

## READY, SET, KNIT

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### Building a Crochet Library

I'd like to share with you some books that I have in my Crochet library and which I highly recommend to all crocheters no matter what your level of expertise.

The first thing you need is some good **reference books**. One should be small enough to carry in your crochet bag so you'll have it with you at all times. Two books that fill the bill are Edie Eckman's *The Crochet Answer Book* and Nancy Brown's *The Crocheter's Companion*, which is spiral bound - a definite plus when using it. They both have good illustrations and cover a wide variety of techniques. Another good reference book that is spiral bound is Nancie Wiseman's *The Essential Book of Crochet Techniques*; it has excellent illustrations in color as well as all the requisite information. A larger book that I really love but can't easily carry around with me is *Crocheting School: A Complete Course*, published by Sterling. It has the best, large color illustrations of any crochet book I have seen, and I refer to it again and again. *Crocheting in Plain English* by Maggie Righetti is another very good reference book, particularly for beginners. Be sure to read Chapter 1, "A Living History" - it is a charming short story about the author's experiences with crochet from the age of 7. I like this book because the author writes as if she's talking directly to you and shares many of her experiences as a struggling crocheter and as a crochet teacher. A new book out by Jane Davis, *Crochet: The Complete Guide* (spiral bound) is a lovely little book with lots of great information...however, I think the title is a bit ambitious. Rowan also has a new book out called *Crochet Workshop: The Complete Course for the Beginner to Intermediate Crocheter* by Emma Seddon and Sharon Brant (spiral bound) that is quite interesting, has wonderful color illustrations and covers pretty much everything a crocheter needs to know. In addition, there are some great patterns and a lot of ideas to get your creative juices flowing. I also have to mention a new book by Pauline Turner - *Finishing Techniques for Crochet* - this is the first book on finishing techniques that I've seen and it certainly has some great information.

Next, you need at least one good stitch dictionary -- but you can never have enough of them! I like the following:

*The Crochet Stitch Bible* by Betty Barnden (spiral bound), The Harmony Guides 300 Crochet Stitches, vol. 6 and *220 More Crochet Stitches*, vol. 7. These give charted as well as worded directions for some of the most wonderful stitches you'll ever see. *The Complete Book of Crochet Stitch Designs* by Linda Schapper has 500 classic and original patterns - and a wonderful pictorial index so you can find what you need very quickly. Another little book (spiral bound) by Helen Jordan is called *Textured Crochet* and contains some very beautiful and unusual stitches.

Since crochet edgings are so varied and so useful, you must have at least one good book on crochet borders. My favorite is *The Complete Book of Crochet Border Designs*, also

by Linda Schapper. From plain to fancy, thin to wide, this is an amazing collection of classic and original patterns.

Since crocheted squares are versatile and can be made by crocheters of all skill levels, and used for all kinds of projects, I highly recommend Jan Eaton's ***200 Crochet Blocks for Blankets, Throws and Afghans***. My copy is so well-used that I may soon have to replace it. Jan has identified each block by level of difficulty and also suggests which squares would mix and match well together. There is a pictorial index for ease of locating the square you want and wonderful pictures in color not only of all the blocks, but also of blocks combined together as afghans to give the crocheter an idea of how the blocks look together. I also like Edie Eckman's ***Crochet Motifs*** because it takes you beyond blocks to other shapes that can be joined together in pleasing and original patterns.

If you'd like a book with good technical information, some interesting patterns, and one that is a good read as well, you should try ***Stitch 'n Bitch Crochet - The Happy Hooker***, by Debbie Stoller.

And, because socks are all the rage in the knitting world and crocheters need to know that they, too, can make socks out of all that awesome new sock yarn, you must have ***Crocheted Socks!*** by Janet Rehfeldt and Mary Jane Wood. Wow, great patterns, both toe-up and top-down, and faaaaast to make!

I would be remiss if I didn't include crocheted flowers - they are so beautiful and can be used to embellish just about anything. My two favorites are Nicky Epstein's ***Crocheted Flowers*** and Suzann Thompson's ***Crochet Bouquet***. Looking through them makes my fingers itch to get out my hook and some yarn and sit and make flowers all day.

And lastly, you must have a book about crocheted lace...remember, you don't have to make lace out of fine thread anymore ... take a hint from knitter Brooklyn Tweed and use a larger hook and larger yarn. You'll be amazed at the beautiful projects you can produce in no time at all. So, I am recommending ***Crocheted Lace*** by Pauline Turner and a new book by Jean Leinhauser and Rita Weiss called ***Crochet Lace***.

Now, don't run out and buy these books all at once! You can find many of them in your local library, so look them over first and decide which ones you can't live without. If I were picking just one book to start with, it would be either ***The Crochet Answer Book*** or ***The Crocheter's Companion***.

Happy Hooking!