative practice

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I particularly like creative activities that are accessible.

Being accessible means they don't require a lot of money or space to get going. Knitting is one of those activities – and it's not just for old ladies.

## Knitting as art

People tend to [distinguish between arts and crafts](#). The arts are usually intended to provoke an emotional response and be more of a direct expression of an idea, while crafts tend to have a more practical output and focus on skills. "Art" is frequently placed above "craft" in terms of social value, and crafts more typically associated with women and cast as low status.

Both arts and crafts are forms of creative pursuit, and equally as valid.

Many people might disagree that knitting is worth learning as an "art", but I want to include both arts and crafts in my creative practice.

The distinction between "art" and "crafts" is made up, and irrelevant to being creative.

## My knitting project

I'm knitting my own blanket out of woollen squares. This is the easiest way for me to get started with a basic knitting technique, which I learned for free from this [online tutorial from Instructables](#).

I'm using a colour scheme that appeals to me, partly based on a picture I painted recently:



Cloud artwork I painted recently

It's good to learn about the particular colour schemes that I like and to reuse them in different formats.

Knitting is fairly quick to learn, once you master the technique of creating your first row of stitches, knitting each row, and then finishing off the last row of stitches.



One of the most enjoyable parts of going to the shop to pick out wool is choosing colours that I like.

## Where I got my materials

I got the blue wool from [Fred Alduous](#) , an arts and crafts supply shop in Northern Quarter, Manchester. Fred Alduous has pretty much all the basics any artist could need, from fabrics, to paint brushes, to sketch books, to wood, to screen printing materials, and more. I also got my bamboo knitting needles from here (bamboo was all they had).

The salmon and burgundy wools are from [Abakhan](#) , a fabric shop that sells pretty much anything you can imagine relating to textiles. Abakhan is a chain of shops with my local branch also located in Northern Quarter, Manchester.

All in all I have spent around £10 on getting started with knitting, so I consider this a low-cost hobby. I think it would be quite easy to get even cheaper wool from the various markets I have been to around the North West, including ones in Bradford and Leeds.

## Wellbeing benefits of knitting

Knitting is very relaxing and I am using it as a way to "de focus". This means spending less time in focused left brain analytical thought, and more time just relaxing. It's very tactile and satisfying to produce something so tangible.

I think this will have many health and wellbeing benefits, such as decreased stress and anxiety resulting in higher quality sleep and a stronger immune system.

I plan to take my knitting with me on this year's trip to Hong Kong because the flights there and back are each more than ten hours. This means a lot of sitting in Economy class, so knitting will be a good way to keep myself occupied!

I plan to keep an illustrated and photo diary of the trip, so watch out for that post in the next couple of months.

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What creative activities do you use to help you relax and de-stress?

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