1 **2**

3 **4**

5

Crochet is simple to learn and can be used to create an interesting range of household soft furnishings such as cushion covers and throws as well as a great variety of clothing and fashion accessories from hats and bags to scarves. It is quick to work up and finished effects can range from dense fabric textures to delicate lacy ones. Crochet can also be used to join seams in knitting and to create edgings for sleeves and necklines.

Yarns and threads
The type of yarn should be selected to suit the individual project, taking the composition and thickness into account. Finest crochet threads give a lacy finish and can be used for edgings and even Christmas decorations. Double-knitting (DK) or 4-ply give a thicker, more solid finish and are used for items of clothing.
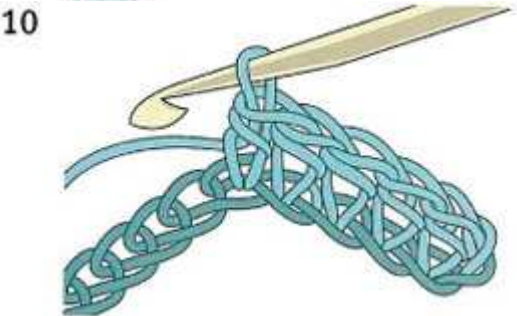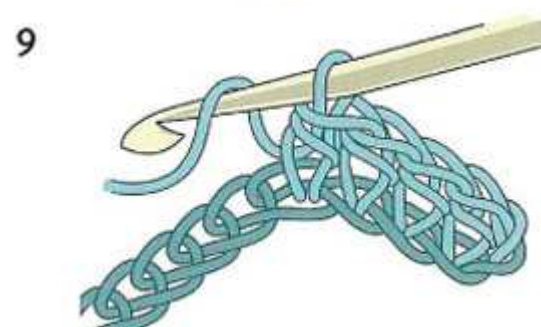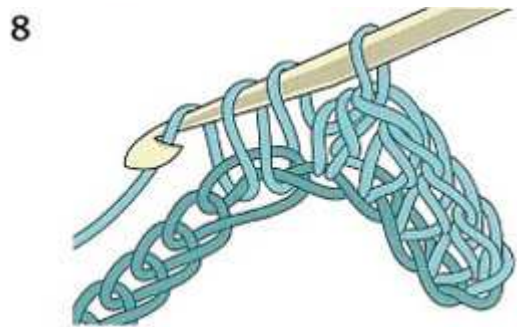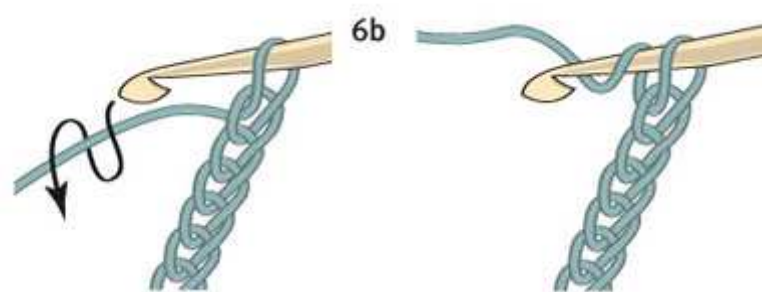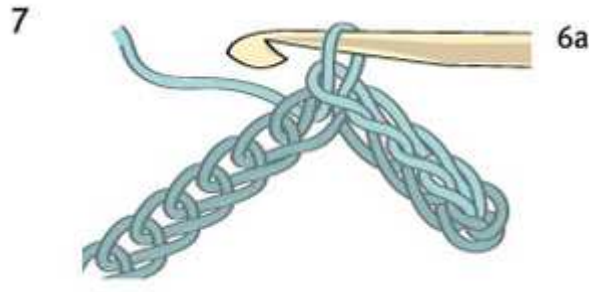
Crochet hooks
The size of crochet hook is determined by the yarn used and the project being made. The larger the hook and the thicker the yarn, the quicker your work will grow. If you are following a pattern, the recommended size hook is given.

Making a loop
To start to crochet you need to create a loop on the hook. Form the yarn into a loop, positioning the ball end of the yarn behind the loop (fig 1). Holding the hook like a pencil, insert it through the centre of the loop and catch the yarn strand behind the loop with a crochet hook (fig 2). Draw the yarn through the loop to create a loop around the hook (fig 3). Pull the tail end of the yarn in the opposite direction to tighten the new loop around the hook (fig 4).

Foundation chain
To cast on in crochet you will need to make a foundation chain. Catch the tail end of the yarn between your thumb and forefinger and hold it firmly (fig 5). Catch the ball end of the yarn with the hook, by passing the hook over and under the yarn in a twisting motion as shown by the arrow (fig 6). Draw the yarn now wrapped around the hook through the loop on the hook to make a chain. Hold the end of the chain with your other hand to create sufficient tension until the chain reaches your required length.

7

6a

6b

8

9

Basic stitches
Slip stitch
Slip stitch is the easiest stitch and is usually used as an edging or joining stitch. To work a slip stitch on a foundation chain, insert the hook into the second chain from the hook, catch the yarn with the hook and draw it through the chain and the loop on the hook to complete the stitch (fig 7).

10

Working basic stitches in rows
When you turn your crochet work at the end of a row, in order to start the next row you will need to add a specific number of chain stitches, called turning chains, to bring the work into the right position to create stitches for the next row. The list below gives the number of turning chains required for the various basic crochet stitches:
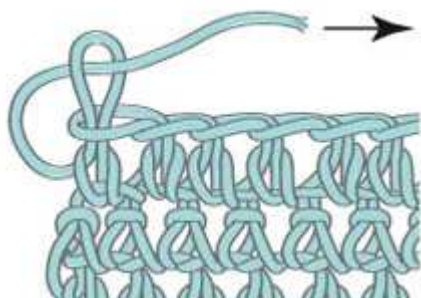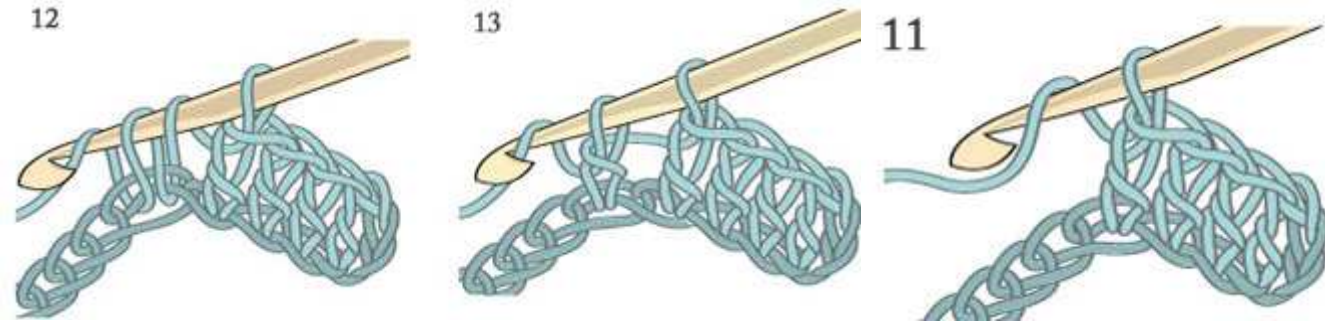
Turning chains:
Slip stitch - 1ch
Double crochet - 1ch
Treble - 3ch

This is a dense stitch, the most common stitch and is sometimes known as plain stitch. It's ideal for mats, bags and containers. Insert the hook through the second chain from the hook and catch the yarn with the hook (fig 8). Draw the hook through the chain so that there now two loops on the hook (fig 9). Wrap the yarn around the hook and draw it through the two loops on the hook (one loop remains on the hook). Work double crochet in each chain in the same way (fig 10). On the following rows, work the one turning chain then work one double crochet in each stitch of the previous row.

Treble crochet
Often used for lacy, or household items. Insert the hook through the fourth chain from the hook. Yrh (yarn round hook) and draw the yarn through the chain (fig 11). Yrh and draw the yarn through the first two loops on the hook (fig 12). Yrh and draw the yarn through the two remaining loops on the hook (fig 13). One loop remains on the hook. Work a treble in each chain in the same way.

Fastening off
When your work is complete, cut the thread about 7cm from the work. Pass the loose end through the one remaining loop on the hook and pull tightly. Darn the loose ends into the wrong side of the work using a blunt-ended needle.

Crochet abbreviations
The following are popular abbreviations found in crochet patterns:
ch - chain
dc - double crochet
ss - slip stitch
tr - treble
ch sp - chain space
lp(s) - loops
t-ch - turning chain
WS - wrong side
yrh - yarn round hook