

# Let's Learn to Knit

## with Knit & Purl



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Based on “Let’s Learn to Knit” from the Oregon Cooperative Extension Service

Subject matter support provided by Linda M. Heaton, Extension Specialist in Textiles and Environment, Family and Consumer Sciences

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- 

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# Your Guide for the Project

## You Will Learn:

1. The meaning of knitting
2. To cast on stitches, knit, purl, and bind off stitches
3. To knit ribbing
4. About knitting tools
5. About knitting terms
6. To select yarns
7. About the importance of caring for your hands
8. How to keep records
9. To share with others the things you have learned

## Articles You Will Make

You will make a practice pin cushion and one item or pair of items with knit and purl stitches. A project with binding off stitches is acceptable.

## Exhibit Your Work

You may exhibit one item or pair of items with knit and purl stitches. The pattern in this project book for the pair of slippers meets the required skills for this project.

## Start Your Record Book

The back pages of this book are your 4-H knitting record. Your leader will explain them to you. Study them carefully. As soon as you finish an article, write it on your record sheet along with the cost of materials used. You will find it helpful to keep your records in a three-ring loose-leaf notebook or folder. This will help keep them neat and clean, and they will be less likely to get lost.

## Learn to Give a Demonstration

Show others what “tricks” you have learned by giving a demonstration at one of your club meetings, or ask your mother or guardian to invite family friends to your home. Show them what you have learned to knit. Tell them what you have learned about knitting.

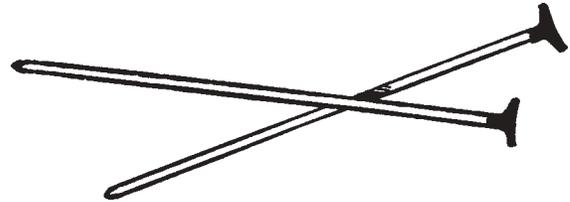
# What is Knitting?

Knitting is to make fabric with yarn on two or more needles. A number of loops are first made on one needle and then the fabric “grows” by drawing other loops through them as they are passed backward and forward along the needles from row to row.

All knitting comes from two kinds of stitches. One is called a “knit stitch,” and the other is called a “purl stitch.” There are several different ways or methods of knitting. Directions in your project book are for the right-hand method because it is the most common. Your leader may prefer to teach you another method. If you have a problem or make a mistake in your knitting, go to your leader for help. It is best not to ask others to help you because they may knit by another method, and this can confuse you. The main thing is to learn to enjoy knitting—relax while you work, avoid a cramped position, have a good light to see by, and if your hands become tired, stop and rest a while.

# Your Knitting Tools

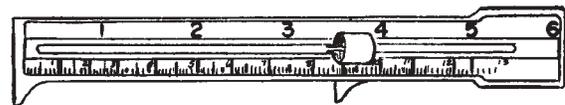
- **Knitting Needles**—The first tool that comes to mind when we think of knitting is needles. Knitting needles come in many sizes, types, and lengths and are made of different materials. All knitting patterns tell you the size of needles to use. For this project, select one pair size 8 knitting needles (size 8 needles are size 5 mm in metric measurement). They should be 8 to 10 inches (about 20 cm) long.



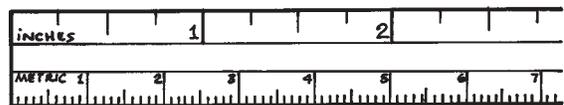
- **Crochet Hook**—You will need a crochet hook to pick up dropped stitches and to correct mistakes. They also come in many sizes. Size C, or 6, is a good one for the 4-ply knitting yarn used in this project.



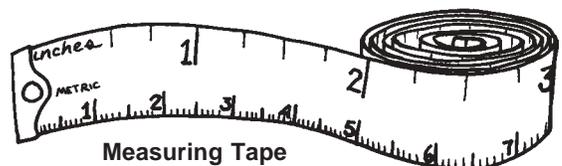
- **Measuring Tool**—You will need a measuring tool. You can use a ruler, a measuring tape, or a metal measuring gauge. Be sure your measuring tool has both standard and metric measurement.



Measuring Gauge

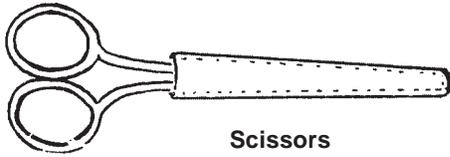


Ruler



Measuring Tape

You will also want to include in your knitting basket a pair of small scissors (kept in a case for safety), a blunt-pointed yarn needle for sewing your articles together, and, last but not least, a nail file or emery board for catchy fingernails. A rough fingernail might catch on the yarn.



Scissors



Yarn Needle



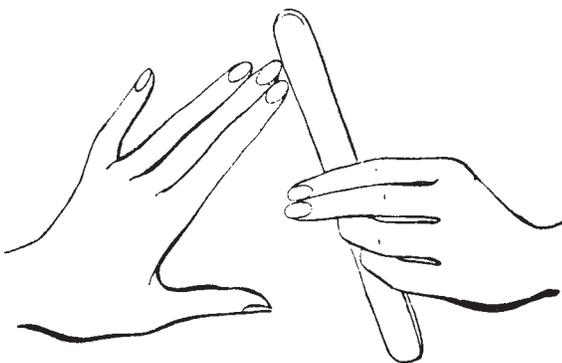
Nail File



Emery Board

Speaking of nails, your hands are your most important tools! Make it a habit always to wash your hands before you pick up your knitting.

Of course, you will want something in which to keep your knitting and knitting tools. There are many things you might use for this purpose, so use your imagination!



## About Yarns



Many different kinds of yarns are available for knitting. Most yarn is wound in pull-out skeins.

The band on each skein of yarn tells the fiber content, ply, color, weight of skein, and care instructions. Read the label or band before buying yarn.

## Amount of Yarn

Yarn is purchased by weight, not length. Since the weight of a skein varies, check the labels carefully to make sure there is enough yarn to complete the project. The pattern will tell you the number of ounces or grams of yarn needed for a knitting project.

## Types of Yarn

Yarns are available in many fibers and sizes. The fiber content of yarns may be a natural fiber, such as wool, or synthetic fiber, such as acrylic or nylon. The size of yarn is determined by the number of small yarns twisted together to form the knitting yarn. A knitting yarn made of 4 small yarns is called 4-ply yarn. Because of its firm twist and medium weight, 4-ply worsted hand-knitting yarn is recommended for beginning knitters.

## Care of Knitting

Save the skein band from the yarn used in the project in case there's a need to refer to the information on the label. Remember, the skein band also contains care instructions. Follow the information specified by the manufacturer for the yarn. For best results do not allow a knitted item to become excessively soiled.

# 4 Rules to Learn Before You Start to Knit

## Rule 1.

Learn knitting abbreviations. These abbreviations are the ABC's of the language of knitting. They are always used in exactly the same way in all directions. The ones you will need to know in this project are:

- k . . . . knit**
- p . . . . purl**
- st(s) . . stitch(es)**
- sl . . . . slip stitch to other needle without knitting**
- \* . . . . repeat whatever follows \* as indicated**

## Rule 2.

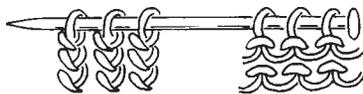
Always read directions step by step. Never “read ahead” when you are following directions.

## Rule 3.

Always try to finish the row before putting your work down. But, if you must put your work down in the middle of a row, *be certain that the end of the yarn coming from the skein is in your right hand* when you pick it up again. Then you can't go wrong.

## Rule 4.

Know the two stitches used for all knitting. One is called a “knit” stitch; the other is called a “purl” stitch. Your directions will tell you when to “knit” and when to “purl.” A good way to tell a “knit” from a “purl” is to think of the yarn on your needle as a neck, the “knit” stitch as a V-neck sweater, and the “purl” stitch as a turtleneck sweater.



Knit or V-neck      Purl or Turtleneck



## Casting On—The First Step in Knitting

Casting on is the technique for forming the first row of stitches on a knitting needle. This technique requires two yarn ends.

There are several methods of casting on stitches. In this project we are showing you one method. By using two threads to cast on, as you do in this method, the beginning or edge of your work will be stronger. You will learn other methods of casting on stitches in later projects.

For correct tension, as it is called, stitches should fit closely but not tightly around the needles. They should move back and forth along the needles freely but not so freely as to allow the needles to fall out.

If you find that you have a tendency to cast on too tightly, use a larger size needle for the cast-on and bind-off rows.

## How to Begin

1. Measure a length of yarn long enough to complete the number of cast-on stitches specified in the knitting instructions. Allow 1 inch (2.5 cm) of yarn for every stitch you cast on and an additional 6 inches (15 cm) for finishing yarn ends. (Figure 1)

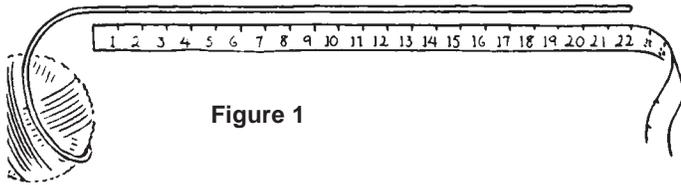


Figure 1

2. After measuring the yarn, make a slip knot for the first stitch. (Figure 2)

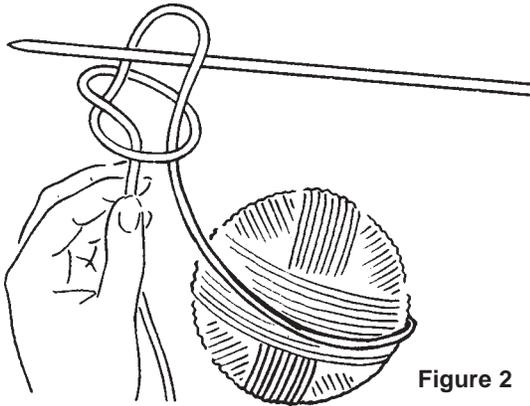


Figure 2

3. Place the loop on the needle and gently pull the ends of the yarn (not too tightly). The skein of the yarn is to the right, and the free end of the yarn is to the left. (Figure 3)

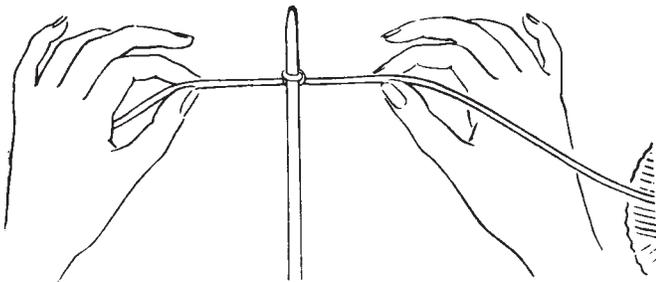


Figure 3

## What to Do with the Right Hand

1. Hold the needle between the thumb and first finger, as if you were holding a pencil. (Figure 4)



Figure 4

2. Be sure that the loop is near the pointed end of the needle. (Figure 5)
3. Using the skein end of the yarn, place the yarn loosely over the first finger, under the second, over the third, and under the fourth above the knuckles. The second and third fingers are very important because they keep the flow of yarn even, not too tight or too loose. That is, they regulate the tension. (Figure 5)

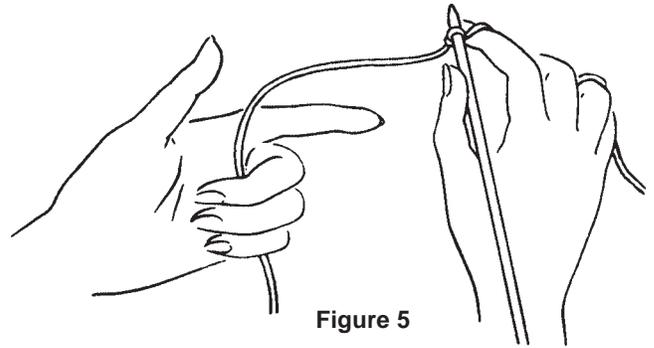


Figure 5

## What to Do with the Left Hand

1. Grasp the free end of the yarn lightly against the left hand with the second, third, and fourth fingers. (Figure 5)
2. Place the yarn near the needle around and under the thumb. (Figure 6)

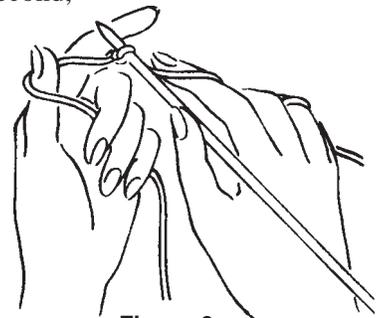


Figure 6

## Now You Are Ready to Work

Bring the hands close together and adjust the yarn. (Figure 7)

### Procedure

1. Notice that the yarn makes a loop around the left thumb. (Figure 7)
2. Insert your needle through the underside of the loop. (Figure 7 and Figure 8)
3. Bring the yarn in the right hand over the point of the needle from the back. (Figure 9)
4. Draw it through the loop. (Figure 10)
5. Slip the thumb out. Pull the yarn tightly. Two stitches are now on the needle.
6. Repeat from Step 2 until you have the number of stitches needed.

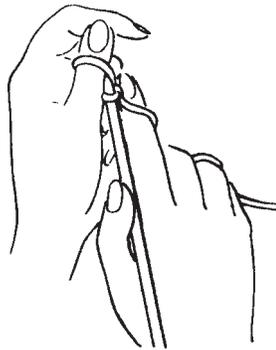


Figure 7

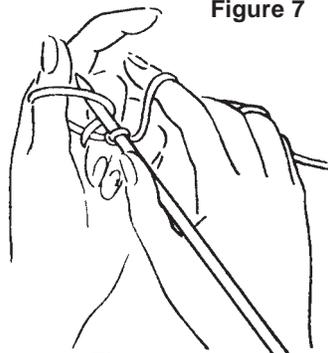


Figure 8

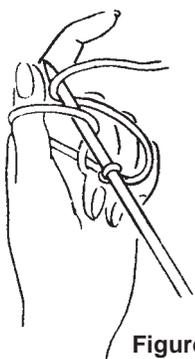


Figure 9

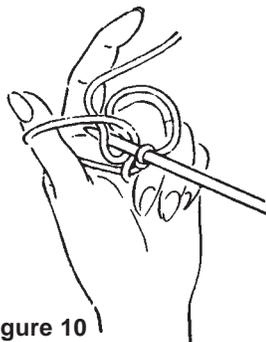


Figure 10

## The Knit Stitch—Plain Knitting or Garter Stitch

### What to Do with the Left Hand

1. In the left hand, hold the needle with the stitches you have just cast on. (Figure 11)
2. The first stitch is held lightly by the index finger near the tip of the needle. (Figure 11)

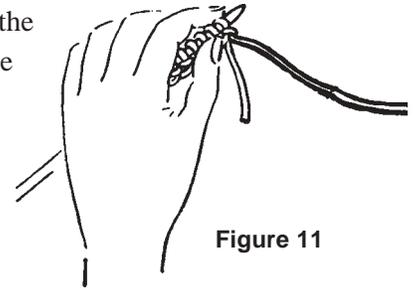


Figure 11

### What to Do with the Right Hand

1. Hold the needle between the thumb and the index finger, as if you were holding a pencil. (Figure 12)
2. The yarn is placed over the first finger, under the second, over the third and under the fourth above the knuckles. As you practice knitting, you will learn to adjust the yarn to get the best results. (Figure 13)
3. Bring your hands close together and adjust the yarn.



Figure 12

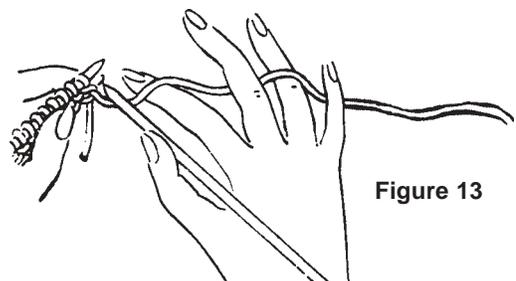


Figure 13

## Procedure—First Row

1. Insert the right needle into the front of the first stitch on the left needle from the left side. Steady the right needle against the forefinger of the left hand. Keep your yarn to the back of your work. (Figure 14)

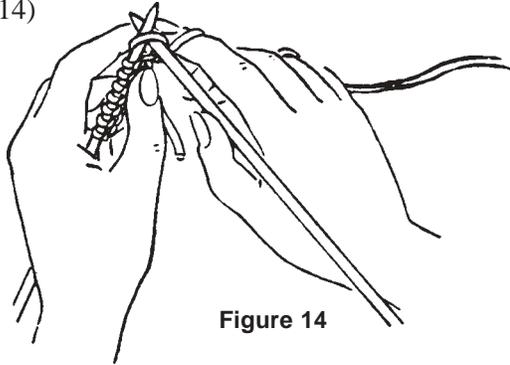


Figure 14

2. With the right hand, bring the yarn over the point of the right needle. (Figure 15)

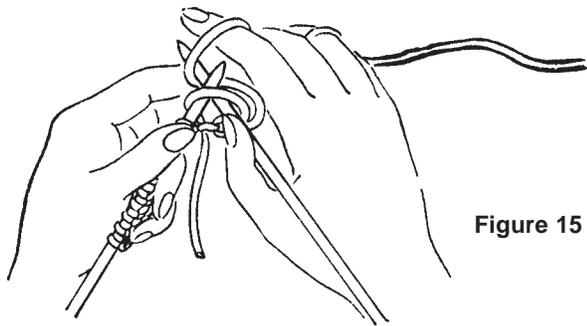


Figure 15

3. Draw the yarn through the stitch. (Figure 16)
4. Slip the old stitch off the left needle, thus completing the first new stitch. A new row is being formed on the right needle. (Figure 17)

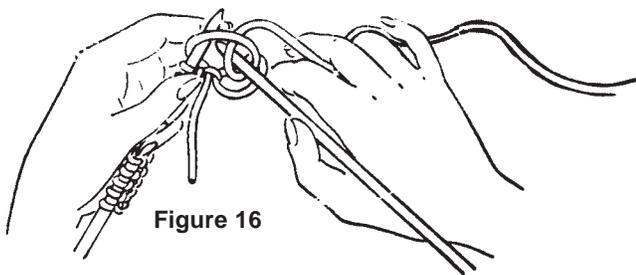


Figure 16

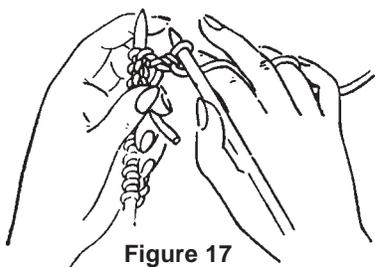


Figure 17

5. Always keep pushing your work up so that the stitch on which you are working is near the tip of the needle.
6. Repeat Steps 1 through 4 until all the stitches have been knitted off the left needle. An easy way to remember these steps is to repeat to yourself: “in” (Step 1, Figure 14); “over” (Step 2, Figure 15); “through” (Step 3, Figure 16); “off” (Step 4, Figure 17).

## Second Row & Succeeding Rows

1. Change the needle with the stitches into the left hand.
2. The empty needle is in the right hand. The yarn is over the first finger, under the second, over the third and under the fourth above the knuckles. (Figure 13)
3. Slip the first stitch off the left needle onto the right needle without knitting. Do this with the first stitch of each row and you will have a smooth edge.
4. Bring your thread to the back of your work by passing it between the two needles.
5. Proceed as before. Watch your work closely to be sure that you have not dropped a stitch. When every row is knit the fabric that results is known as the *garter stitch*. (Figure 18)

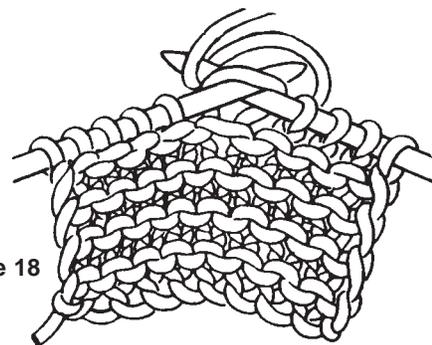


Figure 18

# The Purl Stitch

The purl stitch differs in two ways from the knit stitch. In plain knitting, you keep your yarn at the back of your work. In purling, you bring it to the front of your work.

In plain knitting, you insert your needle in the front of the stitch from the left side of the other needle. In purling, you insert your needle in the front of the stitch from the right side of the other needle. (Figure 19)

The purl stitch is not used alone; it is combined with the knit stitch to create different patterns. When we knit one row and purl the next, a fabric which is smooth on one side results. We call this the *stockinette stitch*.

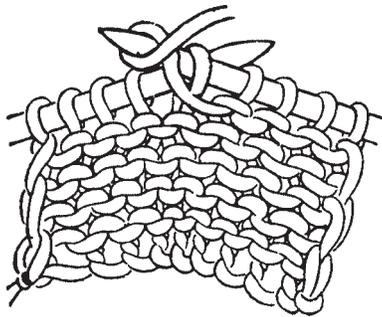


Figure 19

# Ribbing

Ribbing is made by alternating a number of knit stitches with purl stitches. The most common form of ribbing is knit two, purl two. In knit-two, purl-two ribbing (Figure 20), the number of stitches cast on is usually divisible by four. Knit the first two stitches, bring the yarn forward and purl two stitches, then bring the yarn to the back and knit two stitches. Continue in this manner to the end of the row. Always bring the yarn between the needles. Do not go over the top of a needle, as this will make a hole in your row of stitches.

When you turn your work for the next row, the stitches you purlled on the previous row will become knit stitches on the following row. Remember that an



Figure 20

easy way to tell a knit stitch from a purl stitch is to think of the knit stitch as a “V-neck” sweater.

When binding off in ribbing, always remember to bind off by knitting the knit stitches and purling the purl stitches as if you were continuing to rib.

Because of its elasticity, ribbing is frequently used on the part of the garment that fits snugly, such as the waistband and cuffs of a sweater and the tops of mittens and socks. Ribbing is usually worked on smaller size needles than the rest of the garment.

# Binding Off

When you finish a knitting project, you usually use a technique called binding off.

## Procedure

1. Slip the first stitch on the row off the left needle onto the right needle without knitting.
2. Knit the next stitch very loosely. There are now two stitches on the right needle.
3. Insert the left needle through the left side of the first stitch. (Figure 21)
4. Keep the yarn in the right hand very loose so that the second stitch remains loose.
5. Bring the first stitch forward over the second stitch and over the tip of the needle so that one stitch remains on the needle. (Figure 22)
6. Repeat Steps 2 through 5 to bind off the remaining stitches.

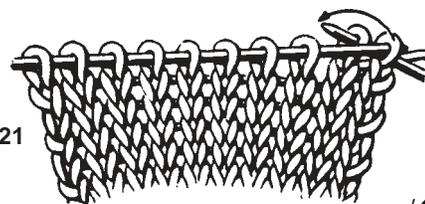


Figure 21

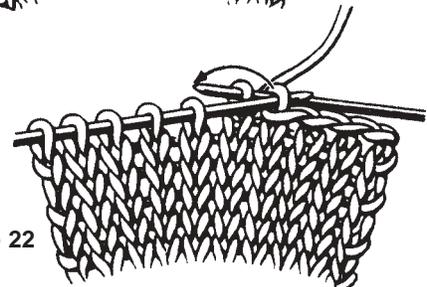


Figure 22

- When you come to the last stitch, clip your yarn about 3 inches from the needle. Bring the loose end through the stitch remaining on the needle and pull tightly (Figure 23). Darn or weave in the loose end so that it will not show.

If you are going to sew a seam on the bound-off edge, you may wish to leave the yarn long enough to sew the seam with.

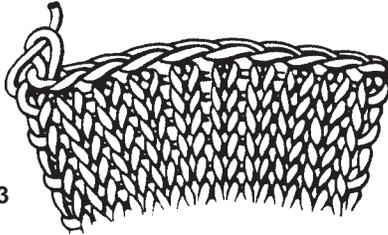


Figure 23

## Sewing Seams

As in almost every phase of knitting, there are several ways to join or “sew” the pieces of a knitted garment together. To join the seams of any knitted garment, you should use the same yarn you used to knit the garment.

Be sure your finished seam has as much elasticity, or stretch, as your knitted fabric, whichever type of seam you choose to use.

In later projects you will learn other types of seams. In this project we are showing you how to do a smooth, flat seam.

### Flat Overcast Seam

- If you look carefully at the side of a knitted fabric, you will see that the end stitches of your fabric have 2 threads forming a top and bottom edge (if you have slipped the first stitch of each row). (Figure 24)

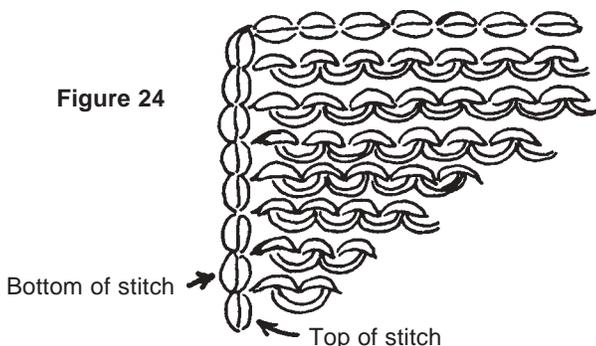


Figure 24

- Place the 2 pieces to be sewn side by side with edges even and wrong side up.
- If you have a thread on either piece of your garment long enough to sew your seam with, use it to sew your seam. Otherwise, thread a piece of the same yarn you used in knitting your garment into your yarn needle and attach the yarn with a slip knot to the wrong side of the piece on the right. Leave about 2 inches of yarn on the end of the knot. Do not cut the yarn close to the knot, as the knot may come untied. (Figure 25)

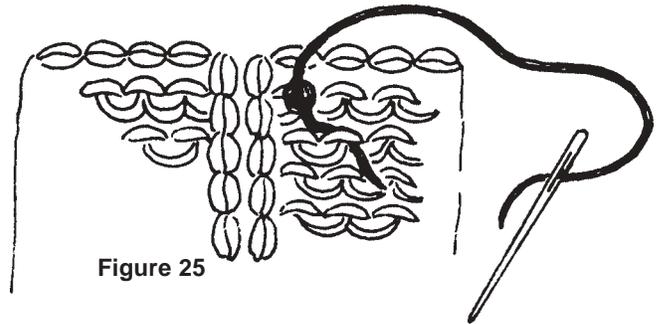


Figure 25

- Now insert your needle into the top half of the first stitch on the right and then into the top half of the first stitch on the left and pull the thread through the two stitches firmly.
- Next insert your needle into the top half of the second stitch on the right and the top half of the second stitch on the left. Put the fingers of your left hand under your work and put your thumb on the outside of the first stitch you made. Hold the first stitch tightly with your thumb and fingers as you pull the thread for your second stitch firmly. Continue in this manner, sewing through the top half of every stitch, until you have finished your seam. (Figure 26)

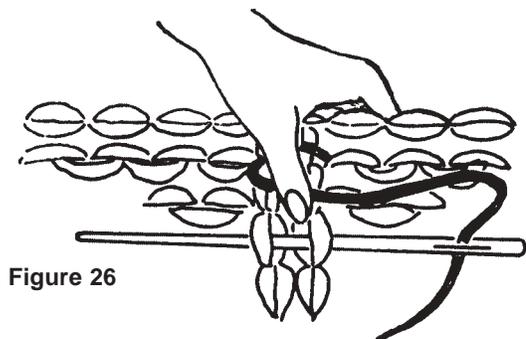


Figure 26

Be very careful to hold the last stitch completed with the thumb and fingers of your left hand while you pull the thread to tighten the stitch you are working on. In this way your seam will be firm but still have elasticity. If you fail to hold each stitch in this manner each time you pull a new stitch, your thread will pull too tightly the full length of your seam, and the seam will be too tight.

6. Check your work every few inches to make sure that it is flat and even on the right side and that your seam has enough “stretch.” (Figure 27)

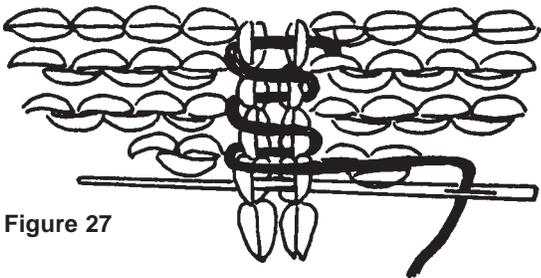


Figure 27

If you find that the two edges are not coming out even (in other words, if one side has a few more stitches than the other), skip a stitch now and then on the longer side to make them come out even at the end of your seam.

7. When your seam is completed, it should be flat and even with almost as much stretch or elasticity as your knitted fabric.

## Suggested Patterns

You can use any patterns you and your leader have. However, you should practice knitting using 4-ply yarn and large needles (size 6 or larger) and make a pin cushion using the garter, stockinette, and ribbing stitches. The pin cushion is a practice strip that includes the basic stitches. Don't worry about making mistakes as you knit the pin cushion.



## Pin Cushion

### *Materials:*

Small amount of 4-ply yarn  
1 pair size No. 8 ten-inch knitting needles  
Large yarn needle

*Directions:* Cast on 12 stitches.

**Garter stitch:** Row 1—Knit across row. Repeat this row until piece measures 6 inches (about 15 cm) in length. Do not stretch knitting when measuring. Then begin:

**Stockinette stitch:** Row 1—Knit across row. Row 2—Purl across row. Repeat these two rows for 3 inches (about 8 cm). Then begin:

**Ribbing stitch:** Row 1—\*Knit 1, purl 1, repeat from \* to the end of row. Row 2—\*Knit 1, purl 1, repeat from \* to end of row. Repeat these two rows for 3 inches. Then begin:

**Stockinette stitch:** Repeat directions above for 3 inches. Then begin:

**Garter stitch:** Repeat directions above for 3 inches. Then:

**Bind off:** Leave 24 inches of yarn on the end.

**Sewing Instructions:** Thread yarn into needle. Fold strip in half lengthwise. Using flat overcast seam, sew the two edges together. Starting at one narrow end, roll the strip into a coil beginning at short portion of garter stitch, sewing together as you roll. Sew along the edges you have just finished sewing together. This is the underside. The folded edge will be the top side of the pin cushion. If desired, a piece of felt can be cut to size and sewn on the bottom. This will hide the yarn stitches and give a more finished look. A thimble may be stored in the center of the pin cushion—open part of the thimble up.



## Slippers

**Size:** Adjustable

**Materials:**

For single-yarn slippers: One 4-oz skein of 4-ply knitting worsted weight Nylo-Wool<sup>†</sup>-wool, or synthetic yarn.

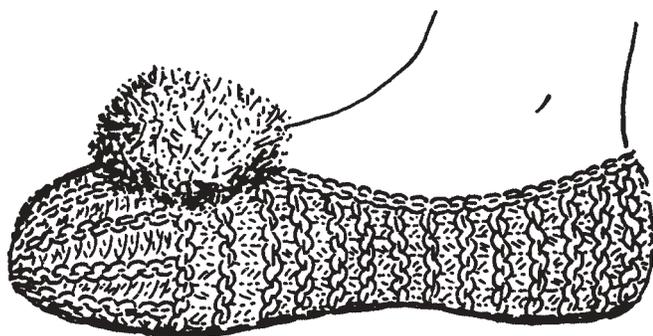
For double-yarn slippers: Two 4-oz skeins are needed. If you select two different colors that coordinate, it is easier to find and correct mistakes.

**Directions:** (Use either single or double yarn.)

**Sole and Sides:** Cast on 30 sts. Row 1—Slip 1, k 29, Row 2—Slip 1, k 29. Repeat these two rows for 5 inches (about 12 cm) or 2½ inches (about 6 cm) less than length of foot, ending on wrong side.

**Toe:** Row 1—\*k 1, p 1. Repeat from \* to the end of row. Row 2—k 1, p 1 to end of row. Repeat ribbing for 2½ to 3 inches (6 to 8 cm). Cut yarn, leaving an 8-inch end. Thread yarn into yarn needle and slip stitches from knitting needle onto yarn needle; pull stitches up very tightly and fasten securely. Sew edges together for 3 inches (about 8 cm) from toe to instep. Fasten securely and weave end of thread into slipper on wrong side. Sew up heel. Trim with pompom, butterfly bow, or buttons. (Directions on next page.)

<sup>†</sup>Nylo-Wool costs a little more than knitting worsted, but it will wear longer.



## Pompoms

Cut two rounded discs the desired size ( $2\frac{1}{2}$  inches in diameter for a medium size pompom, larger for a larger pompom) and then cut a  $\frac{1}{4}$ - to  $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch hole in center. Cardboard or plastic tops from margarine tubs are good materials to use for the discs. Thread a yarn needle with two strands of yarn and cover the discs. (Figure 28)

After the discs are entirely covered, slip scissors between them and cut all threads at the outside edge. (Figure 29)

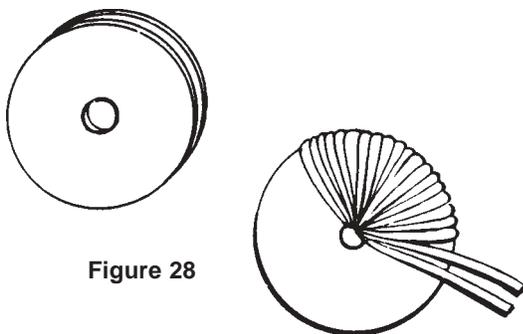


Figure 28

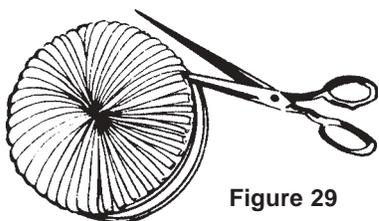


Figure 29

Wind a thread several times between the discs (Figure 30), leaving the ends long enough to join pompom and article. Remove cardboard and trim. To make your pompom very fuzzy, place the finished pompom on the end of a table fork and hold it over a steam kettle; keep turning the pompom slowly until it is moist and fuzzy. Be very careful not to burn yourself!

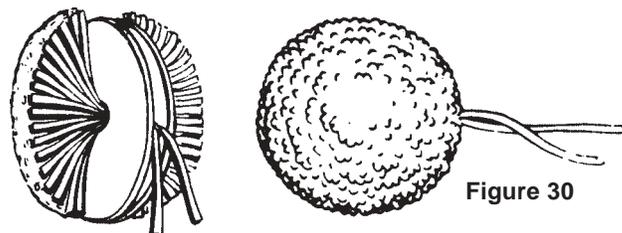


Figure 30



## Butterfly Bow

Measure 12 inches from end of yarn. Cast on 10 stitches with that yarn. Knit 8 rows (garter stitch). Then k 1, p 1 for five rows (ribbing). Knit 8 rows (garter stitch). Bind off. Cut yarn, leaving an end. Thread end into a yarn needle and run it back through last row. Trim off. Finish other yarn end in the same manner.

Run needle and yarn through center of bow as shown (Figure 31). Draw up yarn and attach bow firmly. Run thread back through the seam of your project for an inch or two and cut off.

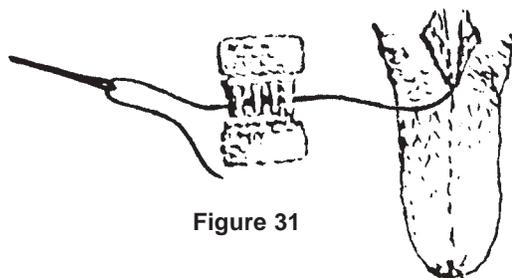


Figure 31

# Self Quiz

Do you know the meaning of these words?

- skein

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- ply

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- casting on

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- stockinette stitch

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- garter stitch

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- ribbing

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Read through the project book again to find the meaning of each word.

# Show Others What You Have Learned

## Exhibits

Invite your friends and neighbors to see what you have made. Be sure your articles are clean and that they look as nice as you can make them.

## Demonstrations

A demonstration means “to show someone else how to do something.” Choose one special thing you have learned and use it for your demonstration.

Here are a few suggestions:

- what tools you need for knitting
- how to make a pompom
- how to make a butterfly bow
- how to cast on
- how to knit
- how to purl
- how to knit ribbing
- how to bind off
- how to sew a flat overcast seam

## Complete Your Record Book

Your record book is important. Examine it carefully. Complete the record as you work on your project. Each year your record book adds a new chapter to your 4-H club story. Are you proud of your record book?

# Scoring My Knitting

• Why I enjoyed this project: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

• Why I like what I made: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

• Cost of project: \_\_\_\_\_

• Type of yarn used in project: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Leader's opinion of participant's progress: Fair \_\_\_\_ Good \_\_\_\_ Excellent \_\_\_\_

PROCESSES I LEARNED	HOW WELL I DID ON THEM		
	Excellent	Good	Should Be Improved
Cast on stitches _____			
Knit _____			
Purl _____			
Ribbing _____			
Bind off stitches _____			
Sew seam _____			
Pompom (or other decoration) _____			

APPROVED: \_\_\_\_\_

*Project Leader*

*Parent*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*County Extension Agent*

# Knitting Record

County \_\_\_\_\_ 4-H'er's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Club \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_

Age \_\_\_\_\_

• I made \_\_\_\_\_  
*Describe knitted article(s)*

• Other knitted articles I made this year \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

• I gave demonstrations on \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

• I helped \_\_\_\_\_ others with knitting by \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

• I plan to and/or have exhibited or modeled my article(s) at:

Local 4-H Rally \_\_\_\_\_

Fashion Revue \_\_\_\_\_

County 4-H Rally \_\_\_\_\_

Area Events \_\_\_\_\_

County Fair \_\_\_\_\_

Other Events \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## MY KNITTING PROJECT STORY



**4-H PLEDGE:**

I pledge my head to clearer thinking,  
my heart to greater loyalty,  
my hands to larger service, and  
my health to better living,  
for my club, my community, my country,  
and my world.

**4-H COLORS:** Green and white.

**4-H MOTTO:** To make the best better.

