

FREE EXCERPT

Amigurumi for Beginners Part 1: Amigurumi Essentials

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Below is a free excerpt from the Amigurumi Essentials section of my pattern book, *Amigurumi for Beginners*. The excerpt includes information on how to read a pattern, the different abbreviations, basic stitch tutorials, and some other useful information.

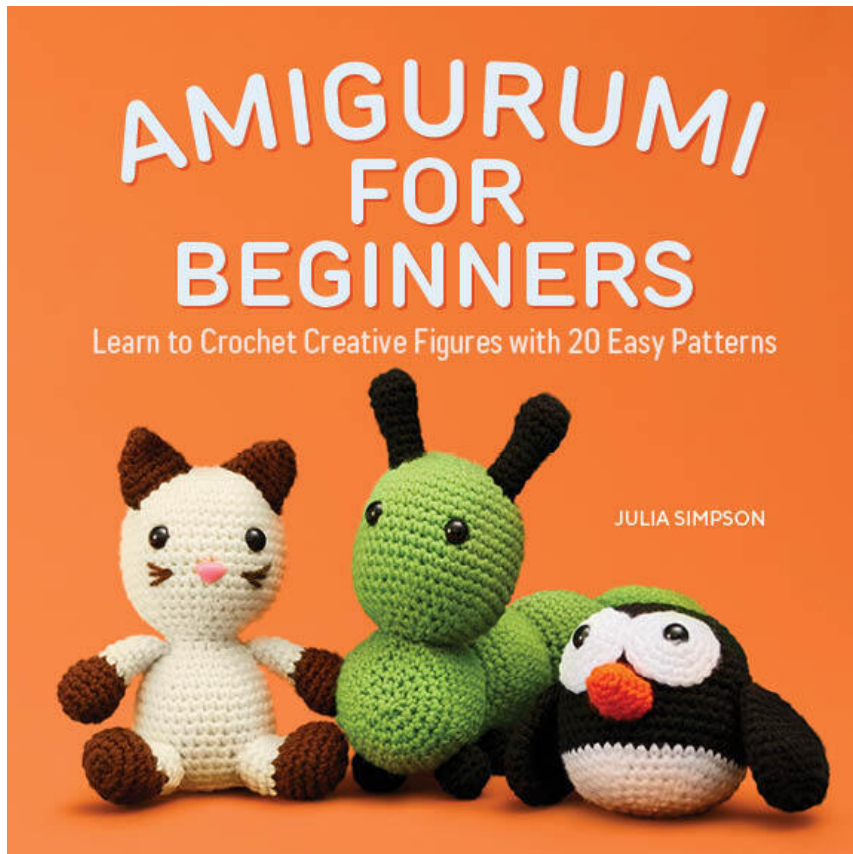
Visit my website to learn more and purchase the full book, featuring 20 simple amigurumi animal patterns aimed at beginner crocheters:

<https://waywardpineapplecreations.com/amigurumi-for-beginners/>

Thanks!

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Free Excerpt: Not for Resale

Reading a Pattern

Crochet patterns may seem overwhelming at first glance, but once you learn the abbreviations and terminology, you will find they are quite straightforward. All crochet patterns are written in a form of shorthand, with standardized abbreviations and terms such as **sc** for single crochet. Amigurumi patterns typically use only a few simple stitches, and they often follow a similar structure of increases and decreases. As you work through the designs in this book, you will become familiar with the basic patterns used to create common shapes such as spheres and cylinders.

Before you start a pattern, always read the information at the beginning, which offers a list of the materials required, the stitches and abbreviations used, and any special notes that will help you complete the pattern. Make sure to gather all the materials and tools listed, including the recommended yarn, hook, and additional supplies.

US vs. UK Abbreviations

Crochet abbreviations and terms vary from country to country, and the most important difference you should note is between the terms used in the United States and the United Kingdom. They use similar terminology, but there is some confusing overlap. For example, a US single crochet is called a double crochet in the United Kingdom, and a double crochet in the United States is called a triple crochet in the United Kingdom. For this book, all the patterns are written in US terms. However, it's good to be aware of both versions in case you come across a pattern written in UK terms. Each crochet pattern will state at the beginning if it uses US or UK terminology.

US TERMS	UK TERMS
chain (ch)	chain (ch)
stitch (st)	stitch (st)
slip stitch (sl st)	slip stitch (ss)
single crochet (sc)	double crochet (dc)
half double crochet (hdc)	half treble crochet (htc)
double crochet (dc)	treble crochet (tc)
single crochet decrease (sc2tog)	double crochet decrease (dc2tog)



Know the Terms

Now that you're familiar with the basic stitch abbreviations, it's time to learn some of the other terminology you'll need to know. Below is a list of common terms, phrases, and concepts you will see in this book's crochet patterns.

Yarn over: The term "yarn over" (abbreviated as **yo** or **yoh**) refers to the act of wrapping the yarn over your crochet hook. Every crochet stitch includes at least one yarn over.

Gauge: Gauge is the measure of how many stitches and rows are created within a specified measurement. When crocheting clothing, you should always crochet a swatch of fabric to ensure that the size of your swatch matches the pattern's gauge. Gauge is less important in amigurumi, but it is important to make sure your tension is sufficiently tight so the stuffing doesn't show through.

Rounds vs. rows: Crochet patterns are worked either in straight rows or in rounds. When working in straight rows, you chain a stitch and turn your work at the end of each row. Most amigurumi are made in the round. You will insert a stitch marker into the first stitch of each round to mark your place. When you reach the end of a round you remove the stitch marker, continue onto the next round without joining or turning, and insert the stitch marker into the first stitch of your new round.

Asterisks and parentheses: Depending on the pattern, either asterisks or parentheses will be used to indicate that a specified section should be repeated a certain number of times. In this book I use asterisks, but you may see parentheses in other patterns. The word "repeat" is abbreviated as **rep**.

Brackets: Square brackets are used to show the final stitch count of each row/round. (Some patterns may use parentheses.)

Yarn tail/end: The tail (or end) of the yarn is the leftover portion when you start a project or fasten off. Always leave a tail of at least 4 or 5 inches so you can weave it in securely.

Basic Crochet Stitches for Amigurumi

In this section, you will find step-by-step illustrated instructions of the basic crochet stitches needed to make amigurumi.

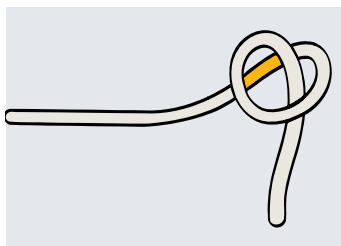
Slip Knot and Chain Stitch (CH)

The chain stitch is the foundational stitch for many crochet projects. When you crochet a flat piece in rows, you normally begin with a foundation chain made up of a specified number of chain stitches. This length of chain stitches is the base onto which you will crochet your first row of stitches. You also always make one chain stitch (**chain 1** or **ch 1**) to turn your work at the end of each row.

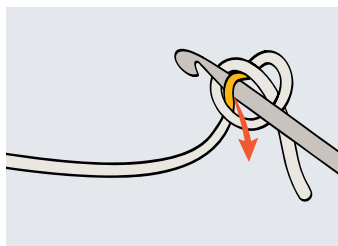
You won't use the chain stitch too frequently in this book because amigurumi are made in continuous spirals without turning. However, you may need to use the chain stitch to create flat accessories for your toys such as a scarf.

To make a foundation chain, you first create a slip knot on your hook.

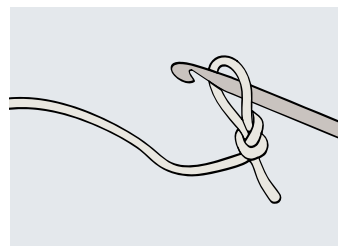
How to make a slip knot:



Step 1: Take a few inches of the working yarn and form a loop with your fingers. Lay the loop over the working yarn.

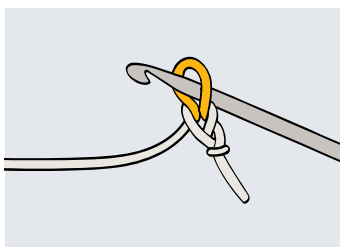


Step 2: Insert your hook through the center of the loop you just made, and grab the working end of the yarn.

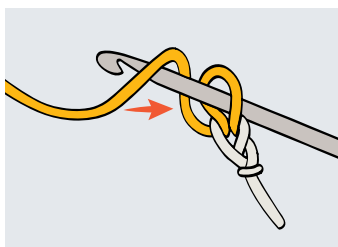


Step 3: Pull the yarn you've grabbed through the center of the loop, then hold on to the tail end firmly and pull the crochet hook up to tighten the knot.

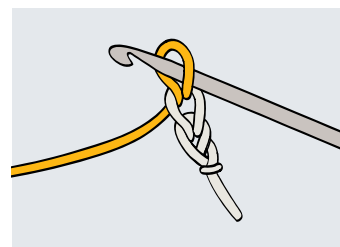
How to make a chain stitch:



Step 1: Once you have a slip knot, hold the hook in your right hand and the base of the slip knot with the thumb and ring finger of your left hand, with the strand of working yarn positioned between your index and middle fingers.



Step 2: With the hook still in your right hand, yarn over and pull the yarn through the loop on the hook. (Do not pull this loop too tight; you want to be able to insert the hook into this stitch later.)

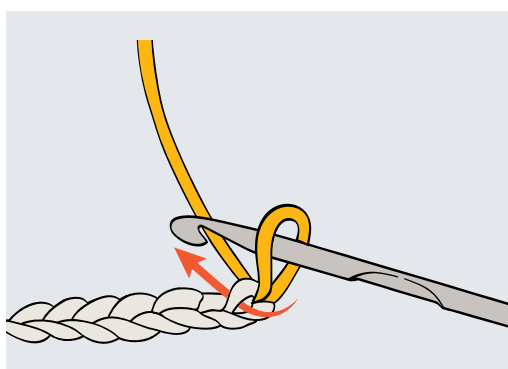


Step 3: Continue to yarn over and pull the yarn through the loop on the hook until you create the required number of chain stitches. Never count the loop on the hook or the starting slip knot as stitches. Practice working a chain stitch, then practice it some more until you are comfortable managing the hook and yarn and the chains are consistent in size.

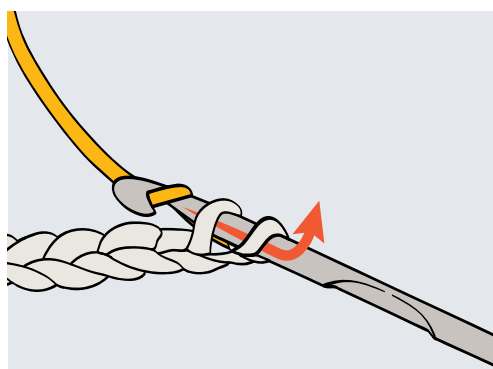
Slip Stitch (SL ST)

The slip stitch is a simple stitch typically used to join sections or to finish off a section. This stitch doesn't add much height to your work, so it is also useful for adding embellishments.

How to make a slip stitch:



Step 1: Insert the hook into the stitch indicated in the pattern.

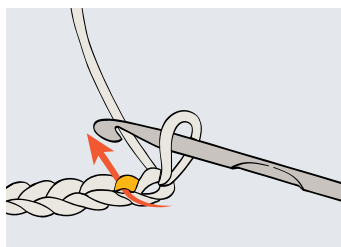


Step 2: Yarn over and pull the hook through the stitch and the loop on the hook at the same time.

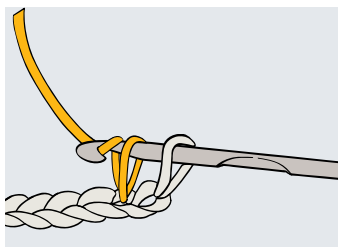
Single Crochet (SC)

The single crochet is an essential stitch to master, and fortunately, it's also one of the easiest. This basic stitch is the building block of crochet, and most other stitches are variations on the single crochet. The majority of amigurumi are made using the single crochet because it creates a tight, stiff fabric that hides the stuffing in your toys. Therefore, it's definitely worth taking the time to practice and become comfortable with single crochet.

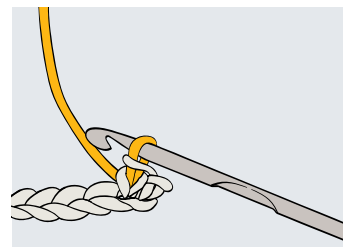
How to make a single crochet:



Step 1: Insert your hook into the next stitch and yarn over.



Step 2: Pull the hook through the stitch only (2 loops on the hook).

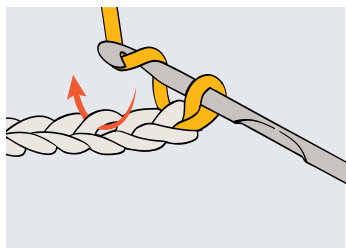


Step 3: Yarn over and pull the hook through the remaining two loops on the hook.

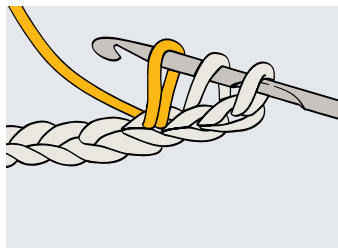
Half Double Crochet (HDC)

The half double crochet is a taller stitch than the single crochet, but not quite as tall as the double crochet. It's a great option you can use to add more height to your work, and it creates a looser fabric than the single crochet.

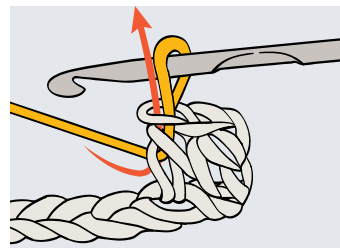
How to make a half double crochet:



Step 1: Yarn over and insert the hook into the indicated stitch.



Step 2: Yarn over and pull the hook through the stitch (3 loops on the hook).

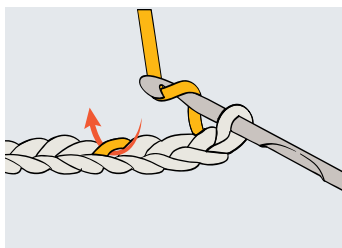


Step 3: Yarn over and pull the hook through all three loops on the hook.

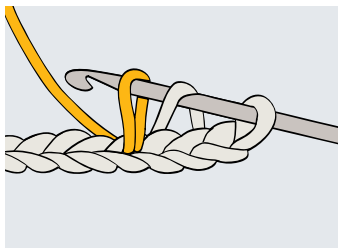
Double Crochet (DC)

The double crochet is twice as tall as the single crochet and is a popular stitch for garments, hats, and scarves. You won't see double crochet used very often in amigurumi; however, there are times when you may use it for shaping and to create doll accessories.

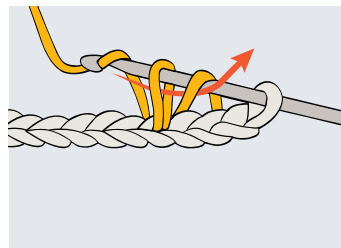
How to make a double crochet:



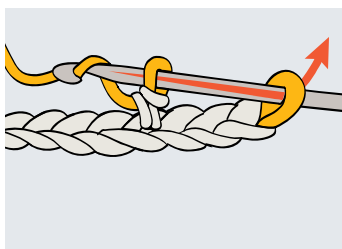
Step 1: Yarn over and insert the hook into the indicated stitch.



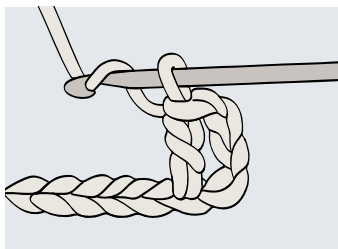
Step 2: Yarn over and pull the hook through the stitch (3 loops on the hook).



Step 3: Yarn over and pull the hook through only the first two loops on the hook (2 loops on the hook).



Step 4: Yarn over and pull the hook through the last two loops on the hook.

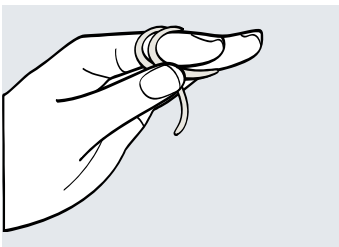


Step 5: Finished double crochet stitch with turning chain.

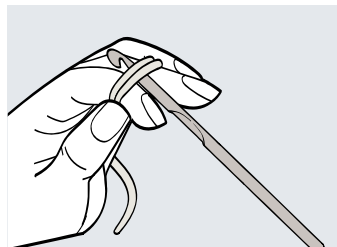
Magic Ring/Circle

The magic ring (or magic circle) is a crucial skill used to start a project in the round. The magic ring creates a tightly closed center with no visible hole in the middle.

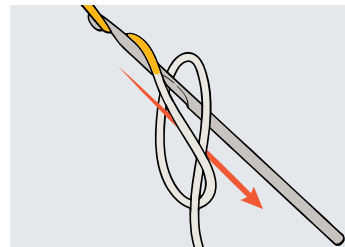
How to make a magic ring:



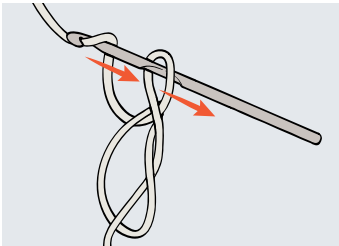
Step 1: With the tail end closest to you, drape the working end of the yarn over your left-hand index and third fingers. Wrap the working end around both fingers one time.



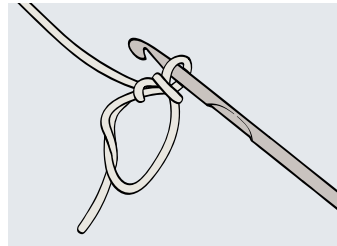
Step 2: Insert the hook between the yarn and the top of your fingers. With your right-hand index finger and thumb, hold the yarn in place and drop the left hand from the ring.



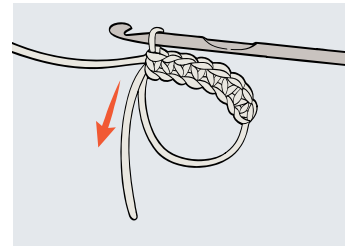
Step 3: With your left hand, secure the working end of the yarn. Hook the working yarn and pull it through the center of the ring.



Step 4: Chain one to secure the ring.



Step 5: You work into the magic ring by crocheting through the center of the ring.



Step 6: When you have the desired number of stitches, gently pull the tail tight to cinch the ring closed.

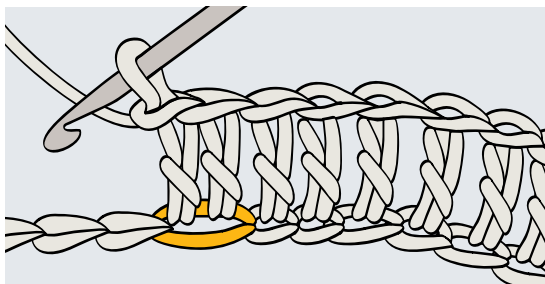
Increasing and Decreasing (INC and DEC)

Increasing and decreasing are where the magic happens in amigurumi. You will use these two techniques to create three-dimensional shapes such as spheres, cylinders, and cones.

An increase is simply two stitches made into the same stitch. In this book, increases are written using the abbreviation **inc**. Other patterns may use the phrase “make 2 sc in next st” or something similar. By making an increase, you are adding an additional stitch to your round.

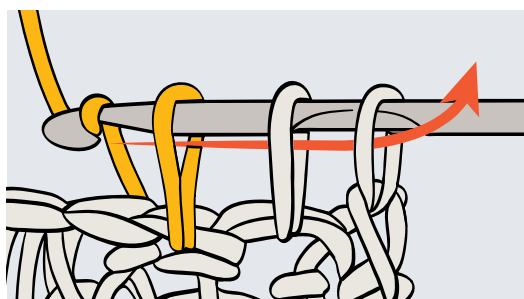
A decrease is the opposite of an increase: You crochet two existing stitches together to remove one stitch from your round. The abbreviation **dec** is used to designate a decrease in this book, but you will also see “sc2tog” in other patterns.

How to make an increase:

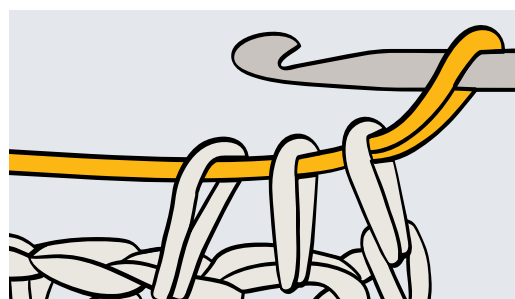


To increase, make 2 stitches in the same space to increase the row count by 1. For instance, the illustration here shows two double crochets made into the same stitch, to increase by one.

How to make a single crochet decrease:



Step 1: Insert the hook into the indicated stitch, yarn over, and pull the hook through the stitch (2 loops on the hook). Instead of finishing the stitch, leave those two loops where they are. Insert the hook into the next stitch, yarn over and pull the hook through the stitch (3 loops on the hook).



Step 2: Now, combine the two stitches you've just made by finishing them all off at the same time: Yarn over and pull the hook through all three loops on the hook.

Crocheting in the Back Loop or Front Loop Only (BLO and FLO)

Normally when you crochet, you work under both loops at the top of a stitch. However, there are times when a pattern will instruct you to work under the back loop only (**BLO**) or the front loop only (**FLO**). By working under only one loop, you create a ridge made up of the unused loops. This ridge may be decorative, or it can be used as a base on which to crochet additional details. When you crochet in the back loop only around the entire round, there will be a ridge of the leftover front loops on the outside of your work. When you crochet in the front loop only around the entire round, there will be a ridge of the leftover back loops on the inside of your work.

Counting Stitches and Rounds

Miscounting your stitches or rounds is a common challenge for beginner crocheters. A missed stitch or round can alter the shape and size of your amigurumi, so it's important to follow the pattern instructions carefully and check your stitch count regularly.

Not sure how to count your stitches? The top of each stitch resembles a V shape, with two loops (front and back). You count the number of V shapes to know how many stitches you've made in a row or round. Do not count the loop that is on your hook (Figure 1.1, Fergus the Fun-Loving Fox, page 129).

Throughout the patterns in this book, I refer to specific rounds for the placement of limbs and safety eyes. For example, I may instruct you to insert the safety eyes "between Rounds 10 and 11." Counting rounds is quite simple. The first round is the small circle of stitches in the middle of the piece, where you made your magic ring. The subsequent rounds are the ridges you can see in Figure 1.2, from Fergus the Fun-Loving Fox, page 129.

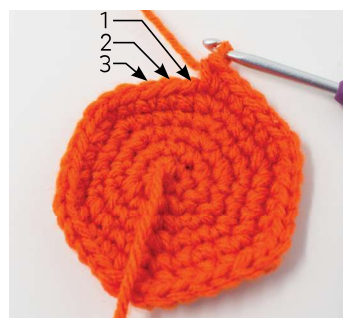


Figure 1.1: How to count stitches

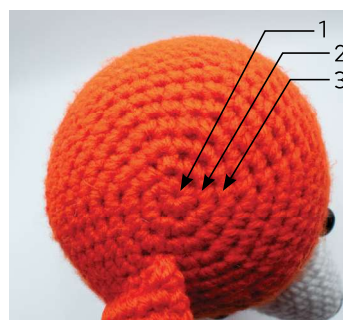


Figure 1.2: How to count rounds

Front vs. Back of Crochet Fabric

When you crochet in a continuous spiral without turning your work, you will notice that the front and back side of the stitches look quite different. Amigurumi are typically made with the front side of the stitches (also known as the right side or RS) showing because most people prefer how front stitches look compared to back stitches (also called the wrong side or WS).

When you are crocheting in the round, your work will naturally start to curve into a bowl shape, with the back side of the stitches showing to the outside (Figure 1.3, Fergus the Fun-Loving Fox, page 129). To fix this, flip your work inside out after a few rounds. Now the front side of the stitches will be on the outside of the bowl and you will be crocheting around the outer rim of the bowl by inserting your hook from outside to inside and working in a clockwise direction (Figure 1.4).



Figure 1.3: The back stitches are on the outside



Figure 1.4: The front stitches are now on the outside

Sample Pattern Line

Now that you understand the terms and abbreviations, let's put it all together. Here is a sample line from a pattern in this book:

Round 4: *Sc 2, inc; rep from * 5 more times. [24 sts]

To complete Round 4, you single crochet in the first two stitches and then increase in the third stitch. You will repeat these instructions a total of six times around. The "24 sts" in brackets indicates that you will have 24 stitches when you finish the round.