Join Yarn Without a Bulky Knot

Two original eight-stitch practice swatches for neat edge and mid-row colour changes

A tidy join is a controlled change

A permanent chunky knot may leave a bump or show through a small crochet project. This original learning exercise changes yarn colour during the final yarn-over of a US single crochet, rather than tying the old and new yarn together with a large permanent knot. The resulting top loop begins the next stitch in the new colour while the two separate yarn tails remain available for weaving in later. The first sample changes at a row edge; the second changes in the middle of a row.

Understand the decisive moment

To make a US single crochet, insert hook, yarn over, pull up a loop: two temporary loops now sit on the hook. In a standard sc, the final yarn over is drawn through both. For this exercise, make that FINAL yarn over with the new yarn instead of the old one. The single crochet remains one completed stitch, not two. Keep both old and new tails free on the wrong side for later finishing. The join is not considered secure merely because a colour has changed.

Two swatches, one comparable count

Swatch A is worked from ch 9 into eight sc per row, for four rows; switch colours at the final yarn over of the LAST sc of Row 2. Swatch B uses the same ch 9 and eight sc per row for four rows; work Row 3 sc numbers 1–4 in yarn A but complete the final yarn-over of sc 4 with yarn B, then finish the rest of the row with B. Each swatch still holds eight sc per row. The sample is a method comparison, not a knot-strength test.

What you need

Use two smooth contrasting yarn colours of similar thickness and fibre care requirements, a compatible crochet hook, blunt yarn needle, two removable markers, scissors and a record sheet. About 5–6 mm may be an accessible hook for some medium yarns but the fibre label and your comfort take priority. Very slippery yarn, very fuzzy yarn or yarn of widely different weights may require a different joining strategy. The lesson uses US crochet terms and does not teach joining for load-bearing equipment.

Honest durability and safety boundaries

The publisher has not physically crocheted, pull-tested, washed, stretched, abraded or safety-rated these joins. A neat-looking stitch is not evidence of long-term durability. Use common sense with household washing, follow labels, inspect tails and choose stronger tested construction for any safety-critical item. Yarn ends are not suitable as ties around children or pets. Store needles, scissors and hooks safely and stop if repetitive hand movements cause pain.

Plan the practice

Read these dimensions and conventions before touching yarn.

Start both samples with eight real sc

For each swatch, make ch 9 from a slip knot, insert the hook into the second chain from the hook and work one sc in each of eight eligible chains. Row 1 = 8 sc. Ch 1, turn, sc into each real top V across for Row 2 = 8 sc. This ch-1 turn is not counted as sc. Repeat the count discipline for Rows 3 and 4 in both swatches: every row contains eight real stitches.

Edge sample A: change at the LAST sc of Row 2

Work Row 2 using yarn A until you reach its eighth and last sc. Insert hook, yarn over with A and draw up one loop (two loops on hook). Drop A, bring B behind the work and use B for the FINAL yarn over through both loops. The eighth sc remains one completed stitch and its top loop is now B. Ch 1 with B, turn, work Rows 3 and 4 in B, each eight sc. Leave tails available to secure later. The resulting colour boundary may look subtly stepped because the final top V is B.

Mid-row sample B: change in sc FOUR of Row 3

For the second swatch, make Rows 1 and 2 in A with eight sc each. Ch 1 and turn. In Row 3, work sc 1, sc 2 and sc 3 fully in A. Begin sc 4 in A: insert hook, yarn over, pull up A loop. Use B for the FINAL yarn over through both loops to finish sc 4. Work sc 5 through sc 8 in B. Then ch 1, turn and make Row 4 in B, eight sc. Do not count a loose changeover loop as a new stitch.

Secure the ends instead of relying on the swap

Do not cut the working strand A flush at the change point. Leave both tails long enough to thread and weave separately. After finishing the swatch, weave each free end into appropriate wrong-side stitches of its own colour where possible, reverse direction through another group of stitches if room allows, and trim conservatively. The exact tail length and anchoring performance depend on yarn behaviour and have not been physically tested. Never rely on a loose colour-change loop as the sole secure finish.

Read the original two-part diagrams

PATTERN 1 shows the final-yarn-over change in three stages: two old-colour loops, new-colour final yarn over, and a completed one-count sc with a new top loop. PATTERN 2 shows two original four-row grids, each eight stitches across, with the precise edge or mid-row switch. The grids are symbolic counts, not a measured swatch. The two pattern pages each contain two original 50 mm calibration bars; Actual Size or 100 percent printing is needed only to use the bars as references.

Use the records as an honest comparison

RECORD 1 has a separate four-row eight-stitch tally for Swatch A and Swatch B. RECORD 2 asks where the change took place, where the two loose ends appear, whether the tops remain countable, and how much visual bulk you observe. These observations are personal, not laboratory data or proof of mechanical join strength. If you want to compare with a permanent knotted join, that would be a separate method with different risks and is outside this original two-swatch lesson.

Practice - steps 1 to 8

Fourteen original steps / count only actual completed crochet stitches.

1. Read both swatch diagrams before starting Choose two compatible, smooth, contrasting yarn colours A and B. Study the three final-yarn-over stages on PATTERN 1 and the different colour boundaries on PATTERN 2. Set out a hook, blunt needle, closed scissors and the record sheet. Read all of the pattern first; no permanent knot is required at the colour-change point.

2. Build Swatch A's foundation and Row 1 Using A, form a slip knot and make nine actual chain stitches. Skip the first chain nearest the hook, then work one US single crochet in each of the remaining eight chains. Count eight top Vs in Row 1. Ch 1 and turn without counting that turning chain as a ninth sc.

3. Work the first seven sc of Row 2 Using A, work one sc in each of the first seven actual Row-1 sc tops. Under both top loops for each stitch, yarn over A, pull up one loop, yarn over A again and draw through two hook loops. Stop before finishing the eighth and last stitch. Your count is seven completed sc in Row 2 so far.

4. Begin the eighth sc in old colour A Insert hook under both top loops of the eighth real Row-1 sc, yarn over with A, pull up one loop. Exactly two loops sit on the hook. Do NOT draw through them with A yet. This is the turning point for PATTERN 1, stage one. Leave A attached to its ball or leave a tail if you have cut it; do not secure it with a chunky knot.

5. Finish that same sc with new yarn B Hold B behind the work with a tail you can weave in. Yarn over with B and draw through both loops on the hook in a single motion. Row 2 now has eight completed sc; the new live loop is B and is not an extra stitch. The top V of this final sc includes the newly drawn B loop. Record Row 2 = 8 on the worksheet.

6. Make Rows 3 and 4 in colour B Ch 1 using B and turn; work one sc in each of the eight actual stitch tops of Row 2. Count 8 for Row 3. Ch 1, turn and work another eight sc across Row 4 in B. Do not insert an extra sc into the turning chain. Leave comfortable yarn ends and secure the final live loop by pulling the cut tail completely through.

7. Set Swatch A aside with loose ends Do not pull both tails tightly to hide them. Keep A and B ends separate and visible for later weaving; one tail may sit by the colour boundary. Mark the side where the change occurred and record a note about whether the top edge looks smooth. A loose tail is not proof that the join is stable, so do not use the sample under load.

8. Build Swatch B's first two rows Start a new sample entirely in yarn A. Ch 9, work eight sc in Row 1, ch 1 turn, and eight sc in Row 2. Ch 1 and turn for Row 3. Count carefully so the next colour change occurs inside the row rather than at either edge. Compare the beginning counts to Swatch A; both should be 8, 8.

Practice - steps 9 to 14

Finish the original project and record the measured result.

9. Work three full A-colour sc in Row 3 In Row 3 of Swatch B, work full US sc number 1, 2 and 3 using A throughout. Move a temporary marker beside sc 3 if you want a position cue. Locate the fourth real stitch top in the old row; keep the other edge stitches untouched for now. Do not start a new chain to change colours.

10. Switch yarn during Row 3 sc number four Insert into old stitch position 4, yarn over A and pull up one loop (two loops on hook). Use yarn B for the final yarn over and pull it through BOTH loops to complete sc 4. This is still one completed stitch. Keep a B tail; do not knot A and B together. The fourth stitch's top loop now shows B.

11. Complete the rest of Row 3 in B Work one US sc into each of positions 5, 6, 7 and 8 using B. Count all eight completed sc in Row 3; the colour change does not create a ninth. Ch 1 and turn with B. Work eight single crochets across Row 4, each into one real top V of the previous row, then finish with a yarn tail.

12. Weave separate loose ends on the reverse With a blunt yarn needle, guide A's loose tail through several reverse-side stitches of its own colour where possible and then reverse direction through a second group if suitable. Secure B's beginning tail separately. Avoid puncturing the front surface or drawing the work into a ridge. Leave any final yarn tail likewise woven, not dangling. There is no physical pull-strength guarantee.

13. Compare the two join positions without strain Lay both swatches flat. RECORD 1 should show four rows of eight sc for EACH swatch. On RECORD 2 identify whether each colour change occurred at the edge or near the middle and whether the top Vs are easy to count. Compare visible bulk visually only; do not claim either method stronger based on appearance or pull aggressively to test it.

14. Finish safely and keep the records Cut remaining threads only after they are secured as appropriate for the yarn. Store the hook, needle and closed scissors. Note which join method you would choose for a decorative project and why. These samples are adult lessons, not tested repairs, load-bearing joins, toys, ties or household safety equipment; no hands-on testing was performed by the publisher.

Fix, care and preserve

The new colour makes a loose hole. At the colour-change point, hold the new yarn gently so the final yarn-over draws through both old loops without a dramatic gap. Do not yank the new tail into a hard knot. If the gap remains, undo the newest stitches and repeat the final-yarn-over transition with calm tension.

A row has nine sc instead of eight. An added loose loop or turning ch may have been counted as a stitch. The last-yarn-over colour change completes the existing sc; it is not an extra sc. Count the eight real top Vs of every row and unravel the latest incorrect row before proceeding.

The tail will not stay woven in. Yarn texture and washing change finishing needs. Reweave with a longer path or appropriate reverse direction where practical, without distorting the front. For a critical or heavily washed article, use a tested joining and finishing procedure appropriate to that yarn rather than treating this small demonstration as a performance standard.

Join Yarn Without a Bulky Knot

Original vector teaching drawing / symbolic stitch sizes, not a finished-yarn gauge

THE LAST-YARN-OVER COLOUR CHANGE / ONE SC TOTAL

1 / OLD COLOUR A

Insert hook, yarn over A, pull up one A loop.

Two loops on the hook; stitch NOT finished.

2 / NEW COLOUR B

Use yarn B for final yarn over, draw through 2.

B is now the live loop; still the SAME sc.

3 / FINISH LATER

Leave A and B tails available to weave separately.

The colour change alone does not secure the yarn.

50 mm BAR A

50 mm BAR B

PRINT AT 100% / ACTUAL SIZE; measure both original 50 mm bars.

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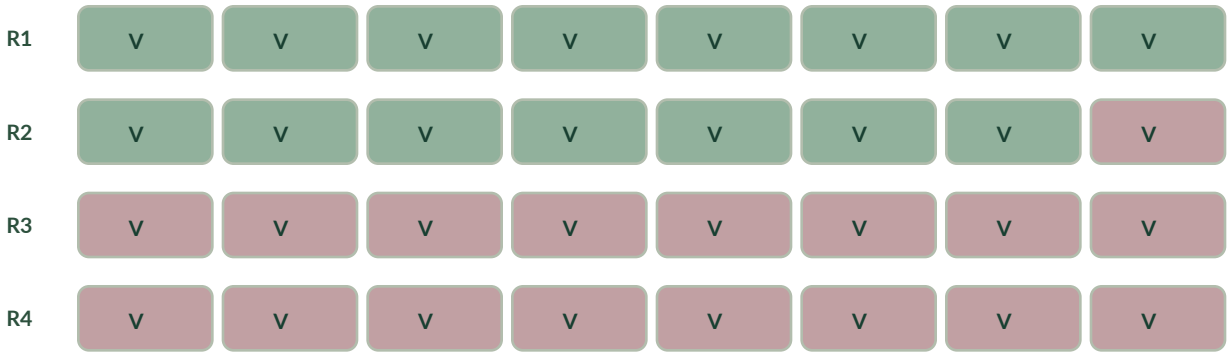
Original vector teaching drawing / symbolic stitch sizes, not a finished-yarn gauge

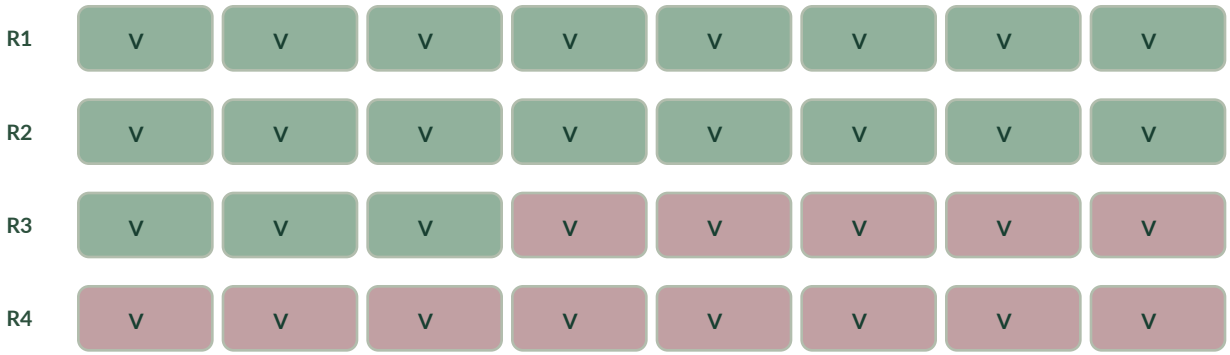
TWO 4-ROW SWATCHES / EXACTLY 8 SC PER ROW

A / EDGE JOIN: LAST YO OF ROW 2



Colour change adds NO extra stitch; weave both tails separately.

B / MID-ROW JOIN: LAST YO OF ROW 3 STITCH 4



Colour change adds NO extra stitch; weave both tails separately.



50 mm BAR A **50 mm BAR B**

PRINT AT 100% / ACTUAL SIZE; measure both original 50 mm bars.

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Maker setup / count record

Date / maker:

Yarn name, fibre and washing label:

Hook size and notes:

Yarn A / yarn B, if applicable:

Every row = 8 real sc; compare TWO swatches

- [ ] A / R1 = 8
- [ ] A / R2 = 8
- [ ] A / R3 = 8
- [ ] A / R4 = 8
- [ ] B / R1 = 8
- [ ] B / R2 = 8
- [ ] B / R3 = 8
- [ ] B / R4 = 8

Actual counts may differ: mark corrections honestly before adding rows.

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Observation, dimensions and safe-use record

A: colour change at Row 2 stitch 8?

B: colour change at Row 3 stitch 4?

A: actual row counts R1-R4:

B: actual row counts R1-R4:

Where are the A and B loose tails?

Visible bulk near the two transitions:

How were ends woven and secured?

Evidence boundary: original digital lesson; publisher did not physically crochet or print.