

a beginner's guide to amigurumi



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www.freshstitches.com

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introduction

Are you in love with all things cute? Like making things yourself? But are maybe a bit nervous about getting started? You've come to the right place!

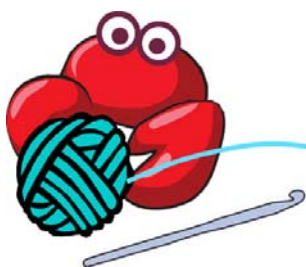
I'm Stacey, and I'm the crochet designer for FreshStitches amigurumi. I think that everyone in the world should feel the joy of making something cute and adorable all on their own, so I'm here to help you get started!

This e-book is a compilation of blog posts that I've written over the years (for my blog: www.freshstitches.com/wordpress), and together, you have everything you need to get started crocheting!

Throughout this book, I've added helpful links to videos for some techniques, because some things, you just need to see in action to learn. Watch them... they're your friends!

And finally, the end of this book includes, Howie, a penguin pattern. You can put all of your new skills into action by making your very own amigurumi. Don't worry... you can do it!

So, let's get started!



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selecting your materials

choosing yarn for your amigurumis!

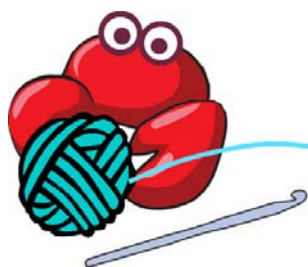
If you look around on amigurumi websites, or ask someone who does amigurumi what kind of yarn they use, they are likely to say ‘acrylic!’. This is because acrylic has many pluses: first and foremost, it’s very inexpensive. It’s also widely available at your local craft store, it comes in a wide variety of colors, it’s machine washable and people are rarely allergic to it.

However, most amigurumi patterns require less than one skein of yarn, which means it’s the perfect opportunity to experiment with new (and slightly more expensive) yarns! Even if you select a very high-end wool, you will probably end up spending less than \$10-\$15 in total, and that’s still not a bad price for an adorable stuffed animal. So, while acrylic is a great choice, I’m going to urge you to check out some of the other fibers on the market!

Wool

I’m a sucker for 100% wool yarn. If you cringe when you hear ‘wool’, it’s probably because you remember scratchy wool sweaters from when you were a kid... and let me tell you- you’re right to cringe at those memories!

I’m delighted that wool has come a long way since then! While you may still bump into an icky wool yarn, most of the 100% wool yarn sold in independent yarn stores is lovely stuff. Two of my favorite brands are Ella Rae Classic wool and Plymouth Galway- both worsted weight yarns (translation: a nice medium weight) that come in a wide range of colors!



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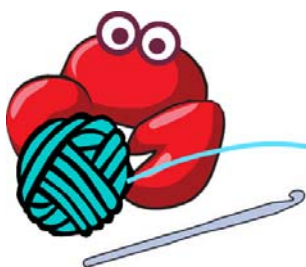
The main advantage of wool is its feel: it feels nice to work with and it feels nice in the final product. Wool tends not to be as slippery as acrylic, so it also holds shape fairly well. Especially if you are doing a pattern which calls for the loop stitch, you want to use a yarn that has a certain amount of friction to hold the stitch in place.

Additionally, wool yarn, because of its popularity, is available in an enormous array of blends. For example, wool is often blended with much softer animal fibers (such as silk, angora or cashmere). Experimenting with these options is a tempting treat for stuffed animal making.

Wool does have some downsides. It has a tendency to felt, which means it is not machine washable. To avoid this problem, you can use 'superwash wool', which is wool that has been treated so that it will not felt. Another downside to wool is that some people are allergic to it, so in these cases, it would be best to use an acrylic or a plant-based yarn (like cotton or soy, discussed below).

Cotton

I have a soft spot for cotton. Usually relegated to dishrags and doilies, cotton deserves a fair place in yarn consideration. The reason that cotton is used for dishrags is the same reason you should consider it for amigurumi: it dries quickly (unlike wool, which can absorb a great deal of water and sometimes takes forever to dry). So, if you are making a stuffed animal for a baby, who may decide to chew on an animal leg, a fast-drying material may be what you are looking for.



My favorite cotton yarn is Blue Sky Alpacas Worsted Cotton, a 100% organic cotton yarn that is amazingly soft! This line of yarn also comes in beautifully bright and dazzling colors... just the thing to add some spunk to your amigurumi!

Soy and Bamboo

Soy and bamboo yarns are the new kids on the block. Both soy and bamboo yarns are made from smooching up the plants, processing the pulp and spinning it into yarn. Both are also incredibly soft and usually machine washable.

The downside is that they can be very slippery, which can make them a little trickier to work with. However, if you are looking to make a stuffed animal great for children (soft, hypoallergenic and machine washable), give these yarns a try!

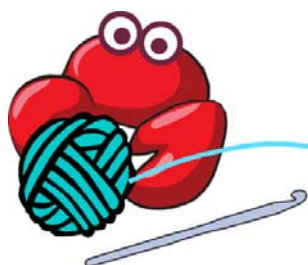
So, it's not that acrylic is bad. It's not. But stuffed animals are small, which means that you can experiment with the exciting array of yarns out there, without much of a hit to the pocketbook. Who knows, you may find a new favorite!

what hook size do i use?

Of course, this question is easy-peasy if you have the exact yarn called for in the pattern. But what if you want to substitute yarn for your amigurumi? Fortunately, this is easy to do too!



Let's start with the basics. If you use a smaller yarn than is recommended, you'll need to use a smaller hook, and you'll end up with a smaller amigurumi. Check out the two monsters above: the monster on the right was crocheted with the (recommended) worsted weight yarn and the monster on the left was crocheted with a smaller yarn and hook. Look how much smaller the one on the left is... isn't he adorable?



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Let's get down to the details- how do you know what sized hook to use? Amigurumi patterns typically recommend that you use a hook smaller than is recommended for the yarn, so to substitute successfully, you'll want to use a hook that's the same amount smaller than is recommended for your yarn. Let's look at an example.



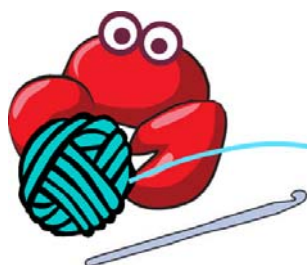
Let's pretend we're looking at a pattern that recommends using a worsted weight yarn with a size F (3.75mm) hook. A worsted weight yarn usually uses a size H (5.0mm) hook. How do I know that? I peeked at the size hook recommended on the yarn label of a worsted weight yarn!

That means that the pattern recommends that you use a hook that is 1.25mm smaller than what is recommended on the yarn label.

So, now I have a smaller yarn that I want to make an amigurumi from. The yarn label for my smaller yarn recommends a 3.5mm hook.



To calculate what size hook we need, just subtract 1.25 from 3.5... and we find out that we'll want to use a 2.25mm, which is a size B. So, grab your B hook and start crocheting! Easy!



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Does it work the same way for bigger yarns? Of course! Let's say we have a bulky yarn.





The bulky yarn label says that we want to use a size 10, which is a 6mm. 6 minus 1.25 is 4.75! Since there isn't a 4.75 mm crochet hook, we'd probably round up to a 5mm (size H) and get started!

A couple of other points to keep in mind:

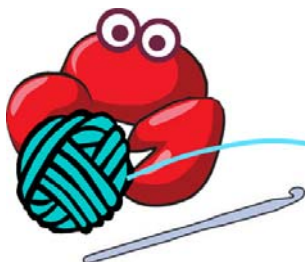
- If you're using a bigger yarn, you're going to also use slightly more yardage than is called for in the pattern. Smaller yarns will use less yardage.
- Scale your eyes accordingly! In the monsters above, the big monster uses 12mm eyes, but I used 9mm eyes for the smaller monster.
- Are you confused about what size in millimeters your crochet hook is? You might want to check out a conversion chart (handy dandy example, below!).

cut out & save! 

Crochet Hook Sizes			Crochet Stitches*	
letter	number	metric	 American	 British
C	2	2.75mm	slip stitch	single crochet
D	3	3.25mm	single crochet	double crochet
E	4	3.5mm	double crochet	treble
F	5	3.75mm	treble/triple	double treble
G	6	4.0mm	skip	miss
	7	4.5mm	gauge	tension
H	8	5.0mm		
I	9	5.5mm		
J	10	6.0mm		
K	10.5	6.5mm		

* If you consider yourself to be from a serious cricket-playing nation (UK, Aus, NZ, India), then you use the 'British' terms if you think of an insect when you hear 'cricket' (US & Canada), then you use the 'American' terms

courtesy of: www.freshstitches.com



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And remember, amigurumi are about having fun... so don't worry too much about the exact hook size! If the little animal you're making looks good in the yarn that you chose, then go with it!

Selecting Stuffing

I'm going to talk about some considerations when selecting a stuffing, and some alternatives to consider. Keep in mind though, picking a stuffing has more to do with personal preference than hard-core evidence, so these are just my opinions!

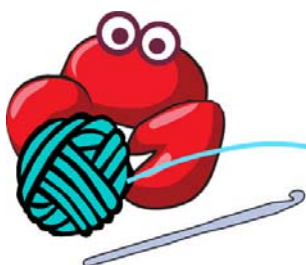
Fiberfill

Fiberfill is the generic name for polyester stuffing, and you may have heard of 'PolyFill', a brand of fiberfill. Polyfill's claim to fame is that it is much fluffier than other brands of fiberfill. That is, if you take an ounce of Polyfill, and an ounce of some other brand of fiberfill, the Polyfill will take up more volume. According to their website, this is because the fibers in Polyfill are specially manufactured to sit in a 'random' arrangement, creating more fluff.



I will attest that Polyfill is fluffier than other brands. However, I don't think that makes it better! That's right- I'm going against the grain here. In my opinion, Polyfill is *too* fluffy. Let me explain why. All stuffings, no matter how their fibers are arranged, smooch over time. If you give a child a stuffed animal, and let them hug it and squeeze it, some of the fiberfill is going to get compressed.

Of course, you can get around this problem by over-stuffing, to accommodate the squishing. In fact, that this is the solution that is usually recommended. You'll usually read that you stuff the dickens out of your amigurumi. But then, do you know what happens? The stuffing shows through the crochet stitches. So, you need to crochet the animal using a much smaller hook than usual, which often leads to a hand cramp! Oy!



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My preferred solution is to stuff your animal with generic fiberfill stuffing (yeah, the cheap stuff) and stuff the animal with a decent amount of stuffing (instead of totally overstuffing), which allows you to crochet the animal with a regular sized hook. Because you aren't overstuffing, the fiberfill doesn't show through your crocheted fabric. And, because your stuffing isn't too fluffy, your animal won't deflate like an expired balloon. Sounds good to me!

Natural Stuffing

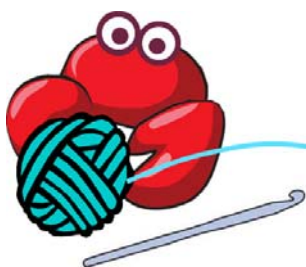
I have to admit, I haven't tried the natural/organic stuffings available on the market, but my interest has been piqued! Nowadays, stuffing is made from cotton, bamboo, and even corn. And, don't forget, wool is natural, too! I've already confessed that I have little experience in this domain, so this section will be short. I do, however, have a word of caution about stuffing animals with wool. Keep in mind that wool absorbs water (up to 30% of its weight). So if you're making amigurumi for a little one who is a bit drooly, you might not want that drool absorbed in the stuffed animal. Enough said.

Cheap alternatives

Many a person has had the following thought: 'why would I pay for stuffing? There's *stuff* everywhere!' It's true, and I'm completely in favor of recycling... but some things work better than others. Here are a few ideas, and my input about them:

- old pillows: Excellent idea! In fact, commercial pillow stuffing is the same polyester stuff as fiberfill stuffing, except that it comes in a pillow-form. If you have a fancy pillow (i.e. down or some other material), just have a good look at it before deciding to use it. Does it look like it will sneak out through the crochet stitches? (down is particularly good at this) Is it still fluffy? If it looks good, use it.
- cotton balls: hmm. These actually don't work out so well. First, they're a little lumpy. If you are the heiress to a cotton ball collection- and need to use them- I recommend tearing them up (and getting them out of their 'ball' state) before using them. They are also rather dense, so you're going to get a heavy animal. But, at least they're not a safety hazard!
- yarn and fabric scraps: eh, in a pinch. In my opinion, they are also very dense, and will make a heavy animal, but some people love them. If you're using fabric, just make sure the pieces are small, or they will be very lumpy. If you have too many yarn scraps lying around, consider making a scrap animal, rather than using them as stuffing.
- plant material: not such a good idea. (I'm only putting it on this list because I've heard it suggested). Things that can rot or decompose are not good things to put inside a stuffed animal.

So, in the end, I like to recycle, but will generally only use things as stuffing that were once used as stuffing: old blankets, pillows, sofa-cushion fill... you get the idea. But, feel free to experiment, and let me know if there's one I haven't thought of!



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getting started crocheting

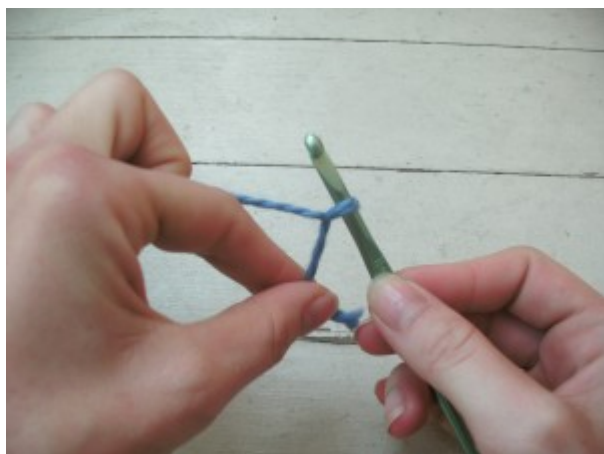
Okay, you have your yarn, hook and stuffing... now you're ready to crochet! Even if you're a crocheting novice, fear not! This section contains all the info you'll need to get started, as well as links to videos that will show you how to do the basic crochet stitches.

Most amigurumi begin by working 6 stitches (sts) into one stitch, to begin working in the round. There are lots of ways to do this, some of which can be confusing. Below, I'll tell you about my 2 favorite ways to begin working in the round.

beginning to work in the round: sloppy slip knot



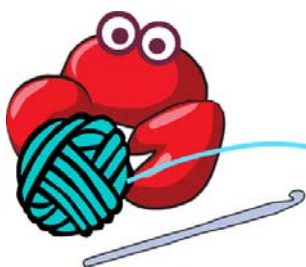
The typical way of starting to work in the round is less than ideal for amigurumi. The standard way is to make a slip knot, chain 2, and then single crochet six times into the first stitch. Why isn't this the best? It leaves an icky hole that lets stuffing poke through, as shown in the photo at left. Not so good.



I teach my students what is called 'the sloppy slip knot'... it's a quick and easy way to crochet with no hole! Let's get started!

To begin, don't make a slip knot. Instead, simply twist the yarn once around your crochet hook, as pictured on the left.

Now, continue on as noted in the pattern. Chain two stitches, and single crochet six times into the first stitch.



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Here's the magic part. Just pull the tail, and your hole closes up! Because you aren't starting with a knot, the start yarn is easily pulled shut, as pictured on below. And don't worry, the hole won't slip open over time.



video help!

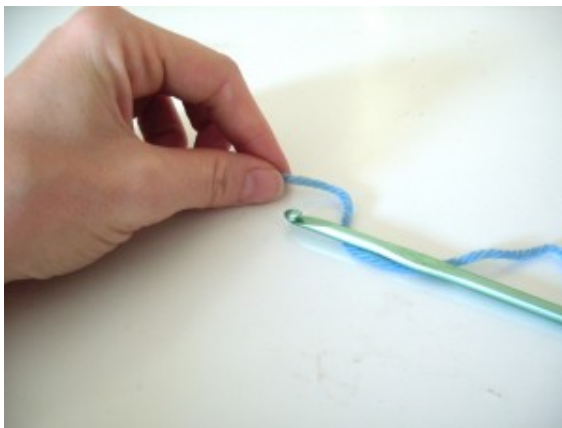
Want to see the sloppy slip knot in action?

Watch my video at www.freshstitches.com/slopslipknot.php

It's easy! And best of all, the 'sloppy slip knot' leaves you with a quick way to avoid that pesky hole that comes with working in the round.

beginning to work in the round: super easy magic ring!

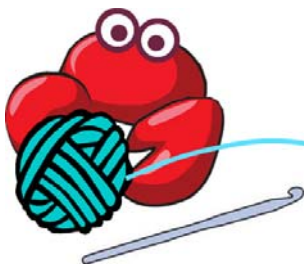
Maybe you've heard of magic (adjustable ring), but it got you all tied up in knots... the classic technique can be a bit complicated. That's why I came up with this super-easy way of doing magic ring.



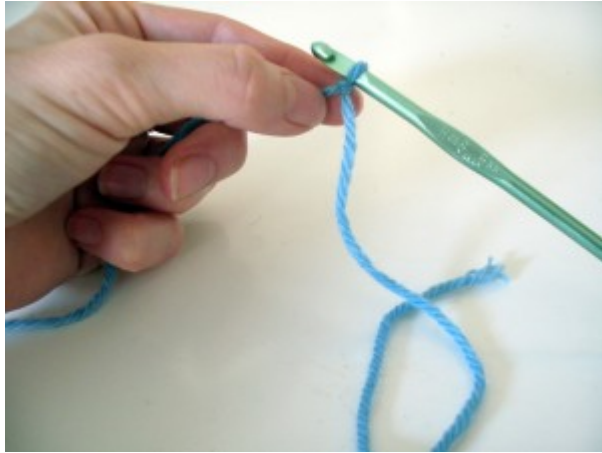
In this technique, you begin by making a slip knot, then creating the adjustable loop. With this method, there are less loops flying around, so it's more accessible to beginners. Who knows, it may become your favorite!

Step one: make a slip knot

Start off by getting the hook and yarn called for in your pattern.



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Then, make a slip knot with about 6 inches remaining at the tail, and insert the hook into the slip knot.



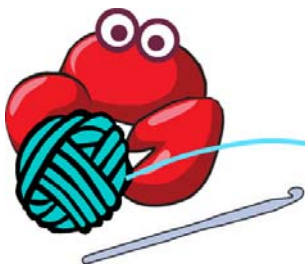
Step two: make a loop

With that 6 inches you left in in the tail, make a loop, as pictured at left.



Step three: crochet into the loop

Pretend that GIANT loop is just one crochet stitch. Crochet into it six times (or do however many stitches called for in your pattern). To single crochet one stitch into the loop: insert your hook into the loop, wrap your yarn over the hook and pull through the loop, then wrap your yarn over your hook again and pull through the two loops on your hook! Repeat this until you've crocheted all of your stitches! Your piece will look as pictured at left.



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Step four: pull, and you're done!

To close up the hole, pull on the tail!



You're done! Hooray!

video help!

Want to see the how the new magic ring is done?

Watch my video at:
www.freshstitches.com/magicring.php

crocheting through the back or both loops

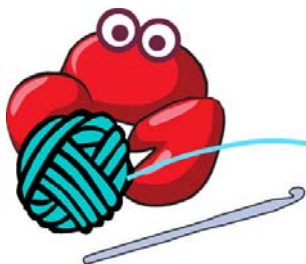
When you're crocheting, you have the option of crocheting through both loops or the back loop, and I often get asked which is better.

I, personally, prefer crocheting through the back loop. But, I'll show you what both ways look like, and let you decide!

video help!

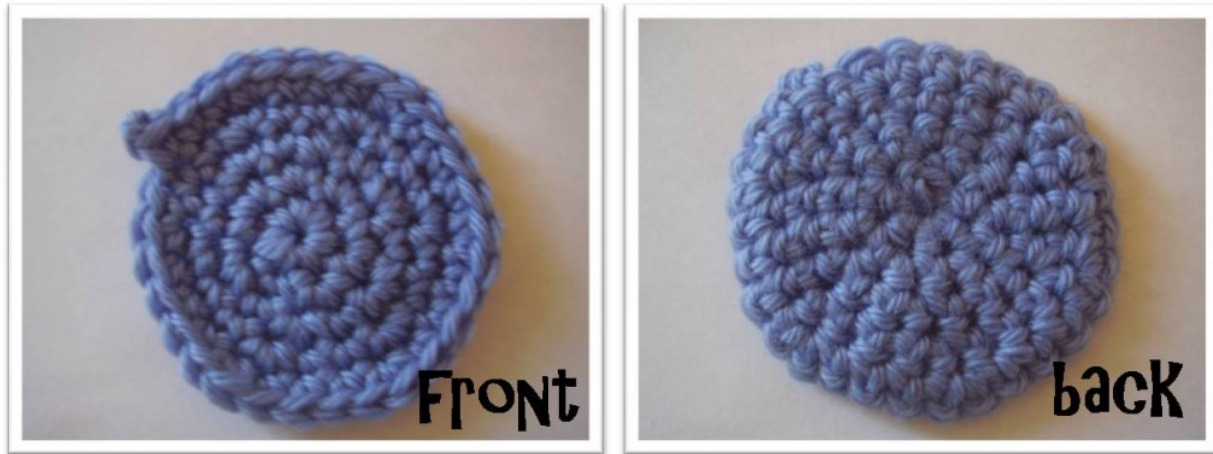
Not sure how to crochet through the back loop of a stitch?

Watch my video at:
www.freshstitches.com/backloop.php



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Both Loops

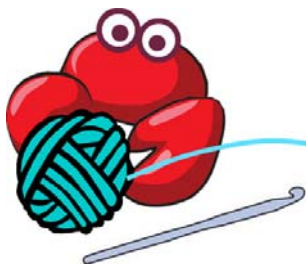


The above photo shows an example of working **through both loops**. Doing so creates a fabric that is slightly thicker than working through one loop alone, with no notable 'ridges' on the work. The fabric also contains noticeable little holes, so when this technique is used in making amigurumi, one usually uses a smaller hook size than is required for the yarn so that the stuffing does not show.

Back Loop



The above photo shows an example of working **through the back loop only**. Doing so creates a thinner fabric than working through both loops. It also creates little 'ridges' on the front of the work that I really like. (you'll notice that almost all FreshStitches patterns are worked through the back loops only). This technique does not leave very noticeable holes in the fabric, meaning that amigurumi can be made without a very small hook size. You will notice that the back of the fabric looks identical to the back of the sample that is worked through both loops.



tips for counting while working in the round

Many amigurumi patterns are crocheted in the round using 'spirals' (which means that you crochet around and around without turning). Since there's no clear beginning to the round, this means you're going to have to count and keep track of where your end of round is. This can be scary news for beginning crocheters... the dreaded counting.

Fear not! I can help you!

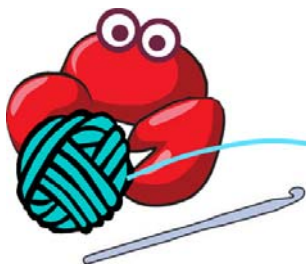
Beginning crocheters tend to have difficulty counting because they are concentrating on performing the stitch properly... and before you know it, have lost count. It's okay, this is not a disaster. To start, grab a row counter and a locking stitch marker.



Row counters are handy devices. They come in many forms: circular ones that stick on the end of your crochet hook (and that you need to manually rotate to advance to the next number), ones that hang around your neck (and click as a means of advancing), and even... these things called pencils and paper... Yes, many people prefer a post-it note and a pencil to keep count of what round they are on. These are all fine ways of keeping count, and it's really a matter of personal preference. For example, if you carry your crochet projects around with you often, a row counter that sticks to your hook may be more useful than a post-it note, but it's up to you. I'm going to demonstrate using the hook-based kind of row counter.

In yarn world, there are two types of stitch markers. If you knit, you may be familiar with ring stitch markers that are kept on your knitting needle as a place holder. Because crochet doesn't keep stitches on a needle, it's not surprising that this kind of stitch marker is completely useless to us. We need to use the second type: a locking stitch marker. This type of stitch marker has a hook that will lock onto a stitch and stay there until you take it off. This allows you to keep a place in your work as you continue on crocheting.

And, there are different options available! I'll be using my super-cute koala decorative stitch marker (at right) for this demonstration, but there's no need to be fancy. Locking stitch markers are available in the plain plastic



variety, and should be available at most yarn stores. Even a safety pin will do. Use what works for you!

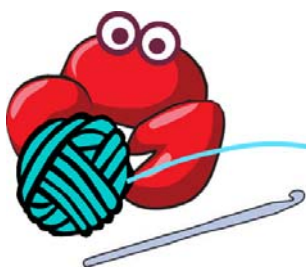
You are going to use these two items (a row counter and a locking stitch marker) to keep track of your stitches. You will use the row counter to keep track of what round in the pattern you are on. And you will place the stitch marker at the last stitch of each round to keep track of where you started the round. That's all you need to do. Let's see how this works: step by step.



Okay, so those are your tools. Now get out your pattern. The first step is to ch 2, so no exceptional counting skills required there. The next round says to sc 6 times in the first stitch. Set your row counter to '01' to remind you that you are on your first round. To finish this round, you will need to count to six. At this point, it is difficult to use a stitch marker because the piece is so small, so you'll have to rely on your memory.



Now you've finished round 1 (and hopefully, have a circle with 6 stitches in it). Increase your row counter to '02', to remind you that you are now on the second round. Place your stitch marker on the front loop of the last stitch that you just completed. This is pictured at left.



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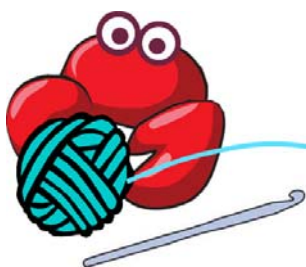


You are at the last stitch in the round. How do you know? You are directly above the stitch marker from the last round, meaning that this round is done.

Now it's time for Round 2. Notice that the instructions (on most amigurumi patterns, particularly Howie the penguin, the pattern at the end of this ebook) say to 'sc twice in next st, then sc in next st', and repeat 5 more times. Here is where the stitch marker does his work. All you need to remember is that you need to 'sc twice in next st, then sc in next st' until the end of the row! So, sc twice in the next st, and in the next stitch, single crochet once. You just keep doing this until you are directly above the stitch marker, as we saw with the previous round. If you forget what you are supposed to be doing, just look at your row counter, which will remind you that you are on round 2, and check the instructions for that round.

When you have completed round 2, it's time to start the process over again. Increase your row counter to '03', and move your stitch marker to the last stitch you have just completed. Now, just look at the directions. They say 'sc twice in next st, then sc in next 2 stitches'. So, single crochet twice in the next stitch. Single crochet in the next stitch, and again in the next stitch. And, you just have to remember to do this until you arrive above the stitch marker again. And on it goes!

With this system, you just need to remember to increase your row counter and move your stitch marker at the end of each row. And before you know it, you'll have your circle!





There is another part where the stitch marker is useful. Notice, after you complete the circle, this pattern tells you to do 10 rounds of single crochet. Looks like a lot of counting, but it's not! Leave your stitch marker in place at the end of Round 10. You won't need to move it soon. Now, just keep single crocheting. Every time you pass the stitch marker, you'll know you've completed one round. At that point, just count how many ridges you see between your hook and the stitch marker, as shown at left (The arrow points to one 'ridge'). This tells you how many rows total you have done. When you get to 10, you're finished, and you didn't need to count the stitches!

This is the system I teach to all of my beginning amigurumi students, and it's helped them not get lost in a maze of numbers. I'm sure it will help you get started, too!

helpful crochet stitch videos

Are you feeling a little shaky on your crochet stitches? No problem! Here are a few links to videos that will help you out!

Single crochet: <http://www.freshstitches.com/singlecrochet.php>

Increasing: <http://www.freshstitches.com/increasevideo.php>

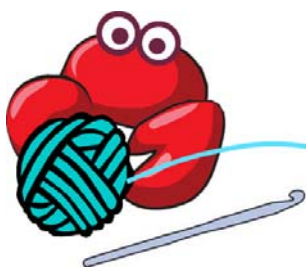
Decreasing: <http://www.freshstitches.com/decrease.php>

assembling your amigurumi

a little trick when assembling

I'm going to share a little tip that helps me when I'm assembling tricky amigurumi pieces (although, you could use this when you're seaming anything small)!

I use **locking stitch markers** to hold my pieces in place!



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I've already talked about using locking stitch markers to help you keep track of rounds while crocheting (see 'tips for counting while working in the round', above), but they're great for holding two pieces of fabric together, as well!

Just place a couple around the piece that you're attaching, and it'll be held in place- making your sewing even easier. Yay!

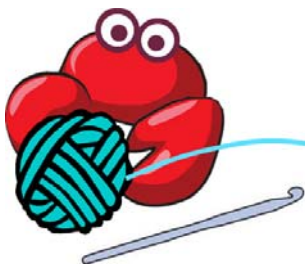
tips for stuffing large amigurumi

You probably wouldn't be too surprised if I told you that how you stuff your amigurumi is important. After all, you spend lots of time crocheting... you want to end up with an animal that looks great! And stuffing is crucial to obtaining a great final look.

You may be surprised, though, that stuffing large amigurumi requires slightly different techniques than stuffing tiny amigurumi. For small amigurumi, it's important to stuff firmly, and the main trick is getting the stuffing into all the tiny parts. However, with large amigurumi, while it's true that you need to stuff your animal firmly, but there are a couple more tricks I'd like to share.



The first thing to note is you need a fair bit of stuffing for large animals! And because crochet stretches, the amount of stuffing used determines the size of the finished product. So, if you're stuffing body parts like legs, you want them to be the same size, meaning you need to stuff them with the same amount of stuffing! Before I stuff, I set out equal amounts of stuffing for each leg (or arm, or whatever you want to be of equal size).

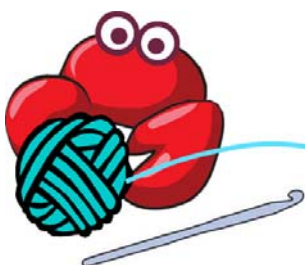


Another tip is that you want to stuff your amigurumi part with one big ball of stuffing, instead of continually putting in little bits of stuffing. If you fill the part with little balls, the finished product will look lumpy. So, try stuffing your amigurumi using one big ball of stuffing.



If, at this point, you realize that you haven't added enough stuffing, you can add more to the center. The stuffing you added earlier will press out to the sides, keeping a smooth look, and you can add more to the center. If you have too much, just rip off what's hanging off the top!

Now, you have two stuffed parts of equal size! Of course, these stuffing tips apply to all amigurumi parts- even if you don't need to have pieces match in size. For large amigurumi, the key is firm, even, non-lumpy stuffing!



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how to place your limbs

A common problem in making amigurumi is placing the arms and legs evenly. But, it's not too hard... you just need to do a little planning!



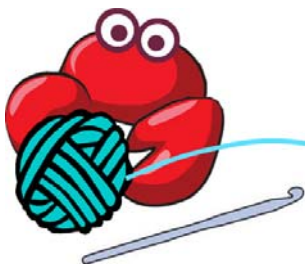
At left is a body, and we'll need to attach two legs. Since we've crocheted through the back loop, our body has a great grid that we can use to place our legs!

Even if you haven't crocheted through the back loop (and don't have those little ridge stitches), you can still count the stitches to get an even placement of limbs on your piece.



At left, I've highlighted some of the stitches in blue. In this case, the legs that we need to attach have a circumference of 18 stitches (which is to say that the last round has 18 stitches in it!)

So, all you need to do is select a round to attach the bottom of the leg (in our case, round 10 of the body), and stitch 5 stitches along the bottom of the leg to this round (18 divided by 4 sides = about 4 or 5 stitches per side of the leg). Continue along all sides of the leg, until it is fully attached. Now, to attach the second leg, just attach the bottom of the leg along the same round... and attach along the same number of stitches on each side.



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Now that you've planned out where your limb should be attached, just use your tapestry needle and a piece of yarn to attach it!

With this tip, your arms and legs will be attached evenly, and you'll get a symmetrical amigurumi!

reading crochet patterns, step by step

Do you know what I love about amigurumi? They're quick and fun crochet projects that can be suitable for beginners! But, it can be a little daunting to read a crochet pattern- even if you know how to crochet! So, let's talk about the **basics of reading a crochet pattern!**

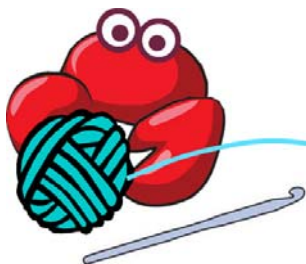
Below, I've snipped a little piece of pattern from Howie the holiday Penguin, a free pattern available at the end of this e-book! (also available for download at: www.freshstitches.com/holidaypenguin.php) The chosen snippet is from the wing- and I'm going to go through, line by line, and decode the tricky bits.

Wings

- 1 Make 2.
- 2 With MC, ch 2
- 3 Round 1: sc 6 times in 2nd ch from hook (6)
- 4 Round 2: sc twice in each st (12)
- 5 Rounds 3-4: sc in each st (12)
- 6 Round 5: * sc twice in next st, sc in next st. Repeat from * 5 times (18)
- 7 Rounds 6-9: sc in each st (18)
- 8 Round 10: * sc2tog, sc in next st. Repeat from * 5 times (12)
- 9 Fasten off with long tail.

Line 1: *Make 2*

This instruction tells you that you are going to make 2 items (in this case, wings). So, you'll complete this entire set of directions once, and end up with one wing. Then, you'll do it all over again for your second wing!



Line 2: *With MC, ch 2*

For decoding this line, you'll want to flip to the front of the pattern, where the abbreviations live. 'MC' stands for 'main color', and in the front of the penguin pattern, you'll find that the main color is a black yarn. 'ch' stands for 'chain', and 'ch 2' is instructing you to 'chain 2 stitches'. Before you can do this, you'll need to begin with a slip knot (that part usually doesn't get mentioned in the pattern!).

video help!

For a video of the slip knot, visit:

www.freshstitches.com/slopslipknot.php

For a video of the chain stitch, visit:

www.freshstitches.com/chain.php

Line 3: *Round 1: Sc 6 times in 2nd ch from hook (6)*

Again, you'll need to consult the abbreviation! 'Sc' stands for 'single crochet'. So, in words, this line instructs you to 'single crochet six times in the second chain from the hook'. What's the 'second chain from hook'? Look at the two chains you completed on the last line. It's telling you to work NOT in the one right next to your hook... but one further away from that! (it's the first chain that you crocheted!).

video help!

For a video of single crochet, visit:

www.freshstitches.com/singlecrochet.php

What does that (6) mean? It means that at the completion of this round, you should have 6 stitches! It's very helpful to count your stitches!

Line 4: *Round 2: Sc twice in each st (12)*

This instruction is instructing you to single crochet twice (do an increase) in each of the next 6 stitches, and that you should have 12 stitches at the completion of this round.

video help!

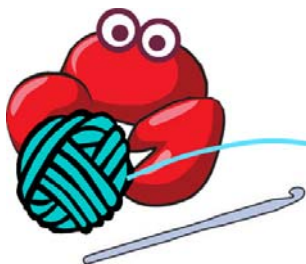
For a video of the single crochet increase, visit: www.freshstitches.com/increase.php

Line 5: *Rounds 3-4: Sc in each st (12)*

This instruction is saying that for round 3, you should single crochet in each stitch. Then, you should single crochet in each stitch for round 4, as well. You should have 12 stitches in each round. (I'll bet you're getting the hang of pattern reading, now!)

Line 6: *Round 5: *Sc twice in next st, sc in next st. Repeat from * 5 times (18)*

Just when you thought you were getting it... a crazy asterisk crept in! So, here's what this one is saying. It's telling you to single crochet twice in the next stitch, and then single crochet in the stitch after that. Now, do that 5 more times. So, by the end, you will have done:



sc twice, sc, sc twice, sc, sc twice, sc, sc twice, sc, sc twice, sc, sc twice, sc, and you'll have have 18 stitches. (now, you see why we don't write out patterns that way... it gets really long!

Line 7: Rounds 6-9: Sc in each st (18)

You've seen this before! For round 6, 7, 8 and 9, single crochet in each stitch there is!

Line 8: *Sc2tog, sc in next st. Repeat from * 5 times (12)

Sc2tog means to 'single crochet 2 stitches together', also known as a decrease. So, this line is instructing you to single crochet the next 2 stitches together, then single crochet in the next stitch. Now, do that 5 more times. You'll have 12 stitches when you're done!

Line 9: Fasten off with long tail

You're almost done! Simply cut your yarn about 6 inches away from your last stitch, and pull the tail through the stitch to tie a knot. Yay!

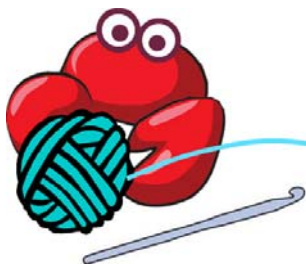
Congrats! You've read your first pattern... now you're ready to crochet the entire penguin!

video help!

For a video of fastening off, visit:
www.freshstitches.com/fasten.php

video help!

For a video of the single crochet decrease, visit: www.freshstitches.com/decrease.php



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get started with howie the penguin!



Abbreviations

ch: chain

sc: single crochet

sc2tog: single crochet 2 stitches together

st(s): stitch(es)

Materials

Size H (5.0mm) crochet hook

tapestry needle

two 12mm black animal eyes

a few handfuls of stuffing

Yarn

Less than 220 yards (1 skein) is required of each color. *For the yarn, I use 100% wool worsted weight (Ella Rae Classic the brand used in the sample). However, any worsted weight yarn can be substituted.*

MC- Black (Plymouth Galway Worsted color # 154)

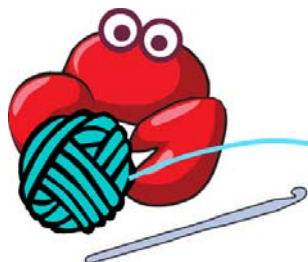
SC- White (Ella Rae Classic color #01)

AC1- Yellow (Ella Rae Classic color #44)

AC2- Blue (Ella Rae Classic color #83)

Gauge

This pattern doesn't specify a gauge. It's a stuffed animal, and you don't need to be too picky about exact sizing. The most important thing is that you use a hook size that creates a nice looking fabric for your yarn. If you use the recommended hook size, and your fabric looks very loose (so that stuffing would show through), then you will want to use a smaller hook. Other than that, no measuring required!



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Stitch into the back

All stitches in the round are into the back loop, unless otherwise directed. You can stitch into both loops if you desire, but this will change the look of the final product.

Fasten off with long tail

What does this mean? It just means that when you are ending a piece, to leave a lot (about 6-9 inches) of extra yarn, as pictured. This will be used to attach this piece to another piece. To attach your piece to another, just thread the long tail through a tapestry needle, and stitch to the second piece.

the pattern

Eye Circles

Make 2.

With AC2, ch 2

Round 1: sc 6 in 2nd ch from hook (6)

Round 2: sc twice in each st (12)

Round 3: * sc twice in next st, sc in next st. Repeat from * 5 times (18)

Round 4: * sc twice in next st, sc in next 2 sts. Repeat from * 5 times (24)

Fasten off with long tail.

Feet

Make 2.

With AC1, ch 2

Round 1: sc 6 in 2nd ch from hook (6)

Round 2: sc twice in each st (12)

Round 3: * sc twice in next st, sc in next st. Repeat from * 5 times (18)

Rounds 4-5: sc in each st (18)

Fasten off with long tail.

Wings

Make 2.

With MC, ch 2

Round 1: sc 6 times in 2nd ch from hook (6)

Round 2: sc twice in each st (12)

Rounds 3-4: sc in each st (12)

Round 5: * sc twice in next st, sc in next st. Repeat from * 5 times (18)

Rounds 6-9: sc in each st (18)

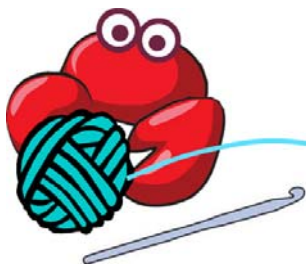
Round 10: * sc2tog, sc in next st. Repeat from * 5 times (12)

Fasten off with long tail.

Beak

With AC1, ch 2

Round 1: sc 6 times in 2nd ch from hook (6)



Round 2: sc twice in each st (12)
Rounds 3-5: sc in each st (12)
Fasten off with long tail.

Tummy Circle

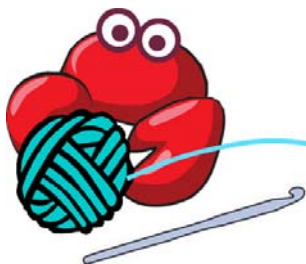
With SC, ch 2

Round 1: sc 6 times in 2nd ch from hook (6)
Round 2: sc twice in each st (12)
Round 3: * sc twice in next st, sc in next st. Repeat from * 5 times (18)
Round 4: * sc twice in next st, sc in next 2 sts. Repeat from * 5 times (24)
Round 5: * sc twice in next st, sc in next 3 sts. Repeat from * 5 times (30)
Round 6: * sc twice in next st, sc in next 4 sts. Repeat from * 5 times (36)
Round 7: * sc twice in next st, sc in next 5 sts. Repeat from * 5 times (42)
Round 8: * sc twice in next st, sc in next 6 sts. Repeat from * 5 times (48)
Fasten off with long tail.

Body

With MC, ch 2

Round 1: sc 6 times in 2nd ch from hook (6)
Round 2: sc twice in each st (12)
Round 3: * sc twice in next st, sc in next st. Repeat from * 5 times (18)
Round 4: * sc twice in next st, sc in next 2 sts. Repeat from * 5 times (24)
Round 5: * sc twice in next st, sc in next 3 sts. Repeat from * 5 times (30)
Round 6: * sc twice in next st, sc in next 4 sts. Repeat from * 5 times (36)
Round 7: * sc twice in next st, sc in next 5 sts. Repeat from * 5 times (42)
Round 8: * sc twice in next st, sc in next 6 sts. Repeat from * 5 times (48)
Round 9: * sc twice in next st, sc in next 7 sts. Repeat from * 5 times (54)
Round 10: * sc twice in next st, sc in next 8 sts. Repeat from * 5 times (60)
Rounds 11-21: sc in each st (60)
Round 22: * sc2tog, sc in next 8 sts. Repeat from * 5 times (54)
Round 23: sc in each st (54)
Round 24: * sc2tog, sc in next 7 sts. Repeat from * 5 times (48)
Round 25: sc in each st (48)
Round 26: * sc2tog, sc in next 6 sts. Repeat from * 5 times (42)
Round 27: sc in each st (42)
Round 28: * sc2tog, sc in next 5 sts. Repeat from * 5 times (36)
Round 29: sc in each st (36)
Round 30: * sc2tog, sc in next 4 sts. Repeat from * 5 times (30)
Round 31: sc in each st (30)
remove hook, but do not fasten off!



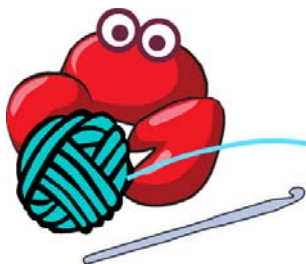
Flatten feet, and attach to round 7 of body.



Flatten wings, and attach to each side of body, at approximately round 22.



Attach eye circles to body. The bottom of the eye circles should be attached to round 21, and the top of the eye circles will reach round 27. Be sure that the two eye circles touch in the center.



Attach tummy circle to body. The bottom should be attached at round 9 (two rounds above the feet), and slightly overlap the bottom of the eye circles at the top.



Fasten eyes onto the head. To do so, insert post between desired stitches, and press washer onto back post to secure. . Plastic eyes should be positioned in the center of the eye circles.



Stuff beak slightly, and attach over the point where the eye circles and tummy circle meet.

Stuff penguin body.

Continue crocheting...

Round 32: * sc2tog, sc in next 3 sts. Repeat from * 5 times (24)

Round 33: * sc2tog, sc in next 2 sts. Repeat from * 5 times (18)

Round 34: * sc2tog, sc in next st. Repeat from * 5 times (12)

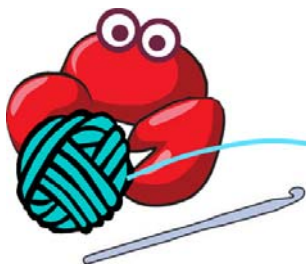
Round 35: * sc2tog. Repeat from * 5 times (6)

Round 36: sc2tog next and fourth sts, pulling knot to center. (1)
Fasten off.

ta da! you have a beautiful penguin!

aren't you proud? share your finished cutie with us!

www.facebook.com/freshstitches



a beginner's guide to amigurumi



the stars in this book

Interested in meeting some of the cuties you've seen in this book? Here's how to snag them! (and now that you're crocheting amigurumi like a pro... you can make them on your own!)



roosevelt the monster

as seen on: page 5

available at: www.freshstitches.com/monster2.php



tipper the tiny crab

as seen on: page 1

available at: www.freshstitches.com/tinycrab.php

about stacey and freshstitches



Hi! I'm Stacey and I live my fantasy life designing cute & cuddly amigurumi!

I'm passionate about helping everyone out there have that priceless, oh-so-yummy satisfaction that only comes with making something yourself... so I'm dedicated to writing patterns and providing tutorials that help you crochet your own adorable creations!

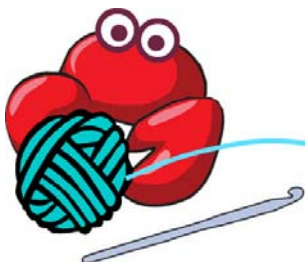
My patterns all come with progress photos, so that you can see what your piece should look like along the way. I also enthusiastically write a blog, dedicated to providing helpful tips for my customers.

blog: www.freshstitches.com/wordpress

twitter: @freshstitches

facebook: www.facebook.com/freshstitches

it's easy to find me!



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