# Essential Guide to...
# CROCHET


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**2**


**3**

## Master crochet in minutes!
We show you all the techniques to get started

PATTERN INSIDE


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# Slinky Scarf
Make one this weekend!

## EXPERT ADVICE!

* All the essential stitches
* Easy guide to following a pattern

# Hello!

**W**elcome to *Simply Knitting*'s guide to crochet. It's one of the oldest forms of crafting with yarn, that's easy to pick up and used all over the world.

Crochet is an extremely versatile and popular technique, and as with knitting, once you have learnt a few basic stitches they can be combined to create fantastic garments and accessories for the home.

To crochet, all you need is a hook and some yarn. First you make a basic chain (see page 4) to create the foundation row, on which all your other rows or rounds are worked. Crochet stitches are made by wrapping the yarn around the hook to make loops. The loops are then drawn through the wrapped yarn to make the stitches. You can also use the chain stitch foundation to make cords or drawstrings for knitting projects.

As well as using crochet to create whole garments, it can also be used to make pretty edgings on knitting. And as with knitting, lightweight yarns will create a delicate fabric, and a thicker yarn will produce a denser fabric. Crochet is easy to learn and your work will grow very quickly, so you'll be making beautiful items in no time. Go on give it a go!

*Debora*

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*The basic kit: crochet hooks come in a range of sizes and materials, scissors, a tape measure and glass-head pins.*

# How to hold your hook

### Pencil method



Hold the hook as if it was a pencil, in your right hand two inches from the hooked end. If your hook has a flat area you'll find it comfortable to hold it here.

### Knife method



Hold the hook between your thumb and forefinger two inches from the hooked end, resting the end of the hook against your palm.

# How to hold the yarn

### Forefinger method



Pass the yarn around the little finger, under the next two fingers and over the forefinger. Hold the slip knot (see page 4) between the thumb and middle finger. You'll raise your forefinger automatically when you make your first chain.

### Middle finger method



Pass the yarn around the little finger, and over the other fingers. Hold the slip knot between the thumb and forefinger. You'll raise the middle finger when you make your first chain.

## Left-handed crochet...

All the instructions in this book are for the right-handed method. If you're finding them tough to follow, place this book in front of a mirror and copy the reflection of the images.

# Make a slip knot

**1** About 6in (15cm) from the end of the yarn, make a loop with the ball end on top.

**2** Insert the hook down through the loop and catch the yarn, pulling it up through the loop. Pull both ends of the yarn to tighten the knot and slide it up to the hook

**All the stitches you need**

Take a look at the next few pages to master all the basic crochet stitches.

# Chain stitch (ch)

**1** With the hook in your right hand, hold the slip knot between thumb and finger of the left hand. Move the hook under and over the yarn, with the yarn held in the hook. This action is called yrh or yoh.

**2** Pull the hook and yarn back through the slip knot loop to form the first chain stitch.

## How to count chains

Each chain or loop counts as one stitch. Never count your first slip knot or the loop on the hook (called the working loop), and so you can be accurate, make sure the chain is not twisted and the front is facing you.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

**3** This is what your row of chains will look like. Keep going until you have the number of chains stated on your pattern.

# Slip stitch(sl st)/single crochet

**1** Insert the hook from front to back under the top of the second chain from the hook. Wrap the yarn round the hook (yrh).

**2** Pull the yarn through both of the loops on the hook to make a slip stitch. To carry on working a row of slip stitch, insert the hook into the next chain down and so on, repeating step 2 each time.

# Double crochet (dc)

**1** Skip 2ch and insert the hook under the top loop of the 3rd ch.

**2** Wind the yarn around the hook and pull it through the chain loop. Leaving two loops on your crochet hook.

**3** Yrh again, then pull the yarn through both loops. There's your double crochet (dc) made and you'll have one loop left on your hook ready to do the next stitch. To do a row of dc, continue to end of chain sts.

**4** For the following rows of dc, turn work and ch1. This is the turning chain (t-ch) and counts as the first dc. Skip the stitch, at the base of the t-ch, then work 1dc under the top 2 loops of each stitch to the end, including top of t-ch on following rows.
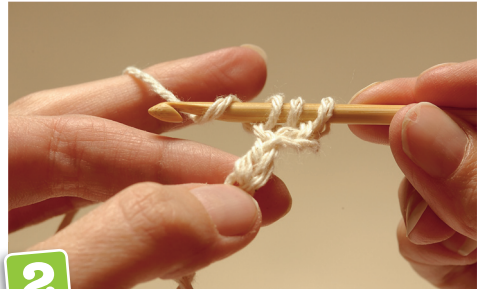
# Half treble crochet (htr)



**1** Make a foundation chain. Skip 2 ch, yrh and insert the hook under the top loop of the 3rd ch, yrh.



**2** Pull the yarn through the chain loop only leaving 3 loops on your hook, yrh.
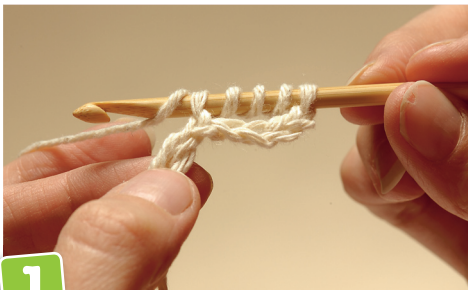


**3** Pull the yarn through all 3 loops. You've made a half treble. Continue working htr into next and all following chs to the end of the row.



**4** For following rows of htr, turn work and ch2. This is the t-ch and counts as the first htr in the new row. Skip the first st at base of t-ch, work 1htr under the two loops of the 2nd st in previous row. Work 1htr into next and each st to end, including top of t-ch.

# Triple treble (ttr)



**1** Make a foundation chain. Skip 5 ch, yrh three times, insert hook under top loop of 6th ch. Yrh, pull yarn through ch loop only (5 loops on hook). *Yrh, draw loops under 2 loops only. Repeat from * three times more; your triple treble is made.



**2** To make the next row, turn work and 5 ch. This t-ch counts as the first ttr in new row. Skip first st at base of t-ch. Work 1 ttr, inserting hook under top 2 loops of the 2nd st in previous row; continue to then end of row.

# Treble crochet (tr)

**1** Make a foundation chain. Skip 3ch, yrh, and insert the hook under the top loop of the 4th ch, yrh.

**2** Pull the yarn through the ch loop only (3 loops on hook), yrh.

**3** Pull the yarn through 2 loops only (2 loops on hook), yrh. Pull the yarn through these 2 loops. You've made a treble crochet.  Continue working tr into next and all following chains to end of the row.

**4** To make the next and following rows of tr, turn work and 3 ch. This is the t-ch and counts as the first treble in a new row. Skip the first stitch at the base of the t-ch, work 1tr into top 2 loops of 2nd stitch in previous row. Work 1tr into next and each st to end, including into top of t-ch.

**Essential knowledge**
With stitches sussed, you're eager to make something bigger. We give you the know how on the next pages.

## How to work in rows

**1** The first row is made by working across the foundation chain from left to right. At the end of the chain or row, turn the work so that the yarn is behind the hook.

**2** First make the turning chain for the stitch you're about to work. Now work the next stitch into the top of the stitches on your first row, missing the first stitch.

# Check your tension

## Making crochet a certain size depends on the size of the hook, the yarn, the stitch pattern and you!

Crochet patterns tell you the required stitch, number of stitches and rows at the start. No two people have the same tension, so make a practice swatch at least 6x6in (15x15cm) before starting a project to ensure your tension matches the one given on the pattern. If your swatch is has fewer stitches and rows, your tension is too loose and you'll need to change to a smaller hook. If there are too many, your tension is too loose and you'll need to change to a bigger hook.

Try another sample before you start, and bear in mind that it's usually more important to match the number of stitches than the rows, as you can compensate for rows by working more or fewer to the measurements the pattern states.

**1** To measure your stitches, place a ruler or rigid tape across the sample at the bottom of a row of stitches. Insert two pins 4in (10cm) apart and count the number of stitches between the pins.

**2** To measure your row tension, place the ruler or tape along a column of stitches. Avoiding the edges, insert two pins 4in (10cm) apart and count the rows between the pins.

# Turn chains for the next row

The reason for adding turning chains to the beginning of rows is to bring the hook up to the height of the stitches you're crocheting. Each basic stitch has its own number of chains. This table tells you how many ch sts form the first stitch. Some patterns won't count it as a stitch, others will say chX then turn.

| Stitch | Add to foundation chain before starting row | Skip at start of foundation row (counts as first st) | For turning chain counts as first st |
|---|---|---|---|
| Double | 1 ch | 2 ch | 1 ch |
| Half treble | 1 ch | 2 ch | 2 ch |
| Treble | 2 ch | 3 ch | 3 ch |
| Double treble | 3 ch | 4 ch | 4 ch |
| Triple treble | 4 ch | 5 ch | 5 ch |

# Count stitches

**To count short stitches such as double crochet, look at the tops. Count the upright stems for taller stitches each is counted as a single stitch.**

# Make straight edges

**To keep your edges straight and keep the number of stitches the same, work the turning chains in one of two ways. The first is the most common, but the** **second is used with very short stitches, or to avoid the gap created by using the turning chain as a stitch, although this can create uneven edges.**

## Turning chain counts as first stitch

**1** Skip the first stitch of the previous row at the base of the t-ch.

**2** When you reach the end of the row, work a stitch into the top of the t-ch of the previous row.

## Turning chain does not count as stitch

**1** Work your next st into the first stitch that lies at the base of the t-ch.

**2** When you reach the end of the row, do not work a stitch into the top of the t-ch on the previous row. Just turn and carry on.

# Single increases

### At start of row
When the turning chain counts as a stitch, skip the first stitch as usual and work 2 sts into the 2nd st, or work 1st into the first st that you usually skip, as illustrated here.



### At the end of a row
Work 2 sts into the last st. This will be the turning chain, if it counts as a stitch.



### Across a row
Pattern instructions usually tell you where to position each increase, but if not, spread them evenly across the row. Work 2 sts into the one below at each position.

# Multiple increases



### At the start of a row
Add the number of increases needed to the number of turning chains being used. For example, if you are working treble crochet (tr), which needs 3 ch, and want to add 3 sts, then you will need to work 6 ch. Skip 3 ch (counts as 1 tr) and work 1tr into each of the remaining 2 new ch, making 3 new sts, including the t-ch.



### At the end of a row
To make the first additional increase stitch, insert the hook through the lower part of the last stitch made, picking up the single, vertical thread on its left-hand side. Continue inserting the hook into the base of the stitch just completed to work the required number of additional stitches.

# Multiple decreases





### At the start of a row
Work slip stitch over each stitch to be subtracted, then make the required turning chain to form a new edge stitch. Continue the row in pattern.

### At the end of a row
Work in pattern until you reach the stitches to be decreased. Leave these stitches unworked, turn and then make the turning chain for the first stitch of the next row.

# Joining new yarn





**1** Before you pick up for the last time to make the last stitch of a row with the old colour, drop the old yarn and pick up the new on with your hook.

**2** Pull the new yarn through to complete the old stitch. The working loop is now in the new colour. Before working the next stitch, make sure old yarn is kept to the wrong side of the fabric or carried along the tops of the next few stitches so it is encased.

# Changing yarn mid-row

Change the yarns as for joining, just before you complete the last stitch with the old colour. Pull up the float in the new colour evenly, making sure the old yarn is appropriately positioned.

# Rejoining yarn



**1** Insert the hook into the appropriate place. Start with a slip knot or a simple loop and then pull this through.



**2** Make the appropriate turning chain for the first new stitch.

# Chain foundation ring and spiral method

**Work in the round**

Some patterns have a centre ring and continue outward in rounds. Always work on the right side.



**1** Make a short length of foundation chain as stated in the pattern instructions, for example, ch5. Insert the hook into the first ch.



**2** Close the ring with a sl st (yrh and pull through). You can continue in a spiral .

## How to follow a pattern

Crochet patterns, like knitting patterns, are written out in abbreviated form. Here's how to decipher what to do when, where and why.

1. Before you crochet, read through the pattern to ensure you understand what to do in each part.
2. Do not turn the work at the end of a round.
3. Always count the turning chain as a stitch.
4. Work into the next available stitch in the previous row.
5. Always insert the hook under both top loops of a stitch, unless it is a chain stitch or loop.
6. The instruction to work 'even' in a pattern means to work without any increasing or decreasing.
7. Asterisks are used to show where a particular pattern is repeated across a row.
8. Brackets or parentheses are used to enclose a stitch combination, which will be repeated in the order stated.

# Joined/separate rounds

**1** Make a foundation ring then work the correct number of chains for the t-ch, for example, 3 ch for a treble.

**2** Work the stitch as you would on a row, but this time insert the hook into the centre of the ring rather than the chain loop.

**3** To close the round, work a slip stitch into the top of the turning chain.

**4** Before working another round, make the required turning chain.

# Yarn loop foundation ring

**1** Make a loop in the yarn. Hold the bottom of the loop with the fingers which would normally hold the work. Insert the hook through the loop, yrh and pull through.

**2** Make the correct turning chain (chain 1 for double crochet) and work the first round into the loop ring, encasing the short end of the yarn. Close the round with a sl st. Close up the centre of the ring by drawing the short end of the yarn tight. Secure it by weaving it into the wrong side of the work.

# Beginner's crochet scarf

## You will need...

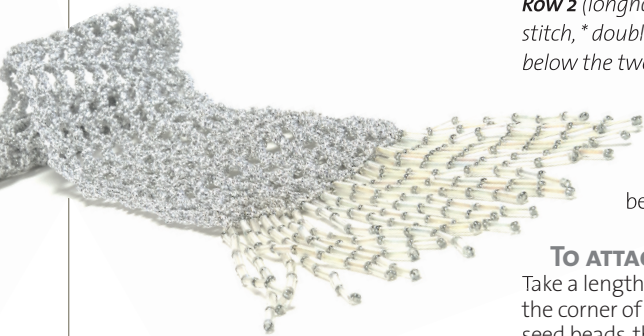| 1 x 25g/100yard ball | Papillion Starlight SH, Silver (002) |
|---|---|
| 3.5 crochet hook | |
| 1 tube of 7mm bugle beads (available from Güttermann) | |
| Strong sewing thread or beading thread | |
| Fine needle | |
| For where to buy, turn to page 96 | |

## Stitches you will use

Chain stitch (ch)
Double treble stitch (dtr)



## ✸ Start crocheting here...

Work a chain of 24 links

**Row 1** Miss 5 ch, and *dtr into next ch, 1 ch, miss 1 st, * repeat from * to end of row.

**Row 1** (longhand) Miss 5 chain stitches, * double treble (dtr) into 6th stitch (wrap the yarn round the hook twice, insert hook into 6th loop, wrap the yarn round the hook again and draw it through the chain loop. Wrap yarn round hook, draw hook through 2 loops on the hook, wrap the yarn again, draw through 2 more and then wrap again drawing through the last 2. Make 1 chain, skip 1 stitch on the foundation row, * repeat from * to end of row. You should have made 9 double sts along the foundation row. Turn for next row

**Row 2** 4 ch, miss 1 st, * dtr into top of previous row dtr, 1 ch, miss 1 st, rep form * to end

**Row 2** (longhand) Make 4 chains (the turning chain) miss 1 stitch, * double treble as before by inserting the needle below the two loops at the top of the treble stitch on the row below. Miss 1 st * repeat from * to end of row. Each row has 9 dtr stitches and one end stitch of 4 chain.

Keep working until desired length has been reached.

### TO ATTACH THE FRINGE

Take a length of strong sewing cotton and attach it to the corner of your scarf. Alternately thread bugle and seed beads, then pass thread back through all the beads but not the end one. Secure the thread to the scarf edge and repeat until desired affect is achieved.

# Finishing your crochet



## Fastening off

**To prevent the work unravelling when you've finished, fasten the end. Complete the final stitch, then cut the yarn about 6in (15cm) away from the work and pull it through the last loop on the hook. Pull the yarn tight to close the loop. Thread the working end of the yarn into a tapestry or yarn needle and weave it into the back of the work.**

# Joining your work together

## You can even do seams with a crochet hook! Read on to find out more...

To join pieces of crochet, it's often simplest to stitch them together, but you can also use a crochet hook to join seams, which are quick to work and strong. You'll get the least visible seam using slip stitch to join pieces. Double crochet forms a ridge at the seam which can make a feature on the right side. When you have lots of pieces, it's worth joining pairs of motifs in a continuous seam to avoid repeated fastening off.



### Double crochet seam
Place the crochet pieces right sides together, or wrong sides together for a visible seam. Work as for slip stitch seam, using dc instead of sl st.



### Sewing a seam
The neatest way join seams by sewing is to use an over stitch.



### Slip stitch seam
Place the crochet pieces right sides together. *Insert hook through both edge stitches, yrh and pull through to complete 1 sl st; rep from *, working loosely.



### Double crochet and chain seam
A useful variation on double crochet seam, this is used when less bulk and/or greater flexibility is needed. Work 1 dc and 1 ch alternately.

## Blocking and pressing

Cotton lace work usually needs careful pinning (with rust-proof pins) and pressing. Other crochet hardly ever needs this. Pinning the item out, misting with a fine spray and leaving it to dry naturally will be fine.

## Crochet Abbreviations

| | |
|---|---|
| across | to the end of the row |
| alt | alternate |
| approx | approximate(ly) |
| beg | beginning |
| bet | between |
| bl | insert hook under back loop only Example bldc – back loop double crochet |
| ch(s) | chain or chain stitch(es) |
| ch sp(s) | chain space(s) |
| cl(s) | clusters |
| cont | continue |
| dc | double crochet |
| dc2tog | work 2 dc together |
| dec | decrease |
| dtr | double treble crochet |
| dtr2tog | work 2 dtr together |
| fl | insert hook under front loop only Example: fldc – front loop double crochet |
| foll | following |
| gr | group |
| htr | half treble crochet |
| htr2tog | work 2htr together |
| in next | sts to be worked into same stitch |
| inc | increase |
| lp(s) | loop(s) |
| nc | not closed |
| patt | patterns |
| p or pc | picot |
| rf | raised front Example: rfdc – raised front double crochet |
| rb | raised back Example: rbdc– raised back double crochet |
| rem | remaining |
| rep | repeat |
| rnd | round |
| sk | skip |
| sl st | slip stitch |
| sp(s) | space(s) |
| st(s) | stitch(es) |
| t-ch(s) | turning chain(s) |
| tog | together |
| tr | treble crochet |
| tr2tog | work 2 tr together |
| yrh | yarn round hook |
| * | work instructions immediately following *, then repeat as directed |
| [] or () | work or repeat all instructions enclosed in brackets as directed immediately after |

## Which hook for which yarn?

| HOOK SIZE | YARN WEIGHT |
|---|---|
| 2.5-3.5mm hook | 4ply yarn |
| 3.5-4.5mm hook | double knitting yarn |
| 5-6mm hook | aran yarn |
| 7mm and bigger | chunky |

## Crochet hook conversion

| UK | METRIC | US |
|---|---|---|
| 14 | 2mm | B/1 |
| 13 | 2.25mm | – |
| 12 | 2.5mm | C/2 |
| 11 | 3mm | – |
| 10 | 3.25mm | D/3 |
| 9 | 3.5mm | E/4 |
| 8 | 4mm | G/6 |
| 7 | 4.5mm | 7 |
| 6 | 5mm | H/8 |
| 5 | 5.5mm | I/9 |
| 4 | 6mm | J/10 |
| 3 | 6.5mm | K/10½ |
| 2 | 7mm | – |
| 0 | 8mm | – |
| 00 | 9mm | – |
| 000 | 10mm | – |