

Learn to Knit

Knitting Basics Resource Guide

This guide provides an overview of knitting concepts, equipment, stitches, and techniques. When you're ready to try a beginner project, follow one of the online tutorials at the end of this guide.



Basic Concepts

- **Gauge:** Gauge is a critical concept in knitting—it's the number of stitches in one inch of fabric that determines the size of a finished project. Every knitter knits differently, so the gauge will be different depending on the yarn, needle size, and whether you knit tight or loosely.
- **Reading a pattern:** Knitting patterns and charts look like a language unto themselves—with mysterious abbreviations and instructions. Once you crack the code, you will be ready to tackle any knitting project. Some basic stitch abbreviations include:

BO is an abbreviation for **bind off**.

CO is an abbreviation for **cast on**.

dec is an abbreviation for **decrease or decreases**.

K or k are common abbreviations for **knit**.

P and p are abbreviations for **purl**.

rnd and rnds are abbreviations for **round and rounds**.

st and sts are abbreviations for **stitch and stitches**.

Garter stitch fabric is created when you knit every row.

St st is shorthand for **Stockinette stitch**. It is created when you alternate between knitting one row and purling the next (or vice versa).

Basic Equipment

- **Knitting needles:** Knitting needles come in all sizes and materials. There are many different types of needles, including straight, circular, and double-pointed needles.
- **Yarn:** Often comes in a skein, in different textures and materials, including cotton, acrylic, and wool. Often described by its weight; super fine is great for lace, while super bulky is good for blankets and finger knitting. Worsted Weight is the most common weight.
- **Yarn needles** can be used to weave in yarn ends.

Basic Stitches and Techniques

- **Basic stitches** include slip knot and knit (k), purl (p), yarn over (YO), make 1 (M1), decrease (Dec).
- **Basic techniques** include casting on, keeping an even tension, English vs Continental knitting, holding your needles, and binding off.

Beginner Tutorials for Simple Projects

- **Creative Bug with Debbie Stoller:** In her several courses, Debbie Stoller covers the fundamentals of knitting outlined in this resource guide and then walks through more advanced techniques and beginner projects. These are great courses for beginners as well as experienced knitters looking for a refresher. [Available with your library card](#). Search for “Debbie Stoller” once you’ve logged in.
- **Creative Bug with Carla Scott:** Learn the basics of knitting in this two-part course with Carla Scott. Carla covers essential skills outlined in this resource guide, including casting on, reading a pattern, and troubleshooting mistakes. In Creative Bug (link above), search for “how to knit.”
- **Beginner’s Knit Coffee Cozy with Becca Boland:** Create a simple coffy cozy [using this pattern](#) developed by staff member Becca.