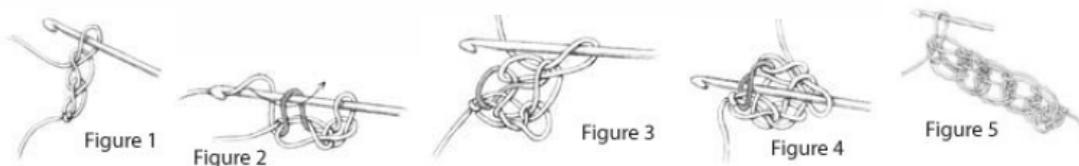# Chain-free or Foundation Crochet

Most people are taught to start their crochet using a chain of loops. There can be problems with this – most people crochet chains more tightly than their crochet stitches, so will find that their starting chain pulls the work in. Switching to a larger hook for the chain can help, but it can also create a loose edge.

Using foundation crochet, you can work the chain and the stitch at the same time. The row should be the same gauge as the rest of the work, and the starting edge can also be picked up later and crocheted downwards, as it has a chain stitch appearance which matches the top of the stitches. Finally, it's far quicker to add a few more stitches than to add a few more chains if you've miscounted.

The pictures and text have been taken from a US website, www.crochetme.com, which uses US crochet terminology, hence the two names for each stitch.
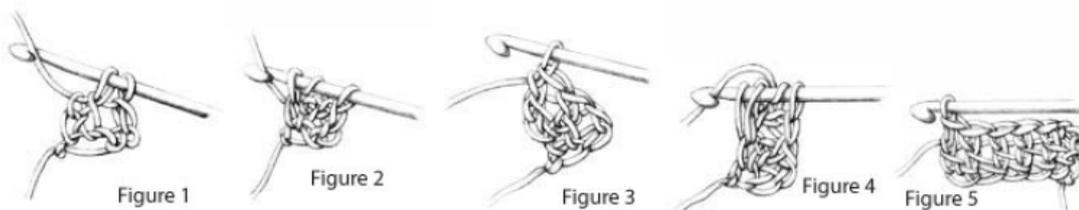
(US) foundation single crochet "fsc" / (UK) Foundation double crochet "fdc"

Start with a slipknot on hook, chain 2 (Figure 1), insert hook in 2nd chain from hook, pull up loop, yarn over, draw through 1 loop (the "chain," Figure 2), yarn over and draw through 2 loops (the single crochet), 1 sc with its own ch st (shaded) at the bottom (Figure 3), *insert hook under 2 loops of the "ch" st (shaded) of last st and pull up loop, yarn over and draw through 1 loop, yarn over and draw through 2 loops, repeat from * for length of foundation (Figure 5).

Figure 1   Figure 2   Figure 3   Figure 4   Figure 5

(US) foundation double crochet "fdc" / (UK) Foundation treble "ftr"

Chain 3. Yarn over, insert hook in 3rd chain from hook, yarn over and pull up loop (3 loops on hook), yarn over and draw through 1 loop (1 chain made), [yarn over and draw through 2 loops] 2 times (Figure 1)— foundation double crochet. Yarn over, insert hook under 2 loops of chain at bottom of stitch just made, yarn over and pull up loop (3 loops on hook) (Figure 2), yarn over and draw through 1 loop (1 chain made), [yarn over and draw through 2 loops] 2 times (Figure 3). *Yarn over, insert hook under 2 loops of chain at bottom of stitch just made (Figure 4), yarn over and pull up loop (3 loops on hook), yarn over and draw through 1 loop (1 chain made), [yarn over and draw through 2 loops] 2 times. Repeat from * as needed (Figure 5).

Figure 1   Figure 2   Figure 3   Figure 4   Figure 5

(US) half double crochet "fhdc" / (UK) Foundation half treble "fhtr"

Ch 3, yarn over, insert hook in 3rd chain from hook, yarn over and pull up loop (3 loops on hook), yarn over and draw through 1 loop (1 chain made), yarn over and draw through all loops on hook—1 foundation half double crochet. *Yarn over, insert hook under the 2 loops of the "chain" stitch of last stitch and pull up loop, yarn over and draw through 1 loop, yarn over and draw through all loops on hook; repeat from * for length of foundation.

Using foundation chain to add multiple stitches at one side of the work

Using foundation single crochet as an example:

Ch 1 (this is to "drop down" one chain in height), insert hook into body of stitch below (this is to anchor stitch) and pull up a loop. Yarn over, draw through one loop (the "chain"), yarn over and draw through two loops (the single crochet).

Using foundation crochet to create a starting row with chain stitches

Example: Tr, ch1 foundation (US dc, ch1, foundation)

1. Ch4, yo twice, insert hook in 4th ch from hook, pull loop through, yo, pull through, 2 loops on hook (ch sp completed).

2. Yo, pull through 1 lp on hook (base ch completed).

3. [Yo, pull through 2 lps on hook] twice, (treble completed)

Using foundation crochet to create a V stitch foundation row

This creates a foundation of tr, ch1, tr V-sts with a ch2 sp between their bases

1. Ch4, tr in 4th ch from hook (first V-st completed)

2. *yo 3 times, insert hook in same ch last V-st was worked in, yo, pull lp through,[yo, pull through 2 lps on hook] twice (2 ch completed)

3. Yo, pull through 1 lp on hook (base ch completed)

4. [yo, pull through 2 lps on hook] twice, ch1, yo, insert hook in last base ch completed, yo, pull lp through, [yo, pull through 2 lps on hook] twice (V-st completed)

5. Rep from * until desired number of stitches completed.

Slingshot cast on

This is used to create a looser chain than the standard method.

1. Make a slip knot and hang it on the hook.

2. Holding end in front of hook, and yarn in back of hook, wrap yarn around left thumb and insert hook under and over yarn as in long tail knitted cast on (2 lps on hook)

3. Yo, pull through both lps on hook

4. Repeat for desired length

Alternative turning chain

The turning chain on a piece of crochet can look rather flimsy. This method produces a firmer stitch

1. Work to the point where you need to make a turning chain.

2. Insert the hook into the base of the last chain (as if for ordinary crochet), yarn over, pull a loop through

3. Yarn over, pull through 2 loops

4. Insert the hook into the left "leg" of the stitch just created and pull a loop through

5. Yarn over, pull through 2 loops

6. Repeat steps 4 and 5 until alternative turning chain is correct height.

Invisible joining when working in rounds

Ending a round

When a round is complete, do not join with a slip stitch. Instead, cut the yarn and release the last loop. Thread the yarn end through the turning chain at the start of the round, and then back through the last but one stitch. In other words, create the last loop manually and link it through the start of the round.

Starting new round

This works best when starting a new colour.

Example using US dc/UK tr:

Make a slip loop in the yarn and place it on hook. Yarn over, insert hook into next stitch to be worked, complete stitch as for US dc/UK tr. The stitch will look like the succeeding stitches, and once the round is completed, the join will become invisible.

Linked stitches

Linked stitches are the basic stitches, but linked halfway up. This is kind of a cross between standard and Tunisian crochet.

Directions for the (US) linked treble "ltr"/ UK linked double treble "ldtr"

Set up stitch

1. Ch any number of sts, add 4 for turning ch.

2. Insert hook into the 2nd ch from hook, yo, draw up loop.

3. Insert hook into 3rd ch from hook, yo, draw up loop.

4. Insert hook into the 5th ch from hook, yo, draw up loop - 4 loops on hook

5. Yo, draw through 2 loops on hook.

6. Yo, draw through next 2 loops.

7. Yo, draw through last 2 loops (first stitch made).

Next Stitch

1. Insert hook into upper horizontal bar of previous stitch, yo, draw up loop.

2. Insert hook into lower horizontal bar, yo, draw up loop.

3. Insert hook into next ch, yo, draw up loop, (4 loops on hook).

4. Yo, draw through 2 loops on hook.

5. Yo, draw through next 2 loops.

6. Yo, draw through last 2 loops.

7. Continue stitches as above to end of row, ch 4, turn.