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Learn to knit

BEGINNER | KNITTING | TUTORIAL

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Verde patterns and kits are for person-

A LITTLE HELP

All you need to create your own knitted projects are yarn, needles and a pattern. Read on to learn the basics and get you started on your knitting journey.

YARN

Yarn is the general name for the 'thread' used in knitting. This could be made of wool, cotton or any number of natural or man made fibres.

Yarn is available in balls, cakes, donuts or skeins (these are long, twisted lengths of yarn which need to be wound into balls.)

Yarn 'weight' often refers to the thickness of the yarn rather than how much it weighs. The most common are double Knit (DK), and 4 ply.

The label on your yarn will provide some basic details ~ what it's made off, how much (in grams and yards/metres), the needle size to use, how to care for the yarn and the tension. Tension is the number of stitches and rows that fit into a knitted 10cm square. The needles you use and how tightly you hold the yarn both affect your 'tension'.

NEEDLES

UK needle sizes are shown in mm. The size of the needles you use depends on the yarn. The thicker the yarn, the bigger the needles. There will be recommended needle sizes on the yarn label or pattern.

There are straight needles which are used for knitting flat pieces back and forth or circular needles which are connected by a flexible cable. You can use these to knit back and forth (particularly helpful when you have a lot of stitches) or in the round – where you knit without turning and create a 'tube' of fabric for cowls, seamless sweaters or hats etc.

Wooden needles are best for beginners as these 'grip' the yarn a little better than metal, which tend to be much slippier.

THE 3 BASIC STEPS TO KNITTING

Knitting any project follows a 3 step process:

Cast on ~ this is the beginning of all knitting where you create the first row of stitches. There are lots of different ways to cast on depending on what you prefer and how stretchy you want this to be.

Knitting ~ the knit stitch is the most basic and important stitch used (hence the name). This can be combined with other stitches to create interesting and varied fabrics. The most common are garter (where every stitch is knitted), stockinette (where alternate rows are knit and purled) and ribbing (where alternate stitches are knit or purled).

Bind off (also called cast off) ~ the method used to finish your knitting and safely remove this from the needles without it unravelling.

ABBREVIATIONS

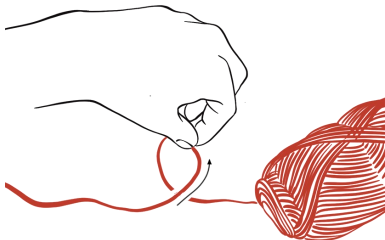
To keep knitting patterns short and easy to read, abbreviations are used. The most common are listed below.

CO	~ Cast on
BO	~ Bind off
K	~ Knit
P	~ Purl
RS	~ Right side (the side that will be seen)
WS	~ Wrong side
SL	~ Slip a stitch (with yarn held to the back)
SLWYIF	~ Slip a stitch (with yarn held to the front) © Verde ₂
KFB	~ Knit in the front and back of the stitch (increase)
K2TOG	~ Knit 2 stitches together (decrease)

LET'S GET STARTED

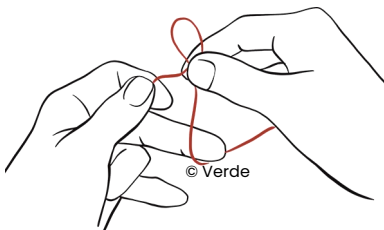
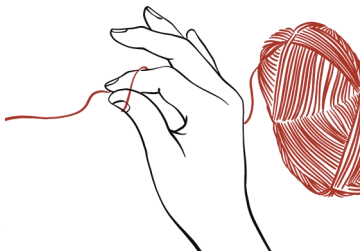
SLIP KNOT ~ this is the first step in knitting as this creates your first stitch and a starting point for your cast on.

1. Pull out a length of yarn from the ball and place it down on a flat surface in front of you - tail end to your left and ball to the right.



2. With your left hand, pinch the yarn and move this to the right diagonally up and over to create a small loop. Lay this down in front of you.

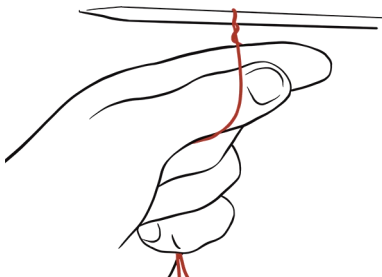
3. Squeeze the thumb and index finger of your right hand together and place them into the loop from above. Lift your hand, sliding the loop up onto your fingers. Pinch the yarn tail to the left of the loop with these two fingers.



4. Still pinching the yarn, gently pull on the ball end to slide the loop off your fingers and close the knot. You can now pull on the tail end of the yarn to close the loop, and 'slip' the knot back and forth.

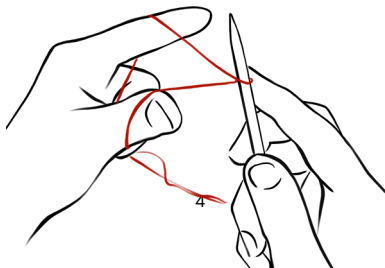
CAST ON - LONG TAIL METHOD

1. Take your yarn and pull the end until it's about 4 times as wide as the size of your cast on, plus an extra 15cm. For example, if you're making a scarf that's 10cm wide, pull out 55cm of yarn.
2. Tie a slip knot at this point (see previous instructions).
3. Slide the slip knot onto a needle. Pull the tail end of the yarn gently to close the loop of the slip knot but not too tight. This should be able to slide easily up and down the needle.
4. Hold the needle horizontally in your right hand with the tip facing left. Position your yarn with the ball away from you and tail end towards you.

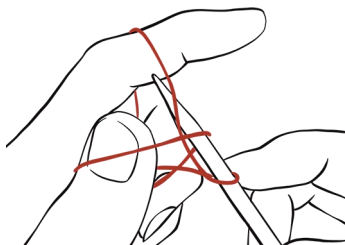
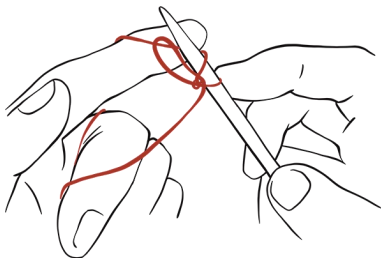


5. With your left hand, squeeze the thumb and index finger together and slide these just underneath the slip knot between the 2 strands of yarn. Gently close the rest of your fingers around the yarn that's hanging below.

6. Open the finger and thumb of your left hand about 5cm apart, letting the yarn pull evenly through your fingers. Rest the index finger of your right hand on top of the slip knot and tilt the needle and left hand upwards.

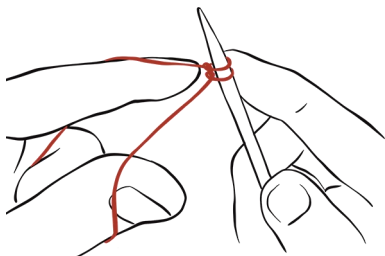


- Bring the needle tip to the bottom of your left thumb and slide the tip up through the loop of yarn.
- Now move the needle tip from right to left behind and around the strand of yarn that hangs over the front of your left index finger.



- Bring the needle tip towards you through the loop on your left thumb as you slide your thumb out of the loop. Still gripping the yarn with your remaining fingers, pull the needle slightly away pointing this back up.

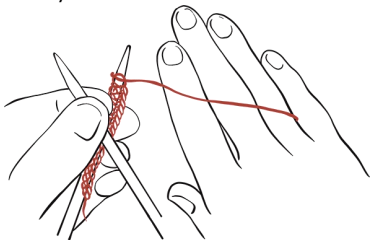
- Slip your thumb next to your index finger between the 2 strands of yarn (not the loop) and open your finger and thumb again to tighten the stitch gently. Wiggle the needle slightly to tighten this but remember, not too tight.



- Your fingers will now be in position for creating the next stitch as in step 6. Repeat until you have the cast on the required number of stitches (including the slip knot).

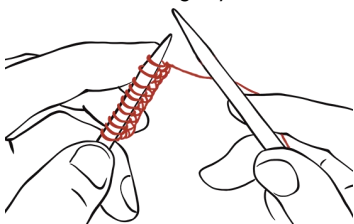
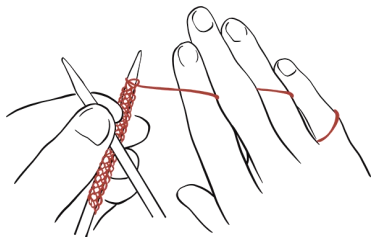
HOLDING THE YARN AND NEEDLES

Learning how to hold the yarn and needles can be tricky at first and there is no single right way. As you practice you will find a method that suits you best, but below is a method that will get you started.



1. After casting on, pop your empty needle down or hold with your left hand and slide your right hand next to the needle and under the yarn. Let the end drop between your ring and little fingers.

2. Rotate your hand so that the yarn wraps around your little finger, then weave this over your ring finger, under your middle finger and back over your index finger. This will control how tight you knit.

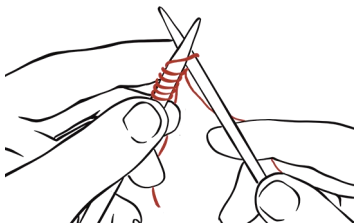


3. Take the empty needle back into your right hand and hold this with your thumb and index finger, resting on your middle finger. Now you're ready to knit.

Knitting notes: Always begin with the stitches on the needle in your left hand and the knitting positioned along the bottom. Stitches should be near the tip but not too close, you don't want them to drop off. Use your left index finger to guide the stitches. The empty needle should be in your right hand. Knit with the yarn from the ball, not from the tail.

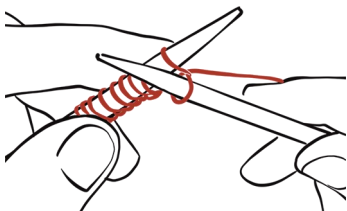
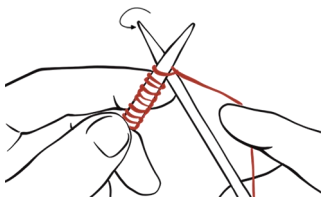
KNIT STITCH (ABBREVIATION K)

Now that you can cast on and hold the yarn and needles you're ready to try the knit stitch. This is the main stitch you will use and once you've mastered it you're well on your way to creating your own projects.



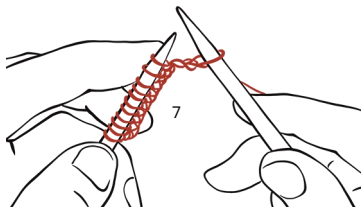
1. With yarn at the back, push the tip of the right hand needle from left to right into the front loop of the first stitch so that the needle tip slides underneath and behind the left needle to form an X.

2. Wrap the yarn anticlockwise around the right hand needle. Pull down gently so that the yarn sits between the needles on top of the stitch.



3. Holding the yarn with your right hand fingers, slide the needle tip towards you underneath the left needle and through the stitch, bringing with it the new loop.

4. Using your left index finger to keep the next stitch on the needle, move the right needle up so that this first 'old' stitch slides off the left needle.

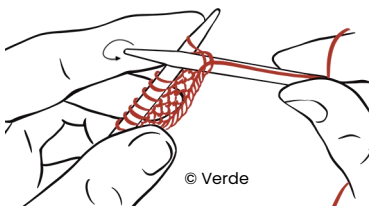
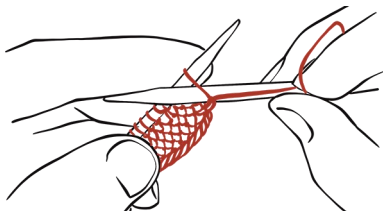


5. You now have your first knitted stitch. Pull the ball yarn slightly to neaten and tighten the stitch a little.
6. Repeat from step 1 until you have no stitches remaining on the left needle. This means you've knitted a row. Simply swap the needles in your hands and you're ready to go again!

Now that you can complete a knit stitch, it's time to practice, practice, practice. Choose a beginner project that's all about the knits and once you feel confident, have a go at the next stitch, the purl.

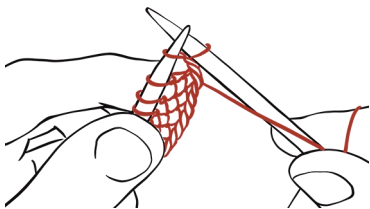
PURL STITCH (ABBREVIATION P)

1. Hold your knitting in your left hand with yarn to the front. Use the tip of your index finger to help hold and guide the stitches.
2. Slide the tip of the needle from right to left into the front loop of the first stitch so that the needle tip is underneath and in front of the left needle to form an X.



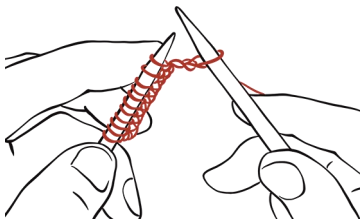
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3. Wrap the yarn anticlockwise around the right hand needle, passing between the needles and then returning to the front. Pull the yarn slightly so that this sits on top of the stitch.



4. Hold the yarn with your spare fingers and slide the right needle away from you through the stitch, bringing the new loop of yarn through.

5. Using your index finger to keep the next stitch in place, move the right hand needle up so that this first 'old' stitch slides off the left needle.



6. Pull the ball yarn slightly to neaten and tighten the stitch.
7. Repeat from step 2 as required.

Switching between stitches

With the knit stitch you will notice that the yarn starts and finishes at the back. The purl stitch is the opposite, and the yarn sits at the front.

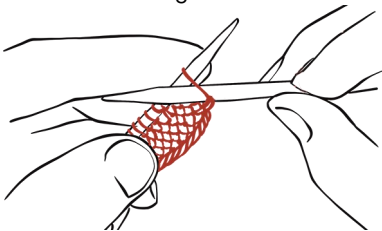
Sometimes you will have knit and purl stitches in the same row. To switch between them, move the yarn between the needles BEFORE you insert the needle into the next stitch. Take care not to wrap the yarn over the needle. This should go inbetween and 'sit' on the knitting. This switching of yarn position will be hidden between the stitches and will stop holes forming.

This method of moving the yarn is the same when slipping stitches with yarn at the back or held to the front. (See next pages.)

SLIP STITCH (ABBREVIATION SL)

This is the most common type of slip stitch. If a pattern asks you to slip a stitch then this is the method to use. Slipping a stitch is just moving this from the left to the right needle without working it.

1. Ensure the yarn is held to the back (away from you) and slide the tip of the right hand needle from right to left into the front loop of the stitch as though to purl.

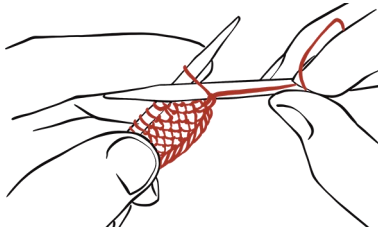


2. Now slide the stitch off the left needle and onto the right without wrapping the yarn. That's it!

Note: If your next stitch is a knit, simply carry on. If it's a purl, remember to move the yarn to the front between the needles before you start.

SLIP STITCH WITH YARN IN FRONT (ABBREVIATION SLWYIF)

Sometimes a pattern will specify that the yarn should be held to the front when slipping stitches. This is often for structural or decorative effect or when slipping on a wrong side row.



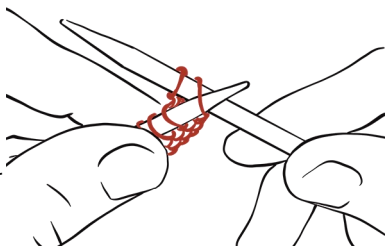
2. Now slide the stitch off the left needle and onto the right.

NB: If your next stitch is a purl you're good to go! If it's a knit, remember to move the yarn back between the needles before you start.

BIND OFF (CAST OFF)

Once you've finished your knitting you will need to 'bind off' the stitches so that this can be removed from the needles without unravelling. As with the cast on, there are many different methods. This is the standard knitted method and works well for beginner projects.

1. Knit 2 stitches.
2. Put the tip of your left needle into the first knitted stitch and pull this up and over the second stitch and off the needle. Use your index finger to help hold the second stitch.



This is called passing a stitch over and is abbreviated as PSO.

3. You will now have 1 stitch on the right needle. *Knit 1, pass the first stitch over the second as you did in step 1. Repeat from * until you have only 1 stitch on the right needle and none on the left.
4. Cut the yarn about 40cm from the end of your knitting. Wrap the yarn once around the right needle and pull the stitch up and over the loop and off the needle.
5. Hold your knitting and pull away with your needle to expand the yarn loop so that the tail comes right through. Gently tighten this knot with your finger tips to neaten this as close as possible to the knitting. You can then use the tail for seaming or just weave in the ends to finish.

READING A PATTERN

Following a pattern can be a tricky business but here are some pointers to get you started.

- Patterns will suggest the type of yarn to use and a needle size. It will also give you the number of stitches and rows in a 10cm square – the tension. Before knitting a garment it's always important to check your tension. If you don't, this could end up being the wrong size. Too many stitches per 10cm mean you need to use a larger needle. If you have too few, try a smaller one. For shawls or accessories this isn't as important but will affect how much yarn you use.
- The pattern will begin by explaining how many stitches to cast on (this includes the slip knot). Then it will list numbered steps or rows. Just work through these one by one. For example:

1: (RS) Knit.

2: (WS) Purl.

This means that the side facing you in step 1 will be the final 'right' side (RS), i.e. the side meant to be seen. Here it's asking you to knit across the row. Step 2 in this case is the 'wrong' side (WS), e.g. the inside of a hat. In this example you are asked to Purl along the row.

- Often in patterns you will see an abbreviation followed by a number. The letter tells you the type of stitch to use and the number indicates how many times. For example:

1: K2, p4, k3.

This means knit 2 stitches, purl 4 stitches then knit 3.

- If using different colours, a letter A, B, C etc at the beginning of each step will indicate which colour yarn to use. For example:

1: A - K2, p4, k3.

12

2: B - Purl.

Here, you would use yarn A for step 1 and yarn B for step 2.

- There can be a lot of repetition in knitting patterns, so brackets and asterisks are also used to simplify this process.

Asterisks usually appear at the start of a sequence. For example:

1: *K2, p2; repeat to end.

This means knit 2, purl 2, then go back to the asterisk and repeat, so knit 2, purl 2 again until you reach the end.

- Brackets are used in a similar way, though often when a group of stitches need to be performed a specified number of times. For example:

1: K2, [p3, k1] x 6, k3.

This is asking you to k2, then repeat the stitch sequence in the brackets a specified number of times - in this case, purl 3 knit 1. After you've done this 6 times, knit 3.

- Parentheses are sometimes used in place of brackets or to show a small repeat within a bigger repeat. For example:

1: [K2, (p3, k1) x 6, k3] x 3, k6.

So this has the same stitches as the previous example, but this time the pattern is asking you to repeat the whole sequence 3 times and then knit 6.

As you progress you will likely see combinations of all these methods. Just read each step carefully and take your time to follow it through. Make notes and tick the steps off once you've completed them so you don't lose your place.

Learning to knit can be tricky. Finding extra stitches and trouble with tension are common problems new knitters face. As with most things practice is key but we are here to help and look forward to guiding you through each step of your new creative hobby.

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