

Whether you will be learning to Knit or Crochet, first you need to get the yarn onto your needle or hook with a Slip Knot. A slip knot will secure your yarn on your needle or hook in order to begin.

There are other methods, but my method is to lay the yarn over the needle or hook with about 4 inches of the tail on the side facing you.

Holding your needle or hook in your right hand, with your forefinger on top of the needle or hook, place your left hand just under the needle or hook and twist the yarn one half turn, so that the long end of the yarn is facing you.

Pinch this with your other fingers of the right hand to hold under the needle or hook.

With your left hand, take the long end of the yarn and yo (yarn over) the needle or hook from back to front.

Transfer the "pinch" to your left hand with your thumb and middle finger. Pull back on the needle or hook so that you pull the "yo" loop through the original loop. (This is easier with a crochet hook; sometimes you need to pull it through with your fingers on a knitting needle).

With your Slip Knot made, you are ready to begin your Cast-On (for Knitting) or make a Chain (for Crochet).

All Crochet instructions will begin with the term, "Chain_"

A Chain in Crochet will give you a "base" to get your hook into to make the next row or round. Right now you should have only a Slip Knot on your hook.

(Note that the Slip Knot is not counted as a "stitch"- you will always ignore this one when counting your chain or when working into the stitches. It will be the little stitch at the end with the knot attached before the tail).

To make a chain, hold the hook in your right hand, using your right forefinger to guide the top of the hook.

With your left hand, pinch the Slip Knot with your left thumb and middle finger, and drape the yarn up over your left forefinger. (The forefinger is always used for control or to bring the "yo" or yarn over the hook).

With the tip of your hook, reach into the space of the "triangle" made with the yarn, your forefinger, and middle finger. Your hook will be moving left to right and picking up the yarn held by your forefinger.

With your fingers all together now in your right hand, pull the hook face down through the Slip Knot loop and all the way through. (Always face your hook down when pulling through to clear the loops).

You have just "Chained 1".

Continue to insert your hook into the triangle, yo with the long end, and pull through the loop that is on the hook. Practice your chains and try to have even, loose tension.

If your chains are too tight, you will have difficulty getting your hook into them for the next row. The remedy for this is to take your hook out of the loop, pull the long tail, and your chains will come out. Then restart as needed.

Crochet is all about counting- every row or round must be counted before moving on. Otherwise you may begin an afghan but notice at some point it is growing or decreasing.

A large item such as an afghan will have many chains in which you need to double check your count in order to have the right amount. (For example, Ch 150). For small projects, you can usually count in your mind as you go.

To count the chain, you would count the stitch by the hook, but not the little Slip Knot at the end (which you will not work into).

With your left hand, you will turn the stitches out horizontally to the side, facing you. (If you turn this over you will see that it would be impossible to count the back side). The front side will have smooth loops which can be counted.

It usually helps me to count "by twos" instead of one by one.

On the title of this page, it gives you an abbreviation: Sc. That means Single Crochet. (Sometimes I say "Single Chain" in my mind when I am doing Single Crochet, rather than saying a mouthful).

There are a lot of abbreviations in Crochet. It will look very confusing at first.

For example,

Row 1: Ch 10. Sc in 2nd ch from hk, sc in next ch across, at end, ch 1, turn. (8 sc)

What that says is, "Single crochet in 2nd chain from hook (you can't get your hook into that little stitch that's next to the hook, so don't try!), single crochet in every chain across the row (do not work in the Slip Knot at the end, Chain 1, turn your work over."

At the end, it tells you parentheses how many stitches you should have for that row. ALWAYS count every row or round, counting the number of top loops across the row or round. If you learn to count the stitches correctly, it will save you much confusion later.

The reason you lost 2 stitches in that row (it said Chain 10, but you ended up with 8 sc) is that most every row or round (except Slip Stitches) need height to begin.

If you were going to walk across a platform, first you would need to go up the steps, right? (Usually you wouldn't walk up a ramp).

When your directions tell you to work your first stitch a few stitches away from the hook, you are making a turning chain, or giving yourself the height you need to make the first row. Then when you look at your finished row, it will be even across.

(It's not always called a turning chain- it could be called just a chain if you are not turning your work over).

For different stitches, you will need different heights. Generally, a SC (Single Crochet) row has a height of 1 chain, a HDC (Half Double Crochet) or DC (Double Crochet) row has a height of 2 chains, and a TC (Treble Crochet) row has a height of 3.

After you have made the chain, you're ready to begin your first row of practice. This will be a Sc (Single Crochet) row.

1. Hold your hook in your right hand, with your right forefinger guiding the top of your hook.
2. To crochet, you will need tension on the yarn. Hold your left hand as in a handshake. Drape the long end of the yarn in and out of your left fingers. (My middle and 4th finger are usually together inside the yarn while the yarn is draped over the forefinger).
3. Hold the chain in your left hand (below the yarn you are holding for tension) with the chain laying out to the left horizontally (chain stitches facing you).
4. Skip the chain which is next to the hook, and insert your hook into the next chain.
5. With your left forefinger, yo (yarn over), from back to front.
6. Hook the yo (facing your hook down), and pull through the chain, (2 loops will be on your hook), yo, back to front, hook the yo, and pull through both loops on hook. (1 SC, or Single Crochet made).
7. Repeat the same process in the next chain and in every chain across, until you have reached the Slip Knot at the end. (Don't work in this).
8. Now, hold your row flat and look at it. You'll notice there are 2 loops at the top of every stitch. (They will look like a chain on top of the row). From now on, every time you will make a stitch, you'll put your hook below these top 2 loops, going from your side out to the other side.
9. Go ahead and count your row. (One stitch will have the 2 loops if looking down from the top). These are called the Front and the Back Loop. Count these: The stitch by the hook, all stitches across the row, and the stitch at the end that is not quite up by the other stitches. (Do not count the Slip Knot on the row below). When you are finished, ch 1 (chain 1), turn work over (turn).
10. Next row: The chain you just made was your turning chain to get the height you need for this row. Your first stitch will be just under the hook with the 2 loops on top. Insert your yarn under these 2 loops, yo, pull through (which means to hook the yo and pull through that stitch), yo, pull through 2 loops. (1 sc made), repeat your stitches across. Count (these should match the count of your last row).

When you are ready to finish off, you will cut yarn to about 5-6 inches, yo, and pull all the way through your last loop on the hook, pulling to tighten.

All crochet is worked with yarn or thread ends hanging down- these are not taken care of until the project is finished.

To weave in yarn ends, choose a large child's plastic sewing needle. To weave in crochet thread ends, choose a metal needle with an eye large enough for the thread to pass through.

Then pass this through the work as invisibly as you can, always on the back side of work. Trim ends close to work. Any knots you would make by tying ends would show, so this is not something you would want to do.