

# HOW TO CROCHET



I have always believed that anyone can learn to crochet, so long as you follow one simple rule: don't try to run before you can chain! The chain is the most simple of stitches and therefore ideal for practising the all-important hold, which helps create the perfect tension for forming all the following stitches. When my mother taught me to crochet, she followed her grandmother's lead and helped me to hook metre upon metre of chain before I was shown any

further stitches. It was a fantastic foundation for learning the more difficult techniques. Once your chains are looking even and feel comfortable to create, then progressing on to the stitches becomes much easier.

If at any point you feel as if you have lost your hold, simply go back to those comforting lengths of chain until your confidence returns. My biggest tip is to remember that this wonderful craft is well-known for being relaxing and fun, so find a comfy chair, some free time and just enjoy it!

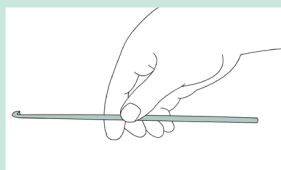
Happy crocheting...

*Claire* x

## THE BASICS

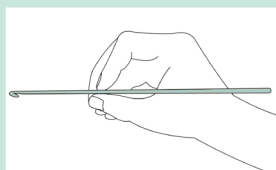
To crochet smoothly and efficiently, you must hold the hook and yarn in a relaxed, comfortable and consistent fashion. This will also ensure that your tension is even and accurate. There are two main ways of holding the hook and two main ways to tension the yarn. You can choose whichever combination feels more natural for you, or a variation on these.

### HOLDING THE HOOK



#### KNIFE GRIP

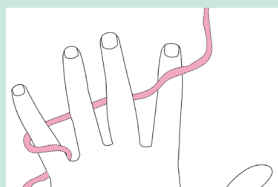
Hold the hook in your dominant hand as you would a knife.



#### PENCIL GRIP

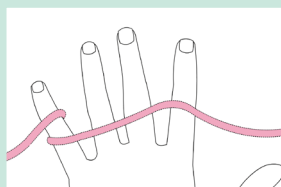
Hold the hook in your dominant hand as you would a pencil.

### HOLDING THE YARN



#### FOREFINGER METHOD

Wrap the ball end of the yarn around the little finger of your opposite hand, under the next two fingers and over the forefinger. Hold the work steady with your middle finger and thumb, then raise your forefinger when working to create tension.



#### MIDDLE-FINGER METHOD

Wrap the ball end of the yarn around the little finger of your opposite hand and over the other fingers. Hold the work steady with your forefinger and thumb, then raise your middle finger while you are crocheting to create tension.

#### Working left-handed

To crochet left-handed, simply do the opposite to the right-handed holds. Hold a mirror up to any picture in this guide to see how to work.

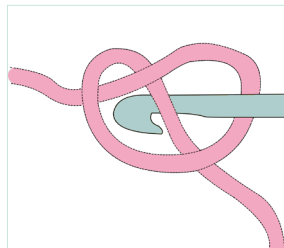
#### TOP TIP

It doesn't matter if your stitches tend towards being slightly tight or even a little loose; you are aiming for an even tension throughout to achieve a professional finish.

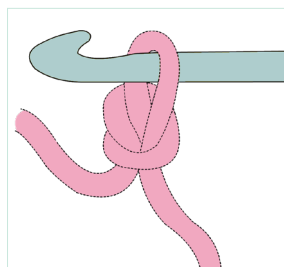
## GETTING STARTED

### SLIPKNOT

A slipknot creates the first loop on the hook.



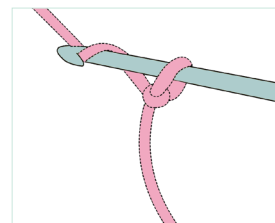
1 Make a loop in the yarn around 10–20cm/4–8in from the end. Insert hook through loop, catch the back strand of yarn and pull it through to the front.



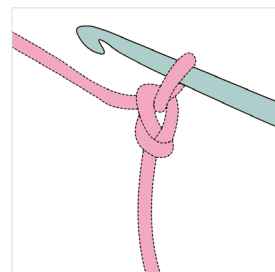
2 Pull the ends of the yarn to secure the knot around the hook, but not too tightly or it will be hard to pull the first loop of chain through.

### CHAIN

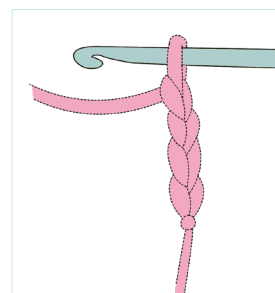
Most crochet projects begin with a length of chain. This is the perfect stitch to practise your hold and tension with.



1 Holding just the hook with point up in your dominant hand, and the yarn in the other, grip the slipknot with the yarn-holding hand. Work a yarn round hook [yrh or yoh] by passing the hook in front of the yarn, under and around it.



2 Roll the hook round in your fingers towards you to catch the yarn and pull through loop on hook. One chain made.



3 Ensuring the stitches are even – not too loose or tight – repeat to make a length of chain.

#### TOP TIP

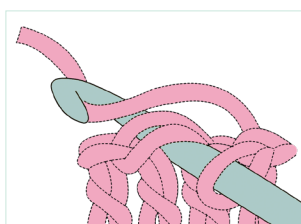
The action of working stitches causes a constant rolling of the hook in your fingers; hold the hook pointing up when performing the yrh, then roll it round towards you to point down when pulling through the loops so that you don't catch the hook in the stitches.



# THE MAIN STITCHES

## SLIP STITCH (sl st)

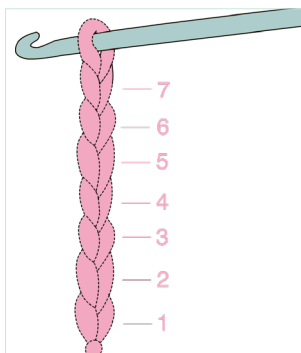
A slip stitch is usually used to join one stitch to another, or to join a stitch to another point. It is generally made by picking up two strands of a stitch but when used all over, you usually only pick up the back loop.



Insert hook into stitch or chain required. Yarn over hook, as when you make a chain. Pull a loop through all stitches/loops/work on hook to finish slip stitch.

## COUNTING A CHAIN

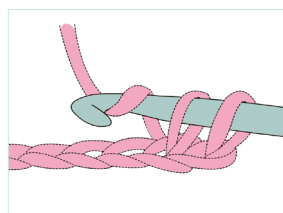
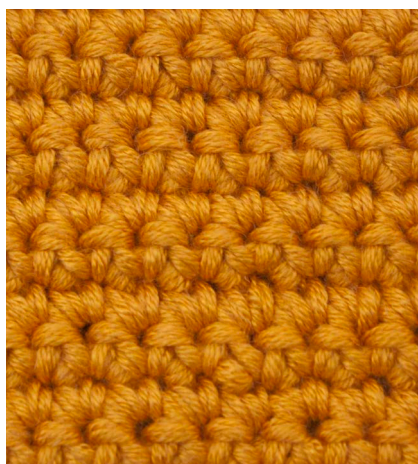
The right side of your chain is the one that looks like a little plait of 'v' shapes. Each 'v' is a stitch and must be counted. When you are working the chain, you do not count the slipknot, but begin to count your chain when you pull through the first loop. To count the chain afterwards you count the slipknot as the first stitch, but not the loop on the hook, or 'working' loop.



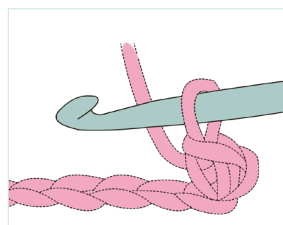
DOUBLE CROCHET STITCHES ARE PERFECT FOR MAKING AMIGURUMI, WHILE TREBLE CROCHETS ARE USED TO CREATE THE CLASSIC GRANNY-SQUARE DESIGN

## DOUBLE CROCHET (dc)

The smallest stitch, creating a dense fabric perfect for amigurumi.



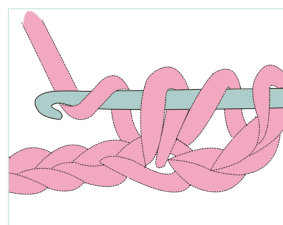
1 Insert hook into chain or stitch, front to back. Yarn over hook and draw through stitch to front, leaving you with two loops on the hook. Yarn round hook.



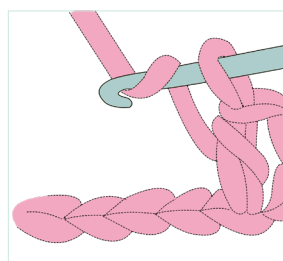
2 Draw through both loops to finish the stitch. Double crochet completed.

## HALF TREBLE CROCHET (htr)

Slightly taller than a double crochet stitch, with a softer drape to the resulting fabric.



1 Yarn over hook, insert hook into stitch from front to back and draw loop through stitch only. This gives you three loops on the hook. Yarn round hook.



2 Draw yarn through three remaining loops on the hook together to complete half treble.

♥  
This cheery Floral Friends Vase by Matt Farci (issue 127) uses simple dc stitches to create solid blocks of adorable colour!



## Top crochet websites



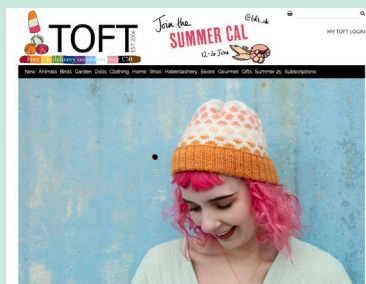
### bellacococrochet.com

➔ Sarah-Jayne of Bella Coco provides a brilliant range of video tutorials for beginners and beyond on her YouTube channel, including all the techniques you'll need and a useful stitch library.



### janiecrow.com

➔ Enjoy Jane Crowfoot's inspirational blog, plus browse her stunning designs. There's also a brilliant library of crochet techniques.



### toftuk.com

➔ Kerry Lord of Toft is well known for her stunning amigurumi, from dolls and animals to birds and dinosaurs, and they sell wool too!

### theloopystitch.com

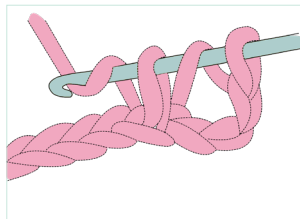
➔ Packed with inspiration and shining with a real love for crochet, visit Emily's site for YouTube tutorials and a huge selection of colourful homeware designs.

### coastalcrochet.com

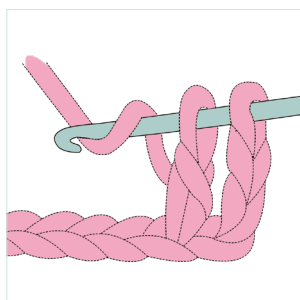
➔ Constantly inspired by her seaside home, Eleonora shares a host of gorgeous designs, the most popular of which are her stunning blanket crochet-alongs.

## TREBLE CROCHET (tr)

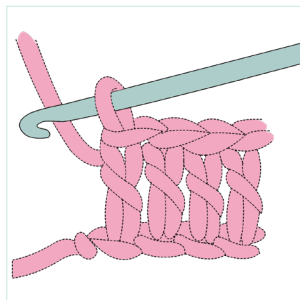
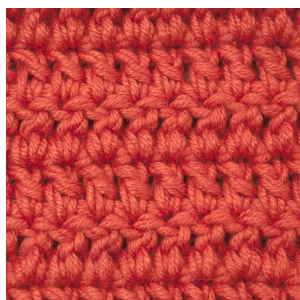
The tallest of the basic stitches, great for using within more complex patterns.



1 Yarn round hook, insert hook into stitch from front to back and draw loop through stitch only. This gives you three loops on the hook. Yarn round hook.



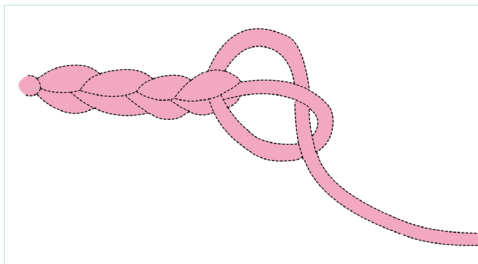
2 Pull loop through two loops. Two loops on hook. Yarn round hook.



3 Pull loop through the remaining two loops to complete treble, repeat to end of row.

## FASTEN OFF

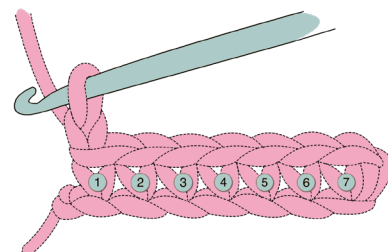
Pull up the final loop of the last stitch to make it bigger and cut the yarn, leaving enough of an end to weave in. Pull the end through the loop, and pull up tightly to secure.



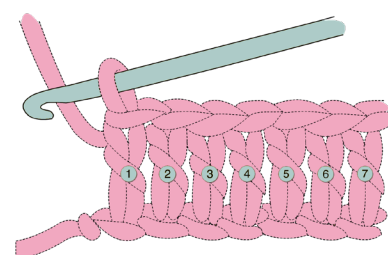
## COUNTING STITCHES

Count the post or 'stem' of each stitch from the side of your work. Each post counts as one stitch.

### Double crochet



### Treble crochet



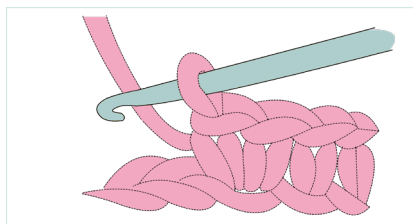
### TOP TIP

Try to count your stitches at regular intervals, usually at the end of every, or every other, row and especially after an increase or decrease row. It is best to try to catch any mistakes as quickly as possible, as this will make them much easier to rectify!

# SHAPING, COLOURWORK & TENSION

Once you've learned simple shaping stitches, you can create almost any garment – and add in different colours as you go with our simple technique. Make sure to check your tension first though, or your finished piece could be completely the wrong size!

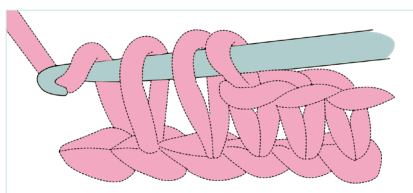
## INCREASING



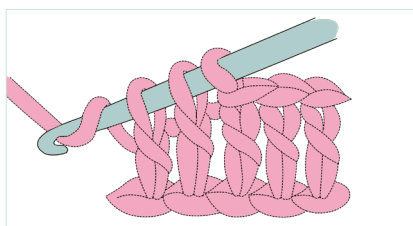
To work an extra stitch, you simply need to work into the same stitch more than once. Work one stitch as normal. Insert hook into same stitch you've just worked and complete another stitch. One stitch increased.

## DECREASING

To decrease a stitch, you need to work into two stitches without finishing them, then work them together.



For a double crochet (above), insert hook into next stitch, yarn over hook and draw a loop through the stitch, but do not finish the double crochet stitch as usual. Insert hook into following stitch, yarn over hook and draw a loop through the next stitch, so there are three loops on the hook in total. Yarn over hook and draw the loop through all loops on hook, drawing two stitches together. One stitch decreased.



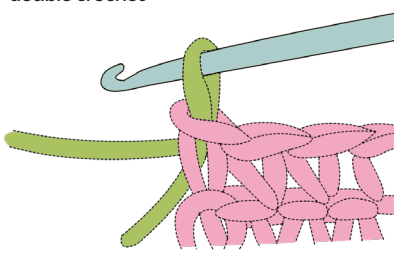
For a treble crochet, work a treble into the next stitch until the last step of the stitch, two loops on hook. Do the same into the following stitch, three loops on hook. Draw through all three loops on hook to draw the two trebles together. One stitch decreased.

## JOINING IN A NEW COLOUR

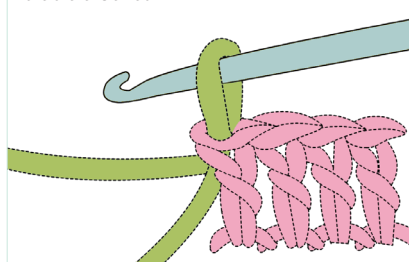
To join in a new colour (or a new ball of the same colour), you can simply fasten off the old yarn and then attach the new colour with a slip stitch into the top of the last stitch made. However, for a neater join, you can also work the colour change as follows:

Work the last stitch in the colour you are using first, up to the final step, so that the stitch is unfinished. Pull the new colour through the loops on your hook, completing the stitch and joining the new colour at the same time.

Working a new colour over double crochet

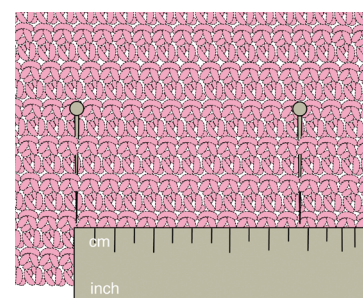


Working a new colour over treble crochet



Once you have joined in the new yarn, you can weave in the ends of both yarns as you go, by holding them on top of your stitches and working round them as you work into the following stitches. Do this for at least 5cm/2in then cut the remaining ends.

## TENSION/GAUGE



A tension swatch is used to ensure you are working at the tension called for in the pattern. It is essential to check this, otherwise your finished garment is likely to be the wrong size! Crochet a small square of just over 10 x 10cm/4 x 4in in the main yarn and stitch used in the pattern, then count and calculate the average number of stitches per centimetre.

Chain a few more stitches and work more rows than the tension in the pattern suggests you'll need for this size. Once you have completed the swatch, use a measuring tape or ruler, place some pins at 0 and 10 and take some average measurements – count how many stitches and rows to 10cm at different points over the swatch.

If you find you have more stitches per centimetre than indicated in the pattern, then your tension is too tight and you need to work more loosely. The best way to do this is to increase the size of hook you're using by a quarter or half millimetre until the tension is as close as you can get it. If there are fewer stitches than required, then you are crocheting too loosely, and you need to decrease the size of hook used in the same way.

**TURN THE PAGE FOR MAGIC LOOPS, TIPS & A FULL GLOSSARY OF CROCHET ABBREVIATIONS, UK VERSUS US TERMS & HOOK SIZES**



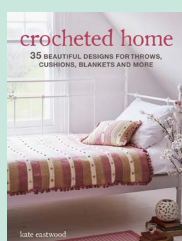
*Beginner books we recommend*



### THE BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO CROCHET

Claire Montgomery  
(Search Press, £12.99)

A complete crochet course by designer and textiles teacher Claire Montgomery covering everything you need to get started. Take small steps and progress through eight colourful modern projects to build your skills.



### CROCHETED HOME

Kate Eastwood  
(CICO Books, £12.99)

Packed with beginner-friendly patterns to fill your home, from blankets to cushions, chunky bathmats, coasters, peg bags and more.



### YOU WILL BE ABLE TO CROCHET BY THE END OF THIS BOOK

Zoe Bateman  
(Octopus, £14.99)

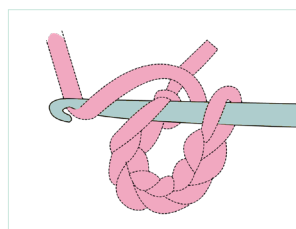
A contemporary crochet textbook infused with a love of our craft and packed with inspiring photography.

## WORKING IN THE ROUND

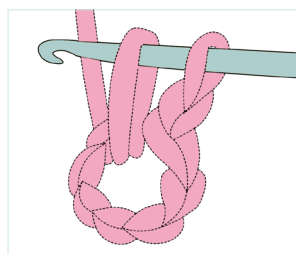
When working in the round, instead of working backwards and forwards along the work, turning at the end of each round, you simply work with the right side facing you at all times and you do not turn. When working in the round, you generally begin one of three ways:

### WORKING AROUND A RING

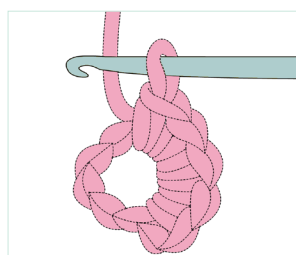
This method of working in the round creates a large hole at the centre of your work. Its size is dependent on the length of chain used.



Make a length of chain as required, then insert your hook into the first chain stitch you made. Yarn round hook.



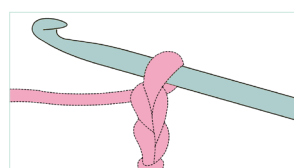
Work a slip stitch to join, creating a ring, and then work your turning chain dependent on which stitch you will be working into the ring. Insert hook into the centre of the ring and work the first stitch into this ring.



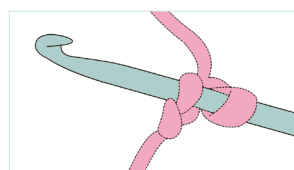
Work the required number of stitches into the centre of the ring and join round with a slip stitch. Do not turn, but continue the next row around the last.

### WORKING INTO A SHORT CHAIN

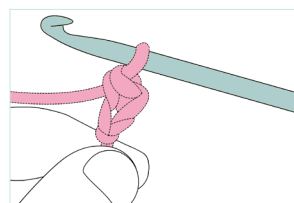
You can create a smaller hole in the centre of your work by working into a chain as short as 2ch long.



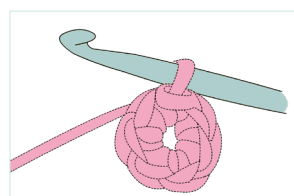
For double crochets, as in this example, work 2ch. For htr you would work 3ch and for trebles, 4ch.



Insert hook into the top loop of the first chain as shown. Yarn round hook.



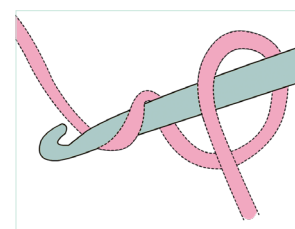
Complete the first stitch in the chain as shown (illustrations show dc, but can be any stitch).



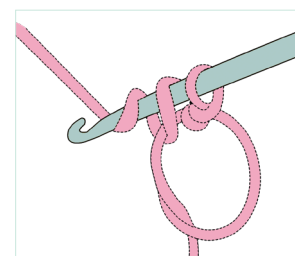
Now work the required number of stitches into the same chain. The sheer amount of stitches worked into one place will cause them to fan out into a round. Now join this round with a slip stitch and continue with the pattern.

### ADJUSTABLE RING

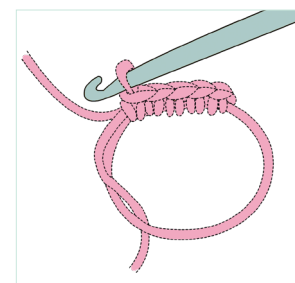
This method is also referred to as the magic loop or ring, as it creates a round with no hole at the centre. Here it is demonstrated with double crochet.



Make a loop in your yarn, at least 15cm/6in from the tail end. Insert hook through the loop from front to back.



Pull the yarn through to the front of the loop and complete the stitch around the loop and the tail end of yarn held double.



Work all the following stitches into the ring in the same way, over the two strands of yarn in the loop. Once all stitches have been worked, pull the loose tail end of the yarn to close the ring and join the round with a slip stitch.

# ABBREVIATIONS

Note: *Inside Crochet* uses UK terms throughout

<b>alt</b> · alternate	<b>est</b> · established	<b>prev</b> · previous
<b>bef</b> · before	<b>etr</b> · extended treble	<b>rem</b> · remain[s]; remaining
<b>beg</b> · begin[s]; beginning	<b>fdc</b> · foundation double	<b>rep(s)</b> · repeat[s]
<b>bet</b> · between	crochet	<b>rev dc</b> · reverse double
<b>blo</b> · back loop only	<b>flo</b> · front loop only	crochet
<b>ch(s)</b> · chain[s]	<b>fol</b> · follows; following	<b>rnd(s)</b> · round[s]
<b>ch-sp(s)</b> · chain space[s]	<b>ft</b> · foundation treble	<b>RS</b> · right side
<b>cl(s)</b> · cluster[s]	crochet	<b>rtrf</b> · raised treble front
<b>cm</b> · centimetre[s]	<b>g</b> · gram[s]	<b>rtrb</b> · raised treble back
<b>cont</b> · continue[s];	<b>gp(s)</b> · group[s]	<b>sl</b> · slip
continuing	<b>hk</b> · hook	<b>sl st</b> · slip stitch
<b>dc</b> · double crochet	<b>htr</b> · half treble crochet	<b>sp(s)</b> · space[s]
<b>dc2tog</b> · work two dc	<b>htr2tog</b> · work two htr	<b>st(s)</b> · stitch(es)
together	together	<b>t-ch(s)</b> · turning chain[s]
<b>dec(s)</b> · decrease[s];	<b>in</b> · inch(es)	<b>tog</b> · together
decreasing; decreased	<b>inc(s)</b> · increase[s];	<b>tr</b> · treble crochet
<b>dtr</b> · double treble crochet	increasing; increased	<b>tr2tog</b> · work two trebles
<b>dtr2tog</b> · work two dtr	<b>lp(s)</b> · loop[s]	together
together	<b>m</b> · stitch marker	<b>trtr</b> · triple treble
<b>ea</b> · each	<b>mm</b> · millimetre[s]	<b>WS</b> · wrong side
<b>ech</b> · extended chain	<b>nc</b> · not closed	<b>yd(s)</b> · yard[s]
<b>edc</b> · extended double	<b>patt</b> · pattern	<b>yoh</b> · yarn over hook
crochet	<b>pm</b> · place marker	<b>yrh</b> · yarn round hook

## BREAKING THE LANGUAGE BARRIER

UK and US terms have differing meanings which can create difficulty for the crocheter. Here's a handy reference guide to overcome any misunderstandings.

### UK TERMS

Chain  
Miss  
Slip stitch  
Double crochet  
Half treble crochet  
Treble crochet  
Double treble crochet  
Triple treble crochet  
Raised treble back/front

### US TERMS

Chain  
Skip  
Slip stitch  
Single crochet  
Half double crochet  
Double crochet  
Treble crochet  
Double treble crochet  
Back/front post dc

A  
NOTE  
ON...





















## Hook sizes

Hook sizes and their designations vary from country to country. When following the recommendations in a pattern or on a ball band, make sure to check which size convention is being used.

### CROCHET HOOK SIZES

Metric (mm)	UK	US
0.6		14
0.75		12
1		11
1.25		7
1.5		6
1.75		5
2	14	
2.25		B/1
2.5	12	
2.75		C/2
3	10	
3.25		D/3
3.5	9	E/4
3.75		F/5
4	8	G/6
4.5	7	7
5	6	H/8
5.5	5	I/9
6	4	J/10
6.5	3	K-/101/2
7	2	
8	0	L/11
9	00	M/13
10	000	N/15
11.5		O
12		P
15		Q
20		S

## CHARTS KEY

 adjustable ring	 fl only	 tr	 rtrf	 tr2tog	 3-tr cl
 sl st	 dc	 dtr	 rtrb	 tr3tog	 popcorn
 ch	 fdc	 trtr	 dc2tog	 puff	 linked tr
 bl only	 htr				