



12 Essential Skills all crochet Beginners can master quickly

LEARN TO CROCHET THE "SMART" WAY

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12 Essential Skills All Crochet Beginners Can Master Quickly

There is always a debate as to whether crochet is easier or more difficult than knitting. Still, whichever side of the fence you find yourself on, the truth is that there are fundamental skills needed to learn the craft. In this tutorial, I will lay out ten skills or steps to take so that you can begin to enjoy the world of crochet.

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Each mini class will direct you to more information on my website to add additional knowledge and skills to your crochet toolbox. Speaking of a toolbox, if you want to jump ahead to supplies, please do so. There is no need to spend a lot of money to get started.

A skein of yarn, a crochet hook, a pair of scissors, and a tapestry needle are all you need initially. But I know that people love to shop, even if it is a virtual window-shopping excursion, so feel free to jump ahead if you want. Since crochet hooks are the essential tools you will use, you should still read that section first.

You can think of these ten skills in several different ways. Each training class can represent one day if you are highly motivated to learn crochet quickly or chose one per week. The point is that it needs to feel suitable for your schedule. Other than the supply module, I don't recommend that you jump around. Each skill builds onto the next so mastering the skills in the presented order is very important.

I recommend that you learn to either knit or crochet and then go on to the other. Trying to master both may be confusing as you will find that many terms apply to both.

Are you ready to get started? Great, let's do it.

Crochet Hooks, including how to hold the hook.

Finding a hook that you fall in love with is a fun way to begin your crochet adventure. Perhaps you love the look of the hook, how it's created, what it is made of, or something else.

When I first learned to crochet, I don't remember having so many choices. I was thankful for anything my parents or grandparents would buy me. This usually meant that I got plastic or metal hooks. Now, retired, I'm grateful for all the amazingly ergonomically designed hooks that feel perfect in my hands and don't lead to strains or pain.

Read the tutorial at <https://www.smart-knit-crocheting.com/crochet-hooks.html>



Remember that you don't need to purchase an entire set of crochet hooks initially. Suppose you plan to make crochet your full-time employment, then yes. In that case, you may need a variety of different sizes, shapes, and compositions. But for the average hobby crocheter, you may only need a few hooks.

The hook size is determined by the thickness of yarn you want to use or recommended by the pattern you are using. For example, if you are using a lightweight yarn, number 3, you will want to use a 4.5 to 5.5 hook. Likewise, a number 4 medium-weight yarn will call for a 5.5 to 6.5 mm hook.

Here is a chart that you can download and print for easy access. Don't feel compelled to use this precisely, as everyone crochets a bit differently. Depending on whether you crochet tightly or loosely will decide which size hook you will want to use. The yarn weight symbols in this chart correspond to the yarn label you see when purchasing your yarn or wool.

| Yarn Weight Symbol and Category Name | Crochet Gauge Ranges in SC to 4 in/ 10 cm | Recommended Hook in Metric Size Range | Recommended hook in US size Range. |
|--------------------------------------|---|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Lace #0 | 32-42 dc | 1.6-2.25mm | Sizes 6, 7, 8 steel, B/1 |
| Superfine #1 | 21-32 sts | 2.25-3.5 mm | B1 to E4 |
| Fine #2 | 16-20 st | 3.5-4.5 mm | E4 to 7 |
| Light #3 | 12-17 st | 4.5-5.5 mm | 7 to I/9 |
| Medium #4 | 11-14 st | 5.5-6.5 mm | I/9 to K 10 ½ |
| Bulky #5 | 8-11 st | 6.5-9 mm | K/10 ½ to M13 |
| Super Bulky #6 | 5-9 st | 9 mm and larger | M13 and larger |

Reference: The Crochet Book

Understanding yarn, fibers, and weight systems



Suppose you have already reviewed the material for yarns and wools in the knitting tutorial. In that case, you are well along for understanding the fibers that crocheters use to complete projects.

If not, start by reading this article: <https://www.smart-knit-crocheting.com/wool-knitting-yarn.html>

Please remember that wool is only one fiber used in knitting and crocheting. Many others are equally important. For example, you will likely encounter a wide range of fibers you might enjoy using in your next project. Let's take a look at a few:

- a. Cotton crochet threads. Many years ago, cotton threads were used to create a wide range of lace projects that resembled lace; whether they were for doilies, table cloths, lace edging, or filet crochet, this was the fiber to make all of these.
- b. Acrylic. Acrylic fibers are produced from ethylene which comes from oil, and they are very cheap to manufacture. They are very popular today and resistant to moths. Since they are so affordable, they make an excellent choice for toys, novelty pieces, and budget pieces. Still, they do tend to accumulate static electricity.
- c. Other materials. If you think you can grab something with your hook and make a loop, you can use it to crochet with, and designers have been doing just that for years. Think wire, strips of plastic, leather to even rope, and old VCR tapes. Grab a few old plastic shopping bags, cut them into strips, and use those strips to make something new.

Or maybe you have a dozen hold t-shirts ready to go to charity but decide to cut them into strips and produce a hammock or rug for your kitchen. The sky is the limit for things you can use to create handmade objects with crochet. This is where true creativity comes into play. If you have something, try it, and see if you can create a masterpiece with your newly found crochet skills.



Crochet supplies you will need

Are you ready to go shopping? You never need to ask me twice; I'm always willing to shop, but what should we buy? Every time you decide to plunge into a new hobby, you will always need a few items.

Lucky for you, crochet is a relatively inexpensive hobby that doesn't expect you to lay down a large sum of your hard-earned cash on a new endeavor. You are in luck. There are only a very few items you will need to get started and be successful but look closely; there will be a million people wanting you to hand over your hard-earned cash. It's just not necessary.

Before we get started with today's training module, check out the article on my website: <https://www.smart-knit-crocheting.com/crochet-accessories.html>

As you might see, there are a few recommendations for those who would love to learn how to crochet. Depending on your budget, spend some of it on a few good crochet hooks and a skein or two of practice yarn. Choose a cheap yarn that you can use to practice all those initial stitches and stitch combinations before investing in some more expensive yarns. Here are my favorite affordable yarns: Remember, choose yarns that are light in color so you can find mistakes if they pop up.

Here is a good shopping list of items most beginners will want to consider. Remember, this is an inexpensive hobby initially but can get costly as you go along and want fancier hooks, more gadgets, and of course higher quality wools and fibers.

Several Crochet hooks (I recommend getting a set of closely sized hooks so you can begin to practice your tension (we'll get to that in just a little while). A good starter pack might include in US terms, (F, G, H, I, J, K) in metric sizes (4 mm, 4.5 mm, 5 mm, 5.5 mm, 6mm)

- Scissors
- Yarn needles
- Stitch markers



- Tape measure
- Row counter
- Case to hold your tools
- Yarn (Number 4, medium worsted weight yarn in a few light colors)

Crochet abbreviations, symbols, and terminology

Does it feel like a foreign language to you know? I know how that feels as I'm still encountering new terminology or new words that mean the same thing as something I already know. It's frustrating, but before we talk about this in any detail, please read the page on [crochet terms and abbreviations](#). It is a work in progress. When I encounter a new word, it goes straight to this page. Please feel free to download a pdf copy to keep in your crochet bag.

Why so much terminology?

In my opinion, we have a lot of vocabulary because crocheting did not happen at a single point in history, nor was it invented by one group of people. No one knows for sure the exact record because, like most histories, it was not written down at the time. If you love history, may I suggest you read up on a bit of [crochet history](#)? You will discover different theories, origins, and types that eventually found its way into the 21st century.

When you have so many people in so many parts of the world doing similar but different crafting types, you're bound to get borrowed vocabulary. Before books, magazines, and the internet, knowledge of crochet was passed down through generations in the verbal tradition.

There was no need for precise terminology because learners could visually experience what their teachers were doing. When crochet was introduced into a print medium, there was a need to describe things in words and pictures.

Fast forward to the 21st century, the internet and YouTube. We learn how to crochet in many new and different ways, and the most popular seems to be viewing videos. Those that make these videos, whether on YouTube or another platform, must have a precise language to use so that people around the world can understand their directions.



A working vocabulary is essential for anyone interested in crochet to understand patterns and eventually write their own. The words of crochet also make it possible to communicate with someone across the globe and feel understood.

How to begin: The slip knot and chain stitch

Not all crochet projects begin with a slip knot and chain of stitches, but many beginner patterns start this way, so I feel this is an excellent place to start. This may be the shortest and easiest lesson, so please feel free to move on to the next if you already have this step mastered.

Read about the [slip knot and chain stitch](#), and then come back for a few more pointers.

Basic Crochet Stitches with troubleshooting

Now it's time to get into the meat and learn some stitches. I've tried to determine how many crochet stitches are out there for us to explore, but I'm getting different messages. The internet was no help, so I searched through large crochet handbooks to find the answer.

[The Crocheter's Skill-Building Workshop by Dora Ohrenstein](#)

[Crochet! Techniques Stitches Patterns by Marie Noelle Bayard](#)

[Crochet: More than 130 Techniques and Stitches](#)

[Ultimate Crochet Bible by Jane Crowfoot](#)

[Complete Crochet Course: The Ultimate Reference Guide by Shannon & Jason Mullett-Bowlsby](#)

Most seemed to agree on one thing: the basic crochet stitches, which are



[Single Crochet \(UK: Double Crochet\)](#)

[Half double crochet \(UK: Half Treble Crochet\)](#)

[Double Crochet \(UK: Treble Crochet\)](#)

[Treble Crochet \(UK: Double Treble Crochet\)](#)

[Double Treble Crochet Stitch \(UK: Triple Treble\)](#)

[Slip stitch](#)

Read the how-to tutorials for the above stitches and then come back for more explanations.

These are indeed basic stitches, but many can be worked in various ways, creating fabric that looks very different from the beginner's stitch. So, for example (and likely to confuse you), a double crochet stitch (in US terms) may be worked into both loops of the previous row's stitches, in the front loop only, in the back loop only, in the front of the post, in the back of the post, in a row below, worked as a cross-stitch in front, as a cross-stitched behind, ok, so you get the idea. So, a double crochet stitch becomes eight different stitches.

Beyond that bit of confusion, there was no agreement. Still, for this tutorial, I am going to classify some more crochet stitches into broad categories.

- Textual Stitches
- Finishing Details and Edging Techniques
- Filet Crochet
- Tunisian Crochet
- Irish Crochet
- Entrelac Crochet
- Intarsia Crochet
- Jacquard Crochet
- Clusters
- Looped stitches
- Chevrons

Stitch differences based on the direction of your work, the texture of the fabric, and more. These techniques and stitches are all covered on my website, <https://www.smart-knit-crocheting.com>, but for the purposes of this beginning



tutorial, I am not going to cover them. Get the basics down first then move into the more intricate stitches and patterns.

How many crochet stitches are there?

There is probably no one reliable reference on all the possible stitches, methods, combination stitches, or alternations available to answer my question. A reference like that would be too large to print.

How to make variations of the above stitches

Now comes the real fun. You've mastered all the basic stitches, so what can you do with them? If you've read some of the pages on my website, I have offered some fundamental patterns for practicing these stitches.

Once you are ready to move on, I think it might help to know that these same basic stitches can create many other patterns. I mentioned this in the previous tutorial, but it's well worth repeating it. Basic stitches can be used to create a fabric that looks very different from beginner stitches.

The stitches I'm referring to are the basic stitches. Still, they turn out differently depending on where you insert your hook. Here are just a few ideas:

1. Insert your hook in both loops of the stitch (normal)
2. Insert your hook into the front loop only
3. Insert your hook into the back loop only
4. Insert your hook in front of the post
5. Insert your hook into the back of the post
6. Insert your hook a row or more below the row you are working on
7. Insert your hook to create a cross-stitch in front of or behind.

Some of these methods can feel a little awkward at first, but with practice, you'll find that they aren't much harder than the way you made your basic stitches. The nice thing is that it gives you so much more flexibility to use just a half dozen stitches in so many ways.

Are you ready to experiment a little? Great. Let's look at a couple of the ways these stitches can create some fantastic designs.



Gauge

Why do we need to discuss gauge or tension as it concerns crochet? Easy. You want your work to look just like the pattern for which you are following. You want your garment to fit. You want to be assured that all your hard work won't go in vain because you got the gauge or tension wrong.

Start here by reviewing a page on my website about crochet gauge.

<https://www.smart-knit-crocheting.com/crochet-gauge-swatch.html>

As you will discover, gauge or tension is essential to get right if you want your result to fit and look like the pattern you followed.

Changing Colors

Just like most other things, when it comes to crochet, there is more than one way to change colors. The fundamental way is straightforward and is used to create stripes. The colors are changed at the end of a row. Leave two loops on your hook. Before pulling through with the old color, wrap the new yarn around the hook and pull through.

Read, [How to Change Colors in Crochet](#)

Fastening Off

Ending your work when crocheting means that you will need to fasten off. It's a relatively simple process. Save about six to eight inches of yar and then cut. Pull the end through the last loop on the hook. The last few inches of the yarn (also known as the tail) will be woven into the fabric's back during the finishing process. Please be aware that fastening off doesn't mean that you are finished with your project. It just means you are completing a part of it and will need to make a fresh start somewhere else.



Weaving in Ends

Weaving in the ends can be a task that you do when everything is finished, but many people will weave their ends in as they work. This is a better method than waiting until the end, as it can get rather tedious if you have an elaborate fabric piece.

Weaving in the ends is best done with a yarn or tapestry needle, but some will use a crochet hook too. To weave your ends using a yarn needle, thread the needle using your tail yarn and begin on the fabric's reverse side. Weave the ends in and out of stitches, trying hard to prevent pulling too hard.

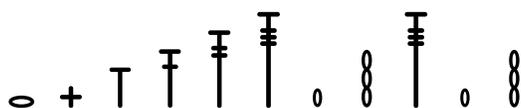
Go in one direction and then turn and go in another direction. The goal is to weave the ends so they don't show on the front of the fabric but in such a way as to prevent the ends from unraveling out.

Understanding Crochet Symbols in a Pattern

Once you get into crocheting, you are likely to want to make something using a written pattern. Patterns are beneficial because they give you the directions for making the product. They can also be confusing if they are written in symbols. Most well-written patterns will provide you with written instructions that include guides written in your language and a series of symbol pictures that describe how the finished project should appear. If you are a visual learner, seeing these diagrams help you understand and picture the finished project as a whole.

If you appreciate step-by-step instructions, these diagrams may look more like hieroglyphics than helpful diagrams.

These diagrams are designed so each crochet stitch is represented by a symbol. Here are a few examples to get you started.



o Chain



+ Single Crochet

T Half Double Crochet

ƚ Double Crochet

ƚ Treble Crochet

ƚ Double Treble Crochet

∞ Turning or starting chain-3

As you can see, there is a bit of a learning curve involved in learning which symbols are used for which stitches or procedures. But, once memorized, one can simply look at the diagram and determine what comes next.

These symbol charts are not for everyone, but they do serve a purpose.

Read more about [Crochet Patterns](#) here.

Crochet in the Round

Once you've mastered a few beginner crochet stitches, you will likely encounter patterns that call for working in the Round. All this means is that you will work around and around, beginning at a center point and working outward. This type of



work is used to create circles, of course, but you can also create all sorts of shapes, including squares, hexagons, triangles, just to name a few.

Being able to crochet in the Round opens up enormous possibilities in the crochet area, and the good news is that it is straightforward to learn. If you can crochet in rows, you can crochet in the Round.

Crochet in the Round begins with a short chain that is connected by a slip knot. All future stitches are worked in the small circle that you create with these chains. Another method for beginning is called the Magic circle, and the principle is the same, but there is less of a hole formed in the center. This makes the magic circle a modern technique for beginning a round of crochet.

Here are a few pages to check out and learn about crocheting in the Round.

[How to crochet in the Round](#)

[How to Read Charts when working in the Round.](#)

[How to Keep a Crochet Circle Flat](#)

[How to Create Crochet Doilies](#)

Now you have the tools and skill to complete a wide variety of projects. Use your newly learned talents to make scarves, blankets, bags, and much more. Please come back and visit <https://www.smart-knit-crocheting.com>. My site is devoted to helping people understand the basics of knitting and crocheting, and then some. From time to time, I will promote a product that I particularly love, and as a disclosure, I do earn a small commission for doing so. This income helps me create more informative posts and tutorials to help you along in your knitting or crocheting journal.

