

# Crochet essentials

Over the next few pages, you'll find simple step-by-step guides to many useful stitches and techniques that you'll use every time you pick up a hook

## HOLDING THE HOOK

Try these methods and see which works best



### PENCIL METHOD

Hold the hook like a pencil, in your right hand (if you're right-handed), about 3-5cm 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, about 3-5cm from the hooked end, resting the end of the hook against your palm. This will give you lots of control.

## HOLDING THE YARN

Even tension results in even stitches



### METHOD ONE

Pass the ball end of the yarn between the little finger and third fingers of your left hand (if you are right-handed), then behind the third and middle fingers, over your index finger.



### METHOD TWO

Loop the ball end of the yarn loosely around the little finger of your left hand, then take it over the third finger, behind the middle finger and over your index finger.

## MAKING A SLIPKNOT

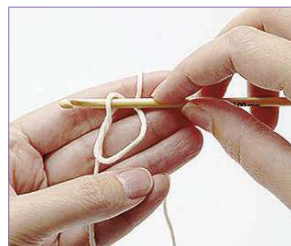
The first loop on the hook



**1** Hold the tail of the ball of yarn in your left hand and drape the yarn clockwise over the top of it to form a loose, circular loop.



**2** Hold the loop between left thumb and forefinger, then insert the crochet hook through the centre of the loop from front to back.



**3** Catch the ball end of the yarn with the hook and pull it back through the centre of the loop, taking the yarn through with it.



**4** Pull both ends of the yarn to tighten the knot, then pull just the ball end to tighten the loop so it's close to the hook, but not touching it.

## CHAIN STITCH

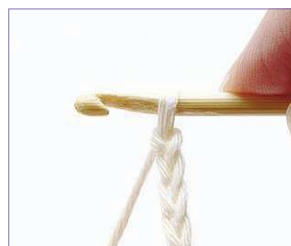
Use this stitch to make your foundation chain



**1** Hold the hook in your right hand, and both the yarn end and the working yarn in your left hand. Move the hook under and over the yarn to wrap it around anticlockwise.



**2** Pull the hook towards the slipknot, catching the yarn in the hook, and pulling it through the slipknot loop. This forms your first chain (ch) stitch. Repeat steps 1 and 2 to form a chain length.



**3** This is what your row of chains will look like. Hold the chain with your left hand near the hook, to keep the tension. Keep going until you have the number of chains that's stated in your pattern.

## How to count chains



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

## SLIP STITCH (ss)

This stitch has no height – often used to join rounds



**1** The slip stitch is used to join a length of chain into the round. Insert the hook from front to back into the first chain you worked. Wrap yarn round the hook (yrh) in an anticlockwise direction.



**2** Pull the yarn through the chain stitch (as shown) and then the loop already on the hook to make a slip stitch. You can also work this stitch into each stitch along a row to form a neat edging.

## WORKING IN ROWS

Follow these simple rules to construct crochet fabric



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



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

## DOUBLE CROCHET (dc) US term: single crochet

One of the key stitches in crochet, doubles are simple, compact stitches that form a dense fabric



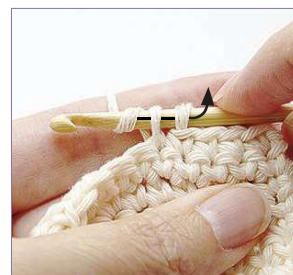
**1** To make a double crochet stitch, insert the hook under the top two loops of the next stitch on the previous row.



**2** Wind the yarn around the hook (yrh).



**3** Pull the yarn through the stitch, giving you two loops on your crochet hook.



**4** Yarn round hook again, then pull the yarn through both loops. There's your double crochet made and you'll have one loop left on the hook, ready to do the next stitch.

## HALF TREBLE CROCHET (htr) US term: half double crochet

A handy stitch that's between double and treble crochet in size, and it looks slightly looser than double crochet



**1** To make a half treble crochet stitch, work to where you want the htr and then wind the yarn round the hook (yrh).



**2** Insert the hook under the top two loops of the next stitch in the previous row. Wrap yarn around the hook again (yrh).



**3** Pull the yarn through the stitch only (3 loops on hook).



**4** Yarn round hook again, pull the yarn through all 3 loops. You've made a half treble crochet. Continue working htr into next and following sts to the end of the row.

## TREBLE CROCHET (tr) US term: double crochet

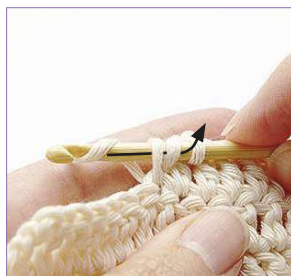
One of the most popular stitches in crochet, this simple stitch is twice as high as a double crochet stitch



**1** To work a treble crochet, start by winding yrh and then insert the hook under the top two loops of the stitch on the previous row.



**2** Wrap the yarn around the hook (yrh) and pull the yarn through the stitch only.



**3** You will now have 3 loops on the hook. Yrh again, and draw the yarn through just the first 2 loops on the hook.



**4** You will now have 2 loops on the hook. Yrh again and draw the yarn through the remaining loops on the hook. Your treble crochet is complete.

## DOUBLE TREBLE CROCHET (dtr)

US term: treble crochet

This is a stitch regularly used as an elongated version of the treble (described above). It's worked in a very similar way to the treble, as follows:

- 1** Make a foundation chain. Skip 4ch, \*yrh twice, and insert the hook under the top loop of the next ch.
- 2** Yrh, pull the yarn through the ch loop only (4 loops on hook).
- 3** Yrh and pull the yarn through 2 loops only (3 loops on hook).

Yrh and pull the yarn through 2 loops only (2 loops on hook).

- 4** Yrh and pull the yarn through the remaining 2 loops. Repeat from \* to make more dtr sts.

- 5** To make the next row of dtr, turn work and ch4. This turning chain counts as the first dtr in a new row. Skip first st at the base of the t-ch, work 1dtr under the top two loops of the 2nd stitch in the previous row; continue to the end of the row.

## TRIPLE TREBLE CROCHET (ttr)

US term: double treble crochet

This is one of the longest standard crochet stitches and is mainly used in fancy stitch patterns. It's taller than a double treble crochet stitch (described left) and is worked in a very similar way, as follows:

- 1** Make a foundation ch. Skip 5 ch, \*yrh 3 times, insert hook under top loop of next ch.
- 2** Yrh, pull yarn through ch loop only (5 loops on hook).
- 3** † Yrh, draw loop through 2

loops only. Repeat from † 3 times more and your triple treble will be finished. Repeat from \* to make more ttr sts.

- 4** To make the next row, turn work and ch5. This turning chain counts as the first triple treble in a new row. Skip first st at base of the t-ch. Work 1 triple treble, inserting hook under the top 2 loops of the 2nd st in the previous row; continue to the end of the row.

## TURNING CHAIN (t-ch)

For an even finish, start each row with a turning chain

In crochet, you need to add turning chains (t-chs) to the beginning of rows. The reason for this is to bring the hook up to the height of the stitches you're crocheting. Each basic stitch has its own number of chains. The

table below tells you how many t-ch sts form the first stitch. \*For dc, usually the turning chain does not count as a stitch, and the first stitch of the row is worked into the stitch at the base of the turning chain.

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 crochet	1 ch	1 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

## How to count stitches

Check your work is correct

Being able to count your stitches is very important and helps you to ensure that you're following a pattern correctly. It's a good idea to count your stitches at the end of every row. To count short stitches such as double crochet, look at the plaited tops (see above right). For taller stitches, count the upright 'stems' – each 'stem' is counted as a stitch (see right).



## HOW TO CHANGE COLOUR

Create stripes and other colour effects



**1** Before you work the final yrh (yarn round hook) on the last stitch of a row in the old colour, drop the old yarn and then pick up the new one with your hook.



**2** Pull through a loop of the new yarn to finish the old stitch. The working loop will be in the new colour. Continue, keeping the old yarn at the wrong side.

## INCREASING AND DECREASING

Shaping stitches are vital for making garments



**INCREASE** To increase one stitch is very simple – work one stitch into the next stitch on the row below. When you've finished, work another stitch into the same stitch.



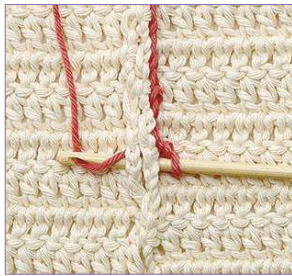
**DECREASE** For a quick decrease, just skip one stitch. For a neater look, work the first part of one stitch and then begin the next stitch. Finish both together.

## SEWING SEAMS

You can join crochet seams by using a tapestry needle or a crochet hook, using one of these four methods



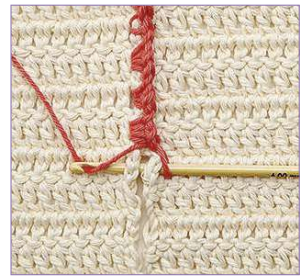
**1** Sewing with a tapestry needle is the regular and neat way to join seams. Place two pieces of crochet right sides together and oversew them as shown above, using a tapestry or yarn needle.



**2** To slip stitch a seam, place the crochet pieces right sides together. \*Insert hook into both edge stitches, yrh and pull through to complete 1 slip stitch; rep from \* working into the next edge stitches, keeping work fairly loose.



**3** For a dc seam, place the crochet pieces right sides together, or wrong sides together for a visible seam. Work as for slip stitch seam, using double crochet instead of slip stitch.

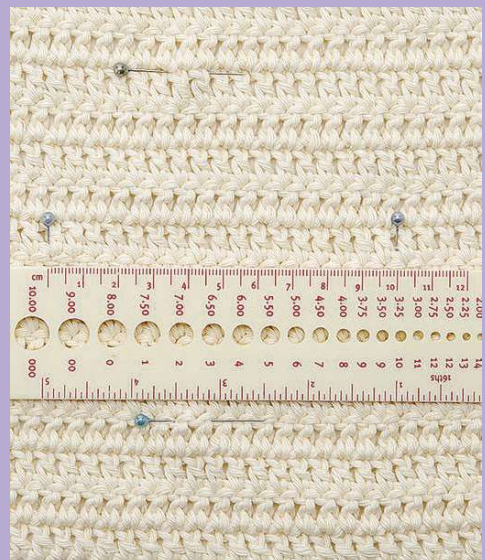
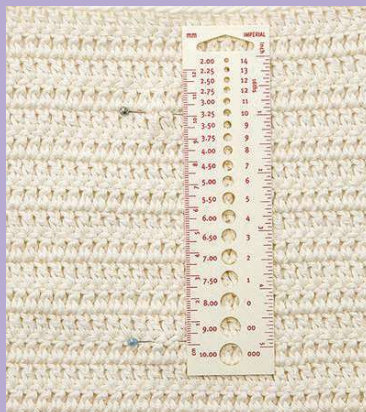


**4** A useful variation on the dc seam, the dc and chain seam is used when less bulk and/or greater flexibility is needed. Work 1 double crochet and 1 chain alternately.

## How to check your tension

Make and measure a swatch to check your tension

Most crochet patterns state the tension required, in rows and stitches of a specific type. Make a swatch at least 15cm square and check that your tension matches. Place a ruler across the swatch and insert two pins, 10cm apart. Then place the ruler along a column of stitches and insert two pins 10cm apart. Count the stitches and rows between the pins – if you have less than the pattern, your tension is too loose so you need to use a smaller hook, but if you have too many, use a larger hook. It's usually better to match the stitches than rows, because you can always work more or fewer rows.



## FOUNDATION RING

Create a foundation ring for working in the round



**1** Make a chain the length stated in the pattern instructions. Next, insert the crochet hook into the first chain. Close the ring with a slip stitch, working yrh...



**2** ...and pull yarn through 2 loops on hook. Now you're ready to start crocheting in the round, following the instructions given right.

## WORKING STITCHES INTO A RING

To make circles, tubes and other shapes



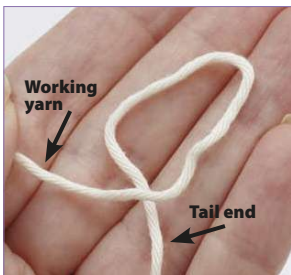
**1** Make a foundation ring and work the t-ch (3ch for treble sts). Work a treble st as usual, but insert hook into centre of ring. For treble sts, yrh, insert hook into ring.



**2** Finish the treble as usual (yrh, pull yarn through ring, yrh, pull yarn through first 2 loops, yrh, pull yarn through 2 loops). Work more sts into the ring as needed.

## MAGIC LOOP

An alternative foundation ring for working in the round



**1** To start a Magic Loop, don't make a slipknot. Instead, make a loop with the yarn, leaving a tail around 10cm long. Make sure the tail end is under the working yarn.



**2** Now insert your hook into the loop, from front to back. Wrap the working yarn around the hook and pull the yarn through the loop.



**3** Make a t-ch for the sts you want to work (above, we made 1 t-ch for dc). Work your sts into the Magic Loop, over both the loop and the tail end (so two yarn strands).



**4** Once you've worked the first round of stitches, simply pull the tail end of yarn to draw up the ring. Work a slip stitch to join the last and first sts to finish the first round (as instructed in the guide below).

## JOINING ROUNDS

Finish off each round of crochet stitches nice and neatly by using a slip stitch



**1** To close a round of stitches, work a slip stitch into the top of the turning chain. To do this, insert the hook into the top stitch of the turning chain.



**2** Then place the yarn round the hook. Pull the yarn through the turning chain stitch and through the original stitch on your hook.



**3** You've slip stitched the round together! Before working another round, be sure to make the required turning chain. Always work rounds on the right side, unless you pattern instructs you otherwise.

## Rounds or spirals



Check which technique you need to use

Some patterns are worked in rounds that are joined together at the end of each round (see left). Other patterns are worked in a spiral so you don't need to join the rounds at the end, just keep going, working into the next stitch on the previous row. Amigurumi toys are often worked in a spiral like this.

# Abbreviations

across	to end of the row	htr	half treble
approx	approximate(ly)	htr2tog	work 2htr together
beg	beginning	in next	sts to be worked into
bl	insert hook under back loop only	inc	increase
BPtr	Back Post treble: yrh, starting from the back, insert hook from back to front to back around post of st in row below, complete as treble st	LH	left hand
ch(s)	chain/chain stitch(es)	lp(s)	loop(s)
ch-sp(s)	chain space(s)	meas	measures
ch-	refers to ch made previously, eg. ch-3	patt(s)	pattern(s)
cl(s)	clusters	pm	place marker
2-tr cl	(yrh, insert hook in sp/ st, yrh & pull up loop, yrh & draw through 2 loops) twice, inserting hook in same sp/st, yrh & draw through all loops on hook	prev	previous
cont	continue	qtr	quadruple treble
dc	double crochet	rem	remain(s)/remaining
dc2tog	(insert hook in next st, yrh and draw a loop through) twice, yrh and draw through all 3 loops on hook	rep	repeat
dec	decrease	RH	right hand
dtr	double treble crochet	rnd(s)	round(s)
dtr2tog	work 2dtr together	RS	right side
fdc	foundation dc	sk	skip
fr	foundation tr	sp(s)	space(s)
fl	insert hook under front loop only	ss	slip stitch
fol/folls	following/follows	st(s)	stitch(es)
FPtr	Front Post treble: work in opposite way to BPtr	tbl	through back loop
		t-ch(s)	turning chain(s)
		tog	together
		tr	treble crochet
		tr2tog	(yrh, insert hook in next st, yrh and pull up loop, yrh and draw through 2 loops) twice, yrh and draw through all loops on hook
		ttr	triple treble crochet
		WS	wrong side
		yrh	yarn round hook
		*	work instructions immediately foll *, then rep as many more times as directed
		()	work all instructions in the brackets as many times as directed

# Crochet hook conversions

UK	METRIC	US
14	2mm	-
13	2.25mm	B/1
12	2.5mm	-
-	2.75mm	C/2
11	3mm	-
10	3.25mm	D/3
9	3.5mm	E/4
-	3.75mm	F/5
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	L/11
00	9mm	M/13
000	10mm	N/15

# Which hook do I use?

Hook size	UK 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 yarn

# UK/US conversions

UK		US	
chain	ch	chain	ch
slip stitch	ss	slip stitch	ss
double crochet	dc	single crochet	sc
half treble	htr	half double	hdc
treble	tr	double	dc
double treble	dtr	treble	tr
triple treble	ttr	double treble	dtr

# HOW TO GET A PERFECT FINISH

To prevent your hard work unravelling once you've finished crocheting, fasten the end off carefully, following our instructions below



Complete the final stitch, then cut the yarn about 15cm from the work. Pull it through the last loop on the hook and pull to close the loop. Thread the yarn tail onto a tapestry needle and weave into the back of the work. Most crochet items don't need a lot of blocking, but cotton lace work usually does. To do this, carefully pin out the item with rust-proof pins, mist with a water spray and leave to dry naturally.