

Teach Yourself
VISUALLY™

Crochet

Second
Edition

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- Step-by-step instructions
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Cecily Keim and Kim P. Werker



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Teach Yourself VISUALLY™ Crochet, Second Edition

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Library of Congress Control Number: 2010941213

ISBN: 978-0-470-87997-9 (pbk)

ISBN: 978-1-118-00494-4 (ebk)

Printed in the United States of America

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Book production by Wiley Publishing, Inc. Composition Services

Praise for the Teach Yourself VISUALLY Series

I just had to let you and your company know how great I think your books are. I just purchased my third Visual book (my first two are dog-eared now!) and, once again, your product has surpassed my expectations. The expertise, thought, and effort that go into each book are obvious, and I sincerely appreciate your efforts. Keep up the wonderful work!

—Tracey Moore (Memphis, TN)

I have several books from the Visual series and have always found them to be valuable resources.

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Thank you for the wonderful books you produce. It wasn't until I was an adult that I discovered how I learn—visually. Although a few publishers out there claim to present the material visually, nothing compares to Visual books. I love the simple layout. Everything is easy to follow. And I understand the material! You really know the way I think and learn. Thanks so much!

—Stacey Han (Avondale, AZ)

Like a lot of other people, I understand things best when I see them visually. Your books really make learning easy and life more fun.

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I am an avid fan of your Visual books. If I need to learn anything, I just buy one of your books and learn the topic in no time. Wonders! I have even trained my friends to give me Visual books as gifts.

—Illona Bergstrom (Aventura, FL)

I write to extend my thanks and appreciation for your books. They are clear, easy to follow, and straight to the point. Keep up the good work! I bought several of your books and they are just right! No regrets! I will always buy your books because they are the best.

—Seward Kollie (Dakar, Senegal)

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Special Thanks...

To the following yarn companies generously supplied yarn for use in the tutorials and patterns in this book:

- Blue Sky Alpacas
P.O. Box 387
St. Francis, MN 55070
www.blueskyalpacas.com
- Crystal Palace Yarns
160 23rd St.
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About the Authors

Throughout **Cecily Keim's** life, regardless of the type of study or type of job, making things has always been her fascination. Her great grandmother, Mama Mac, taught her to crochet at age 9. She is mesmerized by the endless possibilities of crochet and loves passing on the enthusiasm as a writer, designer, and teacher. If she's not crocheting, you will find her exploring quilting, sewing, weaving, and occasionally attempting to understand circuit boards.



Kim Werker is a writer, editor, blogger, crafter and speaker. In 2010 she launched the Mighty Ugly project, an online and in-person adventure in embracing the possibility and eventuality of ugliness in creativity, art and crafting so it's not so scary. Her passion in life is to live creatively and to work with others to foster creative, crafty fun. She's written or co-authored several crochet books, including *Get Hooked* and *Get Hooked Again* (Watson-Guptill, 2006 and 2007), *Crochet Me: Designs to Fuel the Crochet Revolution* (Interweave, 2007), *Crochet Visual Quick Tips*, with Cecily Keim (Wiley, 2007) and *Crocheted Gifts* (Interweave, 2009). Follow her continuing work and adventures at www.kimwerker.com.



Acknowledgments

This book has come about thanks to the contributions of many people.

I owe enormous thanks to Pam, Donna, and Cindy, who went above and beyond with great patience.

Working on the first edition with Kim was a great adventure and I thank her for supporting my work on this new edition.

Thanks go out to the many yarn companies that supplied us with yarn for the tutorials and patterns. Without your contributions it would be impossible to show off what crochet can do.

Personal thanks go to Rob and Cara.

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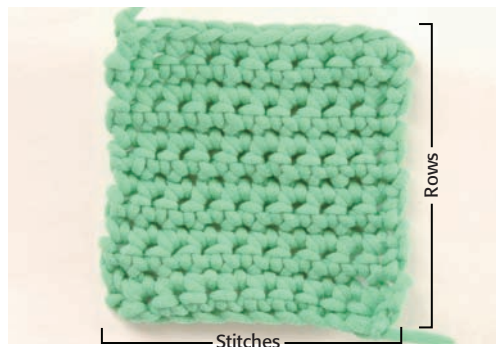
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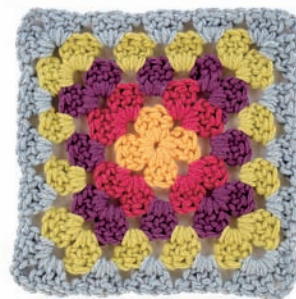
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Introduction to Crochet

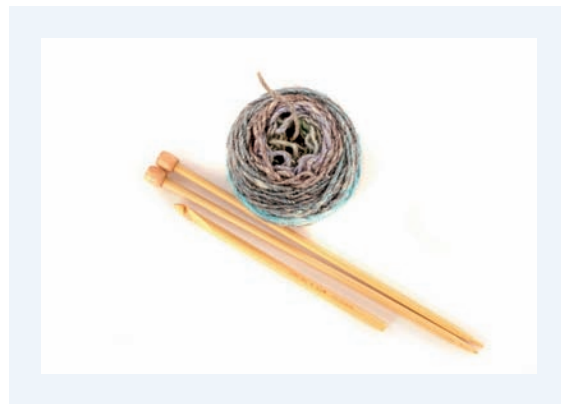
Crochet is the process of interlocking loops of yarn with a hook. By combining a simple set of basic stitches, you can create an infinite assortment of items, from garments and accessories to home décor. Before you start to crochet, take some time to familiarize yourself with the tools that will help you along the way. This chapter will introduce you to crochet hooks and notions, and you will learn all you need to know to choose the right yarn for your projects. We believe that crochet is both craft and art, and we hope you enjoy crocheting your own creations as much as we do!



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Crochet for Knitters

If you know how to knit, you may have encountered crochet in patterns that call for a crocheted edging or motif. Here are some tips that might help you pick up crochet without getting confused by what you already know about knitting.



The Differences

STITCHING

You crochet with only one hook, and you hold the hook in the hand you write with. Right- and left-handed crocheters produce the same fabric, just in opposite directions. Just because you use your hook with one hand does not mean your other hand is idle. Your yarn hand keeps your tension consistent, holds the body of your work, and helps guide your hook into tight places.

If you are a continental knitter (that is, you hold your yarn in your left hand and “pick” stitches with your right-hand needle), you may find it fairly easy to move into crochet because you will continue to hold the yarn in your left hand and maneuver the hook with your right (if you are right-handed). If you’re interested in learning how to knit in the continental style, you may find that knowing how to crochet helps you pick it up more smoothly. If you knit in the English style, you may find that your experience holding yarn and keeping tension with your right hand translates easily to doing the same with your left hand.

In knitting, all stitches remain “open” or “active” throughout your project until you bind off at the end. In crochet, you bind off your stitches as you go; in most cases you have just one loop on your hook when you have completed a stitch.

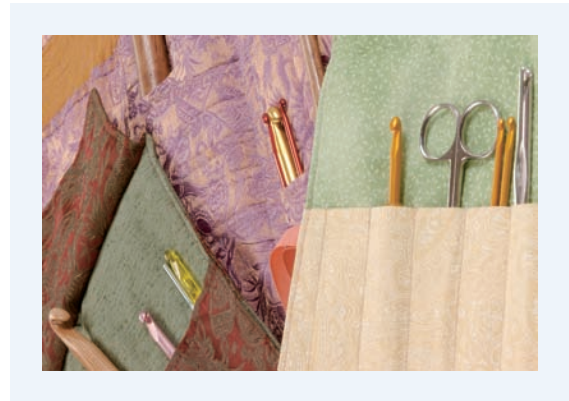
GAUGE

In contrast to knitting stitches, crochet stitches are generally taller than they are wide. Therefore, you crochet more stitches over an inch than you do rows. It might take a bit of experience with crochet before your instincts adjust regarding how many stitches and rows you require to produce an item of certain dimensions.

Crochet stitches can feel denser than knitting stitches. You might find that you are more comfortable using a hook that is larger than the needles you would use for the same yarn, to produce a fabric with good drape.

Crochet stitches use more yarn than knitting stitches, so when you purchase yarn for your first project, get more than you think you need. See the section “Estimate How Much Yarn You Need” on page 47 for more information.

This book gives you the information you need to learn crochet techniques, but you might want to connect with other crocheters for help or to share your passion. The number of crochet resources you can find online is endless. Crocheters are always sharing tips and projects on blogs and in a variety of online communities. Yarn companies and magazines have Web sites with information, instruction, and patterns. And if you can't find what you need from these sites, simply use your favorite search engine.



LOCAL AND ONLINE YARN STORES

If you live in a large town or city, chances are you can find an independently owned and operated yarn store. Owners of yarn stores tend to be friendly, and many encourage crocheters to spend time in the store by having comfortable chairs and establishing a welcoming atmosphere. Yarn stores frequently offer crochet classes as well, so they can serve as a very helpful resource to you as you advance your crochet skills.

If you can't find a yarn store in your area, large craft stores tend to carry a selection of yarns, threads, and hooks and may also offer crochet classes. And given the number of online yarn stores that exist, you're sure to find just the yarn you're looking for.

There are many options out there when you're looking for crochet supplies. Many designers sell patterns and kits directly from their own Web sites. Simply search the name of your favorite designer to find his or her site. Etsy.com is another place to look for patterns and yarn to buy from enterprising crocheters. It's a handmade community full of inspiration.

CROCHET GUILDS, CLUBS, AND MEETUPS

A crochet guild or club might already exist in your area. Such groups meet regularly for social crocheting and organize classes, fashion shows, charity events, and more. If you can't find a crochet guild or club in your area, you can contact the Crochet Guild of America (www.crochet.org) for information on how to start one.

In many communities, informal groups meet regularly for social crocheting. Meeting at a member's home, at a coffee shop, or even at a bar, crochet clutches are a fun and easy way to connect with people who share your interest in crochet. Some yarn stores even organize social gatherings weekly or monthly. For more information, you can ask at your local store or do a search for groups in your area on www.crochet.meetup.com or groups.yahoo.com.

Join the Crochet Community *(continued)*

ONLINE COMMUNITIES AND RESOURCES

The Internet offers an extensive and rapidly expanding amount of information about crochet. From patterns (free and for sale), yarns, and tools to message boards, magazines, and blogs, you can spend hours learning and connecting.

Pioneered by enthusiastic crafters, Web sites devoted to making free craft patterns and related articles available to the public are becoming more and more abundant. You can turn to these online communities for information about techniques, to find that perfect pattern, or to request advice. Members also share photos of their completed crochet projects, information about works in progress, and links to resources they find useful.

Crochet Guild of America

www.crochet.org

Offers tutorials, news, and patterns.

Crochet Me

www.crochetme.com

Includes patterns, forums, blogs, photo galleries, instructional videos, and more.

Crochet Pattern Central

www.crochetpatterncentral.com

An online directory providing links to free patterns, indexed by category.

Crochetville

www.crochetville.org

A message board devoted entirely to crochet.

Ravelry

www.ravelry.com

Offers a number of ways to track projects and supplies, share notes, get advice on questions and problems, and make friends.

Craft Yarn Council

www.craftyarncouncil.com/standards.html

Offers a wealth of resources, from definitions of crochet abbreviations and chart symbols to tables of hook sizes, body measurements for standard sizing, and yarn weights.

General community sites also hold some crochet surprises. Try searching Flickr.com for inspiring photos of crochet projects, to share your own, and to join groups that specifically share crochet-related photos. Look to youtube.com for video instructions made by other crochet enthusiasts.

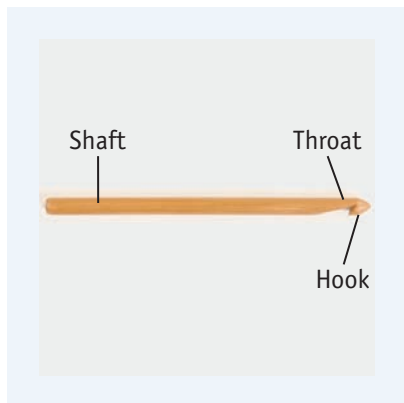
BLOGS AND CROCHET ALONGS

Many software programs that simplify the blogging process are available for free, which means that anyone with a computer and an Internet connection can have a blog. Many crocheters maintain blogs devoted to their projects, displaying digital photos of their completed projects and works in progress.

Crochet bloggers and communities occasionally organize *crochet alongs*, during which each participant works on producing an item from the same pattern. This allows for a fun, shared experience, and more advanced crocheters can help beginners.

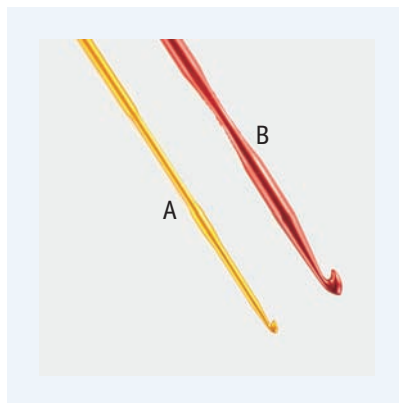
Hooks

Crochet hooks come in many sizes and are made from a selection of different materials. The hook you choose to use depends on the yarn you are using, how big or small you want your stitches to be, and your personal preference.



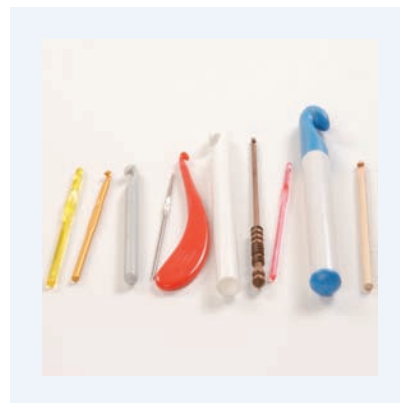
THE HOOK

Crochet hooks are generally 5 to 7 inches long. There is a hook at one end, which you use to grab yarn or thread and pull it through the stitches of your work. You hold the hook along its shaft, and there may be a flat section of the shaft to serve as a thumbrest or grip.



HOOK SHAPE

Various manufacturers shape their hooks differently, so try out a few different brands until you find the shape that you feel works best. Each brand has its own trademark style. For example, hook A has a round, smooth throat that tapers toward a narrow hook to help yarn loops slide quickly. The point at the top of the hook can aid in inserting the hook into crochet fabric. Hook B has a flat cut in the throat to create a deeper hook. The hook head is also wider, helping to keep loops from slipping off the hook.



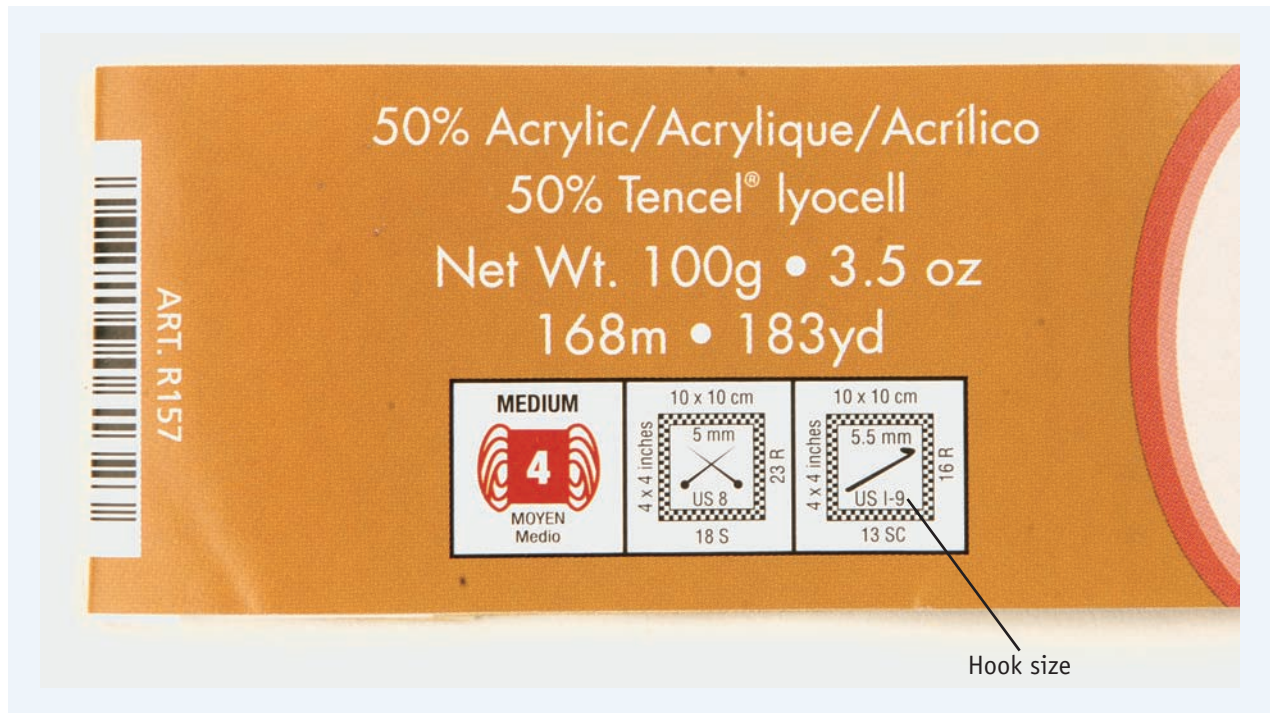
HOOK TYPES

Hooks are usually made from plastic, metal, wood, or bamboo. The smallest hooks are made of steel and are used with thin crochet thread to make intricately detailed items, such as doilies. Metal hooks can be very smooth, enabling the yarn to slide freely. Wood or bamboo hooks, on the other hand, provide a bit of friction with the yarn, which comes in handy when you're crocheting with slippery yarns. Plastic hooks are slightly flexible and lightweight.

HOOK SIZES

Hook size is determined by the diameter of the hook's shaft. Sizes range from tiny ($\frac{1}{16}$ inch/0.75 millimeters) to large ($\frac{4}{5}$ inch/20 millimeters). Smaller hooks work with threads and thin yarns and make smaller stitches. Larger hooks accommodate thicker yarn and make larger stitches. Choose your hook size based on the recommended size for your yarn and on how loose or tight you want your stitches to be.

Most yarn labels suggest a hook size to use with the yarn, and patterns also list a recommended hook size. You may need to change the hook size in order to match the gauge listed in a pattern or to achieve a specific drape and feel. It is more important to match the gauge of a pattern than to use the exact hook size listed.



How can I determine a crochet hook's size?

If you are unsure of a hook's size, you can use a hook gauge to measure the size of the hook. Find the smallest hole that the shaft of the hook fits into; the size indicated beside that hole is the size of your hook. Hook gauges usually mark both metric and U.S. sizes.



Hooks (continued)

Hook sizes are marked differently in the United States and the United Kingdom, although there is a growing interest in standardizing sizes by using metric measurements. Use the following tables to determine your hook size. In some instances, a yarn label provides only a recommendation for knitting needle size. In this case, use a hook of the same or slightly larger metric size. (If you're using U.S. sizing, find the U.S. size equivalent to the metric size given for the recommended knitting needles.)

Hook Sizes		
Metric Size (in mm)	U.S. Size	U.S. Knitting Needle Size
2	A	0
2.25	B	1
2.75	C	2
3.25	D	3
3.5	E	4
3.75	F	5
4	G	6
4.5	—	7
5	H	8
5.5	I	9
6	J	10
6.5	K	10½
8	L	11
9	M/N	13
10	N/P	15
15	P/Q	19
16	Q	—
19	S	35

Steel Hook Sizes	
Metric Size (in mm)	U.S. Size
0.75	#14
0.85	#13
1.0	#12
1.1	#11
1.3	#10
1.4	#9
1.5	#8
1.65	#7
1.8	#6
1.9	#5
2.0	#4
2.1	#3
2.25	#2
2.75	#1
3.25	#0
3.5	#00