



Learn to Crochet

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1. Before You Start

Find a comfortable chair in good light. Read through the steps before you begin. As with any new skill, learning to crochet requires equal measures of patience and perseverance. Remember, crocheting should be a fun experience. If you get stuck, take a deep breath to relax, but keep at it.

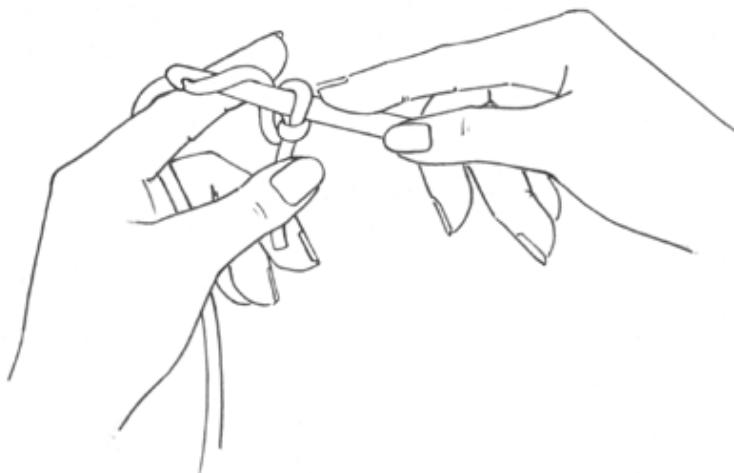


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2. Getting a Grip

Crochet is a method of creating fabric from yarn or thread, by using a hook and a ball of yarn. The hook is generally held in the right hand as shown. Even lefties can learn to crochet this way or they can reverse the instructions. There are two basic "holds".

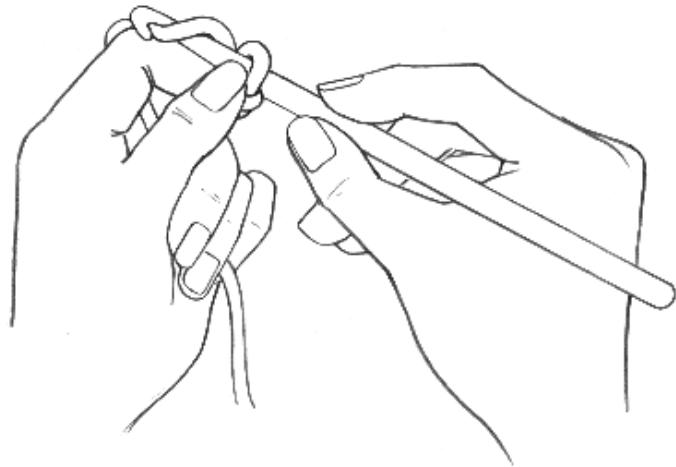


In the knife method, place your right hand over the hook and grasp it between your thumb and index finger to begin. The left hand is used to control the yarn and to hold the stitches as they are created.



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In this method, you hold the hook as you would a pencil, grasping the hook between your thumb and index finger.

Use whichever method feels more comfortable to you.

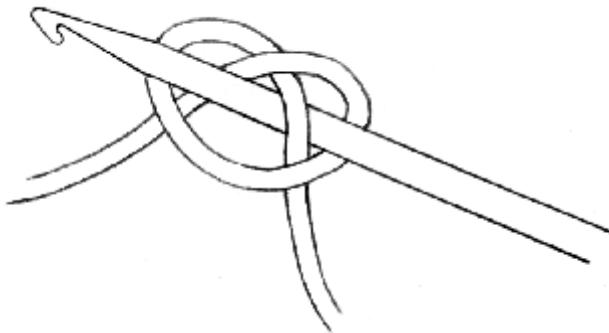


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3. Let's start at the beginning

To begin, you'll need to make the first loop on your hook, a slip knot.



Pull the yarn strand from the center of the ball. Make a loop shape 5" or 6" from the end (the tail) by placing the tail in front of the ball yarn, then letting the rest of the tail yarn fall slightly behind the loop.

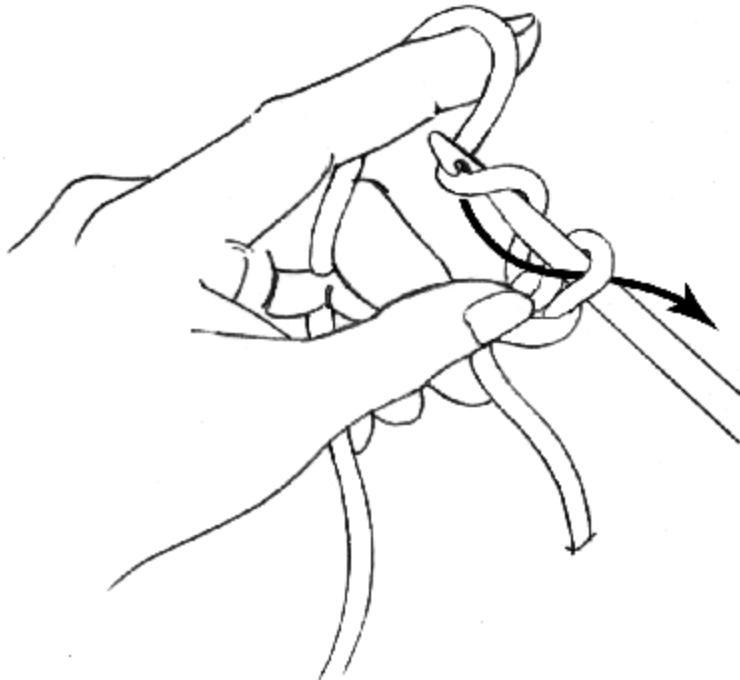
Insert your hook into the loop. Scoop up the yarn in the back of the loop with the hook. Pull through the front of the loop. Gently pull the tail yarn to tighten loop around the hook. In crocheting, the slip knot does not count as a stitch.



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4. Making a chain stitch (abbreviated as ch)

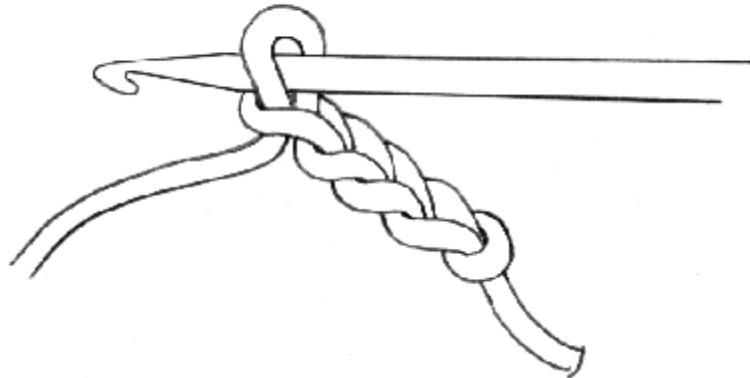


Hold the hook in your right hand and loop the yarn from the ball over your left index finger. Hold the end of the slip knot between the thumb and middle finger of your left hand. With your left index finger, wrap the yarn from back to front around the shaft of the hook. Use the hook to draw the yarn through the loop on the hook – one chain is now made.



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Make as many chains as your pattern calls for. Do not count the slip knot or the loop currently on your hook as chain stitches. The resulting row of chains is called the foundation chain. You will build the crocheted fabric off of this foundation. The chain stitch is also used to produce spaces and loops in your fabric

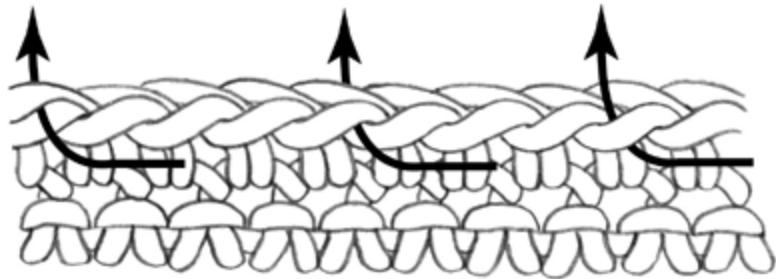


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5. All About Stitches

The illustration above shows how to count the chain stitches you have worked. When counting chains, do not include the slip knot at the end or the loop on your hook as a stitch.



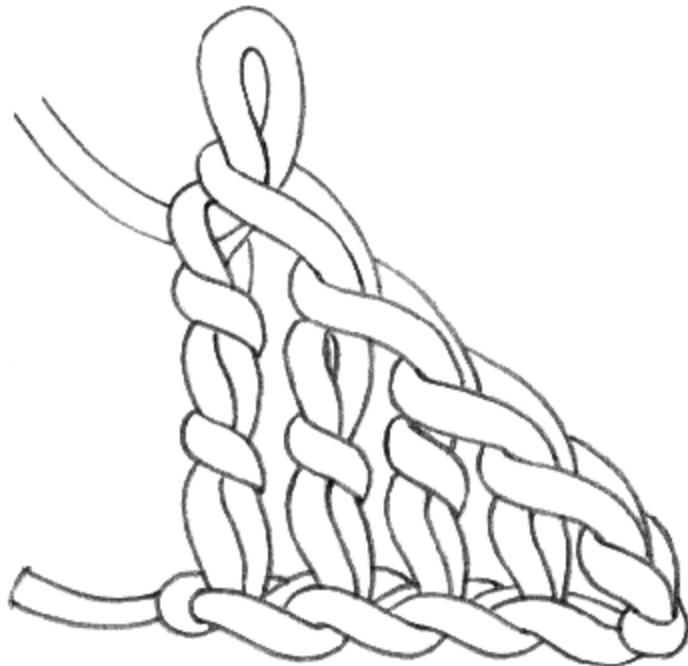
Each crochet stitch has 2 loops on the top of the stitch. The illustration above identifies these loops. Usually, you will insert your hook under both loops of the stitch in the previous row. Sometimes, to create a decorative effect, a pattern will indicate to work in either the front loop or back loop of a stitch.



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6. Turning Chains



Stitches in crochet come in varying heights. When you begin a row of any stitch, you will be starting at the base of the row. In order to come up to the height of the stitch you will be working, you must start with a chain that is the same height as the stitches in the row you are working. This chain is called the turning chain. It can be worked before or after turning your work. The illustration above shows the most common stitches and the length of the turning chain for each stitch.

Single crochet: one chain

Half double crochet: two chains

Double crochet: three chains

Triple crochet: four chains



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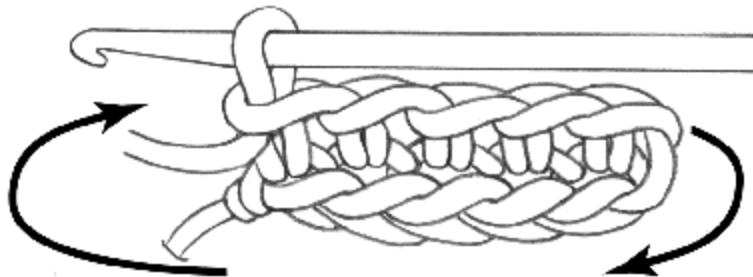
Usually, the turning chain at the beginning of the row, takes the place of the first stitch of the row. So, after working the turning chain, you will not work another stitch in the first stitch. And when you come to the end of the row, you will treat the turning chain as a stitch and work in it. For the single crochet, the rules change. The turning chain worked at the beginning of a single crochet row does not count as a stitch. After working the turning chain, you will also work a single crochet in the stitch below the turning chain. You will not work in the turning chain on the return row.



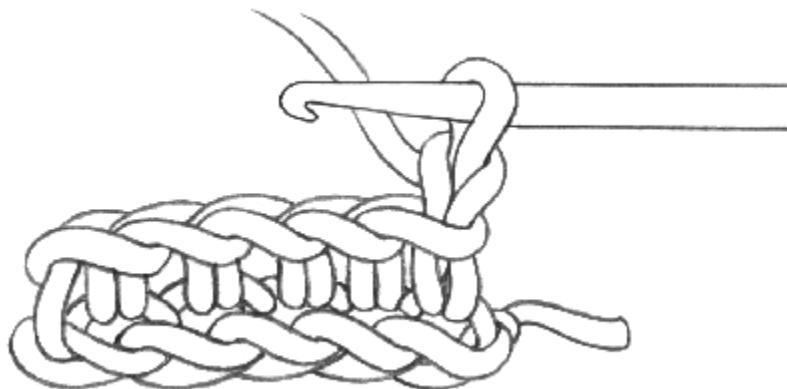
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7. Turning Your Work



When you come to the end of a row, the instructions will tell you to turn (your work). Refer to the illustration above.



Simply rotate your crochet piece, clockwise halfway around so that the last stitch you worked now becomes the first stitch in the row below.

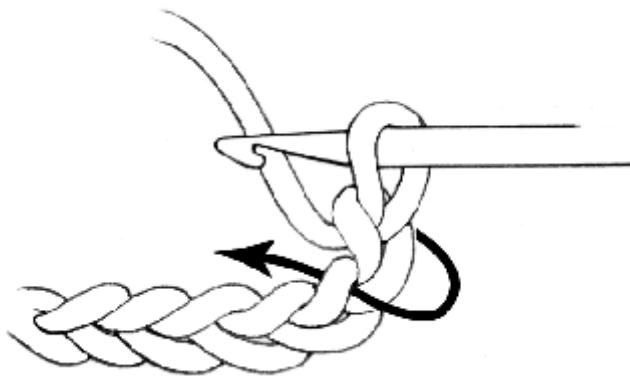


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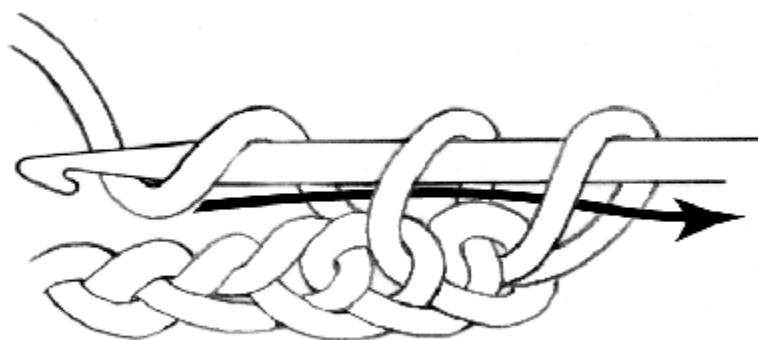
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8. Making a Single Crochet (abbreviated sc)

The single crochet is the most basic crochet stitch for making fabric. All the other stitches are variations on this one.



Make a foundation chain one chain more than the number of single crochet stitches called for. Insert hook from front to back in the center of the second chain from the hook.

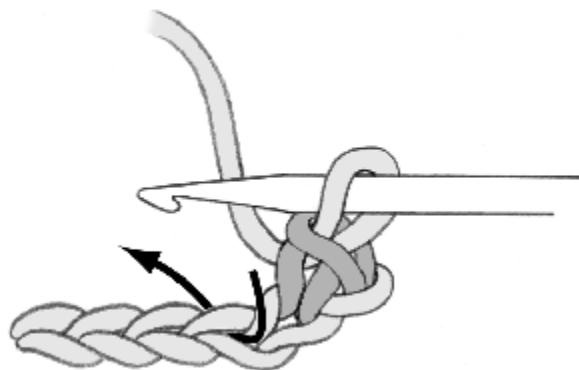


Wrap the yarn, from back to front, around the hook (this is called yarn over and is abbreviated yo), draw the yarn through the chain (2 loops on hook).

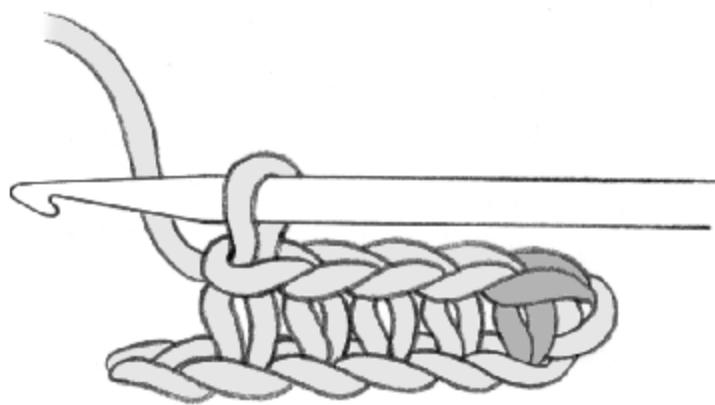


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Yarn over, draw through 2 loops on hook (one single crochet complete).



Insert hook in the center of next chain, yarn over, draw yarn through stitch, yarn over, draw yarn through 2 loops on hook. Repeat across to end of foundation chain.

To begin the second row, turn your work. Chain one for the turning chain (does not



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count as a stitch).

Insert hook from front to back under the top 2 loops of the first single crochet in the row below, yarn over, draw yarn through stitch, yarn over, draw yarn through 2 loops on hook (first single crochet complete). Repeat this step in each single crochet across.

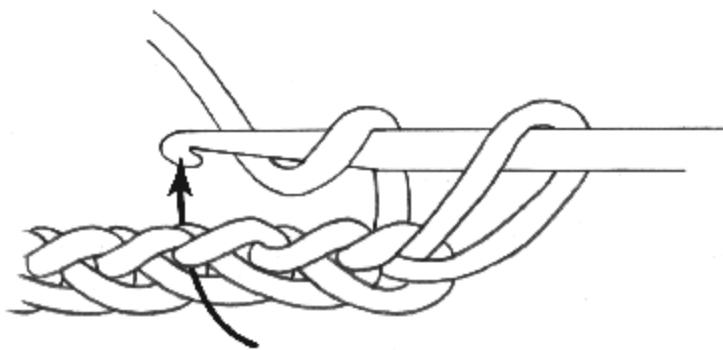


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9. Making a half double crochet (abbreviated hdc)

The half double crochet comes halfway between a single crochet and a double crochet in height.



Make a foundation chain one chain more than the number of half double crochet stitches called for. Skip first 2 chain stitches (will count as the turning chain). Yarn over hook once, insert hook from front to back in the center of the third chain from the hook.

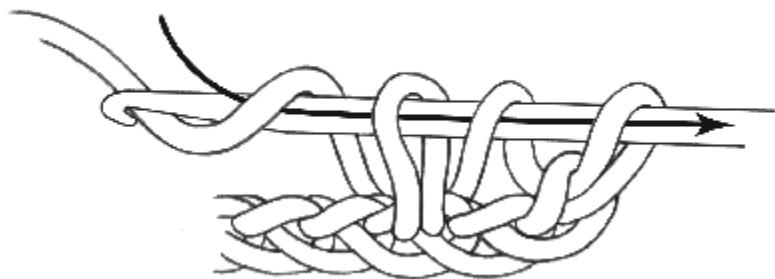


Yarn over, draw the yarn through the chain (3 loops on hook).

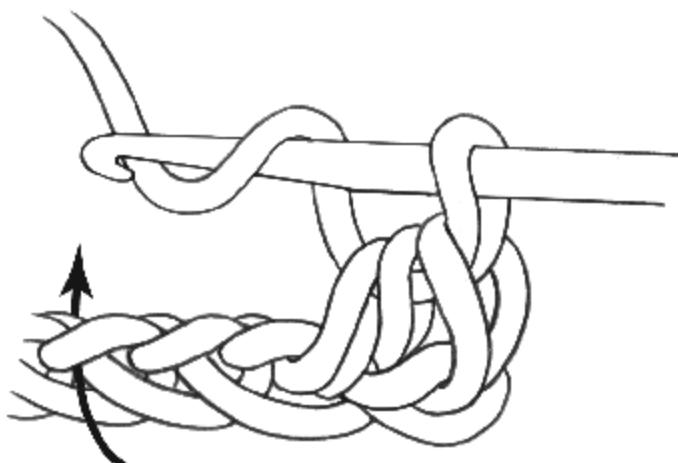


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Yarn over, draw through 3 loops on hook (one half double crochet complete).

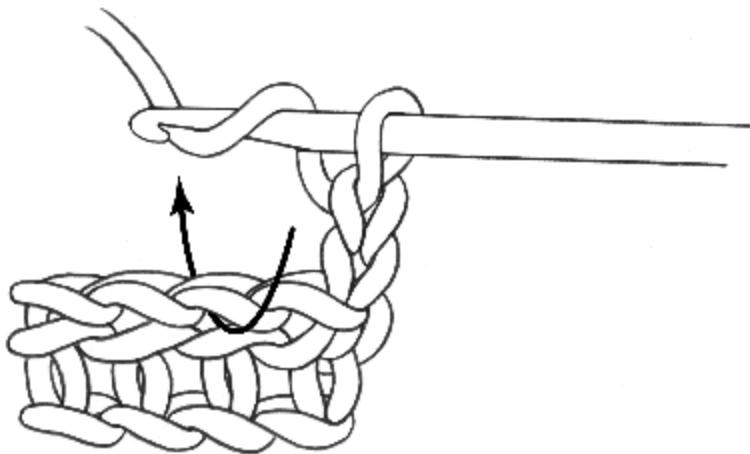


Yarn over, insert hook in the center of next chain, yarn over, draw yarn through stitch, yarn over, draw yarn through 3 loops on hook. Repeat across to end of foundation chain.



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To begin the second row, turn your work. Chain two for the turning chain.

Skip the first half double crochet below the turning chain. Yarn over, insert hook from front to back under the top 2 loops of the next half double crochet in the row below, yarn over, draw yarn through stitch, yarn over, draw yarn through 3 loops on hook (first half double crochet complete). Repeat this step in each half double crochet across and in the top of the turning chain at the end of the row.



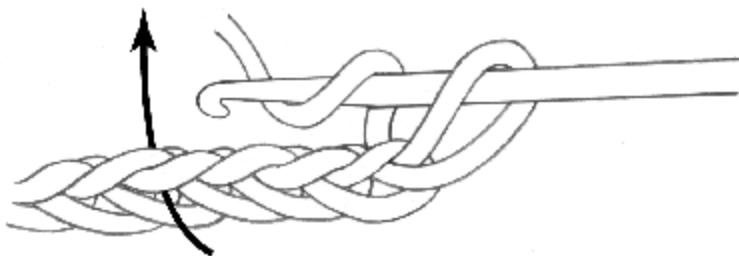
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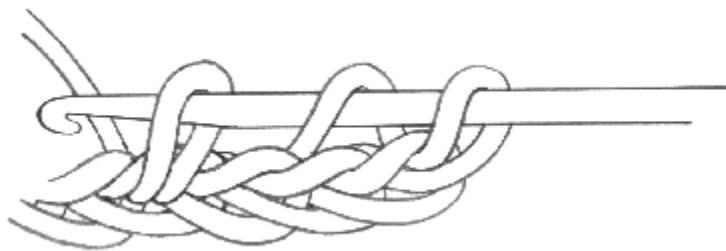
10. Making a double crochet (abbreviated dc)

The double crochet is about twice the height of a single crochet. It is a very popular stitch producing a looser fabric than single crochet.

Make foundation chain 2 chains more than the number of double crochet stitches called for. Skip first 3 chain stitches (will count as the turning chain).



Yarn over hook once, insert hook from front to back in the center of the fourth chain from the hook.

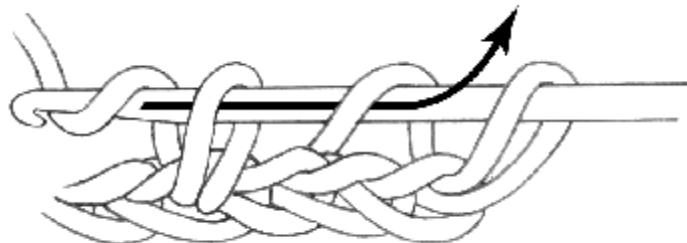


Yarn over, draw the yarn through the chain (3 loops on hook).

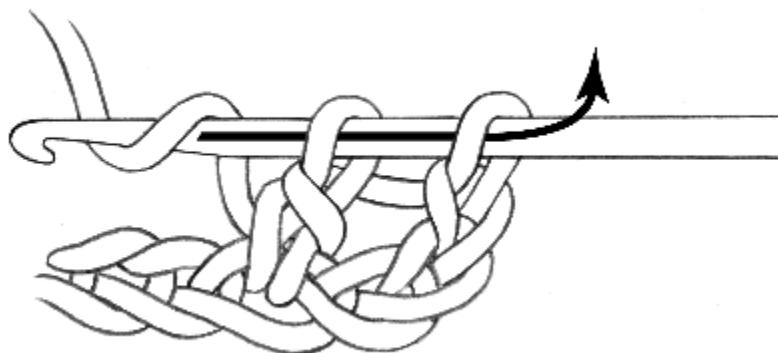


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Yarn over, draw yarn through 2 loops on hook (2 loops remain on hook).

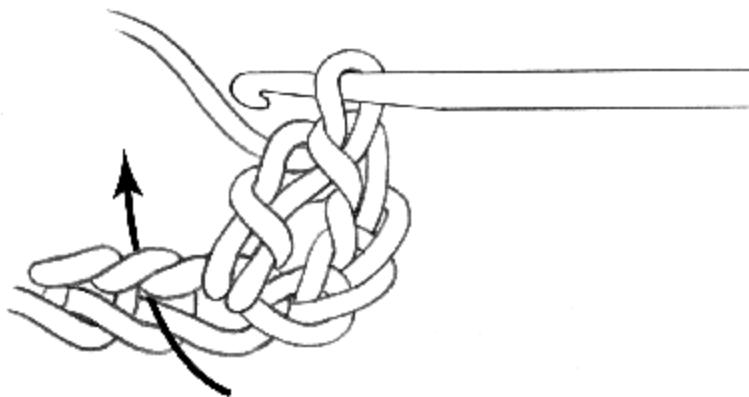


Yarn over, draw through 2 loops on hook (one double crochet complete).



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Yarn over, insert hook in the center of next chain, yarn over, draw yarn through stitch, yarn over, draw yarn through 2 loops on hook, yarn over, draw yarn through 2 loops on hook. Repeat across to end of foundation chain.

To begin the second row, turn your work. Chain three for the turning chain.

Skip the first double crochet below the turning chain. Yarn over, insert hook from front to back under the top 2 loops of the next double crochet in the row below, yarn over, draw yarn through stitch, yarn over, draw yarn through 2 loops on hook, yarn over, draw yarn through 2 loops on hook (first double crochet complete). Repeat this step in each double crochet across and in the top of the turning chain at the end of the row.

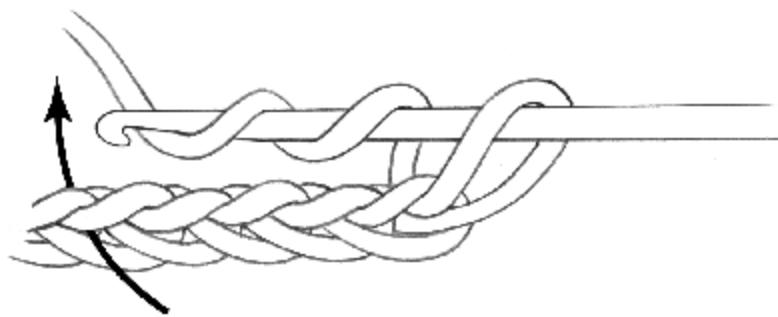


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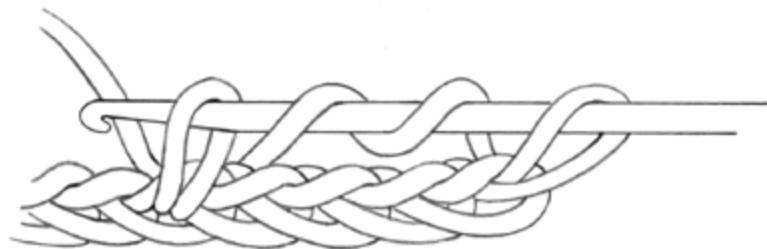
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11. Making a triple crochet (abbreviated trc)

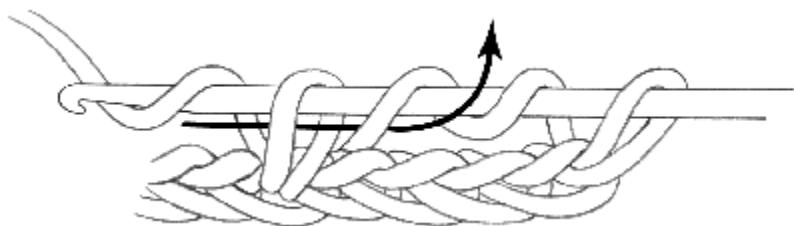
The triple crochet is a little taller than a double crochet.



Make foundation chain 3 chains more than the number of triple crochet stitches called for. Skip first 4 chain stitches (will count as the turning chain). Yarn over hook (twice), insert hook from front to back in the center of the fifth chain from the hook.



Yarn over, draw the yarn through the chain (3 loops on hook).

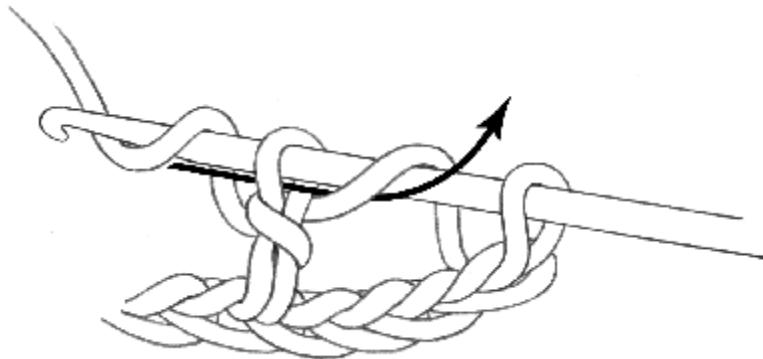




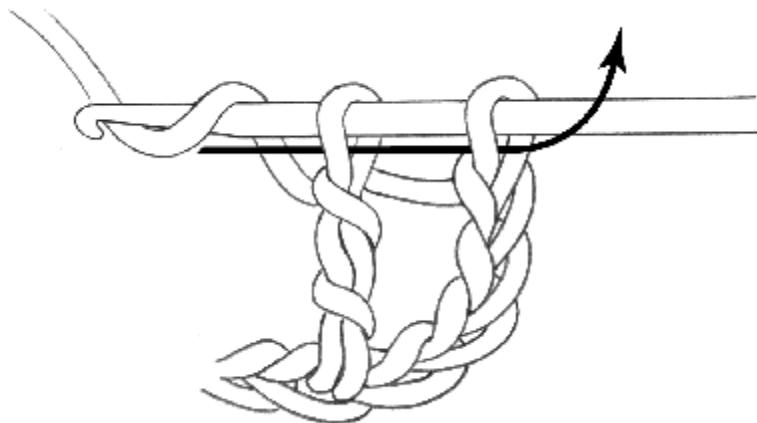
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Yarn over, draw yarn through 2 loops on hook (3 loops remain on hook).



Yarn over, draw yarn through 2 loops on hook (2 loops remain on hook).

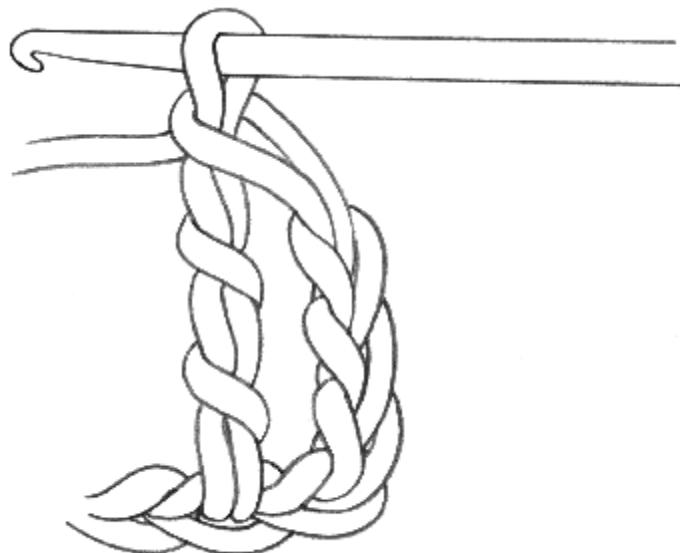


Yarn over, draw through 2 loops on hook (one triple crochet complete).

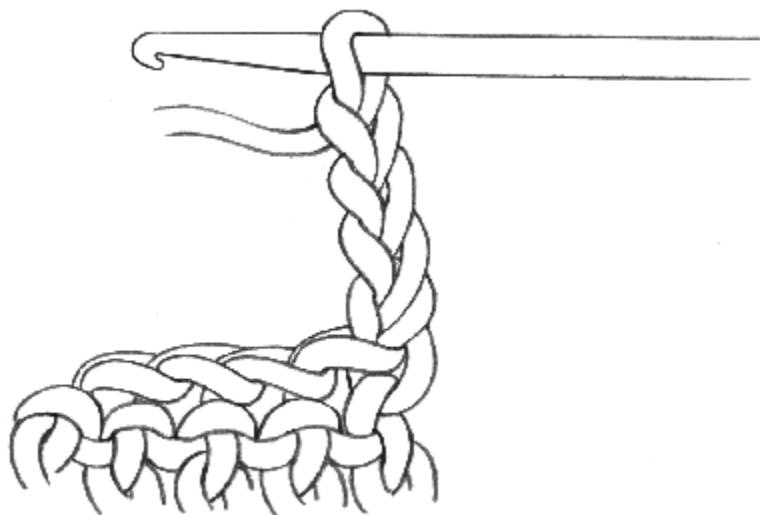


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Yarn over (twice), insert hook in the center of next chain, yarn over, draw yarn through stitch, [yarn over, draw yarn through 2 loops on hook] 3 times. Repeat across to end of foundation chain.





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To begin the second row, turn your work. Chain four for the turning chain.

Skip the first triple crochet below the turning chain. Yarn over (twice), insert hook from front to back under the top 2 loops of the next triple crochet in the row below, [yarn over, draw yarn through 2 loops on] 3 times (first triple crochet complete). Repeat this step in each triple crochet across and in the top of the turning chain at the end of the row.

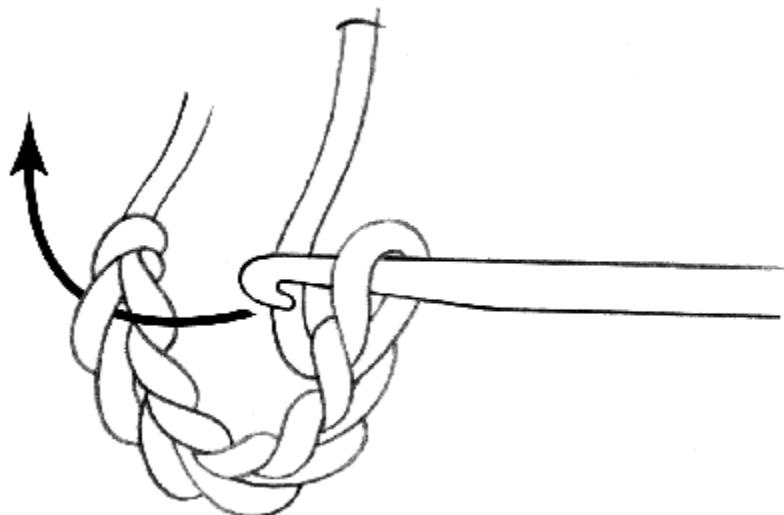


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12. Making a slip stitch (abbreviated sl st)

A slip stitch has very little height. It is used to join stitches that are worked in rounds such as a granny square. It is also used to travel to another part of a row without producing any visible stitches (such as indenting an armhole on a sweater).

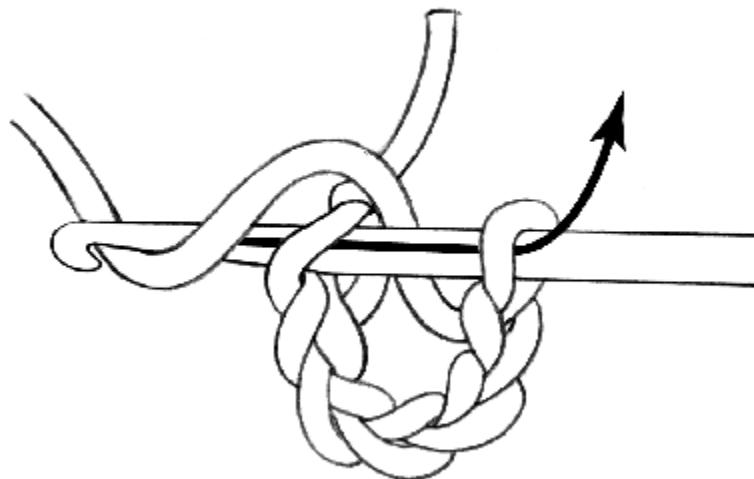


To work a slip stitch into a chain stitch, first make a foundation chain of desired length, insert hook in last chain of foundation chain.

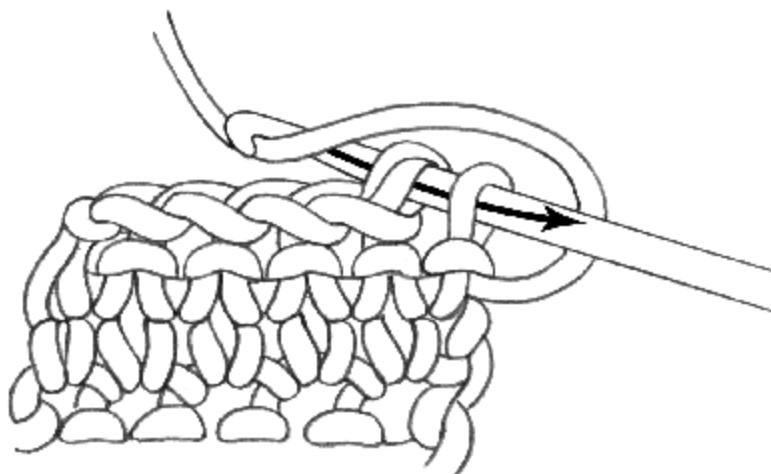


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Yarn over, draw yarn through chain and the loop on your hook in one motion (slip stitch made).





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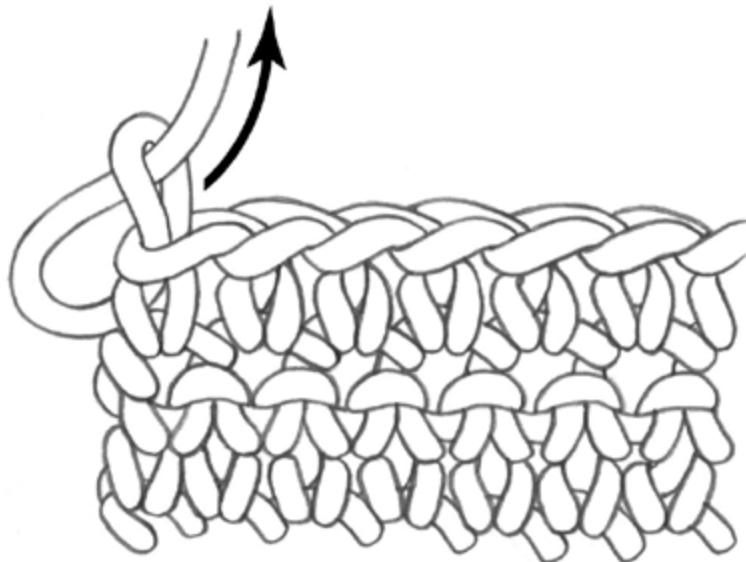
To work a slip stitch in a row stitches (single crochet stitches pictured), insert hook under the top 2 loops of the next stitch, yarn over, draw yarn through stitch and the loop on your hook in one motion (slip stitch made).



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13. Fastening Off



When you finish a piece of crocheted fabric, you'll need to fasten off the yarn and secure it so the stitch will not unravel. Simply cut the yarn leaving a few inches of tail. Then, with your hook, draw the tail through the loop on your hook. Remove hook and pull on tail to tighten. With a yarn needle, weave the tail through the stitches of the fabric to hide it.



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14. Seaming techniques

When you crochet a project in one piece such as a scarf, no seaming is required. But, some projects are made of several pieces that need to be joined together to form the finished piece.

The simplest method to join two pieces is to sew them. This produces a non-bulky seam, suitable for garments.

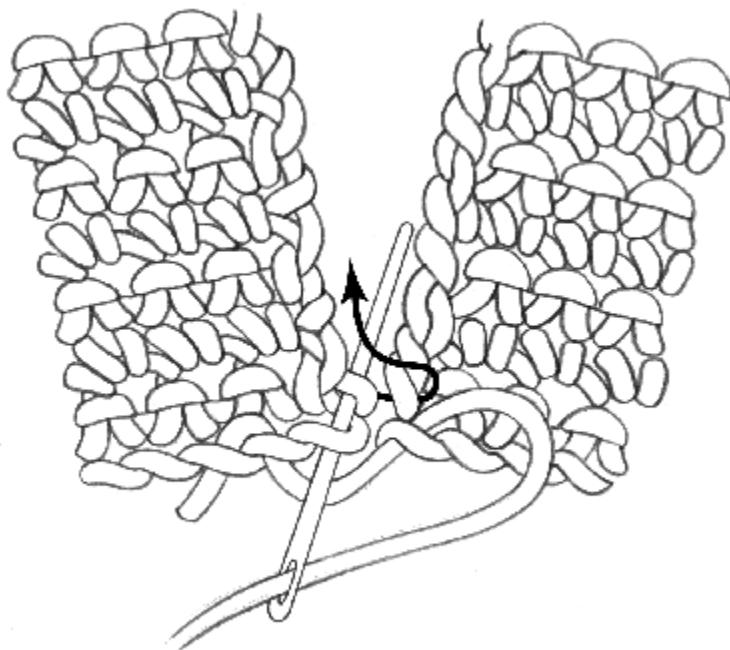
Working a row of slip stitches or single crochet produces a sturdy seam suitable for joining afghan squares. Worked on the right side, these two methods produce a decorative ridge that can be a nice addition.



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15. Invisible sewn seam



Place the 2 pieces right sides facing up (that's the side you want to show), next to each other, matching stitches across the side edges.

Thread needle with a length of yarn. With the needle, weave the yarn through the stitches on one piece, bringing needle out at the corner to begin sewing. Leave a few inches of yarn woven through fabric to secure. Do not make a knot.

Insert needle through the corner of opposite piece and draw yarn through.

Insert needle through next row-end stitch on the first piece and draw yarn through.

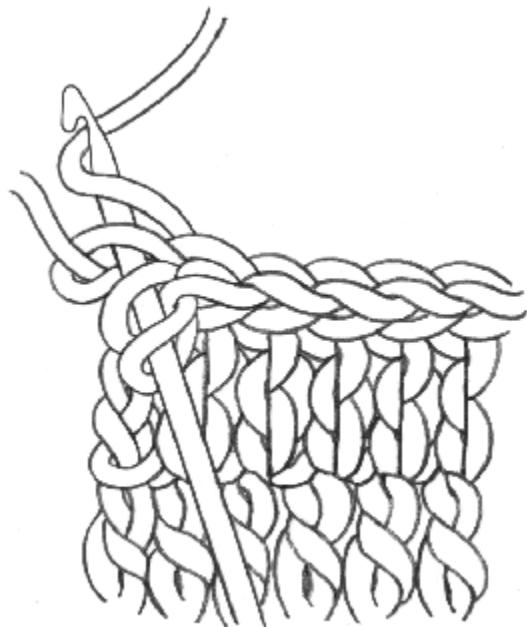
Continue to sew up the seam, working in a zig zag pattern for the length of the seam. Weave yarn through several stitches to anchor it, then cut tail.



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16. Slip stitch seam



Align two pieces, with right sides facing each other, matching stitches to be joined.

Make a slip knot on your yarn. Insert hook through first stitch of both pieces, draw through slip stitch, insert hook through next stitch of both pieces, yarn over, draw yarn through both stitches and loop on hook, in one motion.

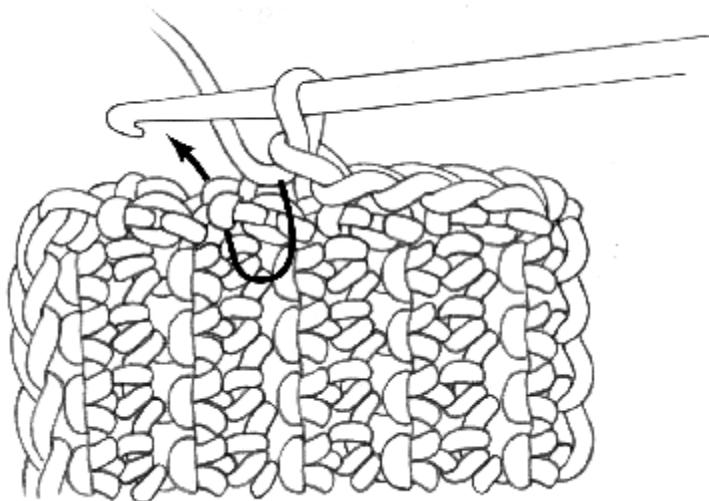
Continue across edge to complete seam. Fasten off.



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17. Single crochet seam



A single crochet seam is worked in the same manner as the slip stitch seam, by substituting single crochet stitches for the slip stitches.



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18. Gauge

Gauge is the term that is used to define the proper tension you should work to insure that the crocheted piece you make will be the right size when it's completed. The hook size listed in the pattern is just the size used by the designer to work at the proper gauge. You may need to change hook size in order to work at the given gauge. It is especially important to work to the proper gauge when making garments – anything that you want to fit properly.

Gauge is usually defined in the pattern by a ratio of stitches and rows to a given measurement such as 16 stitches and 14 rows in single crochet = 4". You should always work a swatch of fabric (approximately 4" x 4") in the stitch pattern of the piece you are making. Then count the number of stitches and rows in the measurement designated by the gauge given in the pattern. If you find that your swatch has more stitches and rows than the gauge, you are working too tightly so change to a larger hook and try again. If you have fewer stitches and rows in the area, you are working too loosely and should try a smaller hook. Keep changing hook size until you arrive at the proper gauge.



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19. Joining a new ball of yarn

Sooner or later you are going to run out of yarn. It's best to join the new ball at the end of a row for a neater appearance. When you're about to run out of yarn, work your last stitch until there are 2 loops left on your hook. Leaving a tail, draw the end of the new yarn through the 2 loops on your hook. Then continue working with the new ball of yarn. With a large-eyed needle, weave in the tails of both balls of yarn to secure. This method is also used when joining a new color of yarn.