LOG YOUR LIFE

What do books, the weather, and emotional states have in common? They all make fantastic crochet projects. Tricia Fairburn explores different ways to capture your life through crochet – and channel your inner data nerd!

Never did I imagine I'd be a stitchy statistician. A statistitchian, you could say. But following a long streak of tracking my mood on the Daylio app, my mind turned to crochet.

Daylio uses a customisable colour palette to rank feelings from 'rad' (bright green) to 'awful' (crimson red), with a thoroughly 'meh' day being yellow. Something about these traffic light colours – so distinct, and yet so complementary to one another – struck me as blanket material. I'd heard of temperature blankets using colour to convey the weather in crochet stitches. Perhaps I could do something similar with my own dataset.

It occurred to me that other people must be doing this too, so I scoured Instagram for crochet mood blankets. That's where I found Helene (@helene.zip), who had put together a mood key to decide the colours in her project. A few Pinterest searches helped her with the most common associations, like blue for sadness and yellow for joy. "There were also a few mood states I specifically wanted to track," she adds, giving 'empty' as an example, "so for those I went with the colour that just felt right in my gut."

Helene used a productivity app called Notion to track her mood on her phone. "The app enabled me to filter within date ranges for certain properties, meaning it was simple to analyse how many times I'd logged all the different emotions that month or year." She hardly ever used one colour in a single row, "because I rarely experienced only one overarching mood a day! Not only did splitting rows end up creating a cool patchy visual look at the end, but it helped take some decision-making pressure off choosing just one colour for the day."



Katie's ongoing lifelog blanket, inspired by the books she's read this year

PHOTO: Katie Young

FATE IN YOUR HANDS

There are other ways to log your life through colour-coded stitches, as demonstrated by Katie (@katiereads.sc), who's working on a book blanket. The colours she uses are determined by the books' covers – which, as you can imagine, results in a variety of hues. "I had toyed with assigning each genre a colour," Katie explains, "but, while crazy, this menagerie of colourful granny squares comes together to tell a story of books!"

Kaz (@kaz_insomniacrochet) has made several temperature blankets over the years, but 2026 has seen her take on a particularly special project. "This year my husband and I are 60," she explains, "so instead of making a 2026 blanket, I am making one for 1966, our birth year." She found the 1966 temperatures online and plugged them into a spreadsheet. "I chose the colours based on fashion photos and fabric prints from the 1960s, joined with a deep purple." Kaz is using colour theory to her advantage, with cool and warm shades to represent shifts in temperature.

As different as they are, I'm noticing the common thread that runs through all these blankets. The colours are decided not by what looks conventional, but what reflects the differences between one day and the next. Sometimes it's messy, mismatched and unpredictable, but it's our reality.

TRACKING HACKS

Anyone who's made a blanket will know the thrill of starting and the pain of sewing up. Is there a trick to staying motivated?

"I have been very disciplined in sewing the squares together as I go," Katie tells me. "It's motivating to see it all come together and has absolutely helped to keep me on track!" When you're making a lifelog blanket, a lot of time and thought goes into tracking the data and choosing the colours. Perhaps that's why stitch patterns tend to be simple. "I decided on granny squares because they are mindless and fun," Katie adds. "It is something I can do while relaxing with a movie on."

For Helene, too much pressure to keep up with her blanket takes the fun out of it. "I've found that there's a thin, wiggly line between self-motivation and shaming," she admits. "It was important to me that I minimised any expectations. The things that have made a difference have been self-compassion, a reliable tracking tool, and regular reminders of why this project matters."

Kaz tries to make one square a day, "but sometimes I don't," she says, "if I'm busy, or just not in the mood." Repetition can wear her down, too: "About two to three months in I have sometimes found I don't much like how they are looking, and regret starting them, but I always carry on. When I've used all the colours, I start to get excited again. I absolutely love adding 31 December just after midnight on New Year's Eve!"

Katie uses the Storygraph app to track her reading, saying, "When I do happen to fall behind, I can easily see which books need granny squares." She also credits her friend Jimmy, who checks in with her and helps her choose colours. Much like a book club keeps readers motivated, friends can cheer us on when our crochet enthusiasm wanes.

Helene was already a near-daily crocheter when she started her mood blanket, "but the project definitely got me into the practice of checking in with my emotions," she says. "I tried to crochet one [row] per day, but on days I couldn't, I would note my moods in Notion. The longest break was a few weeks."

> "It's a tangible and colourful reminder of all the feelings I've felt"

We all lose our crojo from time to time. The beauty of using a dataset is that it's always there, and as soon as you're ready to return, your project will be there waiting.

VANTAGE POINT

We can't know how we're going to feel from one day to the next, or what the weather might do two months down the line. But using historical data gives us the full picture right from the very first stitch, as Kaz discovered: "It was really handy this time knowing the full temperature range in advance, so I knew exactly how many shades I'd need." I may have to take the retrospective route with my next blanket – eyeballing the yarn quantities for a 28-round granny square was a real headache!

Using your own data to make a blanket creates a very personal project. Even when you use a pre-written pattern, you add a little bit of yourself when you include the books you've read, the moods you've experienced, or the weather from the year you were born.

"Working on the mood blanket helped me rebuild trust in my own emotional homeostasis," Helene reflects, "by giving myself proof that it will always, always pass." I feel the same about my own blanket: as it took shape, a bigger picture unfolded. My worst days, the red and orange rounds, felt unbearable at the time. Not only did the project prove that I could cope, but it also showed that there were better days up ahead. "Revisiting the mood blanket as a long-term coping tool makes me love it even more," Helene, now a trainee therapist, adds. "It's a tangible and colourful reminder of all the feelings I've felt and survived."

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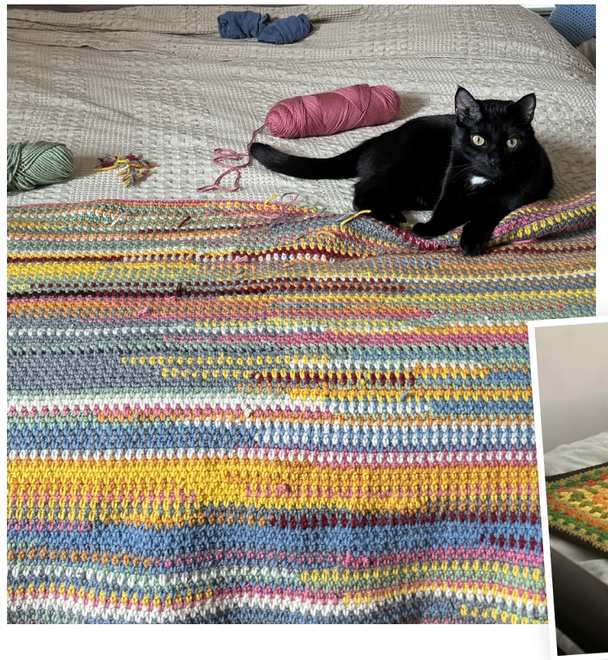

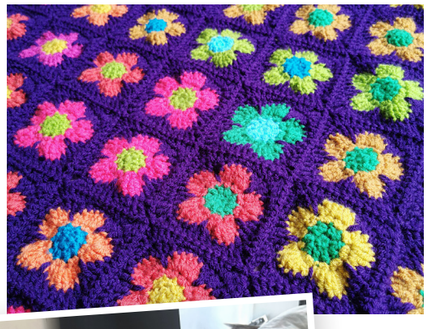

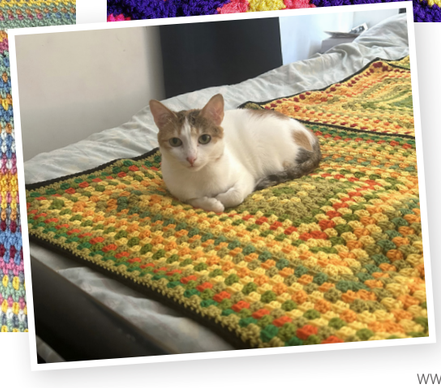

PHOTOS: Helene Ryu, Kaz Hall, Tricia Fairburn

Clockwise from left: Helene's mood blanket uses multiple colours per row; Kaz logs the high and low temperatures of her birth year; Tricia's blanket shows an average month of mood fluctuations