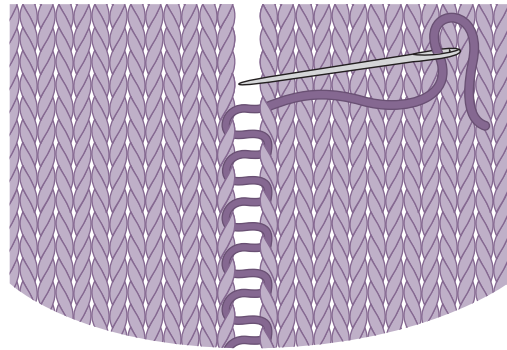## Putting it all together

How you piece your work together can make all the difference to the final look of your project, so it is worth taking your time. Here are few useful techniques and tips.
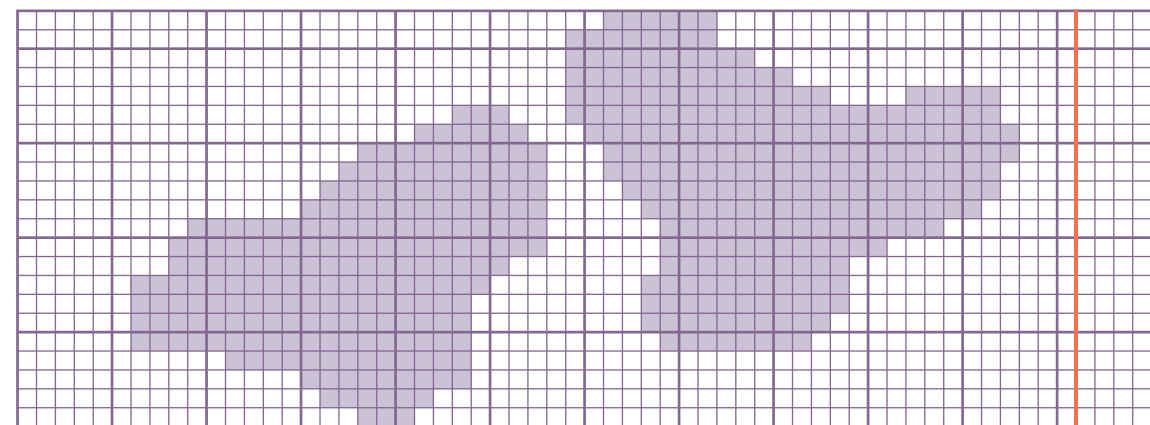
Flat seam

This is the technique used for sewing the back seams of the hats. Unlike mattress stitch, it creates a join that is completely flat.

Lay the two edges to be joined side by side with the right side facing you. Pick up the very outermost strand of knitting from one side and then the other, working your way along the seam and pulling your yarn up firmly every few stitches.

Mattress stitch

There are two versions of this stitch – one used to join two vertical edges (such as the seams on the Zebra Wrist Warmers and Tiger Boot Toppers) and the other used to join two horizontal edges (such as the top edge of the rabbit hat).

Vertical edges

Place the two edges side by side with the right side facing you. Take your needle under the running thread between the first two stitches of one side then under the corresponding running thread of the other side. Pull your yarn up fairly firmly every few stitches.

Horizontal edges

Place the two edges side by side with the right side facing you. Take your needle under the two "legs" of the last row of stitches on the first piece of knitting. Then take your needle under the two "legs" of the corresponding stitch on the second piece of knitting. Pull your yarn up fairly firmly every few stitches.

Ankle Warmers

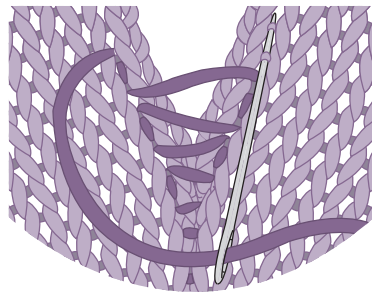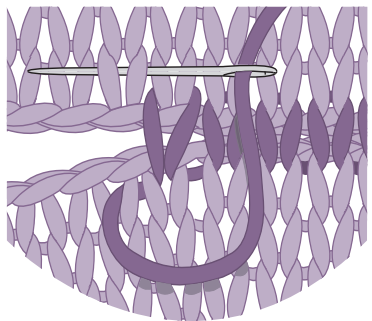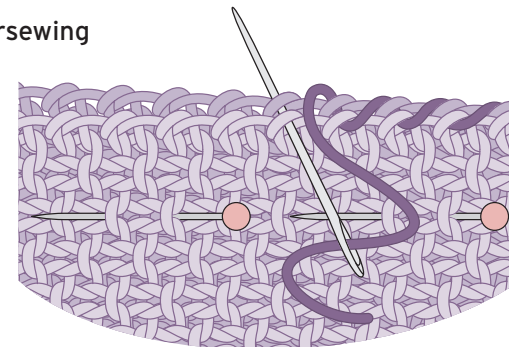This chart is for the project on page 87.

Start chart here for smaller size

Start chart here for larger size

Oversewing

This stitch is used to seam small pieces of work (such as some of the animal ears). It is normally worked with the right sides of your work together.

Take the yarn from the front of your work, over the edge of the seam and out through the front again a short distance further on.

Sewing on the noses and eye pieces

Flat pieces, such as the noses and eyes, can be simply oversewn in place. Stretch the piece very slightly as you work to make sure that it lies flat.

Sewing on the ears, horns and antlers

These can be either oversewn in place or fastened using a technique similar to mattress stitch. Fasten the ears along both the front and back edges to make sure they are secure. The horns and antlers should be fastened so that the base forms a circular shape where it meets the main part of the hat to make sure they stay upright.

Concealing yarn tails

When your knitting is complete, you will have a few ends of yarn that need concealing. The easiest way to do this is to run a few small stitches forwards then backwards through your work, ideally in a seam. It is a good idea to use your embroidery needle to do this and take the tail between the strands that make up your yarn, as this will help make sure the tail stays in place.
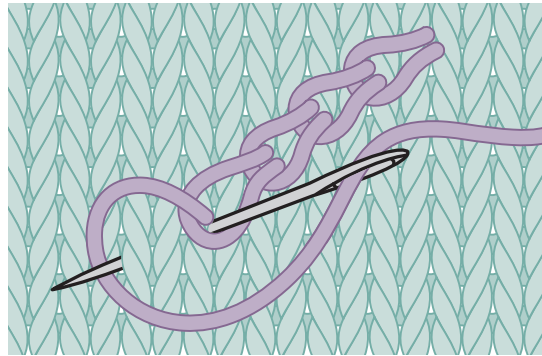
Dunking and drying

Sometimes when you have finished your knitting, the shape may not be quite as even as you would like. If this is the case, soak your item thoroughly (but do not leave it to soak), reshape it, then place it flat and leave it to dry naturally.
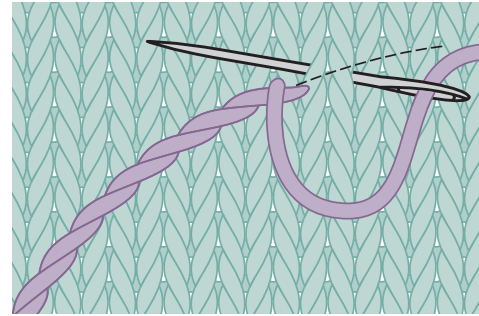
Embroidery techniques

Some of the animals' features are embroidered using double knitting (DK) yarn. These include some of the eyes and noses and some of the markings. When embroidering on knitting, take your needle in and out of your work between the strands that make up your yarn rather than between the stitches themselves. This will help make your embroidery look more even.

Chain stitch

Bring your yarn out at the starting point on the front of your work. Take your needle back into your knitting just next to your starting point, leaving a loop of yarn. Bring your needle out of your work again, a stitch length further on and catch in the loop. Pull your thread up firmly, but not so tight that it pulls your knitting. Continue in this way till the line, coil, or circle is complete.
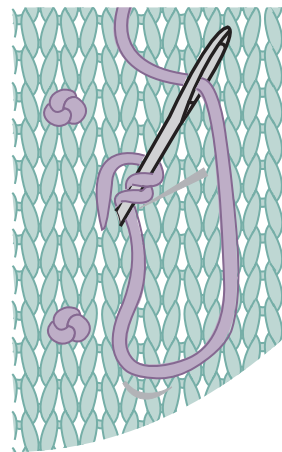
Stem stitch

Take your yarn out at your starting point at the front of your work, then down into your work a little way along. Take the yarn out again, about midway between the other two points. Repeat this process until you have completed the line, remembering to keep your yarn on the same side of your needle as you work.

Straight stitch

To make this stitch, simply take your yarn out at your starting point and back down into your work where you want the stitch to end.
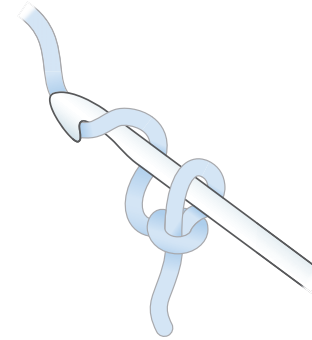
French knots

Bring your yarn out at your starting point, where you want the French knot to sit. Wind the yarn around the needle the required number of times, then take it back into your work, just to the side of your starting point. Then take your needle out at the point for the next French knot or, if you are working the last or a single knot, to the back of your work. Continue pulling your needle through your work and slide the knot off the needle and onto your knitting.
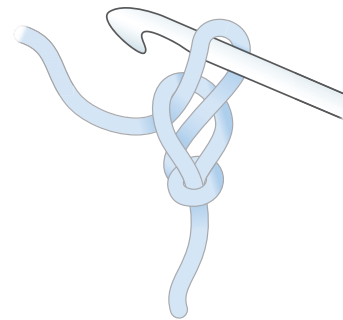
Crochet techniques

While the projects in this book are all knitted rather than crocheted, for some hats you will need to know how to work a crochet chain or how to work a crochet edging.

Make a crochet chain

1. Make a slip knot on the crochet hook in the same way as if you were starting to cast on some knitting. Holding the slip stitch on the hook, wind the yarn around the hook from the back to the front, then catch the yarn in the crochet-hook tip.
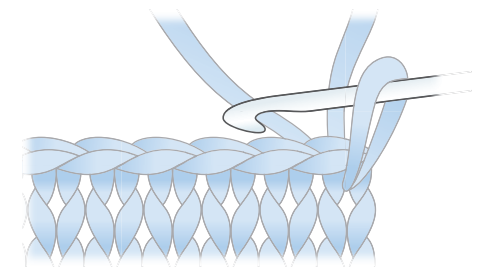

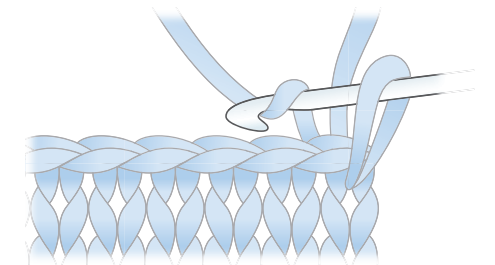**2.** Pull the yarn through the slip stitch on your crochet hook to make the second link in the chain.

3. Continue in this way till the chain is the length that you need.
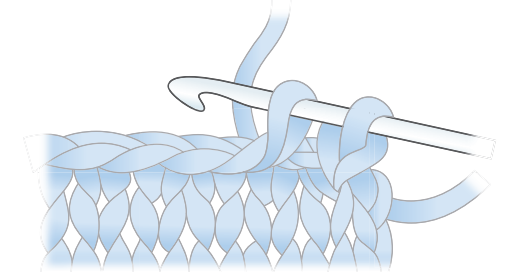
Work a crochet edging

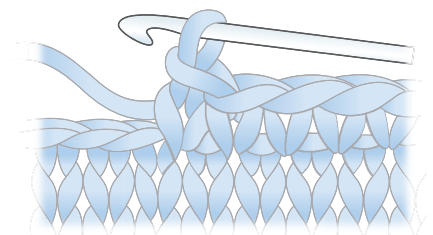A crochet edging can be worked along a horizontal edge or a vertical edge, but the basic technique is the same.

1. Insert your crochet hook in the first space between stitches. Wind the yarn round the hook and pull a loop of yarn through.

2. Wind the yarn round your hook again and then pull the loop through to make a single chain.

3. Insert your hook through the next stitch, wind the yarn round the hook, and pull through a second loop of yarn.

4. Wind the yarn round your hook and pull a loop of yarn through both loops on the hook. Repeat steps 3 and 4, inserting the hook into the spaces between stitches in an even pattern.

For crochet edging along a vertical edge, insert your hook into the spaces between the edges of your rows rather than the spaces between stitches.