



Emergency Yarn Ornament

(formerly Emergency Knitter's Ornament)
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Great holiday (or year 'round) decorations for a yarn-lover; also excellent gifts for stitch 'n bitch groups, guilds, etc.

Materials:

- Yarn
- Clear glass ornaments
- Scissors/yarn cutter
- Knitting needle or chopstick (something pointy but not sharp)

Also:

- A little patience (you're working with glass)
- Knowledge of how to make a skein (some instructions are included)

Caution: Always handle glass with care. This project is not recommended for young children, unless plastic is substituted.

Directions:



Sit down with your yarn and make some mini skeins (see appendix 1).

Carefully remove and set aside the metal caps from several ornaments.



Take a mini skein and twist one end (preferably the one opposite the joined ends) as tightly as you can. Stick that into the opening of the ornament.

Once you have an end inside the ornament, just turn the skein like you're screwing in a light bulb, pushing a little (not too hard - you're holding a glass ball). If the skein isn't too fat, it should work its way in. Once it's completely inside, it will plump back up again.



Use a knitting needle (or other implement) to poke the skein around until it's out of the way of the neck.

Re-insert the metal cap. Display or package and give! (See appendix 2)

Appendix 1: Making mini skeins

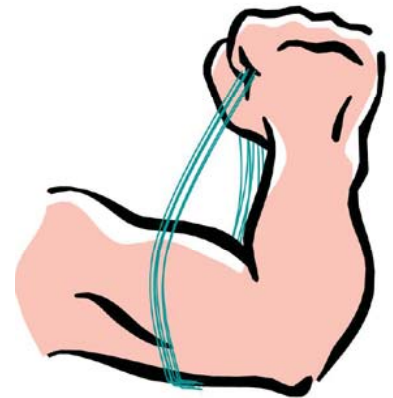


The trickiest part to this whole project is making your skeins the right size for your ornaments. Make a couple of trial skeins and see what goes into your ornament without too much trouble, yet plumps up nicely (not too fat, not too thin). Then, make up a bunch.

Make a loop of yarn and wrap several times, then tie the ends together.

Depending on the size of your ornament, you could use your arm—between hand and elbow—a book or a DVD case, for example.

For a large ornament (pictured, top of page 1), I wrapped the worsted-weight yarn 9-10 times between my hand and elbow (right). For a medium-sized ornament, I used a planner or DVD case.



Take the loop and twist several times until it starts to double up on itself.

Fold the twist in half and insert one end inside the other and let go. It will relax slightly, but retain the general shape.

About the yarn

Smooth, well-defined yarns work best; novelty yarn kind of looks like a giant bug with this application. I used my scrap yarn bowl and lots of pretty wool.

About the ornaments

If you're making these in the fall or early winter, you'll probably have no trouble finding clear glass ornaments at craft stores (make sure they aren't opalescent).

If it's off-season, check for year 'round Christmas stores, or online.

They also make clear plastic ornaments, which might be good for kids' trees, or for ornaments that have to be mailed.



Appendix 2: Displaying & Packaging



Displaying the ornaments

Obviously, these look pretty spiffy on Christmas trees.

If you don't celebrate that holiday, or want to display the ornaments year 'round (maybe one with some very special yarn that brings fond memories), check out ornament stands. I purchased this one during the summer at JoAnn Fabrics for around \$5.

They also look nice grouped in a bowl on a side table or as a centerpiece.

Packaging the ornaments

I've found that it's even more fun to package up the ornaments and give them away. My favorite two ways:

1. Square gift boxes, available at big-box craft stores are the perfect size for the large ornaments (see "Alternate Ending," this page).
2. Take-out boxes, on a nest of shredded paper (or other cushion-type material). Some Chinese restaurants will sell empty boxes; they are also available in fun colors & patterns at craft and party supply stores. I found the small one (right) in the children's craft section at a craft store.



Some other thoughts

Use leftovers from special projects and give those ornaments to the recipient of the original (if they'll appreciate it). Great for leftover sock yarn!

The first time I made these, I used leftover yarn from projects I'd made for others in the past (this is where scrap bowls come in handy) and gave them the ornament with a little note reminding them of its origin. For example, my niece's ornament contained yarn left from making the shawl she wore in my wedding.



Alternate Ending

You can also knit/crochet items like mini scarves or stockings and stuff them in ornaments. Leave a short tail attached to the top of the project to help hold it in place — have a bit of the tail hanging out before you replace the cap, catching the tail between the cap and ornament. .

If you are on Ravelry and you make these, please add them to your notebook. I love to see the results of everyone's efforts!

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