

Creating Marled Yarn

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The Oxford Dictionary defines *marled* as an adjective meaning “(chiefly of yarn or fabric) mottled or streaked.”

There are a couple of ways to create a marled yarn. The simplest form of a marled yarn is to spin singles in two different colors and ply them together. This type of yarn is also known as barber pole yarn. While this type of yarn doesn't always conjure up a desirable yarn (especially if done with highly contrasting colors), it can be created to give an interesting effect. If one of those plies is the same color for the entire length of the yarn, and the other ply is short sections of



multiple colors, the result is a self-striping yarn. If you use black as the first ply this will make the colors of the other yarn pop.



Gray or white will give different effects.

The second way to create a marled yarn is to draft two different colors of fibers together at the same time.

This is a great way to extend a smaller amount of fiber. If you have two, 2 ounce rovings, then you instantly have four ounces of roving. To prepare to spin this type of yarn, I hold the two rovings together in my hand and pull off short segments of both (approximately 12-18”). I then gently pre-draft them to encourage some blending. Then off to the wheel, and let the colors change at random as you draft the fibers. The plied yarn will have interesting color changes.

Don't think that this technique is only for dyed roving. I am in the process of knitting a vest from marled yarn using natural colors. One of the yarns is a dark brown marled with gray, and the other yarn is a medium brown marled with tan. The resulting yarn has hints of all the colors, and creates what a wine taster might call a complex bouquet of colors.

This is also a great technique if you've got some dyed roving, that sort of go together, that you wish you had more of. If you're not sure about a combination, you can spin up just a small amount and make a sample.



Happy Spinning!



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