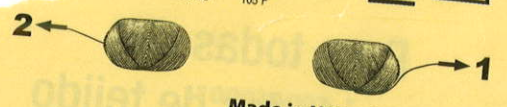


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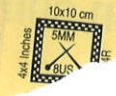
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# I Can't Believe I'm Crocheting!

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# CROCHET BASICS

The Crochet Basics section photo figs are provided for both right-handed and left-handed crocheters. If you are left-handed, please be sure to read the special note to lefties on page 29 once you have become familiar with the basic stitches.

## hands on

You'll need a hook, size H (5 mm) and a ball or skein of medium weight yarn. Look for an icon on the yarn label like this . When choosing the yarn, you may be drawn to all the fabulous fuzzy or variegated yarns, but save those for later. You'll find that working with a light or bright color and a smooth yarn will make your stitches easier to see. You'll also need scissors and a tape measure. Before starting, take a look at the photo of the crochet hook on page 31. Some of the terms on the photo—throat, working area—will be used in the following instructions.

So, grab your hook and yarn and let's start crocheting!

### FAQ

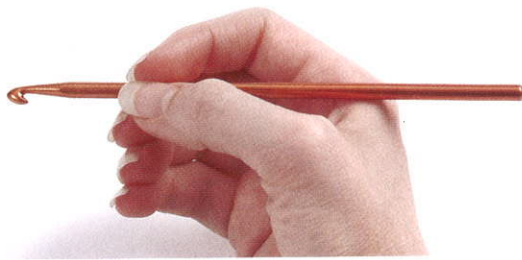
Grab a hook? How?

### ANSWER

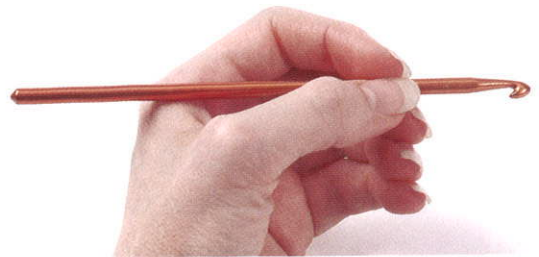
Hold it like a pencil or a mixing spoon. Look at the photos below. You may find that one way is easier with smaller hooks and the other with larger hooks. Try out both methods and choose the one that feels best for you.

**Method 1:** You may hold the hook in the same position as you would a pencil with the hook resting on top of your hand (**Fig. 1a**).

**Fig. 1a Right-handed**



**Left-handed**



**Method 2:** You may grasp the hook with your fingers around it (**Fig. 1b**), similar to holding a mixing spoon.

**Fig. 1b Right-handed**



**Left-handed**

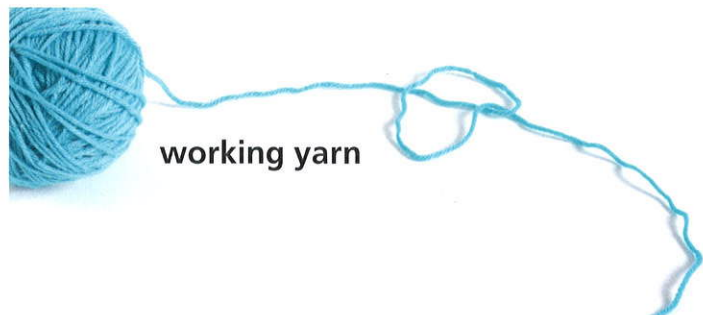


## MAKING A SLIP KNOT

The first thing that goes on your hook will be a slip knot. The grown-up and current Scouts reading this probably remember how to make one of these adjustable knots. If not, here's a simple way to do it.

Pull a 6" (15 cm) length of yarn from the ball. Make a circle at the 6" (15 cm) spot and put the circle on top of the yarn that comes from the ball (**Fig. 2a**). The yarn that comes from the ball is the **working yarn**.

**Fig. 2a Right-handed**

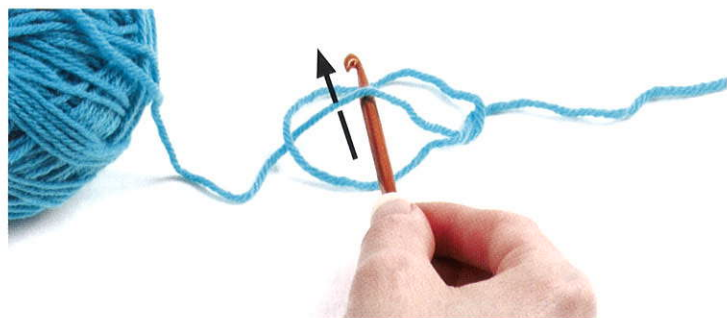


**Left-handed**

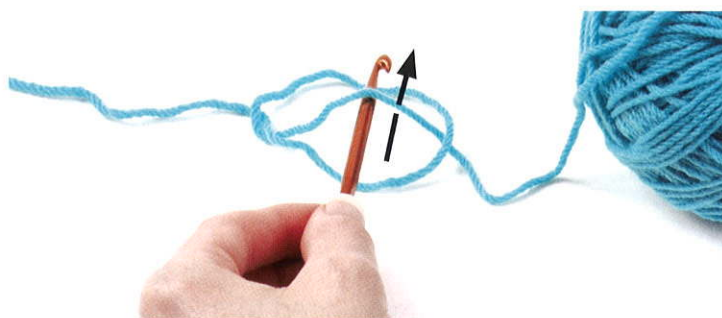


Slip the hook under the working yarn (**Fig. 2b**) and pull on both strands of the yarn to tighten the slip knot (**Fig. 2c**). The loop should slide easily up and down the working area of your hook. Don't worry if you pull too tightly—remember, it's adjustable. Just pull upward on the loop to make it larger.

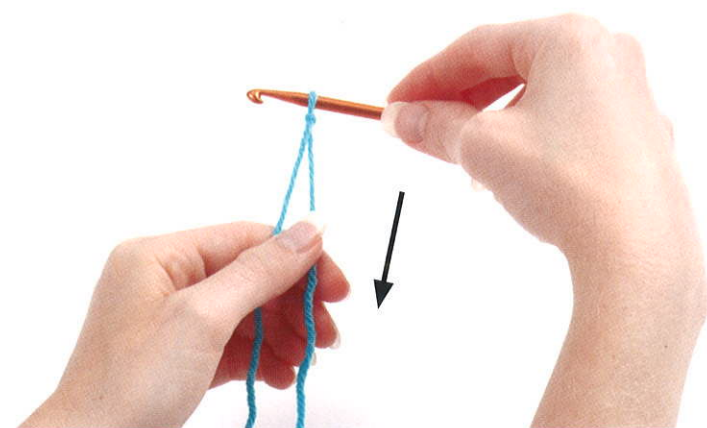
**Fig. 2b Right-handed**



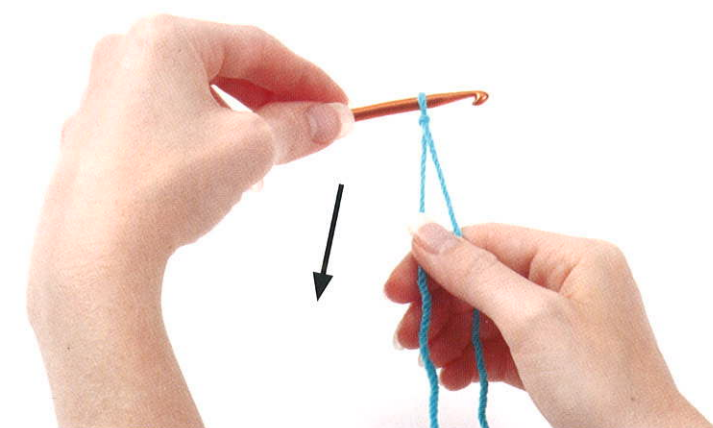
**Left-handed**



**Fig. 2c Right-handed**



**Left-handed**



## HOLDING THE YARN

You have the hook, you have the slip knot, now what? Your other hand, the one not holding the hook, has something to learn—how to hold the yarn.

### FAQ

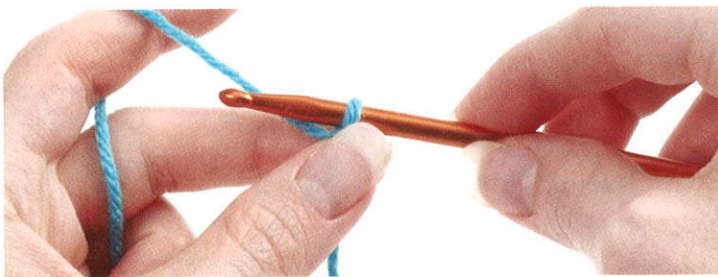
Can't I just let the yarn hang there?  
I don't know if I can get that hand to cooperate!

### ANSWER

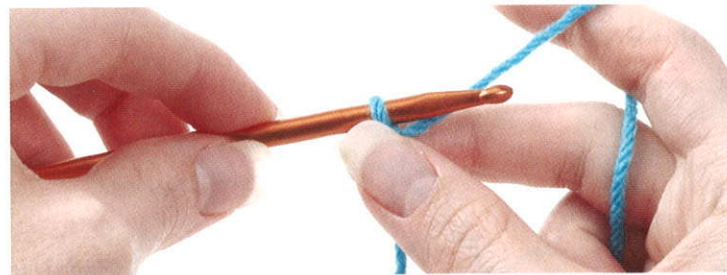
Look at the hands below. The area between the loop on the hook and your index finger will be the yarn that you will crochet. If it is allowed to just hang, the stitches you form will be uneven and pretty sloppy. Your other hand has an important job, controlling the size of your stitches. You may find a way to hold the yarn and hook that's different from what's shown here, and that's okay. The idea is to control them in a way that allows the yarn to slide smoothly and evenly through your hand to the hook.

With the hook in your preferred hand, hold the slip knot with the thumb and middle finger of your other hand. Loop the working yarn over the index finger of that hand and grasp it in the palm with your ring and little fingers (**Fig. 3**).

**Fig. 3 Right-handed**



**Left-handed**

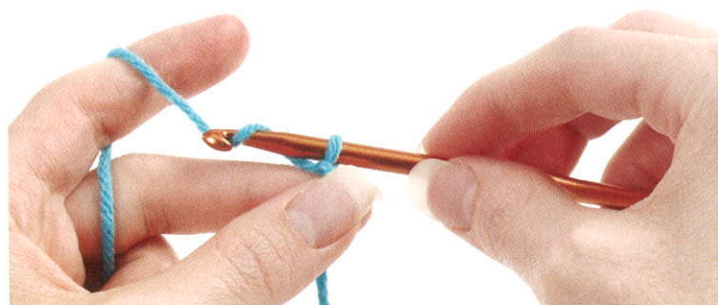


## YO, LET'S GET GOING

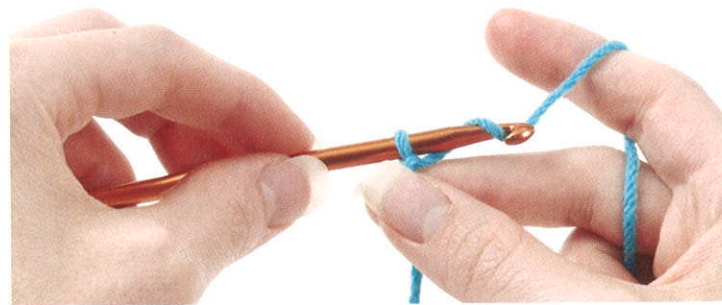
To start out crocheting, you need to make a chain stitch. But **before** the chain, you need to learn how to yarn over (**abbreviated YO**). Every crochet stitch uses at least one yarn over in the steps of making the stitch.

Bring the yarn **over** the hook from the **back** to the **front**. Turn the hook to catch the yarn with the throat area (**see Anatomy of a Hook, page 31**), so the yarn won't slip off (**Fig. 4**).

**Fig. 4 Right-handed**



**Left-handed**

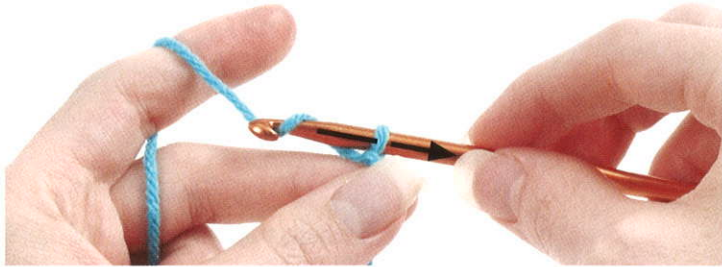


## HOW TO MAKE A CHAIN (abbreviated *ch*)

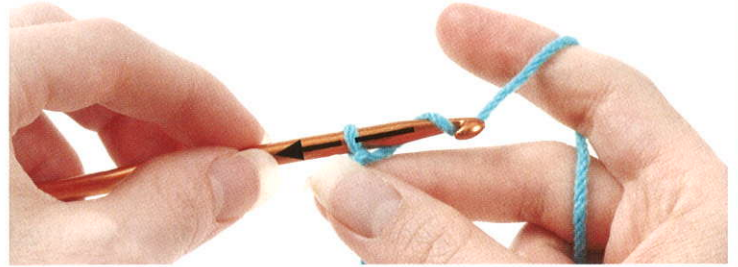
Let's do something with the yarn over you have on your hook. The yarn over is the first step to all crochet stitches, including this one—the chain.

Draw the hook with the yarn around the throat thru the loop that is on the working area (**Fig. 5a**). That's one chain and you will still have a loop on the hook (**Fig. 5b**). Don't leave the loop on the throat area; slide it on back to the working area to open up the loop. You'll need to be able to put your hook back thru the chain later on, so work your chains even and loose enough to do that.

**Fig. 5a Right-handed**



**Left-handed**



**Fig. 5b Right-handed**



**Left-handed**



To form your stitches correctly, bring the yarn over the hook from **back to front** as shown in **Fig. 6a**, not from front to back as shown in **Fig. 6b**.

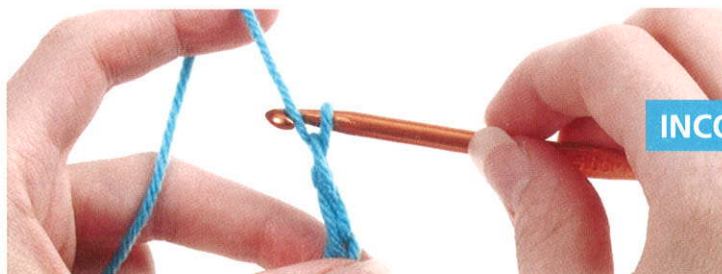
**Fig. 6a Right-handed**



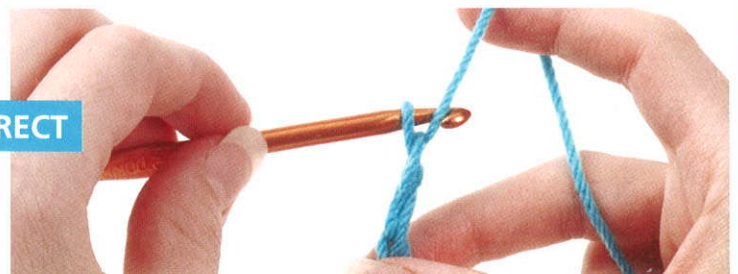
**Left-handed**



**Fig. 6b Right-handed**



**Left-handed**



### FAQ

**EEK!** My hook fell out!

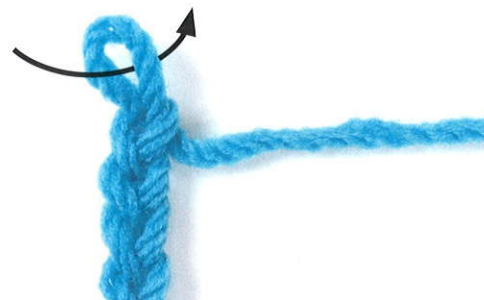
### ANSWER

Don't panic. If the hook slips out of your work, just slip it back through the front of the stitch without twisting the loop (**Fig. 7**).

**Fig. 7 Right-handed**



**Left-handed**

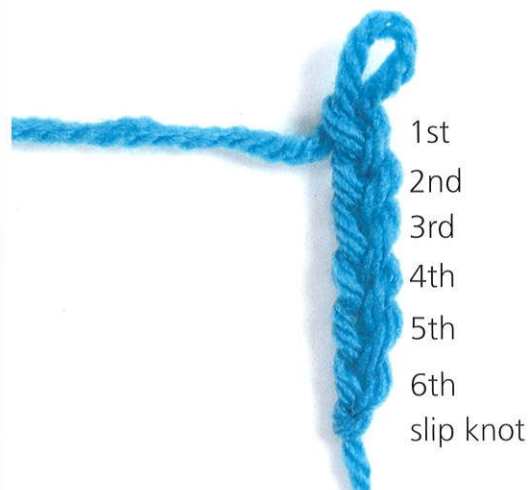


Since you are new to crochet, you may have a tendency to work too tightly. Just take it easy and work loosely. (After all, this is supposed to be relaxing!) It's better at first to have your work a little too loose than too tight. The more you practice, the better your control of the yarn will become which, in turn, will make your stitches more even.

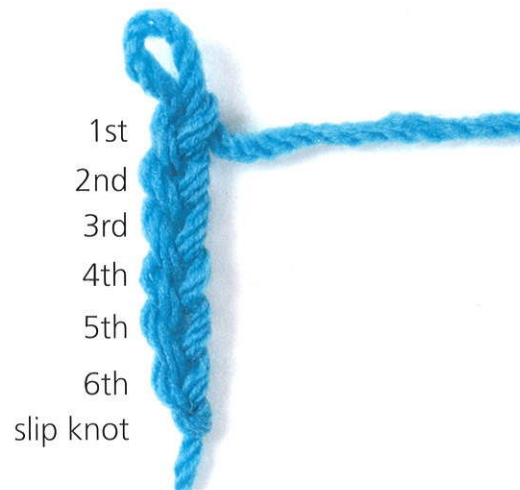
### MORE CHAINS

To make each additional chain, bring the yarn over the hook and draw through the loop on hook. To count your chains, begin with the first chain after the hook and then count back towards the beginning of your foundation chain, the slip knot (**Fig. 8**).

**Fig. 8 Right-handed**



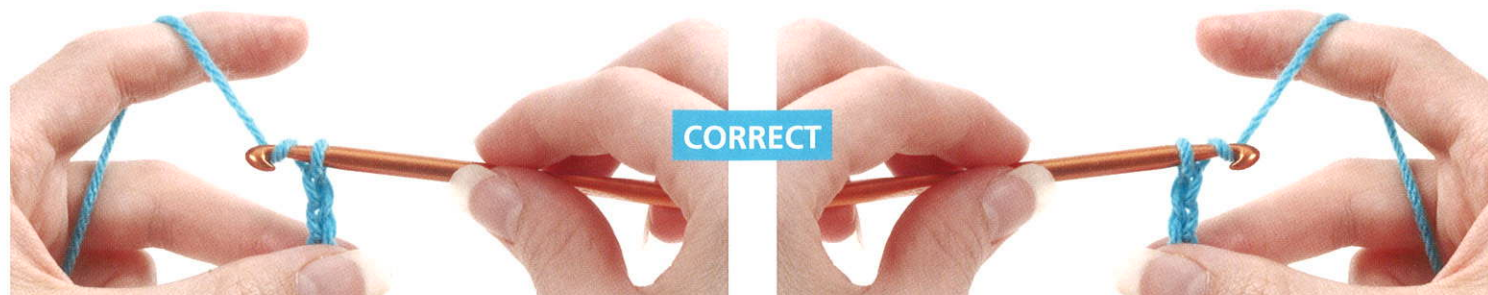
**Left-handed**



As your chain grows longer, let it slip through your fingers, moving your thumb and finger up and keeping them close to the hook (**Fig. 9a**). If you work holding too far down the chain (**Fig. 9b**), your newest chains will not have the same tension or be the same size as the first ones.

**Fig. 9a Right-handed**

**Left-handed**



**Fig. 9b Right-handed**

**Left-handed**



### ***hands on***

Work until you feel comfortable making a chain and your stitches are neat and even. Since you are practicing just making a chain, when you are finished; cut the yarn, slip the hook out of the last loop, and pull the end through to secure it.

*Turn the page for some more info about chains.*



## CHAINING LOOSELY

Your beginning chain for a project should be worked loosely to allow you to work the first row easily into those foundation chains. Here are a few ways to tell if your chains are loose enough:

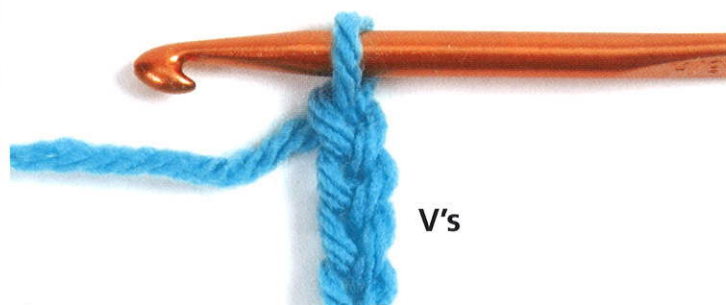
1. The loop formed on your hook for each chain stays the same size as the working area of the hook.
2. The loop has not shrunk down to the size of the hook's throat (**Fig. 45, page 31**).
3. If you have to use force to push the hook back through a chain, then you have made your chains too tight. In that case, just rip it back and try to work your chains a little looser.

It is **very important** that the loop remains the same size as the working area of the hook you are using.

## WORKING INTO THE CHAIN

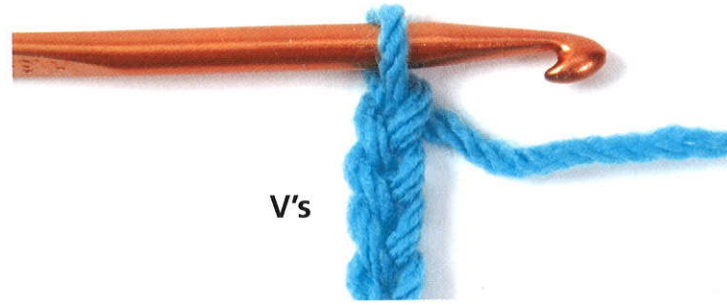
Compare the chain you made to the one in **Figs. 10a & b**. The front of the chain looks like a series of "V's" and the back side has bumps that are called the back ridge.

**Fig. 10a Right-handed FRONT**



V's

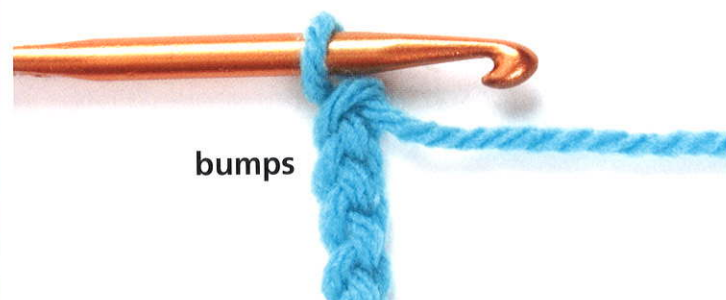
**Left-handed**



V's

**FRONT**

**Fig. 10b Right-handed BACK**



bumps

**Left-handed**



bumps

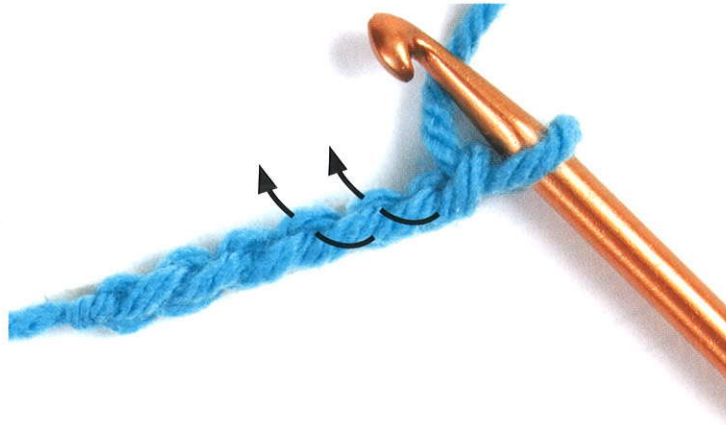
**BACK**

When your beginning chain is complete, crochet stitches will then be worked into the individual chains. There are two different methods for doing this.

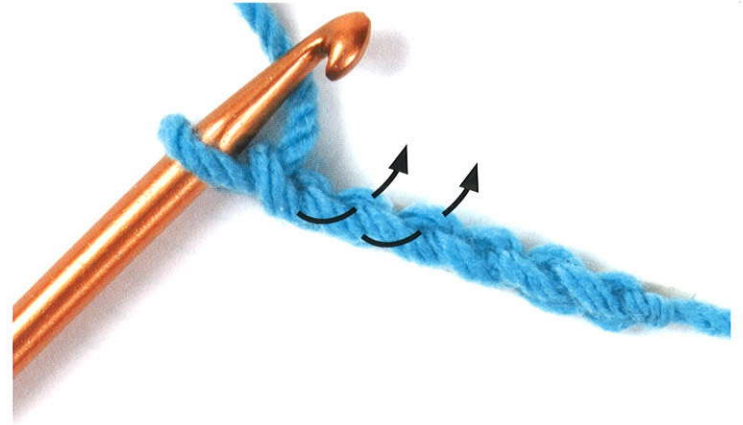
**Method 1: WORKING INTO THE BACK RIDGE OF A CHAIN**

Insert the hook into the back ridge only of each chain (*Fig. 11a*).

**Fig. 11a Right-handed**



**Left-handed**



**Method 2: WORKING INTO THE TOP TWO LOOPS OF A CHAIN**

Insert the hook under the top strand and the back ridge of each chain (*Fig. 11b*).

**Fig. 11b Right-handed**



**Left-handed**



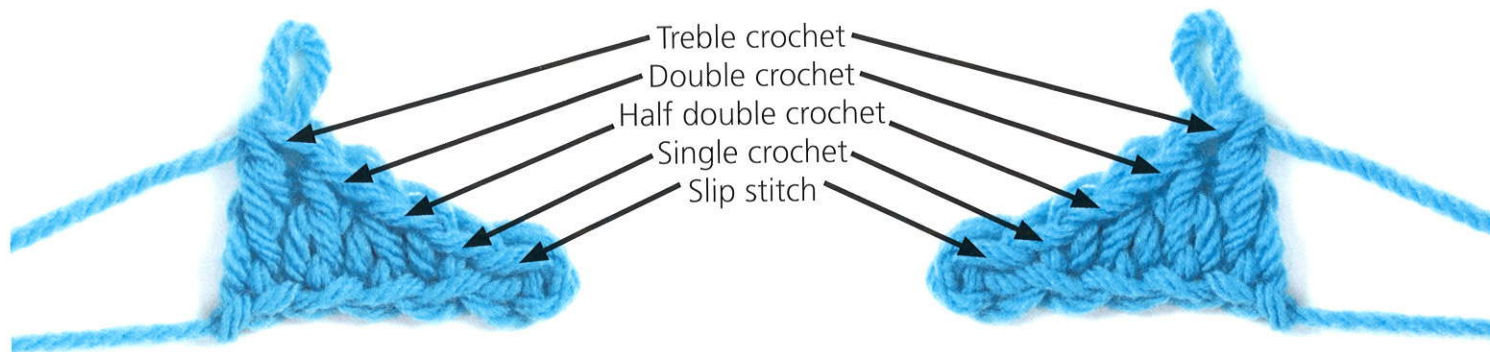
Working into the back ridge of a chain gives the piece a smoother edge. Some patterns will specify using the back ridge. For those that do not, feel free to use either method. Whichever method you choose, use that one all the way through the same project so the edges will look the same.

# BASIC STITCHES

Learning the basic stitches (or any other crochet stitch) is just an extension of how you made a chain. You will hold the yarn and the hook as you have before and will bring the yarn over the hook in the same way. In addition to the chain, most crochet designs use a combination of one or more of these five basic stitches: **slip stitch, single crochet, half double crochet, double crochet, and treble crochet**. Each stitch is made with one or more yarn overs and is completed by drawing the hook through the loop or loops on the hook. How many loops you have on the hook to draw through is what varies the height of the stitches (**Fig. 12**).

**Fig. 12 Right-handed**

**Left-handed**



## SINGLE CROCHET (abbreviated sc)

To practice making single crochets, let's work a sample swatch, starting with a beginning chain.

Chain 17 stitches **loosely**.

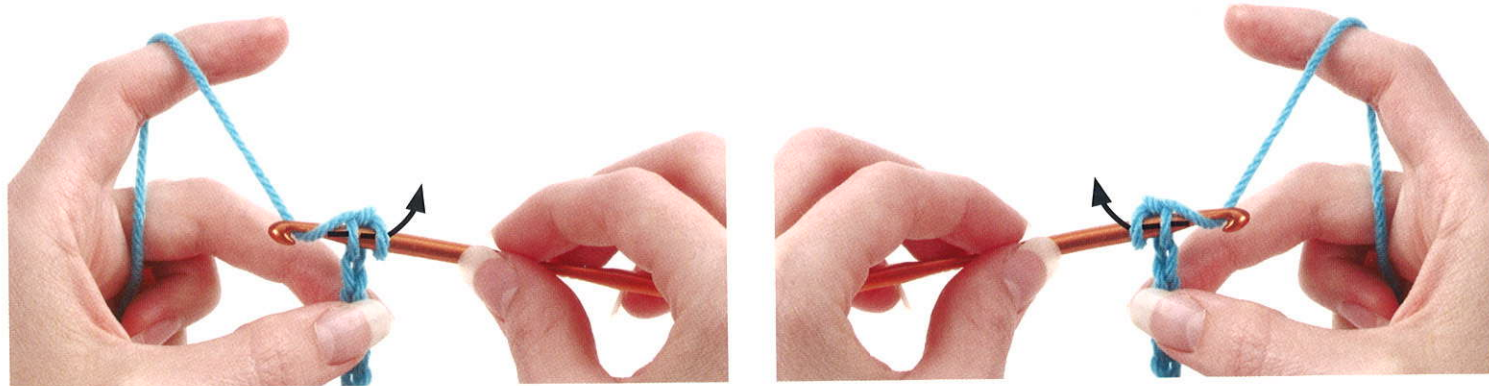
### ROW 1

**Step 1:** Insert the hook in the **second** chain from the hook, using one of the methods for working into a chain (**Figs. 11a or b, page 9**).

**Step 2:** Bring the yarn over the hook and pull up a loop through the chain (**Fig. 13a**). Stop there, don't pull it through the loop on the hook. You now have 2 loops on the hook.

**Fig. 13a Right-handed**

**Left-handed**

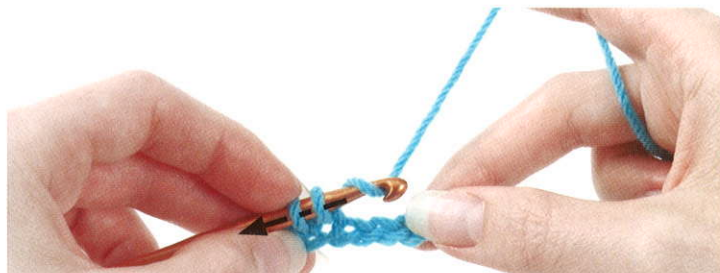


**Step 3:** Bring the yarn over the hook and draw the hook through **both** of the loops (**Fig. 13b**).

**Fig. 13b Right-handed**



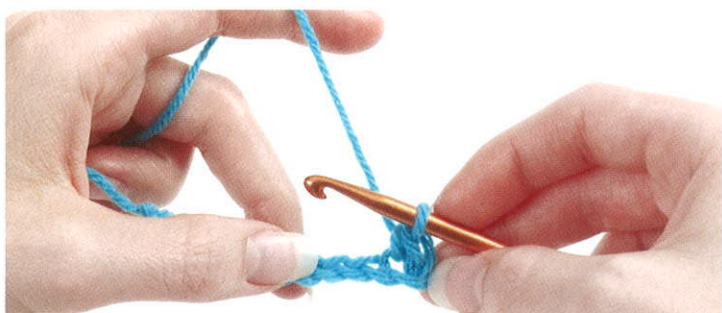
**Left-handed**



**CONGRATULATIONS!**

You have made a single crochet (**Fig. 13c**), and one loop will remain on the hook.

**Fig. 13c Right-handed**



**Left-handed**



**Note:** As you crochet, you will always have one loop remaining on your hook after completing a stitch.

**Step 4:** Insert the hook in the next chain, using the same method as before.

**Step 5:** Bring the yarn over the hook and pull up a loop through the chain (2 loops on hook).

**Step 6:** Bring the yarn over the hook and draw the hook through both loops (**single crochet made**).

Repeat Steps 4-6 in each chain across, making sure not to twist the beginning chain as you work.

You should now have one row of 16 single crochets.

Stop a moment and take a look at the top of the single crochets. Each single crochet has two horizontal strands or loops that form the top of the stitch and look like a horizontal "V," very similar to a chain. These are the loops you will put your hook under to work the next row.

To begin the next row of single crochets, you need to make a **turning chain** to raise the yarn to the height of a single crochet, and then turn your work around so you can crochet back across the first row. The turning chain for a single crochet is one chain. This chain is used **only** to gain height; it is not counted as the first single crochet.

*Single crochet continued on page 12.*

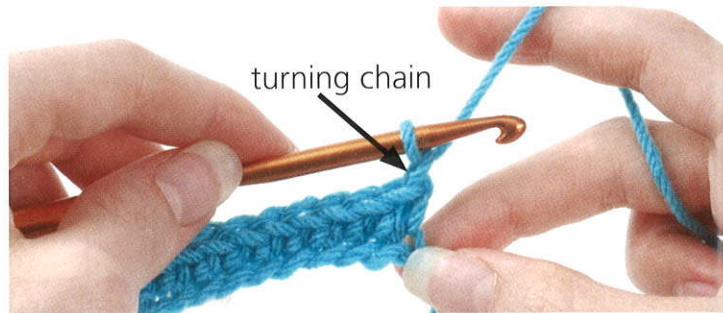
## ROW 2

**Step 1:** Chain one stitch (*Fig. 14, turning chain made*).

**Fig. 14 Right-handed**



**Left-handed**



**Step 2:** Turn your work around (*Fig. 15*). Right-handed crocheters will rotate the work to their left and the left-handed will rotate the work to their right.

**Fig. 15 Right-handed**

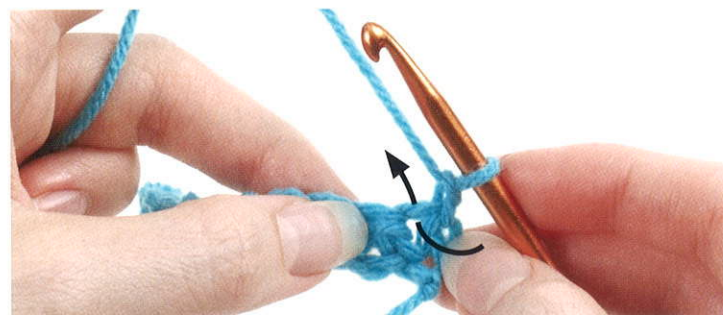


**Left-handed**

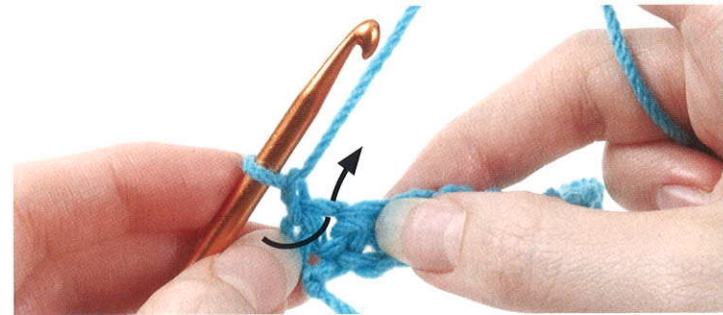


**Step 3:** Insert the hook **under both** top loops of the first single crochet (the single crochet closest to the hook) (*Fig. 16*).

**Fig. 16 Right-handed**



**Left-handed**



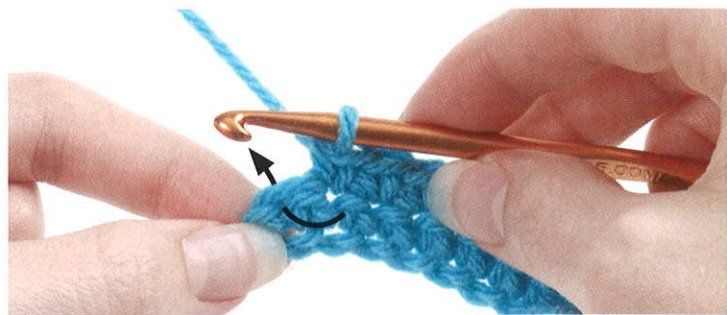
**Step 4:** Bring the yarn over the hook and pull up a loop (2 loops on hook).

**Step 5:** Bring the yarn over the hook and draw the hook through both loops (**single crochet made**).

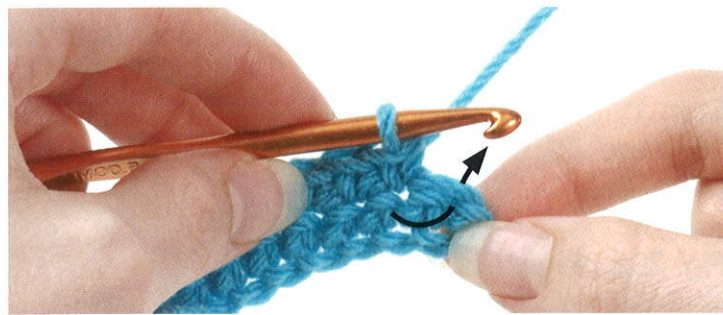
**Step 6:** Work a single crochet in each of the remaining single crochets across the row. You should still have 16 single crochets. If you don't, check the last stitch.

Make sure you worked into the last single crochet of the row because it is very easy to miss it (**Fig. 17**).

**Fig. 17 Right-handed**



**Left-handed**



### ROW 3

Repeat Steps 1-6 of Row 2. Remember, don't work into the turning chain since it doesn't count as a stitch (**Fig. 18**).

**Fig. 18 Right-handed**



**Left-handed**



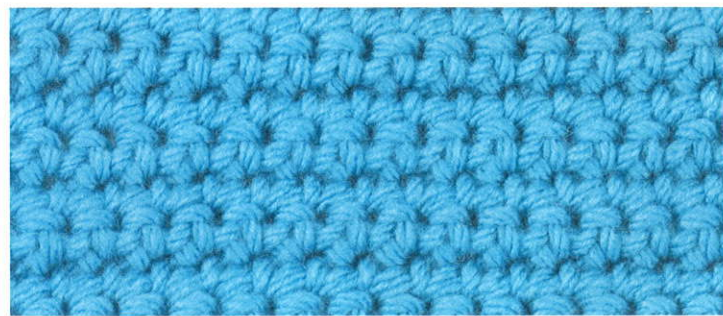
### *hands on*

Continue practicing rows of single crochets until you are comfortable with these steps. **Fig. 19** shows a swatch of single crochets.

**Fig. 19 Right-handed**



**Left-handed**



Don't put down that swatch—  
let's learn the slip stitch!