



How To Guide

New to Crafting - Getting Started



Starting a new hobby can be both exciting and overwhelming. On the one hand there's so much new stuff you can learn! But on the other, there is ***so much new stuff to learn***. We understand it can be difficult to know where to start, so we've put together a list of things you should think about when taking your first steps into the wonderful world of crafts.

The first, unofficial step in this list is just to **start**. That's it. Be your own motivation; don't wait for some kind of sign, just decide that now is as good a time as any. If you're interested in trying a new craft, just give it a go! You'll never know if you don't try.

1. Learn the Basics

Whilst knitting, crocheting and cross stitching have almost endless lists of interesting things to learn, there are some very basic things you will need to know before you begin your first project. If you're learning to knit you need to know how to cast on, how to do the knit and purl stitches, etc. If you're beginning to crochet, you'll need to be able to make a foundation chain and know what a double or treble crochet stitch are. And if you want to begin cross stitch project, you need to know where to begin on your fabric and how to

Interpret the pattern. As boring as it may seem, this really is the best place to start – you won't get very far on knitting your jumper if you don't learn how to cast on first!

2. Start with something simple

Even if you really take to your new hobby and find all this beginner stuff a breeze, it's always useful to start out with something easy for your first project. We know that this isn't terribly exciting, but you'll definitely be better off in the long run. Starting with something simple means you'll build up your skills slowly, and as you move forward into more complicated projects, you'll know you have a super strong knowledge base and more reliable muscle memory.

3. Choose a pattern or a kit

This might seem obvious, but it is very tempting to jump ahead and try to make something you've been designing in your head with the techniques you've already learned. While this kind of creativity and enthusiasm is key with crafting hobbies, we would recommend that you start off by picking a specific pattern that gives you all the details you need and helps you build your confidence and strengthen your abilities.

Newer patterns list all kinds of useful details: not only will they tell you exactly which yarn and needle size to use, you'll also have the tension listed; the kind of stitches used; what the abbreviations mean; and so on. The more information you start out with, the easier your project will be!

4. Use the recommended materials

We all know what it's like: you've fallen in love with a particular yarn and are just itching to use that and nothing else. But unless your chosen pattern uses this yarn, it may be a good idea to save it for a special project further down the line, once you've mastered more skills. The pattern you have picked will have been designed with a particular yarn in mind, so it's usually best to stick with the suggested materials when you're just starting, as then your finished piece will be more likely to look the way it is supposed to.

It is also best to use the needle size recommended in the pattern, although this depends on whether or not you can match the tension needed. If your tension squares don't match the tension listed, you may need to go up or down a needle size – matching tension is the most important thing here! For more information on tension, read our helpful guide.

The same principle applies if it's a cross stitch kit that you have chosen as your first project. Using the supplies of threads and fabric from the kit will ensure that you learn how to match the symbols to the colours, that you have sufficient fabric to complete the project, and that the finished design looks like the picture on the front of the kit.



5. Finish the project

So, you're halfway through your first project, or maybe even nearing the end, when it happens: you get bored. This isn't the yarn you wanted to use and you only chose this pattern because you needed to start with something easy and you don't actually want a scarf that looks like this! Or, where would you even put this embroidery if you did finish it? It happens to all of us. But the best way to learn skills when you're just beginning is to see your projects through to the end; if you stop part-way through you may miss out on the practice of some key parts of a project, like casting off, sewing up or securing floss. You might find the last steps of your next project, which you're really enjoying, isn't as smooth as you'd want because you've never done them before!

Push through, if you can. Decide that learning these skills will be worth it and find the fun you can have in trying all the new things you've never done before – after all, it's about the journey as well as the destination! Or, to phrase it in crafting terms, the process not just the product!

6. Find some support

Just because you've decided to start out on this crafting journey by yourself, doesn't mean you have to be a solitary crafter forever. Whether it's a relative who has crafted for years, a local crafting group, or even an online crafting forum, there are plenty of places for you to find like-minded people who will be more than happy to give you tips and advice, or even help out when you get stuck at a point in your pattern or project. It's tough to get through the difficult parts of learning a new skill when you have no one around who you can ask for help, so surround yourself with crafters - you never know, you might make some new friends along the way!

7. Learn how you learn

We all learn differently and it can be really helpful to know the ways that work best for you. Do you need to write something down for it to stick in your mind? Maybe songs help you to memorise information? Or maybe, like many of us, you need to see a picture to really understand a new idea. Whether you are a visual, auditory or social learner, you can find all sorts of resources that are specific to your exact needs and will help you pick up skills far more quickly.

If you know the ways you learn, you can look for crafting resources that will work better for you, like patterns with step-by-step image guides, video tutorials or crafting groups. Seeking out the best tools for your learning preferences can mean you're less likely to get bored or really struggle with the basics.

8. Build a craft supply stash

Once you've had a go with your new craft and decided that it's for you, it may be time to start building your own crafting stash. This can include all kinds of different tools, some for use in all projects and others that will only be used occasionally, but all useful at one time or another. This stash could include:

- A knitting needle/crochet set which includes a range of sizes
- Stitch markers
- Stitch holders
- Cable needles
- Point protectors
- Pompom makers
- A needle gauge
- Wool/tapestry needles
- Blocking boards and pins
- A row counter
- A yarn winder and swift
- Small, sharp, pointed scissors
- Tape measure
- Needle threader
- Fabric glue
- Fabric scissors
- Pins
- Needlework frame or hoop
- Different counts and colours of Aida

You might find it easier to collect these items as you come across them in your patterns and projects, or you may prefer to stock up and make sure you have everything for any project that catches your eye. Either way, keeping a list and a particular bag/area to store these items means you're less likely to accidentally double up on accessories or lose the smaller ones.



9. Have fun!

Maybe it's a little cheesy, but the most important thing about all of this is just to have fun with it! You can follow all the "rules" perfectly, but if you're not enjoying it then what's it all for? Sometimes things can be frustrating to begin with and it seems like all you're capable of making is mistakes but remember that everyone started where you are. You really can learn from your mistakes, and having a good time doesn't have to be the same as getting everything right. Have a play and have some fun!

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.