



Crochet and Knit for Relaxation

By Brenda K. B. Anderson

Many people use Knitting and Crochet to help themselves relax. Once you learn the basics, you can use the soothing repetitive motions and cozy sensory experience to quiet your mind and calm your body.

For some people, it helps to have a challenging project to take their mind off of their troubles for a while. Colorwork, intricate cables or lacework are great projects for this purpose. If you fall into this category, look for a project where you will learn a new technique, or something where you know you will need to pay close attention to the pattern each step of the way.

Many people, however, are helped the most by the type of project that requires very little attention; a project where you do not need to count your stitches, or constantly refer to a pattern or chart to see what comes next. This type of project can allow your hands to make repetitive calming motions, while you shift your focus to your breathing, posture, and senses. Read on for some suggestions on projects for you to try if this sounds like something that would benefit you.

Knit Projects:

Garter Stitch Washcloth

What is more relaxing than garter stitch? This is usually the first knitting stitch pattern we learn, and for good reason- it's so easy and so satisfying! Using a softer cotton yarn that is easier on the hands will bring this experience to another level of relaxation. I love using Knitpicks Dishie cotton yarn. [Watch this video tutorial.](#)

Simple, top-down, triangular shawl

One you set this up, it's smooth sailing until you decide the shawl is big enough. If you use yarn-overs for your increases along each side of the center stitch, it will be easy to see where to continue making those increases. [Watch this video tutorial.](#)

Broken Rib Stitch Baby Blanket

The [Broken Rib](#) pattern is a super easy 2 row repeat. Use a stitch marker to mark the side of the fabric where you knit all the way across, so you don't need to keep track of which row you are on.

Directions for knitting in Broken Rib stitch:

CO any odd number of sts.

Row 1 (RS): knit

Row 2 (WS): (k1, p1) across, k1.

Repeat Rows 1 and 2 to desired length.

Work 1 additional repeat of Row 1 so you can BO in pattern on a WS row. This makes an edge similar to the CO edge.



Try this: Make a tube shaped knit scarf/circular scarf!

This project is just a long knit tube. This allows you to knit and knit and knit yourself into a calming state. (No purling required!)

Materials:

You can use any yarn you like for this project, however keep in mind, that due to the tube-like construction method of this scarf, that this scarf would be quite thick in a yarn heavier than a chunky weight. Yarn amounts vary, depending on width and length of scarf, and gauge.

The worsted weight sample shown took about 820yds [750m].

Choose a 12" or 16" circular needle with size appropriate for yarn of choice. Your scarf will be about 5-7" [12.5-18cm] or 7-9" [18-23cm] wide depending on length of circular needle.

Project shown in live tutorial is a combination of aran, worsted weight, and sport weight yarns (the later with 2 strands held together), knit on a size 8 [5.0mm] 16" circular needle.

In the sample, I used 5 different colors, but you could make this with any number of colors, including just one color.

Yarn Used for Projects Shown

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We Crochet Wool of the Andes Superwash (worsted weight #4), 100% Superwash Wool, 110 yds [100m]/1.75 oz [50 grams]: Opal #25645, (C1)

Lion Brand Vanna's Glamour (discontinued) (sport weight #2), 96% acrylic, 4% Metallic Polyester, 202 yds [185m]/1.75 oz [50 grams]: Gold #861171 (C2), (this yarn was held doubled)

We Crochet Heatherly (worsted weight, 80% acrylic, 20% merino wool; 218 yards [100 grams]: Butter #29550 (C3), and Peachfuzz #29549 (C4).

C5 yarn (pink) was re-purposed from a thrifted acrylic/cotton sweater.

Gauge: My gauge for this project was 16 sts and 20.5 rows = 4" [10 cm] in stockinette stitch worked in the round. However, gauge is unimportant as long as you achieve a fabric that you like the feel of.

Directions:

Cast on enough stitches onto the circular needle so that they fill up the needle and they can slide freely.

I cast 64 stitches onto a size 8 [5.0mm] 16" circular needle for my sample. This resulted in a 16" [40.5cm] circumference. When the tube was flattened, the scarf measured 8" [20.5cm] wide.

Use a stitch marker to mark the beginning of the round.

Begin knitting in the round.

Changing colors for jog-less stripes

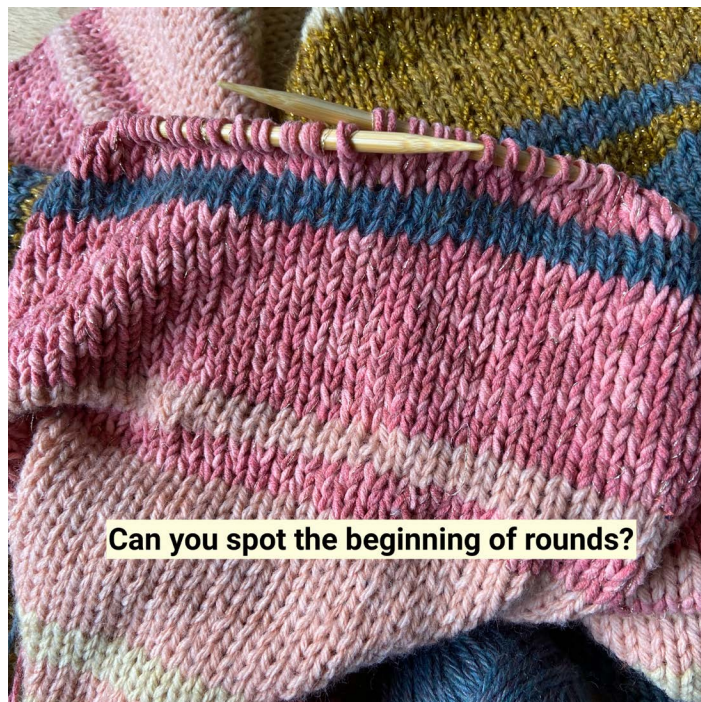
If/when you want to change to another color, drop old color and knit with the new color to the end of the round.

On the next round, slip the first stitch purl-wise, then knit to the end of the round.



Continue knitting each stitch of the round until you want to switch to another color. If you have only knit a few rounds since the last color change, remove stitch marker, knit the first stitch of the next round in the old color, place marker, then knit the next stitch with the new color. The first stitch of the new color will now count as the beginning of rounds (we moved the marker to reflect this, and have shifted the beginning of the rounds by one stitch).

If you have knit many rounds since the last color change (you have made a wide stripe), you do not need to change the location of the beginning of the round.



Instead of weaving in ends, tie the neighboring yarn ends together in a tight knot on the inside of the scarf, and cut off excess as shown below.



Finishing your scarf

Continue to knit in the round to desired length, changing colors as desired.
My sample was knit to 70' [178cm] long.

Bind off all stitches, weave in any loose ends, and block scarf.

If you plan to use this as a regular rectangular scarf, use yarn tails or a matching color to whip-stitch the open edges closed to keep them flat, and to keep them from curling.

Alternatively, if you would like to use this as a circular scarf, use a matching piece of yarn and yarn needle to sew the CO and BO edges to each other while they are in an open-circle configuration. Be careful not to twist the scarf when you do this, and the goal is to maintain the open tube shape- like a hollow donut.

The sample shown was worked in the following color pattern:
5 colors were used: C1(gray/blue) , C2 (gold), C3 (pale yellow), C4 (soft peach), and C5 (dusty pink).

*Knit C1 for 12 rnds.

Knit C2 for 3 rnds.

Knit C1 for 3 rnds.

Knit C2 for 12 rnds.

Knit C3 for 3 rnds.

Knit C2 for 3 rnds.

Knit C3 for 12 rnds.

Knit C4 for 3 rnds.

Knit C3 for 3 rnds.

Knit C4 for 12 rnds.

Knit C5 for 3 rnds.

Knit C4 for 3 rnds.

Knit C5 for 12 rnds.

Knit C1 for 3 rnds.

Knit C5 for 3 rnds.

Repeat from * another 3 times.

Knit C1 for one additional round before binding off. This was done so that the seam between the CO and BO would be less visible. If you plan to leave your project as a rectangular scarf (and NOT seam the ends together to create a circle scarf), then you do not need to make an additional round in the first color used.

Crochet Projects:

Crochet Projects:

Rectangular granny square blanket

If you detest weaving in ends, you can make this in a color-changing yarn or a solid color. Check out our tutorial for making a rectangular granny square blanket here on [the Creative Crochet Corner](#).

Large circular throw pillow

You can use any yarn weight you like, and follow the basic formula for making a circle in single crochet, [which can be found here](#). Make two circles of the same size, then seam or crochet them together around the edges, stuffing pillow or inserting a circular pillow form before you finish the seam. You will need to pay attention to your stitch count for the first few rounds of making the circles, until you get the repeat sections marked with stitch markers, but after that, you will no longer need to count your stitches, and this is a very meditative project.

Double Crochet Dishcloth

So many people find the [double crochet](#) to be the most fun and relaxing stitch to make and who doesn't need more dishcloths? This project is especially soothing to work on if you can find a softer cotton yarn to work with. My personal favorite is Dishie, which is sold at [Knitpicks.com](#) and [Crochet.com](#).

Try this: Crochet a linen stitch scarf!

This project is perfect for using your scraps—the stitch pattern combines colors together beautifully, and thanks to the fringe, you will not need to weave in any ends at all! The stitch pattern is a simple 2-row repeat so it's easy to stitch stress-free.

Materials

Use any yarn that you like for this project, and any appropriate hook to go with that yarn. Yarn amounts vary, depending on width and length of scarf, and gauge.

I used about 6 different colors of yarn for the majority of the scarf with a few extra scraps thrown in here and there. The yarns that were used ranged from sport (held double) to heavy worsted weight, however most of the yarn was a worsted weight. The entire scarf used about 425 yds [398m] in total. The majority of the colors I



used were the same as in the knitted scarf (see above), with the addition of another colorway of Heatherly: Sweetheart.

I used an H [5.0mm] hook, but you will use whatever size hook is appropriate for the yarn you chose.

Size

Scarf pictured measures 64" [162.5cm] long excluding fringe and about 6.5" [16.5cm] wide. Your scarf can be made to any size.

Gauge

My gauge for this project was 15 sts and 17 rows = 4" [10 cm] in linen stitch pattern. However, gauge is unimportant as long as you achieve a fabric that you like the feel of.

Directions:

This scarf was worked [sideways](#) as follows:

With first color, and leaving a 6" [15cm] beginning tail, chain any odd number of stitches until the you have reached the desired length of your scarf, then add 1 additional chain. Note: the length might grow or shrink just a bit once you begin working into your chain, so monitor the length for the first few rows.

Row 1: Working into the [bottom \(or back\) of the chain](#), and starting with the second ch from hook, [SC, skip one chain, ch 1] across until 1 st remains, SC in last st. Fasten off leaving a 6" [15cm] yarn tail. Turn.

Row 2: Leaving a 6" [15cm] beginning yarn tail, pull up a loop of the next color in the first st, ch 1 (doesn't count as a stitch), SC in same st, [SC in ch-1 sp, ch 1, skip next SC] across until 2 sts remain, SC in ch-1 sp, SC in last st. Fasten off leaving 6" [15cm] yarn tail. Turn.

Row 3: Leaving a 6" [15cm] beginning yarn tail, pull up a loop of next color in the first st, ch 1, SC in same st, [ch 1, skip next st, SC in ch-1 sp] across until 1 st remains, SC in last st. Fasten off leaving 6" [15cm] yarn tail. Turn.

Repeat Rows 2 and 3 to desired width.

Block.

To make the fringe:

Use a 7" [18cm] piece of cardboard to prep the fringe.

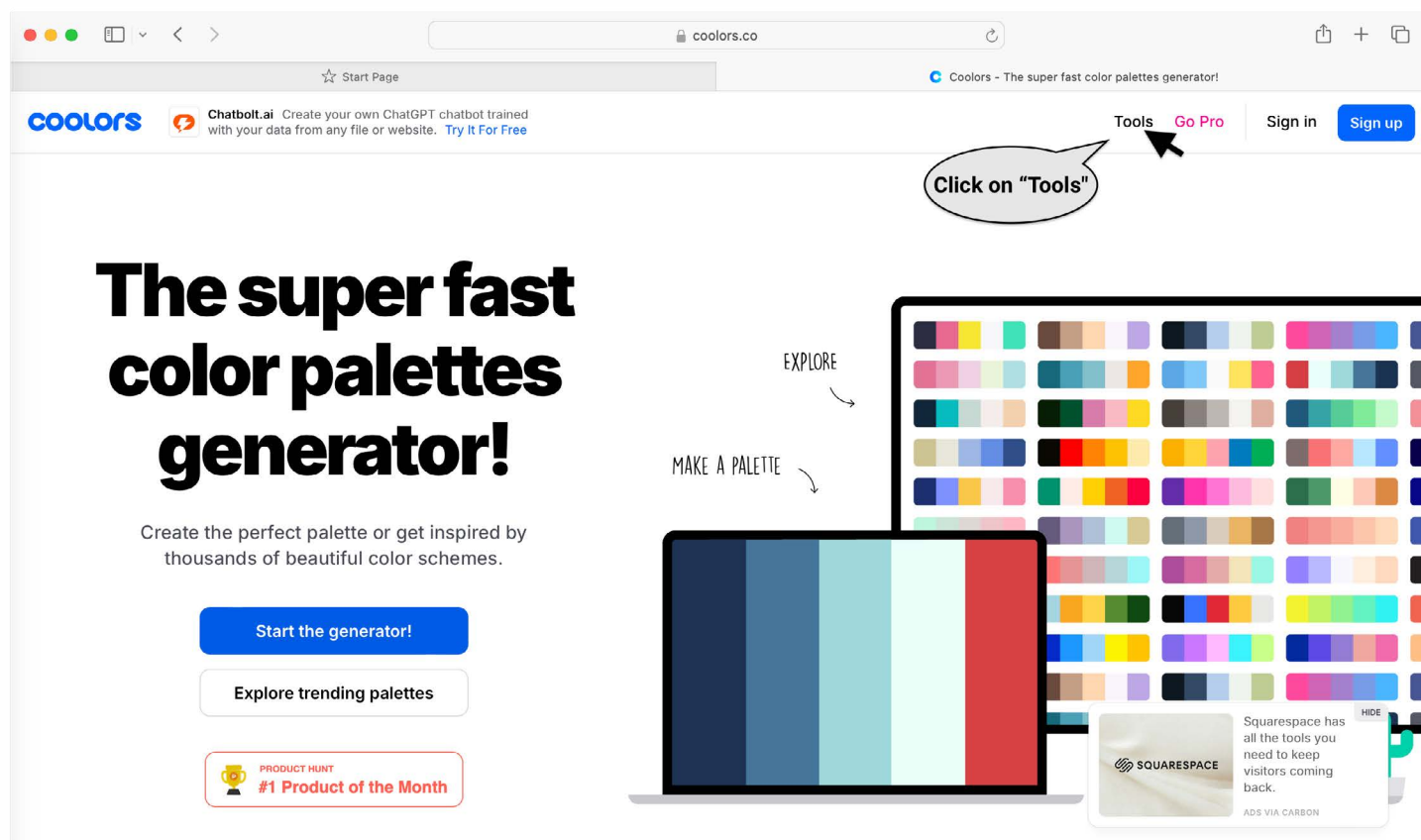
On each end of scarf, make one tassel for every two rows worked across the scarf. Wrap yarn around a piece of cardboard two times for each tassel you plan to make. Use any colors you like for this. Use scissors to cut across bottom edge of cardboard to create many strands of 14" [35.5cm] yarn. Insert hook through end of scarf, lay 2 strands of yarn across hook, use hook to pull

one end of both strands through the fabric. Adjust strands of yarn so that cut edges are even, and incorporate the 2 nearest yarn tails from the scarf into the tassel. With all strands held together as one, tie an overhand knot close to the edge of the scarf to attach fringe. Repeat across both ends of scarf. Trim tassels to make them look neater if desired.

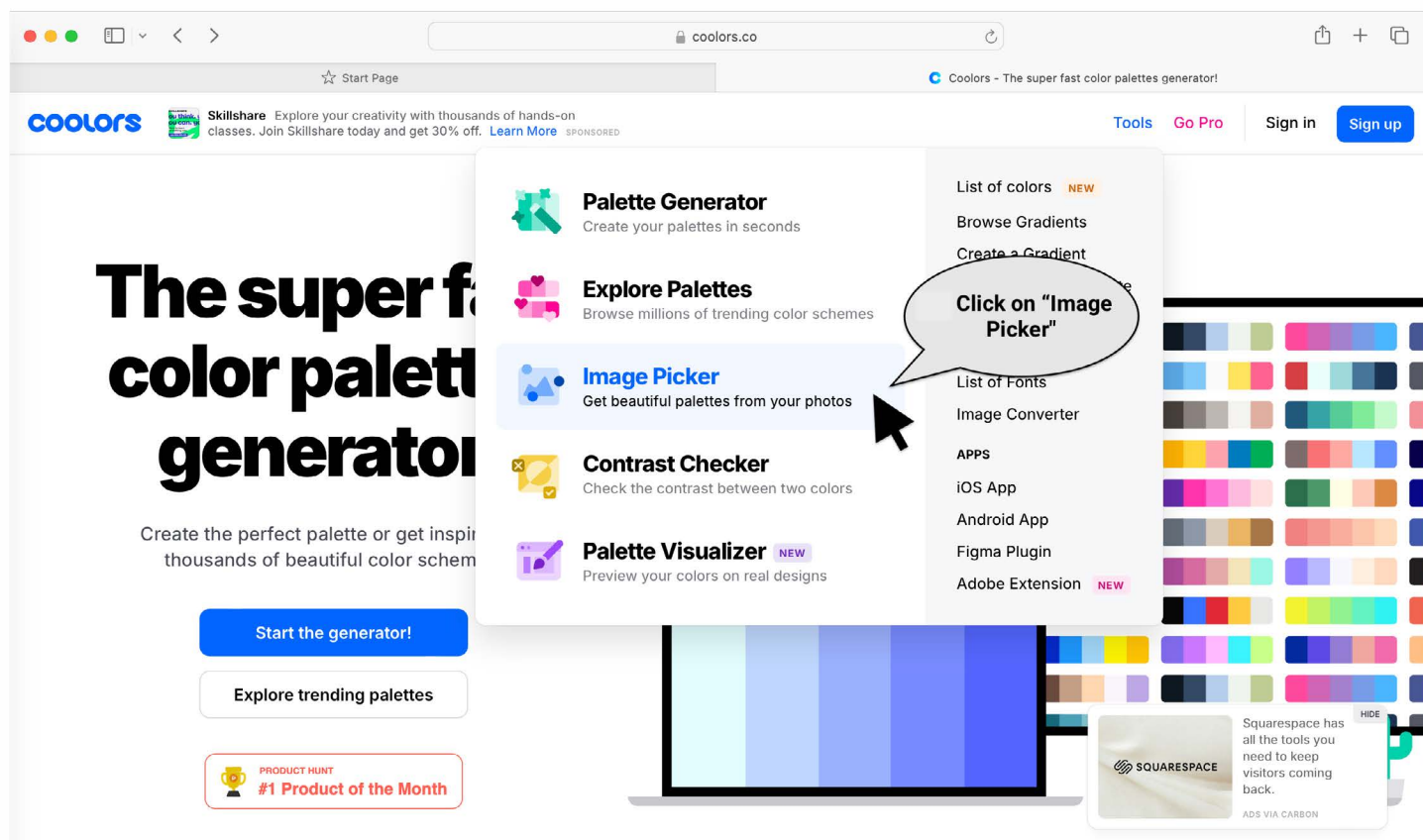
Choosing a relaxing color palate:

Colors have a strong effect on our mindset. They can energize us or they can calm us down. Choosing colors that help you relax, can enhance the benefits of knitting or crocheting. If you already know which colors to choose, then you are good to go! But if the idea of choosing colors leaves you unsure, confused, or anxious, then you may want to try an online color palette generator. This is very easy to do! There are many different websites to choose from that can help you choose a color palette for free, and lots of different ways to come up with your own palette. The example we will be using here is a website called Coolors, and I will show you a fun way to come up with a relaxing color palette.

Go to [Coolors.co](https://coolors.co) and click on "tools" in the menu.

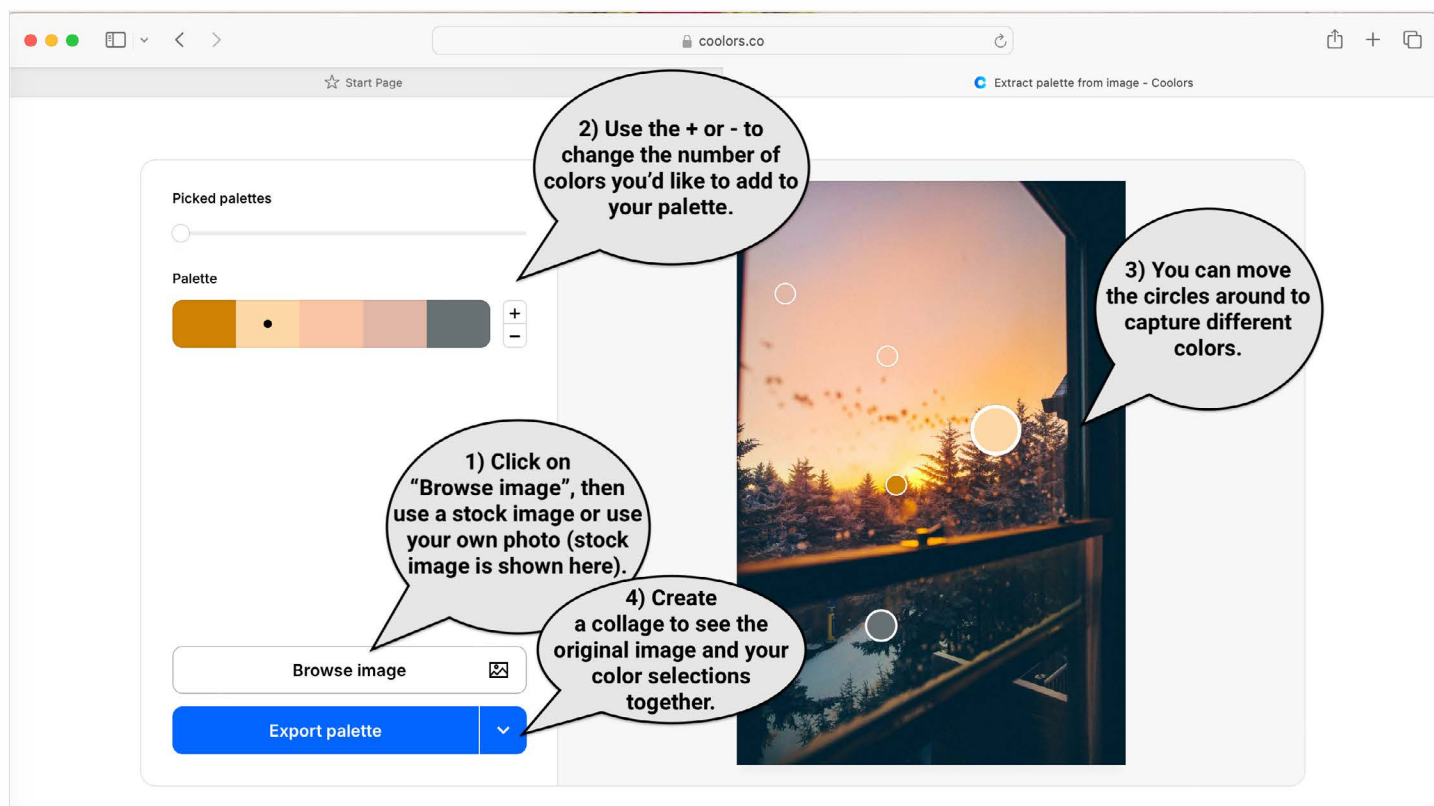


Click on "Image Picker"



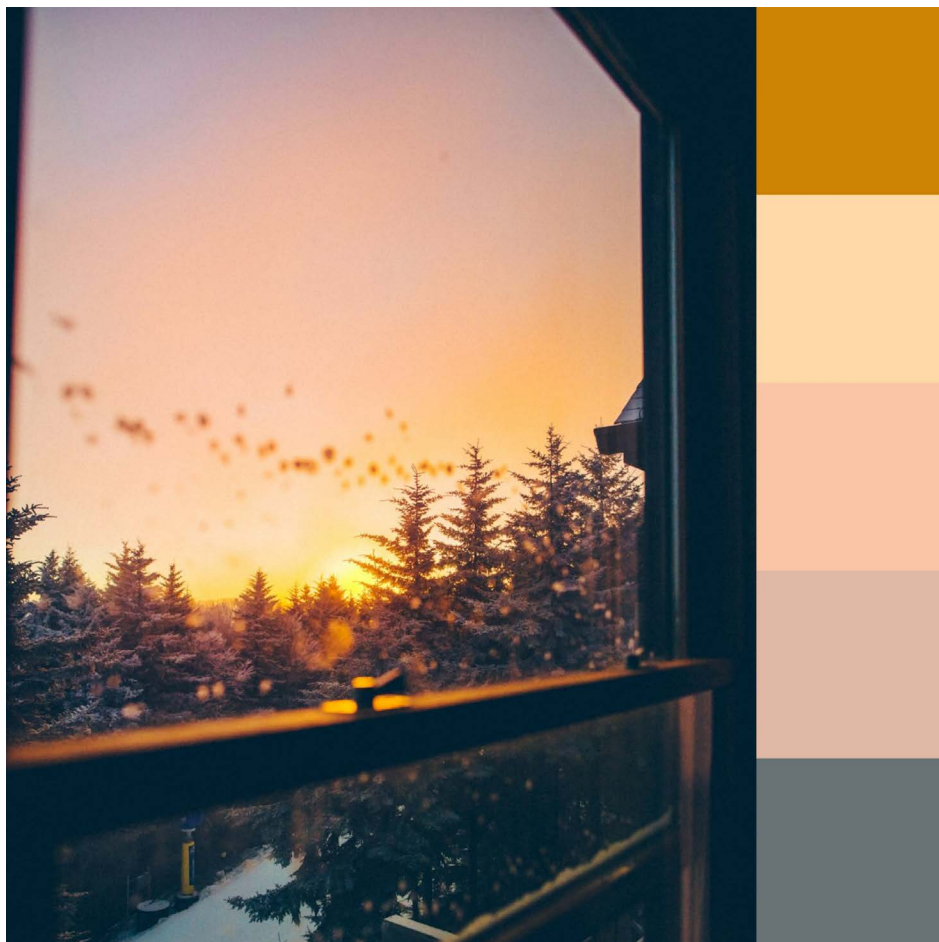
Click on "Browse Image". If you choose "stock image" you can type "cozy" or "relaxing" or "sunrise" or any word that you associate with a feeling of calm and well-being, into the search bar. Then choose an image that makes you feel relaxed and has colors that you like.

Alternatively, you can use your own photograph or picture if you have something specific in mind; maybe a photo of your flower garden, or a view from a favorite vacation spot.



Now that you have your photo, the website will automatically choose a color palette for you. You can change the selections easily though! You can use the + or – buttons to change the number of colors selected, and you can move the little circles around on the picture to capture different colors from the image.

When you are happy with your selection, you can click on the button to the right of “Export palette” to “Create Collage”. This will place your image next to the colors that you chose. You can even choose different configurations for the color palette and image. Then you can click “export” and save this on your computer.



This is such a fun way to get inspired when starting a new project!

Further Reading: Articles on using yarn-crafts to relax, and reduce stress:

<https://archive.nytimes.com/well.blogs.nytimes.com/2016/01/25/the-health-benefits-of-knitting/>

<https://www.anxietyresourcecenter.org/2017/10/crochet-helps-brain/>

<https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2024/jan/02/purls-of-wisdom-the-wellbeing-benefits-of-knitting-and-crocheting>

The image shows a full page of white paper with horizontal grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page. In the lower right quadrant, there is a promotional banner. It consists of two stacked rectangular boxes. The top box is dark brown with the text "Creativity Lives at Craftsby.com!" in white, bold, sans-serif font. The bottom box is light beige with the text "Check us out for patterns, classes, ideas and more in all your favorite creative crafts." in black, sans-serif font.

Creativity Lives at
Craftsy.com!

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