LET'S LEARN TO KNIT

with knit and purl

Phase 1
4-H Club Series L-92
# Let's Learn to Knit - - With Knit and Purl

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## PHASE 1

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(Many of the illustrations in the 4-H knitting project series are courtesy of the Educational Bureau, Coates & Clark, Inc.)

Read this bulletin from cover to cover before you start your project.
Your Guide for the Project

What you will learn

1. What knitting means.
2. How to wind yarn; make a pompon or tassel; cast on stitches; knit; purl; and bind off stitches.
3. About knitting tools.
4. About knitting terms.
5. About the importance of caring for your hands.
6. How to make a knitting basket.
7. About yarns.
8. How to keep records.
9. To share with others the things you have learned.

What you will make

You will make two or more articles, such as a hot pot holder, slippers, or a hat, requiring the skills to be learned in this project.

Exhibit your work

You may exhibit two articles showing that you have learned the skills required in this project.

Start your record book

Your leader will give you your 4-H records and 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 3-ring loose-leaf notebook or folder. This will help keep them neat and clean, and they will not be as likely to get lost or misplaced.

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 to invite your family friends to your home. Show them what you have knit. Tell them what you have learned about knitting.

What is Knitting?

Knitting is the making of a 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 another method; if so, follow her directions. 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 will confuse you. The main thing is to learn to enjoy your 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

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. Your leader will tell you what size needles you will need for your first project.

Knitting Needles

You will need a crochet hook to pick up dropped stitches and to correct mistakes. They also come in many sizes. Size 0 is a good one for this project.

Crochet Hook

As you can see, knitting needles are strong and have sharp points, so be careful with them and learn to use them properly. It is a good idea to put stoppers on the tips of your needles when you put your work down. This will not only keep the points from sticking people, but it will also prevent your stitches from slipping off your needles. Little rubber tips are made just for this purpose or you can use small corks. Be sure and keep all of your knitting tools out of reach of small children.

Measuring Tools

You will need a measuring tool. You may use a ruler, either a 6- or 12-inch one will do, a measuring tape, or a metal measuring gauge.
There is also a “knit check” that is made especially for knitting. The open “L” in the lower left hand corner is for measuring the “gauge,” and the series of holes along the top is for measuring the size of needles.

Other Tools

Some other things you will want to include in your knitting basket are a pair of small scissors (kept in a case for safety), a blunt-pointed tapestry needle for sewing your articles together, and, last but not least, a nail file or emery board for catchy fingernails. If you have a rough fingernail it will catch on the yarn.

Clean Hands

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

“Hands freshly washed and nails clean too,
Will help keep your projects looking like new!”

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

You can make a very handy knitting “basket” at little or no cost from a large oatmeal box. To make your basket pretty as well as useful, you can cover it with wrapping paper, wall paper, cloth, or contact paper. A paper bag is not a very good idea because it tears easily and you may lose some of your tools.
Making an Oatmeal-Box Knitting Basket

Step 1
To cover the box, you will need a piece of fabric, wrapping paper, wall paper, or contact paper (this is easiest of all to use), which is 1 inch longer than the distance around the box and 1 1/2 inches wider than the box is high; plus a square 1 inch wider than the width of the lid and a strip 1 1/2 inches wide and 1 inch longer than the distance around the lid.

Step 2
Lay the box on the material you have selected so that the material is 1 inch above the top of the box and 1/2 inch below the bottom of the box.

Paste the material to the box. Be sure to keep it even—1 inch above the top of the box, 1/2 inch below the bottom. Careful—don’t get wrinkles. Your material will lap over about 1 inch.

Step 3
Now, holding the box so the bottom is facing you and with a pair of sharp scissors, carefully make a series of cuts about 1/2 inch apart through the material to the edge of the bottom of the box.

Step 4
Next, fold and paste the narrow strips to the underside of the box.

Step 5
Now you are ready to cover the lid. Cut a circle of material 1 inch larger than the lid. Then paste the top of the lid to the material. Be sure it is centered.

Carefully make a series of cuts about 1/2 inch apart through the material to the edge of the lid. Then fold and paste the narrow strips to the rim of the lid.

Step 6
Now take the 1 1/2 inch-strip of material (1 inch longer than the distance around the lid) and paste it so one edge is on the rim of the lid—just below the top of the lid.

Now fold and paste the other edge to the inside of the rim.
Step 7
To make a handle for your basket, make a twisted cord. Take a strand of yarn six times as long as the desired finished length. Double the yarn and twist tightly, holding both ends. Or you can knot the loose ends of the strands and insert a pencil in each loop. Twist the pencils in opposite directions until the cord begins to curl.

Hold the center and place the two pencils side by side. Allow the cord to twist of its own accord. Pull to make the twist even.

Step 8
To attach the cord to your knitting basket, punch two holes on opposite sides of the basket about 2 inches down from the top.

Now thread the ends of the cord into the holes from the outside, and tie a knot on each end on the inside.
There are many different kinds of yarn. All knitting patterns give the kind or size of yarn and the amount you need to make the garment. For your first project your leader will tell you what size and how much yarn to buy.

When buying yarn, always buy enough to make the complete article, since no two dye-lots are exactly the same. If there is any doubt about the amount of yarn to purchase, it is far better to buy a little more than not enough.

You can purchase yarn in wound “skeins,” balls, or by the ounce in a loose “hank.” When you buy yarn in a “hank,” it is necessary to roll it into a ball before you start working with it.

**How to roll a hank of yarn**

If you follow these directions for rolling a hank of yarn into a skein or ball, it will pull out from the inside.

1. Carefully untie the hank, keeping it in the large loop. Have someone hold it for you, or drape the loop over the back of a chair.

2. Measure off 10 or 12 inches from the free end of the yarn. Holding the loose end firm with your thumb, roll the yarn around 3 fingers very loosely 12 or 15 times (Fig. 1).

3. Slip the yarn off your fingers, and hold it firmly on end with the free end of the yarn hanging loose (Fig. 2).

4. Now very loosely wrap the yarn around the part you rolled on your fingers about 12 or 14 times. If you pull the yarn too tight, it will not pull free from the center of the ball when you are ready to knit, and it may also take some of the stretch out of the yarn (Fig. 3).
5. Now that you have formed the base for your ball, hold your thumb on the spot where the free end of yarn is coming out and your fingers on the opposite side. (We will call the side with your thumb the top and the other side the bottom.) Hold the free end of yarn in the palm of your hand with your little finger.

6. Now, gently wind yarn from the bottom, toward you, across top of ball, keeping the yarn close to your thumb (Fig. 4). Keep turning the ball slowly counter-clockwise. Be very careful to keep your thumb in the hole you form as you wind, and keep the free end of yarn free. Be sure you wind the ball loosely. Always wind from bottom across top—never around sides. If the ball becomes too pointed on the bottom, squeeze it more tightly between thumb and fingers.

7. When the yarn is all wound, tuck the end under several loops of yarn. When you are ready to knit, the free end you hold in the palm of your hand will pull out easily and the ball will not roll away (Fig. 5).

**Figure 4**

**Figure 5**

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**Five Rules to Learn Before You Start to Knit**

**Rule one**

*Learn knitting abbreviations.* These abbreviations are the A-B-C'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
- *..........................Repeat

**Rule two**

*Always read directions step by step.* Never "read ahead" when you are following directions.

**Rule three**

*Make sure you understand the importance of your "gauge."* The gauge is the most important part of all knitting. It is even more important than having the right size needles.
What is the gauge? Gauge means the number of stitches in each inch across your work, and the number of rows in each inch up and down your work. Some people knit tightly and others knit loosely, so the only way to tell if your gauge is the same called for in the directions is to knit a little sample of your work (a swatch) and count the stitches across, and the rows down for every inch.

Put two pins exactly 1 inch apart and count the stitches between. If one inch has fewer stitches than the directions call for, you need to use a smaller needle. If it has more stitches, you need to use a larger needle.

Rule four

Always finish the row before putting your work down. BUT, if you must put your work down in the middle of a row, then when you pick it up again, be certain that the END OF THE YARN COMING FROM THE BALL IS IN YOUR RIGHT HAND. Then you can’t go wrong.

Rule five

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 and the “knit” stitch as a V-neck sweater and the “purl” stitch as a turtle neck sweater.
Now Let's Learn to Knit

To practice the first steps of knitting, it is suggested that you make a square or "swatch" using size 8 needles (10-inch length) and 4-ply knitting worsted, or make a pot holder using size 8 needles, 10-inch length, and cotton-rayon rug yarn. Before you decide what to make, discuss it with your leader. She may have some better ideas.

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

Pot Holder

Materials: 1 skein of cotton-rayon rug yarn
1 pair No. 8 10-inch knitting needles

Cast on 25 stitches. Knit every row, slipping the first stitch on each row as if to purl. The yarn will be in front of the needles; put it in back of your work by pulling it between needles and down in back. When the piece is square, bind it off.

You can make a loop to hang your pot holder by leaving the yarn long enough to make a double loop, or you can sew on a curtain ring.

A Practice Square

Materials: 1 ounce 4-ply knitting worsted
1 pair No. 8 10-inch knitting needles

Cast on 25 stitches. Knit every row until the piece is square; then bind it off.

Casting On—The First Step in Knitting

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 loosely as to allow the needles to fall out.

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

First Method

How to begin

1. Allow 1 inch of yarn for every stitch you cast on.

2. Since you want 25 stitches, measure off 25 inches of yarn (Fig. 6).
3. Make a slip loop 25 inches from the end of the yarn (Fig. 7). Make the loop by following the steps shown in Figures 8, 9, 10 and 11.

4. Place the loop on the needle and gently pull the ends of the yarn (not too tight) (Fig. 11). The ball end of the yarn is to the right and the free end of the yarn to the left.

What to do with the right hand
1. Place the needle between the thumb and first finger, as if you were holding a pencil (Fig. 12).
2. Be sure that the loop is near the pointed end of the needle (Fig. 12).

3. Using the ball 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 (Fig. 12). The second and third fingers are very important because they keep the flow of yarn even, not too tight or not too loose; that is, they regulate the tension.

What to do with the left hand

1. Grasp the free end of the yarn lightly against the second, third, and fourth fingers (Fig. 13).

2. Place the yarn near the needle around and under the thumb (Fig. 14).

Procedure

1. Notice that the yarn makes a loop around the left thumb.

2. Insert your needle through the underside of the loop (Figs. 15 and 16).

3. Bring the yarn in the right hand over the point of the needle from the back (Fig. 17).

4. Draw it through the loop (Fig. 18).

Now you are ready to work

Bring the hands close together and adjust the yarn. For position, see Figure 15.
5. Gently pull the free end of the yarn with the left hand to tighten the stitch (not too much) (Fig. 19).

6. Repeat steps 2 to 6 until you have 25 stitches on the needle.

**Second Method**
Repeat steps 1, 2, 3, and 4 of first method.

5. *Loop the loose end of yarn over left thumb, and the other end (ball end) over index finger; bring both ends of yarn down across your palm and hold them with remaining fingers (Fig. 20).

6. Bring the needle back under the yarn around your left thumb (Fig. 21).

7. Across and under the yarn on your index finger, draw the yarn so now there are two loops on needle (Fig. 22). Slip the loop off your left thumb and loosely pull the loop on the needle with your thumb in same position as at the beginning (Fig. 23).

Repeat from *until you have the desired number of stitches on the needle.
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. For position see Figure 24.

2. The first stitch is held lightly by the index finger near the tip of the needle (Fig. 24).

As you practice knitting, you will learn to adjust the yarn so that you will get the best results (Fig. 25).

Now you are ready for work

Bring your hands close together and adjust the yarn. For position see Figure 26.

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 (Fig. 25).

2. The yarn is placed over the first finger, under the second, over the third, and under the fourth above the knuckles.

Procedure—first row

1. Insert the right needle into the front of the first stitch on the left needle from the left side (Fig. 27).

2. Steady the right needle against the forefinger of the left hand. Keep your yarn to the back of your work.
3. With the right hand bring the yarn over the point of the right needle (Fig. 28).

4. Draw the yarn through the stitch (Fig. 29).

5. Slip the old stitch off the left needle, thus completing the first new stitch. A new row is being formed on the right needle (Fig. 30).

6. Always keep pushing your work up so that the stitch on which you are working is near the tip of the needle.

7. Repeat steps 1 to 5 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, Fig. 27)—"Over" (Step 2, Fig. 28)—"Through" (Step 3, Fig. 29)—"Off" (Step 4, Fig. 30).

8. Now you have knitted one row. You should have 25 stitches on the needle.

Second row and 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 (Fig. 25).

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 (Fig. 31). 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.
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. In purling you insert your needle in the front of the stitch from the right side (Fig. 32).

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.

Binding Off

When your "swatch" or pot holder is square, you are ready to finish it. This is 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 second stitch very loosely. (There are two stitches on the right needle.)
3. Insert the left needle through the left side of the first stitch (Fig. 24).
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 (Fig. 33).
6. Knit the next stitch loosely. There are two stitches on the right needle.
7. Repeat steps 2 through 5 (Fig. 34).
8. When you come to the last stitch, clip your yarn about three inches from the needle. Bring the loose end through the stitch remaining on the needle and pull tightly (Fig. 35). 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.
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.

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

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

**Hat-overcast seam**

1. If you look carefully at the side edge of a knitted fabric, you will see that the end stitches of your fabric have two threads forming a top and bottom edge (if you have slipped the first stitch of each row) (Fig. 36).

2. Place the two pieces to be sewn with edges even and wrong side up.

3. 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 tapestry 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 (Fig. 37).

4. 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.

5. 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 (Fig. 38).

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” (Fig. 39).
If you find that the two edges are not coming out even (in other words if one side has a few more stitches left 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 you have completed your seam it should be flat and even with almost as much stretch or elasticity as your knitted fabric.

Suggested Patterns

You may use any patterns you and your leader may have. However, until you have had enough practice so that your gauge and tension are nice and even, it will be best to stick to using 4-ply yarn and large needles (size 6 or larger) and make several small articles using the plain knit stitch.

First you will find the patterns for the tassels or pompoms you will need for your articles. If you make them first, you will see how the yarn stretches and then "jumps" back into place.

Tassels
Cut a cardboard 4 x 3 inches. Wind yarn around the 4-inch width 45 times. Tie a double strand of yarn around the top. Make sure you tie it securely or the strings will come out of your tassel when you cut the bottom. Cut the yarn at the bottom (Fig. 40).

Pompons
Cut two round cardboard discs the desired size (2½" in diameter for a medium size pompon, larger for a larger pompon) and then cut a ¼ to ½ inch hole in center. Thread a tapestry needle with two strands of yarn and cover the discs (Fig. 42).
After the discs are entirely covered, slip scissors between them and cut all threads at the outside edge (Fig. 43).

Wind a thread several times between the discs (Fig. 44), leaving the ends long enough to join pompon and article. Remove cardboards and trim. To make your pompon very fuzzy, place the finished pompon on the end of a table fork and hold it over a steam kettle; keep turning the pompon slowly until it is moist and fuzzy. Be very careful not to burn yourself!

Figure 43

Figure 44

Stretch Bed Socks

MATERIALS: 1 pair No. 8 10-inch knitting needles.
2-oz. skein 4-ply knitting worsted.

GAUGE: 4½ to 5 sts = 1 inch.

Cast on 28 stitches (heel). Knit every row until the piece measures the length of your foot. Break off the yarn, leaving an 8-inch end. Thread yarn into a tapestry needle and slip stitches from knitting needle onto tapestry needle; pull stitches up very tightly and fasten securely. Sew edges together for 2 inches above the drawn up stitches to form the toe. Fold cast on edge in half and make a seam for center back.

To make a tie for your slipper, make a twisted cord like the one with the directions for the knitting basket on page 5.

You may trim your bed socks with a pompon or make a flat bow by casting on 8 sts and knitting for 3 inches; bind off. Tie in the middle and place on toe of sock.
T.V. Slippers

SIZE: Adjustable.

MATERIALS: 1 4-oz. skein of Nylo-Wool\(^1\) or 4 oz. of 4-ply knitting worsted.
1 pair size No. 8 10-inch knitting needles.

GAUGE: 4 sts = 1 inch.
(Use double yarn throughout.)

SOLE AND SIDES:
With 2 strands of yarn, cast on 29 sts.
Row 1 (right side): Slip 1, K 8, P 1, K 9, P 1, K 9.
Row 2: Slip 1, K across row.
Repeat these two rows for 5 inches or 2 inches less than length of foot, ending on wrong side.

Nylo-Wool costs a little more than knitting worsted but it will wear much longer.

TOE:
Row 1 (right side): P 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 2\(\frac{1}{2}\) or 3 inches. Break yarn leaving an 8-inch end. Thread yarn into tapestry needle and slip stitches from knitting needle onto tapestry needle, pull stitches up very tightly and fasten securely. Sew edges together for 3 inches from toe to instep. Fasten securely, weave end of thread into slipper on wrong side. Sew up heel. Trim with pompon.

Hat

MATERIALS: 1 pair No. 8 10-inch knitting needles
2-oz. 4-ply knitting worsted.

GAUGE: 4\(\frac{1}{2}\) to 5 sts = 1 inch.

Cast on 35 sts. This will be about 7 or 7\(\frac{1}{2}\) inches. Knit every row until you have a rectangular piece which measures about 14 or 15 inches long (Fig. 45).
Sew short sides together (Fig. 46).

Fasten one end together making three loops, as shown in Figure 47.

Make three tassels and attach them as shown in Figure 48.
Complete Your Record Book

Your record book is important. Examine it carefully. As a first year member, you have just started to build a 4-H record. Each year your record book adds a new chapter to your 4-H club story. Are you proud of your record book?

Show Others What You Have Learned

Displays

Invite your friends and neighbors to see what you have made. Be sure your articles are clean and well pressed 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 knitting basket
- How to roll a ball of yarn
- How to make a pompon
- How to make a tassel
- How to check a gauge
- How to cast on
- How to knit
- How to purl
- How to bind off
- How to sew a flat-overcast seam

Are You Ready for the Next Project?

— Have you learned the skills in this project?
— Have you knitted enough so that your tension has become even and uniform?
— Have you made two or more articles using these skills?
— Have you kept your record book up to date?

Keep this bulletin. When you have completed all of the 4-H knitting projects, you will have a complete knitting book.
THE 4-H CLUB PLEDGE

I pledge . . .
  my HEAD to clearer thinking
  my HEART to greater loyalty
  my HANDS to larger service
  my HEALTH to better living
  for my club, my community, and my country.

THE 4-H CLUB MOTTO

To make the best better.