

---



## Leef's Notes on Spinning Fibers

---

One of the most enjoyable aspects of spinning is the “process”. Planning projects from raw fiber to a finished piece lends a whole spectrum of multi-layered processes for the spinner to enjoy. Before continuing, however, let me make it clear that sometimes we spin, without any end project in mind, simply for the pleasure and peace of feeling the fibers in our hands! Sometimes, our fibers and handspun have to “rest” for a while before they can tell us what they want to be. <G> But if you have the urge to plan ahead, here are some guidelines to help you get started. Remember, these are only some suggestions, as each and every one of us will develop our own way of doing things, and that is what makes this skill so special; and why, when spinners get together, we are able to learn so much from each other.

Consider your end project and the amount of memory it needs to have. Does it need to have lots of elasticity, like a cap, or a sock top, or do you want the kind of drape than conforms to your shape or hangs more fluidly? Is it next to the skin comfort, or tough durable outer wear? How warm should it be, and how breathable? All these factors will determine the kind of fiber or fiber blend you want to use and how you spin it. What color effect do you want? Do you want to use exotic accents? You can certainly dye your fibers and work on your blends before you spin, OR after you spin your yarns. Each dye process, and each blending procedure will give you different looks, and feel. Dyeing your handspun yarns after spinning will give you more precise color control. Now is the time to play with it and SAMPLE. Your structure, knit, crochet, weave, etc., as well as patterning will affect how your fabric wears and drapes. Also to be determined, is *how much of your fiber do you need to complete your project*. If possible, the best way to do this is after you have sample spun your fiber of choice and have determined the size and ply of yarn you want to use. I have found the following amounts to be fairly consistent with most of my end pieces, and may give you a place to start:

- It takes about 6 ounces of clean, dry wool to make a pair of handspun socks. For larger sock tops in excess of 6 inches, and big feet, I would do 8 ounces. 6—8 ounces is about the same amount for a hat.
- It takes about 8 ounces of clean dry wool to make an average coat scarf. For those extra long ones, I would plan on 10 ounces, and for those cute small accent scarves, 4—6 ounces.
- For an average sized adult vest, it takes about 16—20 ounces of clean dry wool
- For an average sized adult sweater, it takes about 24—32 ounces of clean dry wool. I always plan on 2 pounds, and that way there is plenty usually for lots of sampling, and even a hat or pair of mittens
- Not including your warp, it takes about 5 pounds of clean dry wool to make a wool rug of average size.

When purchasing raw wool, remember that you can lose anywhere from 20 to 50% of your fiber weight in the cleaning process, depending on the breed and how much grease they produce, so do your homework here!

---

APPLE LEEF FARM   
Les & Leef Bloomenstiel  
7454 FM 121  
P.O. Box 776  
Van Alstyne, TX 75495-0776



Phone: 903-482-5128  
Fax: 903-482-5128  
Email: [leef@appleleeffarm.com](mailto:leef@appleleeffarm.com)  
<http://appleleeffarm.com/>