

READY, SET, KNIT

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The Babette Blanket

Crochet Tutorial

1. The Hook and How to Hold It

The hook, generally about 5 ½ inches long, is a rod made of metal, plastic, or wood. It will have a flattened area about an inch from the tip – this is the thumb rest. The size of the hook and the name of the manufacturer are usually printed on the thumb rest. At the end of the rod is the hook. You may need to try hooks from several different manufacturers to find the one that works best for you as the hook end can vary widely.

The two most common ways to hold the hook are as follows:

- Hold the hook like a pencil, with your thumb on the top of the thumb rest and your index finger on the underside, supporting your thumb.
- The other way is to pinch the hook between your thumb and index or middle finger and let the hook rest against the rest of your fingers on the inside of your hand, along the topmost knuckle.

I have seen other ways to hold the hook, so you may need to experiment a bit to find what works best for you.

2. The Chain Stitch

Make a slip knot and place it on the hook just above the thumb rest, the same way as you would to start casting stitches onto a knitting needle. Tighten the knot a bit so it won't fall off the hook, but don't make it so tight that the hook won't be able to go through the loop. Hold the hook in your right hand and your yarn in your left hand. Again, there are different ways to hold the yarn so that an even tension can be maintained. (Reverse if you are left-handed...)

- Pinch the slip knot between the thumb and middle finger of your left hand. Place the yarn over the top of your index finger and down between your index and middle fingers and fold your pinky over the yarn to maintain tension. Move the rod under the yarn and grab the yarn with the hook. Pull the yarn through the loop on the hook. Repeat for the number of chains needed, and move the thumb and middle finger of your right hand up the chain as you crochet.
- Wrap the yarn twice around your pinky and fold your pinky down to maintain tension, then under and over your index finger. Proceed as above.
- Thread yarn over your index finger, under your middle finger, over your ring finger and under your pinky. Slide the yarn down to the bottom of your fingers and fold your pinky over it to maintain tension. Proceed as above.

3. The Single Crochet

This is the most common crochet stitch. Make a chain of the length desired. Insert the hook into the second chain from the hook (some folks insert the hook into just the top of the chain loop, some under the top loop and the back bump, and some into the

back bump. Try all the ways and see which one you prefer). Then grab the yarn with the hook and pull up a loop. Grab the yarn again with the hook and pull it through both loops.

4. The Double Crochet

Bring the yarn up over the back of the hook and place your index finger on it. Insert the hook into the third chain from the hook as described above. Grab the yarn and pull up a loop; there should now be 3 loops on the hook. Yarn over and pull the yarn through 2 loops, yarn over again and pull through the remaining 2 loops.

5. The Slip Stitch

Insert the hook into the chain and pull up a loop. Draw this second loop through the loop on the hook. This stitch is generally used to finish a round. To fasten off, cut the yarn, pull it through the loop and tighten.

There are many free online resources, including video tutorials, to help you understand the basic crochet stitches above. Among the better ones are: stitchdiva.com, hassdesign.com and You Tube...just google You Tube, click on Categories and then type in the words “crochet tutorials” in the box below Categories. Two DVDs that are available for purchase, but which you might find in your local library, are Crochet from Start to Finishing and I Can't Believe I'm Crocheting.