

The long and short of it

Description

Why is some yarn scratchy and some not? Some of it has to do with the kind of fiber used for the yarn. Mostly though, it has to do with the width of those fibers and that can vary even within the same species; different breeds of sheep have different widths of fiber. It's not just that alpacas have softer fiber than sheep and angora rabbits have the softest of all.



Are these not the cutest?



Side note here, angora rabbits originated in Turkey hence the name. The breed was named after the city of Ankara, the capital of the country. And no, I haven't gone completely off into the deep end and started raising rabbits, I found these pics on google. Sabrina (the dog, for those who don't know) would love it if I did though! bunny stew, yummm!

But I digress. Microns, my friends, are how these fibers are measured. One micron is equal to one thousandth of a millimeter, or one millionth (pinky to lips here please) of a meter. Amazing. Difficult to imagine being able to measure something so tiny.

Here's how they rank by species. The overall range is between 10 and 40 but can go up as high as 100 for some of the courser outer coats. Not all animals have a double coat that's used so I've ignored that in my list. I won't list the micron ranges but if you are interested in reading more, I will put a couple of links at the bottom of the post.

- Angora Rabbits
- Qiviut (Arctic musk ox) - Looks very Yak like to me
- Vicuña - Wild alpaca cousins. If you want to learn more, go to this link but do it quickly as their site says it is going away mid Feb. [Arkive](#)
- Opossum - I know, weird hunh. I have a sweater, socks and hat made from possum! it's a thing in New Zealand. I haven't see yarn available to purchase. These opossum are not the

same breed as the ones we usually see Stateside but are still considered vermin.

- Kashmir goat – See photo below – there’s a Pinterest board full of pics if you want to look.
- Camel – We all know what they look like, yes. Who knew they have enough fur to even make yarn.



NZ Opossum
Cuter than our domestic ones

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Qiviut



Kashmir goat
Look at those horns!

All the above start between 10 and 15 microns. The next group is 16- 20 microns.

- Merino Sheep â?? The different sheep breeds run the whole gamut in the micron measurement test but from what I have learned, Merino is the softest, i.e. smallest.
- Alpaca â?? Ok, so the weird thing to me here is that the numbers are about the same range for these guys as the merino but the yarns I have felt and used feel so much softer to me.

This last group is the list of the courser ones. Microns that is and every time I say that word, my brain wants to link it to Mycroft for some reason. Canâ??t tell you why, itâ??s a mystery.

- Angora goats â?? Remember my Curly post?
- Llama â?? And no, Tom does not have a llama, not one that walks and talks anyway! although he chatted with a woman who has a fiber farm in upper New York when we were in NYC recently! and I did make him a beanie out of llama yarn.
- Yak â?? The yarns I have in my stash and have used have all been mixed with other fibers like merino and bamboo.

Hereâ??s the take away: While itâ??s interesting to know this, I have never seen this information listed on a yarn label. The first time a fiber person said the word micron to me I rushed home to research and learn, convinced it was vital for me to know all about it. It is interesting *but*, I have decided that the numerical specifics are *not* vital if I can remember the basic order of things. There is only so much room in my brain.

Any who, if you want to learn more about the various fibers, I recommend you go to this site: [Wild Fibres](#). I found a plethora of information on other sites as well but most of it was way more than I needed to know in order to buy yarn at my local yarn store. This alpaca site has lots of info and cute alpaca pics and theyâ??re in Montana! [Alpacas of Montana](#).

To close, I will share with you two photos! one of my newest stash addition, and one of the reason I *had* to buy it. The yarn is called Sleep Paralysis!



Hand dyed yarn from [Nooch Fiber](#)

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She really does get sleep paralysis. It could be she was protesting the fatal penalty screw-up in the Saints playoff that most probably cost them the game. Or maybe I just wanted to see if sheâ??d stay put once I covered her up (and she did).

Category

1. Uncategorized

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