
Crochet a Rag Rug with Cal Patch

Chapter 1 - Introduction

Overview

(bouncy tune) This awesome crochet rag rug is super fun and easy to make. All you need to know are the basics of crochet, the chain stitch and the single crochet stitch. Working on such a large scale goes really quickly and you'll see how satisfying it can be to upcycle all kinds of old textiles you have laying around. We'll work in both a circular and an oval shape and by this weekend, you'll probably have made one for every room in your house. (bouncy tune)

Chapter 2 - Materials

Materials

- One of the many things I love about making these rugs is that you don't really need any special materials. I like to make them out of old T-shirts. You can also use knit fabric yardage, or woven fabric yardage, like quilting cotton. You might have a lot of leftover scraps from your sewing projects, or old sheets, you can go to your local thrift store and pick up all kinds of textiles to upcycle with. You will be needing a lot of fabric if you're going to make a large rug, but one of the cool things is that you can keep adding in fabrics as you go, so if you run out of something, you can just add in a new piece. The only other thing you need is a nice jumbo crochet hook. I've got a few sizes here, we'll see what works best. And a nice pair of sharp scissors for cutting up your fabric strips.

Chapter 3 - Preparing Fabric

Cut fabric and join strips

- Essentially, what you'll be doing is making your own yarn. And working with different types of textiles will require different methods of cutting or tearing them into strips. One of the most common fabrics to use is a woven cotton. Essentially, your classic rag rug would have been made of some sort of old sheet or something that's worn out and given a second life by making it into a rug. I've got a rectangle of woven cotton here, and I've started cutting it into one inch strips. An easy way to tear a lot of fabric at once is to take pieces like this, cut some strips, and then grab every other strip in one hand and the inbetweens in the other. (fabric ripping) You can actually tear a whole sheet like that. If you get a friend to help, and you play tug-of-war, the whole thing will be shredded into little bits all in one step. However, before you tear up all the bed sheets in your house, though, you might want to try just tearing a few strips and crocheting up a swatch to see if you're getting a thickness that you like. Thicker strips, more like two or three inches, will make for a thicker rug, and thinner strips will make for a thinner rug. Also, if you have a thicker fabric, that's going to come into play, so that's why you do wanna test before tearing all your strips. Woven fabrics tear easily, but if you're working with knits, you'll need to cut them. I have this wool jersey folded into several layers so that I can just cut strips without a whole lot of cutting. I've got about eight layers there. (scissors crunching) I've got lots of layers here and this helps keep the knit flat because jersey tends to be really curly, so if you try to keep it single-layer, you'll struggle with it a lot more. (scissors crunching) The other thing I like to use, also a knit, is a t-shirt, or lots of t-shirts more likely. T-shirts, you can actually kind of cut in a spiral so that you get one long, continuous piece that doesn't need to be joined. Starting at the bottom, I'll cut in at an angle to about one inch, maybe a

little more. Cut around the shirt, then when I get around to where I started, I just, again, angle up a little bit so that I'm cutting in a spiral. I'll keep cutting around 'till I have the whole t-shirt into one long strip. When you get up to the arm holes, you can just cut them off and keep going as best you can. You may end up with a few shorter strips up at the top, and you could cut the sleeves in a spiral, too. You can probably figure out a way to keep going and get the whole thing into one strip, but inevitably, whatever you cut, you're going to need to join some strips. I'll show you a trick for joining two ends with a smooth join that's not a knot. You take the end of one strip, fold it in half, and cut just a tiny little snip to make a hole. Do the same thing on the other strip. Then take the two ends, overlap them so that I have one going out in one direction and one the opposite. The one that's on top, I'm going to push through the hole from underneath. And pull, and the two pieces are joined with a pretty minimal, not even a knot. I'll show you once more time. Folding the end in half, cutting a small slit, maybe a half inch from the end. Same thing with the other piece. Tiny, the hole can really be quite small because, especially in this knit, it'll really stretch out. Lay one over top of the other, lining up the holes. And the one on top, I push underneath through both layers. Pull it through all the way. Give it a pull, and it'll be a nice, smooth join. You can either join all your strips in advance, or join as you go. Remember that if you've determined that one inch is your ideal width for the gauge of rug you want, you should cut all your strips at one inch. You might want to join as you go so that you can see how far you get with a certain color and decide if that's where you want to switch to a new color, or you can take all kinds of random strips, join them together, and make a big ball of yarn, and then see what happens as you crochet.

Chapter 4 - Crochet Rug

Crocheting a round rug

- If you don't know how to crochet yet, or you need a refresher, just check out my beginner crochet class. All you need to know are the very first thing you learn which is chain and single crochet stitch. To begin the circle rug, I'll make a slip knot and put my hook through that loop. Chain one, two stitches. Now I can start doing single crochet into this first chain. Put my hook in, pull up a loop, grab and pull through the two loops. Then I'll go again in that very same stitch that I already worked into. Pull up a loop, pull through two loops. I'll probably need about five single crochets into this one same chain stitch to give me a little circle that starts off my rug. This is the center of the rug, and it will grow out from here. One, two, three, four, five. And, instead of joining my round with a slip knot, I will actually just work right into the next stitch and keep working in a spiral. This will give me a rug that doesn't have a seam in it. So here's my first single crochet. I'm working into that one. And then I'm going to work again in that same stitch because, for this first true round of my rug, I need to work two stitches in each stitch to increase and make my circle get bigger and lay flat. So I'm on the next stitch. I do one single crochet, and then a second single crochet into that same stitch. Move to the next one. One single, second single. Next one, one stitch, two stitches. I'm basically increasing every stitch of this row. So, where I had five my first time around, I will now have 10. Okay, I'm back to where I started. I can see, this is my first increase. So, for the second round, I'm actually going to go two in the first stitch, then I only need one in the next stitch. Again, two into the same stitch. And only one in the next. So this round, the pattern of increasing is two, one, two, one, two, one, all the way around. If you're new to crocheting, you might find it confusing to see where your rounds begin and end, especially since we're working in a spiral, so it's kind of continuous. In that case, you could use a marker and, just a scrap of fabric will work fine, to indicate the beginning of the rounds. Let's say I want to mark the beginning of my round here. I'll just take that scrap and put it there. Now I'll

always know where my rounds begin, and I'll keep moving that up as I go. I just did one, so the next one'll be a two, then one. Two, one. Two, one. And I can see that I'm at the end of this round because there's my marker. I just did a two. This next round will be two, one, one, two, one, one. I'm going to place the marker into this new stitch that begins the round. So that was my two. One, one. Two, one, and one. You'll keep working round and round in this manner. The one we were just doing was two, one, one, two, one, one, so when you get to the next round, it'll be two, one, one, one, two, one, one, one. Every time you increase a round, you'll add one more one between your twos. What you're doing is changing the rate of increase so that the rug will lay flat. And you do want to take time occasionally to check on how it's going. If you see your pieces kind of curling up like a bowl, which is sort of what mine looks like it's doing. If it's extreme, it means you're not increasing enough. So you need more twos in there. It may be that you lost count somewhere along the way. Or, sometimes certain fabrics just want to pull in and you might need to put in extra sets of twos. If you notice that your rug is ruffling, it means you've got too much increasing. You may need to pull back a few rounds if you have extreme curling or ruffling. But, in general, these rugs are very forgiving and, once it gets big enough, the weight will let it sort of flatten out and relax into place. Here's another one where I'm a little farther along. I'm on about the sixth row here. And so I have four ones between each of my twos. I've also changed colors. And, in this case, instead of just jumping from red to gray, I have a few rows where I put thinner strips of red mixed with a thinner strip of gray. That way I get sort of a gradation of color. You could keep doing that to transition between colors as another fun way to play with your stripes. So here I'm at four stitches between increases. There's four singles, and an increase. Once you're tuned into really seeing your stitches clearly, you'll start to be able to recognize, I can see that I just did an increase in the row below, here, which means the next increase in this row would come the stitch after it. When you can recognize that, you don't need to count as much. 'Cause every time you see an increase in the row below, it's your cue to increase again. So I see another increase here, two stitches into one stitch. So the next one after that will be my increase again. And as you keep going, your rows just get longer and longer. Things slow down, but your rug is getting bigger and bigger, which is really exciting.

Crocheting an oval rug

- You can also crochet an oval-shaped rug using this technique, here's how you do it. Make a slip knot, just like before, and we start with a straight chain. To determine how long that chain should be, you need to figure out how long and wide you want your rug, so let's say we want a two foot by three foot rug, the difference between the two is one foot, which means we need a chain that's one foot long. If you wanted a three foot by six foot rug, the difference is three feet, and your chain would need to be three feet. I'm just gonna keep my chain pretty short, since we're just making a small sample. Now I can start working down along this chain, with my single crochets. For this first row, I'm just doing one stitch into each chain. And I'm just working into one loop of the chain, because I will be coming back up the other side of the chain, and using the other loop. Three more. Here's the last chain, or also the first chain that I made. In this stitch, I will put enough single crochets to get myself around the end. Probably three or four. So there's a second one, and a third, and, think I'll put one more. It's not an exact science. I'm just looking at the stitches. And I can see now that the four are bending around, putting me in place to work back across the other side of my chain. I also have the original tail here, and I can work over that as I go, so that I don't have to weave it in later. Here's my first chain. Put one single crochet in there. One in each of these, working back across the other side. And I'm back to the first end. Here again I'll need three or four stitches in the

same stitch. But I also see that I'm just about out of my strip, so I need to join on a new one. I wanted you to see how that works when you're in progress. It's really the same process but it's very easy to do and can give you a little bit more flexibility to design as you go, if you join while you're in the process of making the rug, instead of joining all from the beginning. I'm using the same technique I did with the knit. I might need to cut the holes just a little bit bigger because the woven fabric isn't as stretchy, but other than that, it's the same thing, and I can go back to rounding this second end, one, two stitches in the same space, three, four. Basically an oval rug is really like a straight rug with two half circles, one on each end. So you'll see that the circular formula is going to come into play here, as we start increasing. Now I'm back to the straight section, and I'll just work one stitch again in each of my previous stitches. You will notice that working with woven strips are a little different, they don't stretch, and you can hear how squeaky they are. The wool jersey or the tee shirt are a lot stretchier so they can be more comfortable on your hands. I've reached the end of my strips again, so this time I want to join on a new color. And when you join, you can feel free to mix up different colors and textures, but it's usually best to either stick with all knits, or all wovens, within one rug, mainly because the torn edges of the woven fabrics give a little bit of a rougher texture than the smooth cut edges of your knit fabrics. You can try mixing them up though, it will work, it just, there will be a bit of contrast between the two types. This is a nice long strip that will keep us going for a while. Alrighty, still working along the straight edge with one stitch in each stitch. And, I'm at the end where the curve begins, so, for this first round of working into the curve, it's just like we did with the circular rug, I'm working two stitches into each stitch of the row below, so that I increase at a nice smooth rate, and the half circle that is the end of this oval rug will grow. Two and mat stitch, two in the next, and two in this last one. Back to the ones for the straight side. And we're ready for the twos again, two ... I'm at the end of my rope. There's another two. One more two, got four sets of twos around the end. And back to a straight side, so just ones ... Here's my first two again from the row below, so I'm going to put a two there, and this time my pattern for working around the curve is two, one, two, one, just like in the second round of the circle. There's a two, one, two, one. You'll keep working in this way, working singles along these straight edges, and increasing at the same rate you did with the circular rug, along the curves. Keep going until the rug is the size you like.

Finish

- No matter what size or shape your rug is, you'll finish it off in the same way. Because we've been working in a spiral, we have a bit of a step at our last stitch. To blend in with the previous round, I'll work a few slip stitches, which is just grabbing the yarn, pulling through all your loops at once. You can see how that blended the edge in a little more smoothly than it was, and now I can finish it right off by making a last slip stitch, bringing it through the loop, grabbing the tail, and pulling that through the loop. I'll pull to tighten it down, and then I can just weave the tail into my edges, using the hook. Especially on this knit fabric, it's really easy because they're nice and stretchy. A nice, clean finish. I've got a few other rugs that I've already worked up to full size. Here's an oval and a round rug. You can see that I like to play with mixing different colors, even different textures. This red is a flannel, so it's a little bit thicker and has a nice plush feeling. Another idea you can play with is to make small shapes, and then when it's the size you want, stop increasing. Just do ones, so that it grows up the sides, and you can make baskets or dog beds. Everyone you know is gonna want a rug like this, so you better start teaching them how to hook.