Brain Hat

A pattern By Alana Noritake

http://www.ravelry.com/projects/lani-rae/brain-hat

GETTING STARTED

Yarn: Fingering weight 4-ply, fairly thin and light weight, minimal texture. Choose a nice brainy pink. A slightly variegated yarn gives a nice fleshy appearance. I used 2 skeins of Araucania Ranco Solid (750 yards) as in the pic on the left and had about 1/3 of skein left over.

 Needles: US 3 - 3.25 mm DPNs and/or circular.

List of abbreviations:
CO: cast on
DPNs: double-pointed needles
K2tog: Knit 2 together (decrease 1, left over right slant)
SSK: slip 1 stitch knitwise, slip next stitch knitwise, transfer the twisted stitches back to left needle and knit together (decrease 1, right over left slant)

Part 1: THE SKULL CAP

If you have a basic hat pattern that you've used in the past, then feel free to use that. You want a skull cap with basic shaping and no lace or cable-work.

The following pattern is the hat that I created for this project.

CO with 16" circular needles (or DNPs if you prefer).
For a hat circumference of 23.5 inches, CO 131 stitches. This hat will fit heads from 23-15 inches.
For different sizes, add or subtract 11 stitches. This will add/subtract about 2 inches from the hat circumference. Remember to add or subtract a repeat when decreasing in the body of the hat.
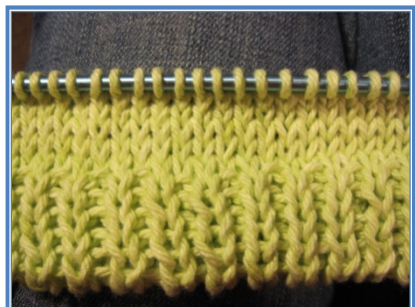
BRIM: knit 14 rows of 1x1 rib. To create the double-thick brim, fold the first 7 rows back and up so that the CO edge is lined up behind the active stitches. Knit one row, knitting one CO stitch together with each active stitch (see pics).

Pic 1: knit a CO stitch with each active stitch.

Pic 2: the backside of the joined brim

Pic 3: the front of the completed brim

BODY: knit 25 rows in the round.

DOME SHAPING:
Row 1: [knit 10 then SSK]x11 reps. This should leave 120 stitches.
Rows 2-4: Knit in the round
Row 5: [Knit 9 then SSK]x11. Leaving 109 stitches.
Rows 6-8: Knit in the round
Row 9: [Knit 8 then SSK]x11. Leaving 98 stitches.
Row 10-11: knit in the round.
Row 12: [Knit 7 then SSK]x11. Leaving 87 stitches.
Row 13-14: knit in the round.
Row 15: [Knit 6 then SSK]x11. Leaving 76 stitches.
Row 16-17: knit in the round.
At this point, you may either switch to DPNs, or use "magic loop".
Row 18: [Knit 5 then SSK]x11. Leaving 65 stitches.
Row 19-20: Knit in the round.
Row 21: [knit 4 then SSK]x11. Leaving 54 stitches.
Knit all even rows.
Row 23: [Knit 3 then SSK]x11. Leaving 43 stitches.
Row 25: [Knit 2 then SSK]x11. Leaving 32 stitches.
Row 27: [Knit 1 then SSK]x11. Leaving 21 stitches.
Row 29: **SSK x 10**. Should have 11 stitches.
Row 31: **K2tog x 5.** Should have 6 stitches.
Using a yarn needle, thread through the active loops 3-4 times and pull tight to close the hole.
Tie off, bury the thread and trim excess.

Stuff the cap with bunched up plastic bags so that it has shape while you pin your I-cord onto it.

PART 2: THE I-CORD

Using DPNs, CO 5 stitches USING THE TAIL.
(If you know how to make I-cord, you can skip this section)
WITHOUT TURNING THE WORK – bring the active yarn around the back and use it to knit row 1.
WITHOUT TURNING THE WORK slide the working stitches to the right side of DPN.
Bring the working yarn around the back, give it a little tug and then simply begin the next row.
Knit, slide, yarn around back, tug. Knit, slide, yarn around back, tug.
After a couple rows, you'll see it start to form a tube. Giving the I-cord an occasional yank downwards away from the needle helps straighten out the stitches too.
Repeat ad nauseum (until you want to vomit).
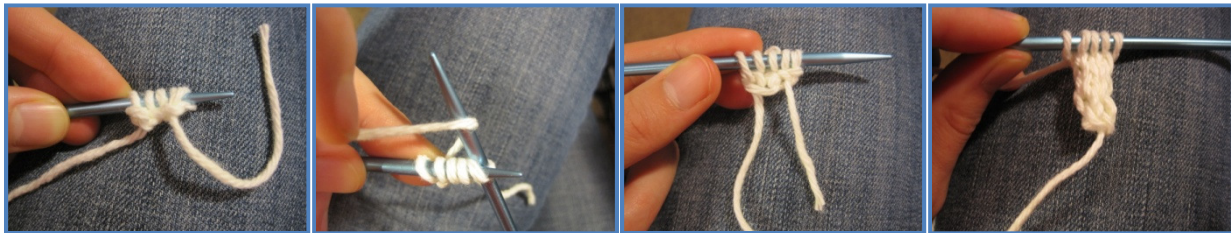
It is difficult to say the exact amount of I-cord you will need, as it will greatly depend on the brain pattern you form on your hat. Suffice to say – you will need a lot. A lot a lot a lot. You may hit that wall and want to quit, but I am rooting for you. Stay strong.

I used four I-cords: two for the frontal lobes, and then two longer ones for the posterior lobes. Being a medical student, I referenced some anatomy textbooks for my brain and made each hemisphere symmetrical, but that's not a requirement.
Use sewing pins to keep the I-cord in place while you arrange (see pic).

DON'T SHORT YOURSELF: (bad pun). You can actually keep the I-cord on the needle while you pin your pattern and (since you never turn the work) and continue to knit as much as you need.
Knit, pin, knit, pin.

TIPS ON MAKING IT LOOK LIKE A BRAIN: Try not to twist your I-cord as you sew it down. The major things that will make your hat look brainy are random squiggles and loops, don't fall into a regular pattern, and having the LONGITUDINAL FISSURE (the split between the right and left hemispheres).

I did not include a cerebellum (the bulb part on the bottom of the brain).

Here are a couple reference pictures:
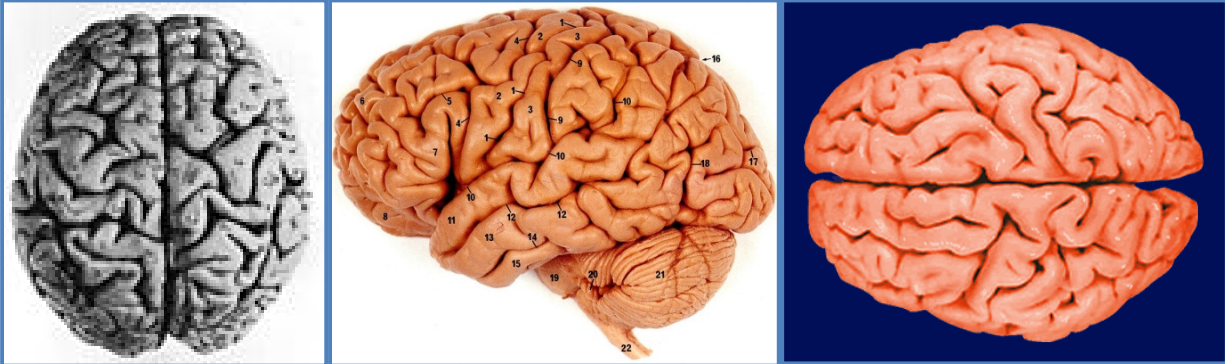
Use lots of pins to secure your gyri (the loops and ridges). Now that you've arranged your I-cord on the hat, time to sew it down. You can use a yarn needle or crochet hook.

Carefully unpin a couple inches of I-cord, and using your needle/hook and some waste yarn, attach one stitch of the I-cord to one stitch of the hat (see pics).

Pic 1: pick up one stitch from the I-cord and one from the hat

Pic 2: pull the yarn tail completely through both stitches.

Pic 3: practice your squiggles!

Continue until your entire hat is covered in amazing braininess – see next page.

The Front

Left Side
(Right side is mirror image)

The Back

The Top

The Entire Left Hemisphere

DONE DONE DONE!!!!!!

Congratulations! You are now the proud owner (or gifter) of a bonafide Brain Hat!

It will focus your mental prowess, gross out total strangers, and keep your head warm and conducive to great thoughts!