Hold Yarn and Hook for a First Crochet Chain

A comfortably held hook, a visible slip knot, and an original 20-chain counting exercise

A small first success

This lesson teaches one action that later crochet projects rely on: make a slip knot, bring the working yarn over the hook, and pull it through the loop already on the hook. The result is a chain stitch. Repeat the action to create a strip of twenty counted chains. No fabric panel, blanket, garment, or finished size is promised. It is better to see and count your loops than to work quickly or tighten them to match an imagined picture.

Choose a grip, not a posture contest

A crochet hook can be held rather like a pencil or more like a table knife. Either can work. Hold it firmly enough not to drop it, but loosely enough to rotate the tip toward the yarn when drawing through a loop. Left-handed learners can mirror the working direction; neither side is the only correct one. Keep forearms supported if helpful, shoulders relaxed, and the hook tip pointed away from the hand that supports the yarn.

What to gather

Use a smooth, medium-weight yarn in a light, solid colour that shows individual loops. A hook about 5 to 6 mm may make that yarn easier for beginners to see, but follow the yarn label as a starting point, then adjust if loops split or refuse to glide. Have small scissors, a ruler, a notebook and a blunt yarn needle for the end if needed. Avoid novelty eyelash yarn, thin dark thread, damaged hooks and very slippery strands for this first exercise.

Count what is actually a stitch

The starting slip knot is not one of the twenty chain stitches. The live loop still sitting on the hook is also not counted. Each successful yarn-over-and-pull-through produces one new visible chain V in the strip below the hook. Number the successive V-shaped chain stitches from the slip-knot end toward the hook; a yarn tail and the working yarn are different strands. These distinctions are illustrated on the printable counting chart.

Read the caution before starting

Yarn can wrap around fingers, pets or nearby objects; keep loose strands away from young children and animals. Put away hooks with sharp or damaged tips and keep scissors closed when not cutting. Stop if repetitive motion causes pain, numbness or persistent hand tension. This guide is instructional text and original diagrams, not a tested physical product, a therapy technique, or a safety certification.

Plan the practice

Read these dimensions and conventions before touching yarn.

Decide which yarn strand you control

The working yarn runs from the hook toward the yarn ball. The short tail comes from the starting slip knot. Arrange the ball so yarn unwinds without dragging the hook or wrapping under the chair. Rest the growing chain in the yarn-supporting hand instead of stretching it down to the table. If the yarn snags, stop and free it before another pull-through.

Try a simple tension route

Run the working yarn loosely over the index finger of the supporting hand and let the other fingers guide the strand without a tight wrap. Another comfortable route is acceptable. You should be able to pull a small amount of new yarn without a sharp jerk or a deep mark on the skin. To correct an overly taut feed, change finger position first; do not force the hook through a cramped loop.

Make a slip knot that can move

Form a simple loop with the yarn, pull a bight of working yarn through it, and place that bight on the hook. Tug the working yarn gently to size the loop so it slides on the shaft. The knot should sit beneath the loop; it must not cinch so tightly that the hook cannot pass through. If the knot locks, open it and begin again rather than yanking it wider.

Understand yarn over

In the illustrated right-hand example, move the working yarn from behind the hook across the top toward the groove, then turn the tip slightly down so it captures the yarn. Draw that captured strand through the loop currently on the hook. After the pull-through, the old loop has become a chain stitch below, and one new live loop stays on the hook. Keep the movement small, not a dramatic wrist twist.

Make a twenty-V reference

PATTERN 1 is a teaching diagram with the three hand-and-hook stages. PATTERN 2 is an original twenty-chain counting strip with boxes and numbered points; its V drawings are symbolic, not the actual length your yarn must reach. Print the two reference pages at Actual Size or 100 percent and use the two 50 mm calibration bars on each page only to verify print scale. The counted twenty-V sequence is the result to aim for; centimetres of final yarn length are not prescribed.

Learn how to recover

If two loops remain on the hook after an attempted chain, the yarn has not passed through the old loop completely; slide it through gently. If the hook splits the yarn, back it out and catch the whole strand again. If a loop is too tight, undo the newest chain by drawing the working yarn back through and remake it. Pulling a long chain into shape at the end does not correct inconsistent tension.

Set a sensible stopping point

Work slowly, count at five, ten, fifteen and twenty, and compare the shape of the front V stitches. A chain can be repeated several times for practice; recording the second attempt is optional. The printable records provide a checklist, stitch-number boxes, tension observations and a place to note which grip felt comfortable.

Practice - steps 1 to 8

Each numbered action stands alone. Count real stitches, not temporary hook loops.

1. Clear the table and prepare the strand Choose a seat and a surface where the yarn ball can rest without falling. Cut no yarn yet. Place a smooth light yarn, matching hook and closed scissors within easy reach. Check that the hook has no chipped tip or sharp burr; if it does, use another hook. Read the yarn label for the suggested hook size, then record the actual size you selected.

2. Choose a hook hold Hold the hook like a pencil or like a dinner knife. Keep the forearm comfortable and the tip visible. Try rotating the tip slightly down and back up; the movement should not pull on your wrist. If you work left-handed, mirror the illustrated arrangement. Record the hold you begin with, knowing you may change if your hand tenses.

3. Separate working yarn and tail Pull out a manageable length of yarn from the ball and identify the working end that remains attached to the ball. Leave a short tail, about 15 cm, for the slip knot and later removal or finishing. Lay the tail aside so it does not accidentally become the strand you wrap over the hook. The working strand feeds each new chain.

4. Form a loose slip knot Cross a loop, pull a bight of the working strand through the loop, insert the hook into that bight and ease the knot until the loop fits the widest working part of the hook shaft. Check the loop can slide without scraping. The initial slip knot is a starting anchor, not chain number one.

5. Route yarn over the index finger Support the slip knot and beginning of the chain with thumb and middle finger on the hand opposite the hook. Let the working yarn pass lightly over the index finger; let the remaining fingers feed it rather than clamp it. Draw out a little yarn. If the finger pulls painfully, loosen the route immediately.

6. Make chain stitch one Move the working yarn over the hook from back to front. Turn the hook groove toward the loop, catch the full strand, and pull that strand through the one loop already on the hook. You should again have exactly one live loop on the hook. Below that loop is the first completed chain stitch. Say 'one' and begin a tally in your notes; RECORD 1 has checkpoints at five, ten, fifteen and twenty.

7. Repeat to make five Repeat the yarn over and draw-through action four more times. After each pull-through, let the supporting thumb and finger move closer to the working stitch. Do not grip the newest loop so tightly that the hook cannot move. Identify five V shapes on the front face of the chain, excluding the original knot and the live loop on the hook.

8. Check the hook and loops Pause at five. Count the front-facing V shapes from the starting end toward the hook. If you see only four, look for a hidden small V close to the slip knot; if the count still differs, unravel to the last correctly counted chain and repeat. If you see two loops on the hook, complete the pull-through rather than counting it.

Practice - steps 9 to 14

Complete the exercise, check the work, and use the quick repairs below.

9. Continue to ten Make five additional chain stitches with the same compact hand motion. Gently slide each new live loop to the working shaft before the next yarn over; do not tighten it around the hook throat. Count all ten completed V shapes. If the chain twists, leave it relaxed instead of forcibly turning each individual loop.

10. Compare tension at ten Look at the first and tenth V. They need not be identical, but each should be open enough to see where its top two legs meet. If late chains are much tighter, reduce the pull of the index finger or briefly release yarn from the ball. If the newest chains are loose loops, hold the growing strip closer to the hook without pulling on the working strand.

11. Add chains eleven to fifteen Count five new yarn-over-and-through movements. Touch the lower edge of each completed V rather than counting the live loop or nearby loose strand. Use the 15-chain checkpoint on the record sheet. If you lose the count, start at the slip-knot end and trace each separate V with a blunt pencil, without stretching the chain.

12. Complete the twenty-chain strip Work five more actual pull-throughs to reach twenty chain stitches. Count one through twenty again from the slip knot. The loop sitting on the hook after stitch twenty stays uncounted; the slip knot also stays uncounted. The strip's measured length depends on yarn, hook and tension, and no fixed length or load capacity is promised.

13. Release the practice safely If you wish to unravel and repeat, remove the hook and gently pull the working end so the chain returns to yarn. If you want to keep the sample, cut a tail about 15 cm long, pull the cut tail entirely through the final loop, and tighten just enough to close that loop. A saved sample is not suitable for a tie or a child's toy.

14. Record and store On RECORD 2, note the yarn, hook size, grip and whether the chain was even, tight or loose. Write the counted result and any correction you made. Store the hook in a case, close the scissors and keep loose yarn beyond children's and pets' reach. Repeat the twenty-chain drill another day only if it is comfortable for your hands.

Fix, care and preserve

A chain that feels like a cord. Too-tight loops often come from pulling the working yarn hard after every stitch. Loosen finger tension, keep the live loop near the usable hook shaft, and remake the last few links. A larger hook for foundation chains may help but must match the yarn comfortably.

Counting when the chain curls. Turn the whole strip gently to see the front-facing V sequence. Do not treat the back bump or a side strand as an additional chain; each V and its opposite back bump belong to the same chain stitch. The pattern drawing is an orientation key, not a test of yarn length.

What comes next. F068 introduces a first single-crochet row made into a foundation chain. It will use the second chain from the hook and count a separate number of stitches. Today, a clean twenty-stitch chain and an accurate count are a complete result.

Hold Yarn and Hook for a First Crochet Chain

Original schematic drawing - teaching reference, NOT a yarn-length gauge

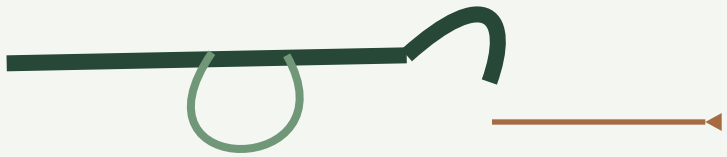
A / SLIP KNOT

Starting anchor; not a chain



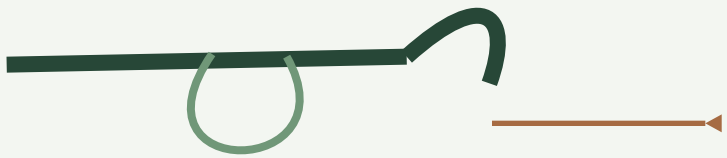
B / YARN OVER

Catch the working strand



C / PULL THROUGH

One new V remains below hook





50 mm BAR A



50 mm BAR B

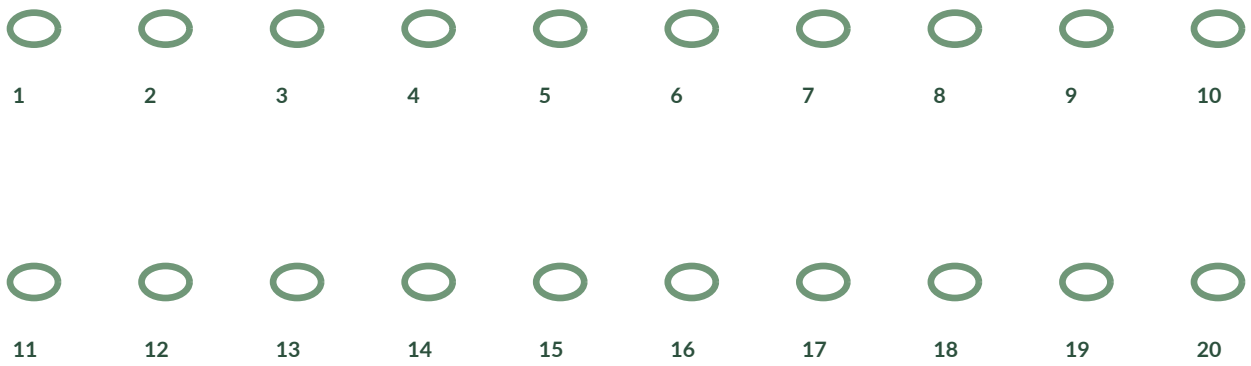
PRINT AT 100% / ACTUAL SIZE; DO NOT FIT. Measure BOTH 50 mm bars.

Hold Yarn and Hook for a First Crochet Chain

Original schematic drawing - teaching reference, NOT a yarn-length gauge

COUNT TWENTY SEPARATE COMPLETED Vs

Slip knot: excluded. Live loop on hook: excluded.



FRONT VIEW

Count each full V along the chain once.

Back bumps and side strands are parts of the same chain.



PRINT AT 100% / ACTUAL SIZE; DO NOT FIT. Measure BOTH 50 mm bars.

Hold Yarn and Hook for a First Crochet Chain

Materials and setup

Date / name:

Yarn fibre / colour / weight:

Hook size and grip:

Dominant working hand (optional):

Starting count / intended stitch count:

What was easy or uncomfortable:

Count checkpoints

- [ ] 5 chains
- [ ] 10 chains
- [ ] 15 chains
- [ ] 20 chains

Hold Yarn and Hook for a First Crochet Chain

Observation and correction diary

What did the chain / stitch tops look like?

Which stitch or symbol did you miscount?

How did you verify the first / last real stitch?

Did you have to undo any part?

What would you do differently next time?

Safety / storage / condition notes:

Evidence boundary

Original digital instruction, not physically tested or calibrated by the publisher.