

A Guide to Kind Knitting

From [Wear It Kind](#)
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Lambs and sheep suffer horrendously for the bloody business of wool production.



Image by Rosie Kerr, Unsplash

One of the biggest problems is the mulesing of merino sheep. In mulesing, lambs have large strips of skin on their buttocks cut off without anesthetic. This cruel procedure is only practiced in Australia.

Mulesing is done to prevent possible fly attacks by removing excessive skin folds where flies sometimes like to lay eggs.

What can I do?

There are two questions you should ask yourself.

Could this yarn be made from alternative materials?

If so, you will find a list of common alternative materials in the guide.

Does it have to be merino wool?

If yes, you should consider the following to ensure that your purchase does not support animal suffering.

Find out about knitting wool brands and retailers. If your favorite brands or retailers publicly oppose mulesing and the wool has one of the following labels, then you can be sure that your wool is mulesed-free:

Mulesing-Free Labels

- *Responsible Wool Standard (RWS)*
- *NATIVA*
- *ZQ Merino*

Be cautious with other labels – even if it says organic, mulesing cannot be ruled out for certain. A general rule to apply is, if the wool originates from Australia, it is possible that mulesing could have taken place.

Alternative Materials

These following materials are not of animal origin and are therefore automatically free of animal suffering. Be careful though: synthetic fibers are often mixed with natural fibers (of animal or vegetable origin).

Bamboo

can be processed into viscose fibers or environmentally friendly Monocel. The material is:

- similar to a mixture of silk and cashmere
- light
- durable
- insulating
- resistant to odors

Cotton

is the best-known alternative to wool and accounts for about a third of the world's fiber production. Organic cotton produces 70% less CO2 than conventional cotton. The material is:

- soft
- sensitive to skin
- wrinkle-free
- absorbent

Hemp

grows fast and is grown without the use of pesticides or chemical fertilizers. The material is:

- fully compostable
- durable
- sensitive to skin
- antimicrobial

Linen

is obtained from the stems of the flax plant. Cultivation and processing are particularly environmentally friendly. The material is:

- tear resistant
- cooling
- quick drying
- anti-allergenic

Lyocell or Tencel

is a cellulose fiber made from sustainable forestry. The material is:

- made from eucalyptus wood
- easily recyclable
- soft
- insulating

Modal

is a viscose fiber that is primarily obtained from the wood pulp of sustainably grown beech. The material is:

- soft and smooth
- easily recyclable
- 50% more absorbent than cotton
- quick drying

The animal suffering behind mohair, alpaca, cashmere or angora wool

Mohair, alpaca, cashmere or angora wool are often used in knitting. Unfortunately, there are major animal welfare concerns associated with these materials. Cashmere goats, angora goats (mohair) and alpacas suffer during the collection of these materials, often due to the lack of animal welfare guidelines in the producing countries.

The Main Issues regarding Animal Welfare are:

- Stress, panic and injuries during shearing, with alpaca especially suffering from stress when restrained
- In some cases, wool is forcibly removed from the animals, such as cashmere goats where the fine under hair is painfully torn out with metal combs
- Outdoor husbandry is often insufficient with a lack of protection from strong winds and other weather conditions, and an inadequate provision of food and care
- There is often a lack of medical treatment following the shearing process. In the case of Angora rabbits, they often suffer from harmful infections, particularly of the eyes, as a result of unchecked breeding and poor cage keeping

There is no animal-friendly production of angora wool. Therefore, FOUR PAWS strongly reject its use and purchase.

When buying cashmere, mohair or alpaca-based wool make sure to select products certified by the Good Cashmere Standard (GCS), the Responsible Alpaca Standard (RAS), or the Responsible Mohair Standard (RMS) or even better seek sustainable alternatives.

AND

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