

Reading charted stitch diagrams

Some crocheters find these visual representations of crochet patterns easier to follow than a written-out pattern

Made up of symbols to represent stitches, charted stitch diagrams lay out a pattern in a visual way, and will look similar to the actual piece of crocheted fabric. The symbols are uniform and internationally recognised, so you will be able to follow them with ease.

Diagrams (sometimes also called charts) can often be found accompanying written-out patterns but may also sometimes be used instead of them, especially for particularly detailed patterns such as lace work and motifs. To begin with it may be best to read a chart alongside a written pattern. Even if using a diagram becomes your preferred method of following a pattern, don't completely disregard written instructions, as these will include important information about special stitches and any repeats you may need to make.

Standard stitch symbols

The symbols for the most commonly used stitches and techniques are designed to look like the stitches they represent. The treble crochet symbol is twice as tall as the double crochet symbol, with the half treble crochet halfway between the two. The horizontal bars on the taller stitches represent how many yarn overs need to be made to begin the stitch. Use the table below to see what stitches the symbols represent:

Symbol	Stitch
	ch
	sl st
	dc
	htr
	tr
	dtr
	magic ring

Variable stitch symbols

When the basic stitches are combined to make special stitches – such as puffs, popcorns, bobbles and shells to name just a few – the stitch diagram represents this, showing the exact combination of basic stitches that is used in the pattern you are following. These may be different from pattern to pattern if the stitches are made in slightly different ways. Here are a few examples of special stitches:

Symbol	Stitch
	dc2tog decrease
	tr3tog cluster/decrease
	5-dtr shell
	4-tr bobble
	3-htr puff
	4-tr popcorn
	ch-3 picot (closed)
	ch-3 picot (open)

“Symbols of crochet charts have been designed to look like the stitches they represent”

Modified stitch symbols

When you need to work the next stitch into a specific part of a stitch – for example in the back or front loop only or around the back or front of the post stitch below – the stitch symbol is modified to represent this. Stitches that need to be worked into the front or back loop only include a curved symbol below them to represent this. Stitches that need to be worked around the front or back post are shown with a hook on the bottom. Foundation stitches show the stitch joined to the chain below. When stitches are crossed, the stitch that needs to go behind the other is slightly more faded than the one that sits to the front:

Symbol	Stitch
	FPtr
	BPtr
	dc in back loop only
	dc in front loop only
	foundation dc
	crossed trs

How to read a chart

Now that you have our handy reference tables to determine what all the different crochet symbols mean, you will need to know how to put them together in an actual piece of crochet. The diagram below represents the stitches as you will see them from the right side of the work (as opposed to the wrong side), and you will notice that each stitch is shown above the one that it needs to be crocheted into.

When working in rows from a stitch diagram, you almost always begin with the foundation chain and then start to work Row 1 from right to left. When you get to Row 2 if you are turning your work, you need to work from left to right. All subsequent odd rows should be followed from right to left and even rows from left to right.

When working in rounds (for example when crocheting granny squares), start from the central ring and follow the stitches in a counterclockwise direction. Do this for every round, unless an arrow at the start of the round indicates to change direction. In this case, turn the work and follow the pattern around clockwise.

“When working in rounds (for example when crocheting granny squares), start from the central ring and follow stitches in a counterclockwise direction”

Top tip!

Even rows are normally shown in a different colour than the odd rows, as this helps distinguish which stitches belong to which row.

