



How to...



WOW!
More than 45 million Americans know how to knit or crochet.

Give knitting a try

This relaxing activity can help you flex your creative muscles.

Knitting is a craft where you use yarn and needles to create a series of stitches. When you make several rows of stitches, you can create specific patterns to form items like hats, blankets, and scarves. Many people find knitting to be creative and relaxing. Here's how to begin.

Gather supplies

You'll need a ball of yarn and a set of knitting needles. If you have a friend who knits, you may be able to borrow these to start out. If not, most craft stores sell yarn and needles. For your first project, choose a yarn that's marked as "medium weight" and needles that are between sizes 8 and 10.

Get started

All knitting projects start with a step called "casting on," which is how you attach yarn to the needle. Grab the free end of yarn from your ball and create a slip knot. Start by making a small loop of yarn at the end by crossing the loose end over the yarn that's still attached to the ball. Then pull the yarn that's attached to the ball through the hole and pull on the loop to make a knot. Put the loop of yarn through one of the needles and tighten the loop so it's snug.

Continue casting on

Now you need to add additional loops to your needle, which you will later use to build your stitches from. To do this, start with a slip knot on the needle in your right

hand. Take the strand of yarn that's attached to the ball and hold it in your left hand. Wrap that strand of yarn around your left thumb from front to back. Slip the needle in your right hand under the yarn that's on the front of your thumb. Keeping the yarn loop on your needle, slip your thumb out and pull the yarn tight so you're left with a loop attached to your needle. To view a video of casting on, go to tinyurl.com/TWJUS-Knitting. Repeat the stitch about 10 times.

Learn your first stitch

Now that you have a row of loops on your needle, the next step is to add stitches attached to each of these loops. There are hundreds of types of stitches, but a good first one is the knit stitch. If you have a friend or family member who knits, ask them if they will show you how to do it. To view a video of how to make a knit stitch, go to tinyurl.com/TWJUS-KnitStitch. Once you learn how to do the stitch, practice by knitting several rows of it until you have a small section of fabric.

Try a simple project

A good option for your first few projects is making squares for blankets (make several and piece them together) or scarves. To make them, you'll need a pattern with instructions to follow. Yarn.com and knitpicks.com have free patterns you can print out.



Choose a fun color of yarn.

4 organizations that provide warmth

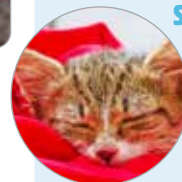
Put your new knitting skills to use by donating something you make to help others.

Project Linus

Since 1995, this organization has donated more than 9 million handmade blankets to children in need. Chapters across the US offer volunteer opportunities. (projectlinus.org)



Snuggles Project



People can donate blankets to animal shelters through Snuggles Project. The website includes directions for making different kinds of blankets. (snugglesproject.org)

Magic Yarn Project

This group donates knit caps with special designs like pirate emblems or princess hair to children who have been diagnosed with cancer. One way people can help is by donating extra yarn. (themagicyarnproject.com)



Warm Up America



Volunteers are asked to knit 7-inch- by-9-inch

rectangles as their donations. The rectangles are then pieced together to make blankets for senior centers, veterans' homes, and shelters. (warmupamerica.org)