

EASTER EGG YARN DYEING



MATERIALS

YARN: We are using undyed, superwash wool (or superwash wool/nylon) yarn from Knit Picks.

DYE STOCK: We are using Easter egg dyeing kits for dyeing our yarn. The kits we're using have 9 different colors.

1-QT. WIDEMOUTH CANNING JAR WITH A LID: This will fit ~100g (4 oz.) of yarn.

OTHER:

- **(OPTIONAL) MEASURING CUP** to measure out water.
- **MEASURING SPOON** to measure out vinegar.
- **DISPOSABLE CUPS** (3 oz. size) to mix the dye, one per color.
- **WHITE VINEGAR** per the dye kit instructions (~1 tbsp per color).
- **(OPTIONAL) PLASTIC WRAP** if you want to microwave your yarn.
- **SCRAP YARN** to add ties to your skein. Preferably use white/undyed yarn to avoid having color potentially transfer to your yarn.
- **MATERIALS TO PROTECT YOUR CLOTHES** and hands (apron/gloves), and to protect your working surface (newspaper, etc.), as needed.
- **OTHER MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS**, such as a stirring stick (non-metallic), and paper towels to clean up any spills.

NOTES ON THIS DYEING METHOD

This dyeing method will produce one-of-a-kind results every time! *If you want more predictable, repeatable results, this is absolutely not the dyeing method for you.* This method is fun because it's always a surprise when you get the finished yarn, and it's easy to do, and since the dyes are food-safe you can use your regular kitchen tools.

INSTRUCTIONS—PRE-CLASS PREPARATION

PREPARATION & SETUP



1. Protect your clothes, hands and working surface as needed.
2. Remove any labels on the skein of yarn, and ensure it's tied in enough places to avoid getting tangled (add some ties with scrap yarn, if necessary)—I suggest having at least 4 ties for a 2-yard diameter skein.
 - a. I also like to punch a hole in the yarn label (if the yarn comes with one) and string it on a piece of scrap yarn long enough to tie around the jar (this is especially helpful if you're dyeing multiple different yarns at once, so you know which one is which when you're done).
3. Optional: Pre-soak your yarn (in Synthrapol, a fiber wash, if you have it) for a bit, then squeeze out the excess water. This will help ensure more even color distribution—if you intend to have LESS even color distribution, skip this step.

INSTRUCTIONS—IN-CLASS WORK

MIXING THE DYE

1. Put one dye tablet in each disposable cup, then measure and add $\frac{1}{2}$ -1 tbsp. of vinegar for each cup. Let the dye tablet dissolve completely.
2. Add water to each cup. If you're using 3-oz. cups, add enough water so the cup is $\sim\frac{2}{3}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way full. If you're using a different size cup, measure about 2 oz. ($\frac{1}{4}$ cup) of water into each of your mixing cups.
 - a. Note that the total amount of liquid for all your colors should be ~ 16 oz. (2 cups), to ensure that it will all fit in your jar with your yarn.

ADDING THE DYE TO THE YARN

1. Arrange your cups in the color order you want (keeping in mind that adjacent colors will blend together a bit).
 - a. For a brighter rainbow effect, arrange your cups in rainbow order:

 - b. For a more muted effect, consider a different order, like maybe:

2. Pour the first color in your jar, then partially put your skein of yarn into the jar on top of the dye.
3. Pour the next color, as you partially put more of your skein of yarn into the jar. Repeat for each color, trying to make sure that the last of the yarn goes in the jar at the same time as the last color.
4. The liquid may not completely cover all of the yarn—you can either push the yarn down more into the liquid, or add more water slowly on top.
 - a. Note: if you plan to microwave your yarn, it is very important to make sure it's completely wet (so it doesn't burn).
5. Put the lid on the jar, and tighten so you don't spill.

INSTRUCTIONS—AT-HOME WORK

SETTING THE DYE—AT HOME

Heat is required to set the dye, so it doesn't just wash out of the yarn.

NOTE: What you're seeing when you look at the jar is not necessarily what the skein will look like when you take it out. Prepare to be surprised when you're ready to rinse the yarn!

“SUN TEA” METHOD

This is called “sun tea” dyeing because the jar sits in the sun to heat up just like sun tea does. Find a nice, sunny spot in a window and leave the jar there for about a week. If it's not very sunny, maybe leave the yarn for a little longer.

MICROWAVE METHOD

If you would like to set your dye more quickly, you can heat it up in the microwave instead of waiting for the sun.

1. **Remove the lid of the jar** (because you don't want metal in your microwave!). Cover the jar with plastic wrap, and ensure that the yarn is fully covered with liquid.
2. Microwave your jar for 1 minute. Wait a minute or two, then microwave again. Repeat once or twice more, then check your water to ensure that it's very hot (**careful not to burn yourself!**).
3. Let the jar cool down (preferably to room temperature) before you go to the next step.

RINSING THE YARN—AT HOME

You need to rinse the residual dye off the yarn before you use it. I usually rinse as follows:

1. Open up your jar next to/over the sink and slowly take the yarn out. Gently squeeze out excess liquid, and set the yarn aside for a moment. You're now done with the jar, and you can wash it and reuse it later (since Easter egg dyes are food-safe, you can even use it for food if you want).
2. Fill the sink with tepid-to-lukewarm water, adding a little wool wash (like Soak) or fiber soap (like Synthrapol). Gently place the yarn into the sink, pushing it down to make sure it's fully submerged. Keep an eye on it for a minute or two--if you see significant color bleeding you may want to take your yarn out ASAP.
3. Let it sit for about 15 minutes, then drain the sink and take the yarn out. Gently squeeze excess water out of the yarn. Keep an eye on the yarn—if you get a lot of dye bleeding out, you may want to take the yarn out sooner so the excess dye doesn't deposit itself back onto the yarn.
4. If there was a lot of dye runoff in the water, and/or if you used soap that requires rinsing, fill up the sink again with lukewarm water, submerge the yarn again, and repeat step 3.
5. When the rinse water is reasonably clear (this is up to you to determine how much potential dye runoff you're comfortable with in the future), squeeze out as much excess water as you can and then hang the yarn up to dry. You can put the yarn in your washing machine on a *spin-only cycle* to get quite a bit of water out.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR RINSING YOUR YARN:

- We're using superwash wool here so it won't felt, but even so you don't want to agitate the yarn too much when it's wet (just in case).
- Always squeeze the skein gently, and avoid wringing the yarn. Wet wool has the potential to stretch, which can permanently alter the yarn.
- If the water is too hot, it has the potential to re-set any excess dye back onto the yarn as it soaks (i.e., potentially ruining the nice color variation you've worked so hard to achieve—ask me how I know this!). Keep it to a tepid-to-lukewarm temperature.