Beginner Crochet 1 with Cal Patch

Chapter 1 - Introduction

Overview

- Crochet is a way of making fabric with yarn and a hook. It's a little different than knitting, but it's another good technique to have in your repertoire. I'd like to show you some examples of crochet before we get started. It can be really thick and chunky, so it's great for a cozy, warm cowl. Or it can be really fine and delicate like the shawl on the mannequin. You can use it to make hats, and it lends itself really well to sculptural techniques like this coral on this hat. Or you have an fun effects by mixing yarns and colors. The classic granny square is always a fun way to play with crochet. You can add little edgings onto even your knit pieces or things that you sewed. Now that I've shown some examples of crochet, I'll show you the tools that you'll need to get started.

Tools and materials

- All you'll need is a hook and some yarn. Eventually, you'll want an assortment, but to start out, you'll really only need one. It's up to you if you want a metal hook, wood, plastic, or these are really fine steel hooks that are more used for making delicate things like lace. To choose your first hook, you'll wanna first choose your yarn because you need the hook to be compatible with the yarn size. For starting out and learning, I like a smooth yarn and a light color, and it's really great if the yarn is just a single ply like this. That way, you won't have trouble with the hook splicing between your plies of yarn. I'm going to suggest that you might start out with bulky yarn because it'll be a little bit easier to see your stitches, kinda like the way kindergartens use big fat crayons. And so with bulky yarn, you'll want a hook that's a little bit larger as well. So for bulky, I go with a hook size J or K. If you're using a smaller yarn like worsted, you might use a G or H size hook. Why don't we get started? And I'll show you how to begin.

Chapter 2 - Basic Crochet Stitches

Chain stitch

- The first thing you always need to do when begin crocheting is make a slipknot. So let me show you how. I like to wrap the yarn around my fingers and then push the long piece that's connected to the skein through the loop and pull on the loop and the short tail. Then pull it down and adjust it a little bit smaller and now I'll show you how to hold the yarn in your hand. So I hold my hand up like this, wrap it around my pinky, across in front of my hand, behind the index finger and just let the tail drop down and then hold the knot in my thumb and middle finger. Now I can pick up my hook. I'm right handed so I have my working hand as the right and the non-working hand as my left. If you're left handed, you can just do the mirror image of me. Now I put the hook through the loop in the slipknot and I'm ready to start chain stitch. There are a few different ways you can do this formation of holding the yarn. The main purpose is just to have a framework that the yarn will feed through and to have a little bit of tension on this section here because that's what's going to help me hook the yarn every time I make a stitch. This is the way I like to hold the yarn, but there are different ways to do it so feel free to find what's comfortable for you. The purpose is really to give some tension as the yarn feeds through your fingers and help you make nice even stitches. So to me the important part is having the yarn come over your index fingers so you have a little bit of a taut section there, and that's where I'm going to begin grabbing the yarn with the hook to make chain

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stitch. Chain stitch is really the foundation stitch or the casting-on of crochet. So I'm putting the hook under the yarn, grabbing it, and bringing it down and sliding it through that loop. That's one chain stitch. To continue I just grab it again, slide it through the loop. And it should just flow in one continuous motion. When you've done a few stitches, you'll want to move these fingers up so that you're holding right under the working stitch. It'll be a little more comfortable. You might also notice that as I pull the yarn through each loop, I turn the hook downward because that helps it slip through the loops. I also find it's easier to drop the skein of yarn on the floor because then it will just feed evenly. So just keep practicing until it feels nice and comfortable. And you want to focus on making a nice loose chain. If your chains are too tight, you'll have a really hard time with the next step, and we don't want that. So now you have a nice chain and we can move on to the next stitch.

Single crochet
- Now that you're comfortable with the chain, we can move on to single crochet. I recommend pulling out some of those chain stitches, so that you're working with a shorter chain, because many people find this next step to be the most difficult. And the shorter your chain, the shorter that step will be. So I'm putting the hook back in the chain and now I wanna show you how there's a front side and back side to our chain stitches. The front is the side that looks like a braid and for each stitch you really only see two loops. This is called the front loop and this is the back. If I flip it over to the back or bottom, you'll actually see three parts to each stitch. Two on the outside and one sort of bump in the middle. But for single crochet we just wanna be looking at the front side of the chain. And you're going to skip the loop that's on the hook and skip the very first chain and we're going to be working into the second chain. So I take my hook and slide it under the front and back loop of that chain. What you don't see is that it slides over the bump that sticks out on the bottom. So now, I have three loops on my hook and I'm grabbing the yarn, sliding it down through two of the three loops. Then I still have two left. I'll grab again and bring it through the remaining two. That's my first single crochet stitch, probably didn't make sense, so let's keep doing it and it will start to sink in. So I identify the next chain stitch, I see the two loops, I bring the hook through both of them, grab the yarn, bring it through two, grab again and go through two. And just continue your way across the chain. Putting one single crochet stitch in each chain. And we started out with one, two, three, six, seven chains, which will give us six total single crochets because we skipped that first one at the beginning. So only two left. If you're having a hard time with this, don't worry I promise it gets much better. The hardest part is crocheting into the chain. Once you have a few rows working into the fabric will feel a lot more comfortable. Now that we're at the end of our row, we need to make one chain before we turn, which is called the turning chain. And then turn the page, I like to say that because I like to think of it as though you're turning the page of a book. That way you'll always consistently turn it the same direction. So I made my one turning chain and now I'm going to skip it, just like I did when I begin and work into the first single crochet stitch. I can look two ways, I can look across the top and you'll see they look just like chain stitches, but I can also look from the side and now I see that below each stitch there's actually a nice hole that I can work into. So this is when it starts to get a lot easier, so I'm going into the first one just like before, I've got three loops on the hook, I grab the yarn and bring it through two, grab again and bring it through two. Continue down the row, one stitch in each stitch and you'll probably notice it's already feeling a lot easier. 'Cause you have something to hold on to and these nice big holes are much easier than the flimsy little chain stitches. And I'm at the end of my next row. See you know what we'll do next, one chain for the turning chain, turn the page and we'll make our third row. And there's my last stitch of my third

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row and now I know how to do single crochet.

Double crochet
- Now you know single crochet, and I just want to show you a piece of fabric made from single crochet. It's pretty thick and dense, so it's great for making a hat or something that you want to be really warm without a lot of wind going through it. The next stitch we're going to learn is double crochet, which makes a much looser and drapier fabric because each stitch is a lot taller, so you can see how there's a lot more air flow between these stitches. And then the final stitch we're going to learn is triple crochet, which is really loose and drapey, they're really tall. Now, let's move on to double crochet. For double crochet, you'll need a turning chain of three chains. One, two, three. This is because double crochet is a lot taller than single, so single had one turning chain, double has three. Now we can turn. And, we're going to do something new, which is yarn over. It just means picking up the yarn on the hook like that. Now for single, we started in this first hole, but for double, you skip over to the second hole. The reason why is that in double crochet, the turning chain counts as a stitch, so we now move onto the next stitch. I go in the stitch just like normal, grab the yarn and bring it through my first two loops that are part of the fabric. Grab and go through two more, and grab and go through two more. It's the same steps, but there's one more set of two loops this time. So I yarn over, go into the next stitch. I have one, two, three, four loops on the hook, grab and pull through two, grab and go through two more, and grab and go through two. So there's three sets of two loops. Yarn over, into the stitch, grab and pull through, grab and pull through, grab and pull through. Just keep working your way across. You'll find you make fabric a lot more quickly with this stitch, because it's almost like doing three rows of single crochet, for every one row of double crochet. I'm at the end of my first row, and I can turn and make a second row of double. So, I've got my three turning chains, turn, yarn over, skip to the second stitch, grab and go through two, grab and go through two, and grab and go through the last two. Now I'm at the end of my second row of double, and it might kind of look like you're finished, but there's sort of this protrusion at the end of the row below. That's actually the turning chain from the previous row, and if you turn toward you, you'll recognize the one, two, three chains. We need to work into this stitch as well, even though it doesn't look quite as obvious as the previous ones. So I yarn over, and I go into the top chain. Just like always, four loops on the hook, grab and pull through two of them. Just a regular stitch, it's just what you're working into might look a little funny. Now you can see that I have six doubles, just like I did below. If I didn't work into that turning chain, I would start to shrink, and we wouldn't want that to happen. Let's do one more row. Turn. Second stitch. It's a good idea to keep a count of your stitches as you go. That's why I like to work with a short chain to begin with. When you've got a small piece like this, it's really easy to see if you grow or shrink, if you have more or less stitches. If you're working with 20 stitches, you might not notice for a while if you've shrunk down to 17. But when you have six, and you shrink to three, it's pretty obvious. So, again, I'm at the last stitch of the row. It might look like I'm done, but you can see that you wouldn't have quite enough stitches if you stopped here, so I have to turn that chain toward me. Find the one, two, three, top of the three chains, and work into it. And that's double crochet.

Triple crochet
- Our next stitch is triple crochet, and at this point, it's gonna be easy-breezy. We need to do four turning chains, 'cause triple's even taller than double. Turn, and this time, we yarn over twice. Go in the same stitch as before, the second one, grab and pull through your first two loops, grab and pull

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through two more, two more, and two more. So, this time, you have four sets of two loops. So yarn over twice, go into the stitch, grab and pull through two, and two more, two more, and two more. You can see how tall they are. And we're at the last one in the row, so I need to find my top turning chain, yarn over twice, go into my two loops. And keep grabbing the yarn and pulling it through, two at a time. So you can see how much taller the triple is than the double. We'll do one more row. Four chains. Turn, yarn over twice, skip the first stitch and go into the second. Just keep working your two loops at a time. And again, yarn over twice, go in, grab and pull through two, two more, two more, two more. One more regular stitch and then we'll have our turning chain stitch. Here's the chain, we need to turn it in order to see the stitches. There's my top chain to work into. And you can see how the turning chain counts as your first triple, so you have one, two, three, four, five, six stitches in the row. So that's triple crochet. I like to think of it as birthday party stitch because if it's your friend's birthday tomorrow, and you need to make a gift really fast, this stitch is so nice and tall, it's like doing four rows at once, and you can make a scarf in no time.

Chapter 3 - Finishing Off

How to finish off

- The last thing I'd like to show you is how to finish off your work. All you need to do is make one last chain stitch, and then you're going to cut the yarn a few inches away. Then just pull the tail completely through, tighten it down, and you have a little knot just like you had at the beginning. Now all I have to do is weave this tail into my work and the piece will be finished. I have a tapestry needle right here, so I'll thread my yarn onto this nice, fat eye of the tapestry needle, and the nice thing about crochet is that it's a double layer thick, so I kind of just need to find a good place to weave it in. Depending on your stitch, you might have different situations. I can either go horizontal like this, and always check from the back, make sure the needle isn't just sticking out the back. I could also go vertically if I want to. Wherever you can find to weave in that tail and hide it inside the fabric. So I went down, maybe now I'll go across a little bit. Check from the back. And that looks good. So once you've woven in maybe two inches or so, you can cut off the rest of this tail. All I need to do now is weave in the tail from the beginning, and my swatch'll be finished. Now you know the basic stitches of crochet. They are single crochet, double crochet, and triple crochet. With those three stitches, you can play around with different kinds of yarn and maybe make a scarf. You might alternate, single, double, triple, double, single, or make up your own stitch pattern. Just to practice the difference between each stitch and the number of turning chains for each row.

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