

BALALAIKA

by sharonf



I designed this pattern in celebration of the 25th anniversary of the video game Tetris. This cell phone cozy in a mosaic pattern of Tetris blocks is the perfect blend of old school and new. You can make the cozy with tiny amounts of time and yarn, so it's perfect as a quick gift, a swatch for a larger piece, or an introduction to mosaic knitting.

I enjoy mosaic (or slip-stitch) knitting because I like the look of color work but get fussed if I try to carry more than one strand of yarn at a time. Mosaic knitting solves that problem by using only one color per round.

Tetris blocks work beautifully in mosaic knitting; nearly any arrangement of blocks and size of playing field will work. The pattern includes instructions so you can create your own unique Tetris chart. To make the work look even fancier, choose a background color with long color changes.

(If the title of the pattern seems peculiar to you, congratulations on having avoided a Tetris addiction!)

Photos: sharonf and [Matt Babcock](#)

SIZE

One. This pattern fits many popular slim cell phones and hand-held devices. You can design your own chart to whatever dimensions you wish.

FINISHED MEASUREMENT

Width: 2.5 inches
Height: 4.75 inches



Free pattern on [ravelry.com](#)

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sharon@sharonmattnadia.com

MATERIALS

One cozy uses approximately 15 yards of MC and 10 yards of CC.

Slate version (grey and red):

[MC] SWS Patons [70% wool/30% soy; 110 yd/100 m per 80 g skein]; color: Natural Slate

[CC] Cascade 220 [wool; 220 yd/200 m per 100 g skein]; color: 2401 (dark red)

Geranium version (pink and green):

[MC] SWS Patons [70% wool/30% soy; 110 yd/100 m per 80 g skein]; color: Natural Geranium

[CC] Cascade 220 Superwash [superwash wool; 220 yd/200 m per 100 g skein]; color: 860 (smoke heather)

1 US #6 / 4 mm circular needle, long enough to do magic loop (or two circular needles)
(optional) a second US #6 / 4 mm circular needle or 2 DPNs (for dividing stitches to begin working in the round)
yarn needle

GAUGE

20 sts/39 rounds = 4 inches in mosaic pattern

PATTERN NOTES

The cozy is worked in the round from the bottom up, using the magic loop technique. If you prefer, you can use two circular needles.

Yarn Substitutions

If you choose a variegated yarn for your MC, make sure your CC contrasts well with all of the colors in the MC. Your MC and CC should be of similar weight, but do not have to be exactly the same. For example, Patons SWS is 9 wraps per inch, while Cascade 220 is 12 wraps per inch. Vigorous blocking takes care of most of the difference.

Re-Sizing

Charts are provided below for a range of sizes. If your yarn knits up to a different gauge than the pattern specifies, or if you want to make a cozy for a different-sized item, it's easy to chart your own pattern (see instructions below). You can use any odd number of stitches for the chart, with 13 as the minimum.



To accommodate a thicker gadget, add an increase or two to either edge on your first round of knitting and chart these stitches as MC. This has the added benefit of visually separating the two repeats and minimizing the appearance of the color "jog" at the beginning of the round. Just be careful to keep your floats around the edges very loose. (See the chart for the geranium version for an example.)

Tetris Pattern

Mosaic work is not difficult, but you do have to wrap your head around the concept if you haven't done it before. You can find an excellent tutorial at <http://www.knitty.com/ISSUEsummer03/FEATslipstitch.html>.

The chart starts at the lower right and reads from right to left on each round. Each row of the chart is worked for two rounds in the same color (indicated in the column to the right of the chart).

When you encounter a block on the chart that is not in the working color (indicated with an X), slip the corresponding stitch purlwise, with yarn in back. This draws the other color up into the round.

On the even-numbered rounds, simply knit each knit stitch and slip each slipped stitch from the previous round.



Charting Your Own Pattern

See page 6 for instructions and 15- and 17-stitch sample charts.

Slate Chart

													Rounds		Working Color			
													33	34				
X				X						X	X		31	32				
	X	X	X		X							X	29	30				
X				X		X				X	X		27	28				
									X		X		25	26				
X						X		X		X	X	X	23	24				
			X				X	X		X			21	22				
X		X		X			X		X		X	X	19	20				
	X				X								17	18				
X				X		X						X	15	16				
			X				X						13	14				
X		X		X		X		X				X	11	12				
	X				X				X	X	X		9	10				
X		X						X				X	7	8				
	X												5	6				
X				X								X	3	4				
													1	2				
13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1						
□ MC (knit)				X MC (slipped)				■ CC (knit)				X CC (slipped)						

Top Edge

Work in MC.

Round 1: sl 1 st; with MC, knit around

Rounds 2-3: knit (work additional rounds as needed to make work the desired length)

Round 4: knit, slipping last stitch on first needle and first and last stitches on second needle (slipping the stitches is optional - it will create a slight downward curve to the top edge of the cozy, which looks particularly nice with the shape of some gadgets)

Bind off in purl. Weave in ends.

FINISHING

Block

Blocking is very important for achieving attractive, even results with mosaic work.

Soak the cozy in tepid water for at least 30 minutes. Gently squeeze out the water by rolling the cozy in a towel.

Select an object that will fit snugly, wrap it securely in plastic wrap, and insert it into the cozy. The intended gadget makes a perfect blocking form. Or try a pad of sticky notes, a stack of business cards, a small flat bottle, or a tin of mints. Let the cozy dry completely.

Tweak

You may notice that some of your CC stitches are hidden or irregular. After the cozy is completely dry, you can use a yarn needle to tweak those stitches and make them more prominent.



before tweaking



after tweaking

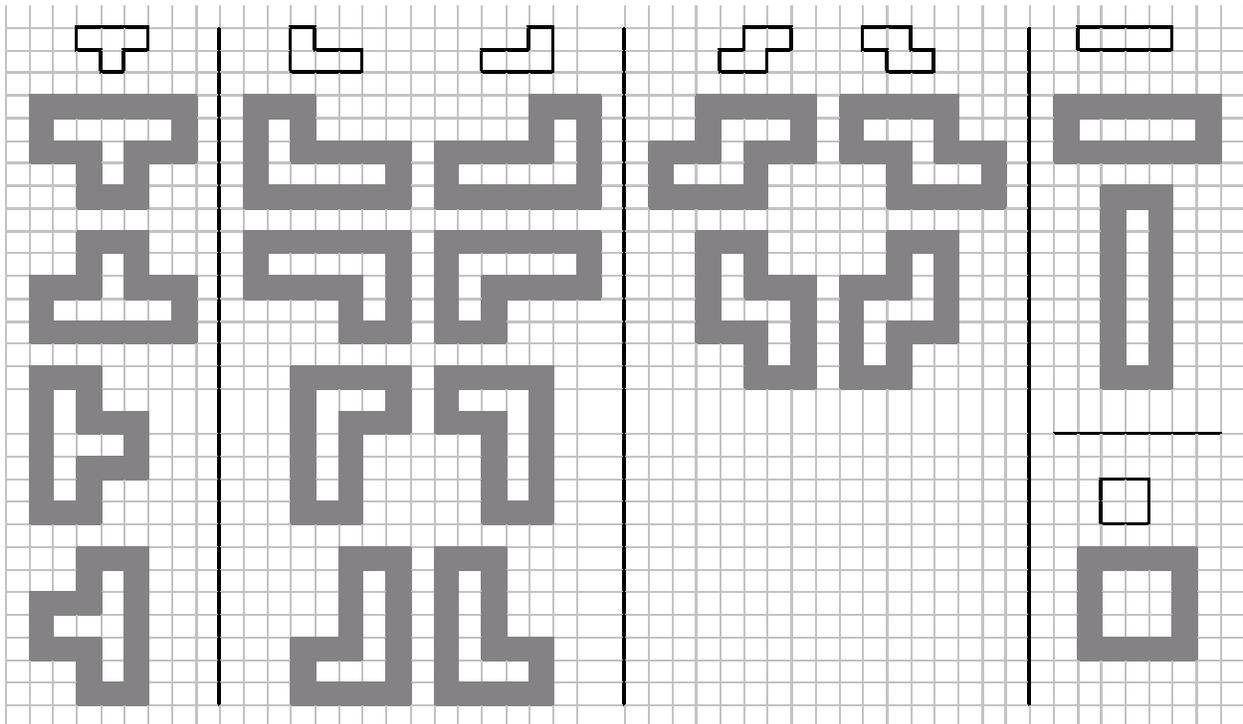


ABOUT THE DESIGNER

Sharon (sharonf on Ravelry) has resumed knitting after a twenty-year hiatus and is attempting to make up for lost time. She keeps a sporadic knitting and miscellany blog (blog.sharonmattnadia.com), but thinks her cake design blog is more interesting (cake.sharonmattnadia.com).

Charting Your Own Pattern

There are 7 different Tetris blocks. Each can be rotated 90, 180 or 270 degrees.



Arrange your blocks with the CC cells overlapping as in the charts in this pattern. You can use any odd number of stitches, with 13 as the minimum.

The square Tetris block requires the longest floats, so use it sparingly. Otherwise, almost any arrangement of blocks will work. Challenge yourself to chart a design that is completely filled in with valid Tetris blocks - leaving no gaps.

I have included a 15-stitch and a 17-stitch pattern as examples. Both are worked over 50 rounds.

