



Meet our team of knitting experts...



Rita Taylor
creates knit and crochet designs for all ages.



Anne MacGregor
loves to try new knitting and crochet techniques.



Joanna Benner
has taught many people to knit and crochet.



Aneeta Patel
wrote the fab knitting resource *Knitty Gritty*.

Ask the experts

Can't figure out that knitting or crochet technique? Ask our panel of knitting and crochet experts!

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Snood or scarf: These cowlgirls have got it covered when it comes to neck warmth

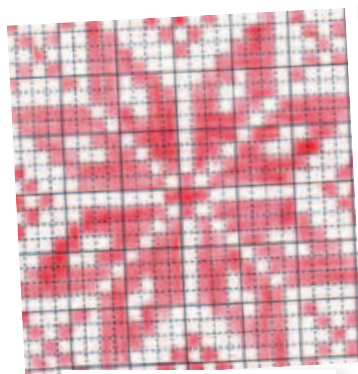
Snood or scarf?

Q My daughter would like me to knit her a snood. I've always thought a snood was for your hair but she says it's a type of scarf – which of us is right and where can I buy a pattern?
Carole Munsford, Seaton

A **Jo says:** You're both right, Carole! Snoods used to be a sort of hairnet, but now a snood usually refers to a scarf or a cowl that can be put over your hair. For an almost instant snood, take a favourite scarf, twist it in the middle and sew the ends together to make a Mobius strip. For patterns, you'll find loads of inspiration in *Cowlgirls* by Cathy Carron (ISBN-13:978-1936096046). You can buy it for £7.99 from www.amazon.co.uk.

Scandinavian style

Q I would love to knit a pair of Scandinavian style mittens, but they look very complicated. Are they difficult to make?
Gina Salton, Banbury



Scandinavian style: Make gorgeous mittens with lovely charted designs, like the Norwegian Star

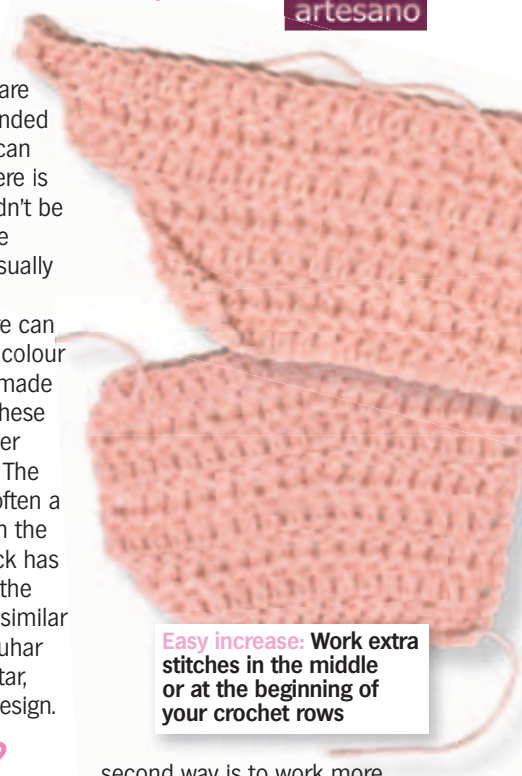
A **Rita says:** If you are familiar with stranded colourwork and can knit in the round, then there is no reason why you shouldn't be able to knit a pair of these lovely mittens. They are usually worked in two colours throughout, although there can sometimes be a different colour in the cuff. Increases are made for the thumb, and then these stitches are left on a holder until the hand is finished. The pattern on the thumb is often a mini version of the one on the back of the hand. The back has an intricate design, while the palm can be in a pattern similar to those in Scottish Sanquhar knitting. The Norwegian Star, below, is a very popular design.

Easy increase?

Q How do I increase in crochet and is this an easy technique?
S Cannon, Lanark

A **Anne says:** There are basically three different ways that you can increase as you are crocheting. The first method is to increase one stitch at each end of a row. You do this by working the required turning chain and then work this first stitch into the stitch that this turning chain stands on, to increase one stitch at the beginning of the row. At the end of the row, work two stitches into the turning chain instead of one. The

second way is to work more than one stitch at the beginning of a row. Before starting to work in the pattern, make a chain equivalent to one less than the extra number of stitches required, plus the correct number of turning chain required. The third method is to increase stitches in the middle of a row, which gives a slight curve to the work. Work in the pattern until you reach the position for the increase, then work two stitches instead of one into the next stitch, then continue the pattern to the end of the row. You may also increase in specific ways to form special patterns, rather than to shape a garment. ➔➔



Easy increase: Work extra stitches in the middle or at the beginning of your crochet rows

Your questions answered



Definition please: This yarn might look plain, but it will show off your fancy stitches brilliantly



Definition, please?

Q In your yarn reviews I have seen quite a few mentions of stitch definition. Please can you tell me what this means?
Val Cantor, Sheffield

A Rita says: If you are working a textured pattern, you want all your hard work shown to its best advantage. For this, you need to be able to see the complexity of the pattern, which is what is meant by stitch definition. A fluffy yarn will hide all but the largest cables, and fill

in the holes in a lacy stitch. Likewise, a yarn with slubs or knots will mask individual stitches. The best yarn for generally showing the detail of stitch patterns is one that is smooth, plain and firmly spun. For example, most of the Sublime yarns, especially the Organic Cotton range, are ideal for a knitting pattern that is made up of a combination of complex stitches.

Simple sweater

Q Can you tell me what sort of pattern would be simple to knit for

my two-year-old? I haven't knitted a proper garment yet and I'm desperate to try!
Esme Cooper, Bridlington

A Jo says: Enthusiasm is the first thing you need, so you're off to a winning start! A smooth, plain DK yarn is the best to start with as mistakes are easy to see and rectify. This gorgeous jumper designed by Sian Brown for issue 53 of *Knit Today* is a perfect starting project, but I recommend knitting it in one colour for your first attempt. Although there are buttonholes on the shoulder, they're very easy to do. To order a back issue, call ☎ 0844 8440388.



Simple sweater: You can't go wrong with an easy child's sweater as your first knitting project, like this one from issue 53

Smocked stitching

Q When working knitted smocking, do you do the smocking as you knit it or sew it on afterwards?
Cherilyn Harris, Stirling

A Jo says: You can do it either way, but I think there is much more scope and control over tension if you stitch it afterwards. Most smocked knitting is actually cables with a contrast thread to give the look of smocking. The sample I've knitted can easily replace any flat stocking stitch pattern – perfect for mug cosies, gloves and hats.

Pattern:

Cast on a multiple of 6sts plus 2sts for the ends.

Row 1 (right side): P1, *P2, K2, P2; rep from * to last stitch, P1.

Row 2 and every alternate row: Knit all the K stitches and purl all the P stitches.

Row 3: P1, *P1, Cr2R, Cr2L, P1; rep from * to last stitch, P1.

Row 5: P1, Cr2R, P2, Cr2L; rep from * to last stitch, P1.

Row 7: P1, K1, P4, K1; rep from * to last stitch, P1.

Row 9: P1, Cr2L, P2, Cr2R; rep from * to last stitch, P1.

Row 11: P1, *P1, Cr2L, Cr2R, P1; rep from * to last stitch, P1.

Row 12: As row 2.

Cr2R – Knit into front of second stitch on left needle, then purl into front of first stitch, slipping both off the needle together.

Cr2L – Purl into back of second stitch on left needle, then knit into front of first stitch, slipping both off the needle together.

Contrast stitching – Oversew 4 times at each point – I like to sew each point separately and tie the threads at the back (to give more stretch) but you can jump to each point without finishing off.

Fancy felt

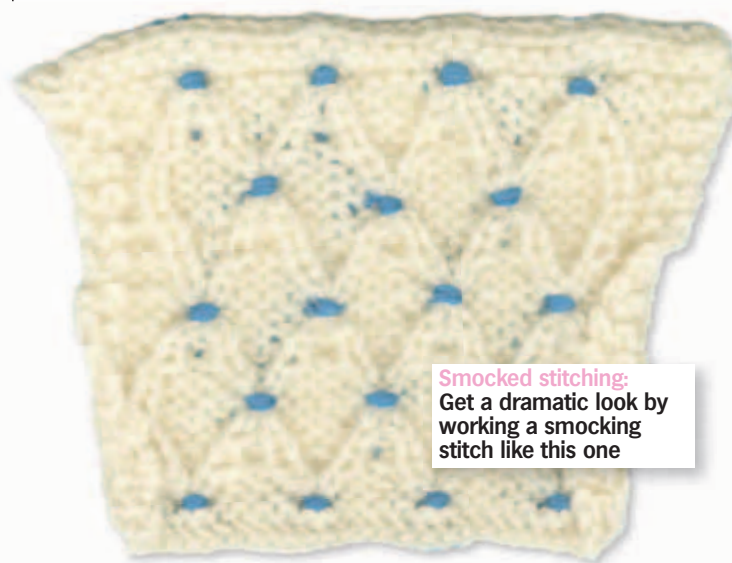
Q I have seen some colourful bags made by felting crochet – how do I go about doing this?
Claudia Young, Erith

A Anne says: To felt by machine, put the finished piece into a pillowcase, plus other items such as towels to add friction. An item shrinks and felts better if it is part of a bigger load. Add a touch of laundry detergent, and start the machine, turning the temperature up high. Crochet felts more in the width of the piece than in the height, so stitches such as

trebles and double trebles will shrink in a different way than items made in double crochet. When the piece is felted enough, take it out, rinse it in cold water, and roll it up in a towel to squeeze water out of it. Lay it flat to dry, pulling it into shape. For a bag, stuff the inside with a towel or some plastic carrier bags while it dries.



Fancy felt: Felt your crochet just by putting it in the washing machine



Smocked stitching: Get a dramatic look by working a smocking stitch like this one



Your questions answered

Which yarn?

Q How do I choose the right type of yarn for a crochet project?

Annie Chatts, Bristol

A **Anne says:** Generally speaking, if you are following a commercial pattern then use the yarn that it recommends. If this is no longer available, substitute for a yarn that is similar in fibre content and weight, and make a test swatch to get the correct tension. There are many different types of yarn on the market, and knowing your yarns and knowing how they work goes a long way in choosing the right type for a certain project. Some projects use a large amount of yarn, and the cost can make it very expensive to do. Some decorative yarns are extremely difficult to crochet with, so stick to very simple stitches with these such as a loose lacy pattern that will show off the yarn well. For baby items, make sure that the yarn is hypoallergenic and soft to the touch. Whatever yarn you choose, always buy enough of the same yarn from the same dye lot to be able to finish your project. You'll find more helpful hints in *Stitch 'n Bitch Crochet: The Happy Hooker* by Debbie Stoller, £5.96 available from www.amazon.co.uk



Which yarn: Pick up all the tips you need to make gorgeous crochet projects in *The Happy Hooker*

Write to us!

Got a query for our panel of experts?

Send your question to us at: **Ask the experts**, *Knit Today*, 9th Floor, Tower House, Fairfax Street, Bristol BS1 3BN or email knittoday@originpublishing.co.uk

MOST TALKED ABOUT SUBJECT

Embroidering onto knitting

Q I love the look of intarsia and Fair Isle, but when I try the techniques I'm never pleased with the results.

Belinda Leaper, New Haven

A **Aneeta says:** I know how you feel – colourwork in knitting can be tricky, but don't fear, there's an alternative. My favourite way of working a colour pattern into my knitting isn't intarsia or Fair Isle, but Swiss darning. You get the same look as traditional colourwork, but the process is infinitely simpler. Swiss darning is worked by following the line of the knitted stitch so as to cover it entirely with a line of embroidery. It's important to darn using the same weight of yarn so that you get good coverage of the base piece of knitting. You can do this technique in as many colours as you like, and it's a lot less fiddly than intarsia. I suggest you start with a piece of knitter's graph paper and some coloured pencils and draw up your design first.

Swiss Darning: Work an intarsia design without the fuss – Swiss darn it instead!



Q I've got some old jumpers that could do with a revamp. Do you have any ideas?

Dell Smith, Liverpool

A **Aneeta says:** Try a bit of freehand embroidery. Simply choose a selection of yarns, embroidery threads, beads and sequins and get creative! You don't need a



Finishing touch: Give your project a whole new look just with a sewing needle!

plan (although you can start with drawings or a theme if you wish), but however you like to work is fine. This is great for the more daring crafters out there; even a simple running stitch can be extremely effective. You can do this on your own knitted garments, or even buy simple ready-knit items and turn them into something unique. I think it's a very clever way of getting a designer look that no one else will have. Or, try it on bought gloves – even complete beginners to knitting can get a fun and stylish finish!

Q I've tried sewing into my knitting but the result is bunched and untidy. Do you have any advice?

H Terry, Church Stretton

A **Aneeta says:** Remember that a piece of knitted fabric is stretchy, so your embroidery should be sympathetic to that. Otherwise, you will end up with unsightly snagging and bunches. Always work with the fabric. And, the most important thing is to not be afraid to undo and start a section again if you are unhappy with it. I suggest that you practise embroidery on a test square of knitting before starting on the main garment to get the feel of it.

Have a go: Try an embroidery design on a tension square first



3 top tips on embroidering

1 Remember that your craft journey should be as fun as the destination! Follow your instincts if you find you are working with a technique that doesn't suit your temperament.

2 Work fairly loosely – don't yank or pull your embroidery thread or yarn through the knitted fabric. Remember, practice makes perfect – and relax!

3 My mum taught me that the back of my work should be as tidy as the front. Work in short bursts of thread, and take your time when weaving in yarn ends.