



How To Guide

Crochet

A relatively modern craft, crochet continues to grow in popularity, with the rise of amigurumi and greater use in fashion sparking interest in younger generations. With so many fun shapes and patterns being beginner friendly, it's no wonder that new crafters are joining in the fun everywhere! If you're looking to join the crochet club, or just need a little refresher on some skills, our guide should help you on your way.

Abbreviations

CH – Chain

CHSP – Chain space

SS – slip stitch

ST(s) – Stitch(es)

DC – Double crochet

DC2TOG – Double crochet 2 together

HTR – half treble crochet

HTR2TOG – half treble 2 together

TR – treble crochet

TR2TOG – treble 2 together

YO/YOH – yarn over/yarn over hook

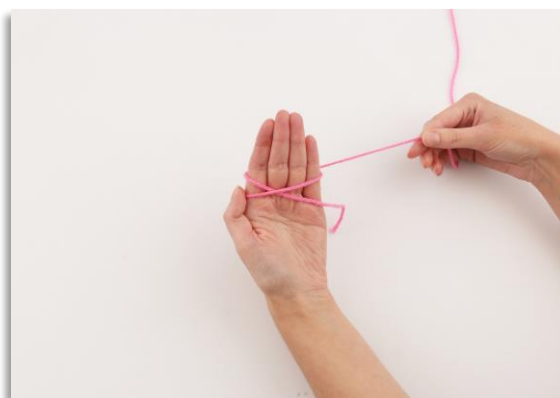
Tension

Using just your hand and a hook means that the way you hold your yarn and the tension you create can make a big difference to the outcome. There are a few ways to loop the yarn around your fingers and different people have different ways that feel more comfortable and create the desired effect. It might be worth trying a few ways to see which creates a tension in the yarn that makes it easier for you to create stitches – careful not to go too tight though! As you practice, you'll find the most comfortable way of working.

A Slip Knot

A slip knot is the very first thing you will need at the beginning of each knitted piece. Essentially you are creating a knot in your length of yarn without pulling the end through, which gives you your starting loop – and so it begins!

1. Leaving several inches for a tail, hold the end of your yarn in your palm and wrap the strand loosely around your index, middle, and ring fingers, moving over, under, and then over again to create a cross shape with the yarn on the inside of your fingers. You will have two parallel strands of yarn lying over your knuckles on the back of your hand.



2. Tuck the second strand under the first strand (the one closer to your fingertips) creating a loop.



3. Remove your fingers and pull the loop tight, being careful not to pull the shorter end through, and place your slip knot onto your hook. You can tighten the loop by pulling on the working end (the end attached to your ball of yarn).



A Starting Chain

There are a few ways to start a crochet project, but most of them are a variation of the two basic methods which you will find in a lot patterns, the first of which is a starting chain. To create a starting chain you'll need to know the number of stitches that you're working with; your pattern should tell you how many you will need to chain.

1. Leaving several inches for a tail, hold the end of your yarn in your palm and wrap the strand loosely around your index, middle, and ring fingers, moving over, under, and then over again to create a cross shape with the yarn on the inside of your fingers. You will have two parallel strands of yarn lying over your knuckles on the back of your hand.
2. Holding the hook in your dominant hand, wrap your working yarn over the end of the hook (a yarn over or YO) and pull this through the loop (slip knot) currently on your hook. Count this as one.



3. Repeat this process until you've created the number you require for your starting chain. Remember, the loop on your hook doesn't count as a stitch, so ensure you're only counting the stitches off the hook when counting your chains.



Working into your starting chain

Some people find working their first row quite difficult as there is no structure to the piece yet, no fabric to hold on to, and no clear indication of where you should be putting your hook!

Your chain will have two sides: a row of 'v' stitches on one, and a long row of bumps on the other. Whichever side you work into you will be achieving the same thing; you need to insert your hook into the gap between the bump and the 'v' stitch. This can be a little fiddly which is why so many people struggle with the first row!

Some crafters swear by using a larger hook to start a new piece (and some patterns will recommend this too) as it creates a loose chain that is much easier to work with when you switch to the correct size on the first row. Be careful about making your chain too loose though, as you will quickly find your edge is too wide and looks frilly when compared to your later stitches that have a more consistent tension.



Chainless Foundation

If you find that working a foundation chain is too fiddly for you, you might prefer to start with a chainless foundation. Some patterns might recommend this, where others will need a regular foundation chain to create the right finished look. If you can use a chainless foundation, give it a try for your first few projects – it might just stop you from giving up before you've started!

Double Crochet Chainless Foundation (Single Crochet US):

1. Create a slip knot and place this on your hook.



2. Chain two – this will be the only chain needed for this foundation!



3. Insert your hook into the first chain created, YO and pull back through this stitch.



4. YO and pull through the first loop on your hook. This acts as the chain you would have in an ordinary foundation row.





5. YO and pull through both loops on your hook. You will now be left with one loop on your hook.



You will now repeat this process for each stitch required for your foundation.

6. Insert your hook into the chain/v-shaped stitch created in step 4 - this will look a little bit like the second loop from your hook. Make sure you are inserting your hook into both loops of the chain and that you now have a v-shaped stitch on your hook. YO and pull back through this stitch.



7. YO and pull through the first loop on your hook.



8. YO and pull through both loops on your hook. You will now be left with one loop on your hook.



Repeat until you have the required number of stitches.

You can also create chainless foundation rows based on other crochet stitches, such as a treble, you'll simply need to chain the right number to begin with; chain two for a half treble foundation, chain three for a treble foundation. Work along as above, pulling through one loop to create a chain first before completing your stitch.

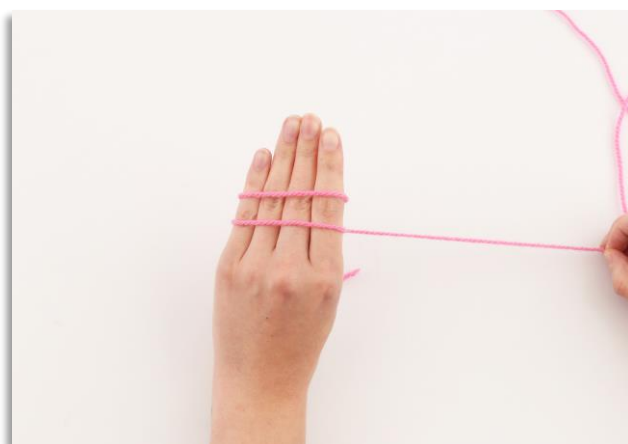


A Magic Circle

Magic circles are great for crochet projects that need to be worked in the round, but need tight finishing, like amigurumi. Once you've finished your toy and need to stuff it, the last thing you want is the stuffing poking through! This method allows you to start crocheting in a circle and then tighten the ring after you've done your first round, so you can tightly close that gap in the centre.

A magic circle starts a bit like a slip knot, but with a bit more twisting involved to create your ring.

1. Leaving several inches for a tail, hold the end of your yarn in your palm and wrap the strand loosely around your index, middle, and ring fingers, moving over, under, and then over again to create a cross shape with the yarn on the inside of your fingers. You will have two parallel strands of yarn lying over your knuckles on the back of your hand.



2. Slide your hook towards your wrist, under the first strand of yarn (the one closest to your fingertips), then over the second strand. Hook the second strand and pull it under the first strand, towards your fingertips.



3. Wrap the yarn around the hook by moving the hook in a circle, first towards you, then away; the strand should do a loop-the-loop around the neck of your hook, like a loose stitch.



4. Move your hook over the first strand and then scoop it under the remaining section of the second strand (from wrist side to fingertip side) and hook the strand. Pull this through the loop you created in the previous step.



5. Placing your finger on the stitch on the hook to keep it in place, gently remove your fingers from the circle.



You should now have a stitch on your hook which is attached to a loop of yarn; your yarn end will be wrapped around your loop a little. Now you will start crocheting into this loop to create your first round.

6. Chain as many as needed based on the kind of stitch you will be using; your pattern should tell you this. Here we have chained 3 and will be using trebles to create the first round.



7. Work as many stitches as needed, inserting your into the centre of your circle like you would with a normal stitch; work your stitches around both the loop and the yarn end. If you have given yourself enough yarn to work with, these stitches won't look like a complete circle yet, but this is where your yarn end comes in!



8. Once you have worked as many stitches as you need for the first round, hold them and gently pull on the yarn end that should still be visible. This will pull all your stitches together and will close up your circle. Work a slip stitch into the last of the chains created at the beginning to complete the round and complete your magic circle!



Double Crochet

Known as a double crochet in the UK (single crochet in the US), this is the most basic of crochet stitches.

1. Insert your hook into the first stitch to be worked, yarn over and pull both yarn and hook back through. You should have two loops on your hook.



2. Yarn over again and pull this through both loops on your hook.



3. Repeat this process with the following stitches along your piece until you have worked as many double crochets as are needed.



Treble Crochet

Known as a treble crochet in the UK (double crochet in US) this stitch works in the same way as the UK double but with more loops!

1. Yarn over and then insert the hook into the first stitch to be worked.



2. Yarn over again and pull both yarn and hook back through. You should have three loops on your hook.



3. Yarn over again and pull the yarn through the first two loops on the hook.



4. Yarn over for the last time and pull the yarn through the final two loops.





Half Treble Crochet

A half treble crochet (half double crochet US) is exactly as it sounds; you work half of the instructions for the treble before you finish it off!

1. Yarn over and then insert the hook into the first stitch to be worked.



2. Yarn over again and pull both yarn and hook back through. You should have three loops on your hook.



3. Yarn over once more and pull this through all three loops on your hook.





Slip Stitch

An excellent way to finish things off, a slip stitch is the smallest stitch in crochet and is useful in all sorts of ways.

1. Insert your hook into the first stitch to be worked, yarn over and pull both yarn and hook back through. You should have two loops on your hook.
2. Pull your new stitch through the first loop on your hook.





Increase

There is really only one way to increase when you crochet: work two or more stitches into the same space. Whatever stitch your pattern calls for, if you need to increase your number of working stitches you will simply add them into the next row, with the spacing to be determined by the instructions in your pattern. This will be very clear when you come to it as you may, for example, be instructed to “work 2 dc into the next stitch” or something similar; whilst it may not be mentioned explicitly, this will be your crochet increase!



Decreases

Only slightly more complicated than increasing, decreasing requires you to work one or more stitches together so they become one; this is different for each kind of stitch but the principle is the same. You'll pick it up in no time!

- **Double crochet decrease - dc2tog (single crochet decrease - sc2tog US)**

1. Insert your hook into the first stitch to be worked, yarn over and pull both yarn and hook back through. You should have two loops on your hook.



2. Insert your hook into the next stitch to be worked, yarn over and pull both yarn and hook back through. You should now have three loops on your hook.



3. Yarn over and pull both yarn and hook through all three loops. You'll be able to see how these stitches lean into each other and become one.





- **Treble crochet decrease - tr2tog (double crochet decrease - dc2tog US)**

1. Yarn over and then insert the hook into the first stitch to be worked.



2. Yarn over again and pull both yarn and hook back through. You should have three loops on your hook.





3. Yarn over again and pull the yarn through the first two loops on the hook. This is the first part of a normal treble; instead of completing the stitch, you will begin a new treble in the next stitch.



4. Yarn over and insert the hook into the next stitch to be worked.



5. Yarn over again and pull both yarn and hook back through. You should have four loops on your hook.



6. Yarn over again and pull the yarn through the first two loops on the hook.



7. Yarn over one more time and pull through the final three loops.





- **Half treble crochet decrease - htr2tog (half double crochet decrease - hdc2tog US)**

1. Yarn over and then insert the hook into the first stitch to be worked.



2. Yarn over again and pull both yarn and hook back through. You should have three loops on your hook.





3. Yarn over and insert the hook into the next stitch to be worked.



4. Yarn over again and pull both yarn and hook back through. You should have five loops on your hook.





5. Yarn over once more and pull through all five loops. You'll be able to see how these stitches lean into each other and become one.



There are all kinds of textures and shapes you can create using crochet, but these basics will get you well on your way to making the crochet pieces of your dreams!

If you find any of these instructions unclear or just need a little extra help, don't hesitate to email us at sales@woolwarehouse.co.uk or give us a call on 01926 88 28 18.