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Modernizing Handmade Crochet Lace, An Antiquated Craft, Through the Development of a Blog

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MODERNIZING HANDMADE CROCHET LACE, AN ANTIQUATED CRAFT, THROUGH
THE DEVELOPMENT OF A BLOG

by

Livier Olson

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Master of Science in Fashion Business and Entrepreneurship

at

Lindenwood University

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THE DEVELOPMENT OF A BLOG

A Project Report Submitted to the Faculty of the College of Arts and Humanities
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Degree of Master of Science in Fashion Business and Entrepreneurship
at
Lindenwood University

By

Livier Olson

Saint Charles, Missouri

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ABSTRACT

Title of Thesis: Modernizing Handmade Crochet Lace, An Antiquated Craft, Through the Development of a Blog

Livier Olson, Master of Science in Fashion Business and Entrepreneurship, 2022

Thesis Directed by: Dr. Chajuana Trawick, Endowed Chair and Associate Professor of Fashion Business and Design for the College of Arts and Humanities

This project investigates the degree of difficulty involved in initiating a web-based blog and growing its content with the intention to create craft-based entrepreneurship. With the advancement in technology and the help of the internet and social media, this project also aims to express how a vintage craft can be modernized and continue to thrive as a cottage industry. The final deliverable is a blog that intends to educate the public about the history of crochet and its ties to the lace and fashion industry, tutorials for crocheted lacemaking, and the continued use of crocheted lace in modern fashion.

Keywords: *crochet, lace, Irish crochet, Irish lace, cottage industry, craft, vintage, handmade, entrepreneur, artisan, craft entrepreneurship, blogging, blog*

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Table of Contents

Acknowledgments	ii
Introduction	1
Literature Review	2
Methodology	9
Production and Analysis	10
Conclusion	14
Bibliography	16
Figures	22
Appendix	25

Introduction

Crochet has been a beloved pastime for far longer than can be pinpointed from historical findings. Today, you can find several weblogs (blogs) from seemingly anyone who is knowledgeable of the skill sharing details ranging from learning the craft to demonstrating independently created or pre-existing patterns. Crochet has even expanded from the use of fiber as you will find artisans who use all sorts of innovative mediums in their creations. My study and project took an interest in thread crochet, also referred to as crocheted lace throughout this report, which is just one specific medium and niche within crochet.

My investigation of the history of crocheted lace demonstrated how crochet is a handicraft that can thrive as a small-scale production business within a home. It reveals this robust cottage industry has provided a means of livelihood for many in the past and the length it has endured as such, classifying it today still as a viable entrepreneurship. The cross-examination highlighted missing links and resources for crocheted lace and its history within the artistic and academic communities. This study is a documentation of parts of the history of lace in fashion, the popularity of handmade lace, and crochet's connection to lace. The purpose of this project is to establish a modern-day resource for an area that has thus far been overlooked by studies in the fashion field and the creative arts field, and in the process modernize the old-fashioned perception of handmade crochet lace through a blog.

Literature Review

Blogging Snapshot for Aspiring Entrepreneurs

The last decade has categorized a staggering increase in the number of blogs on the web. During Mohr's study, there were approximately 160 million public blogs in 2011, and that number doubled within 2 years (2016). Almost 10 years later, the number of websites created daily is approximately a quarter of a million, with about 600 million blogs existing among the 1.9 billion websites today. Since 2013, blogs have been increasingly used by consumers to inform themselves about their shopping choices beforehand (Mohr, 2016). A well-implemented and utilized blog is a valuable (and cost-effective) method of marketing. It has been documented to be an excellent approach for self-promotion, personal branding, and an effective sales tool due to cultural, social, and economic resources and influences (Griffey, 2014; Mohr, 2016; Pedroni, 2015).

Effective promotion and marketing have been noted as weak areas for artisan entrepreneurs, so the implementation of a blog as part of the startup process ought to be considered. Griffey (2014) spent a year establishing a blog to launch her e-commerce business that is still viable today, proving that maintaining her blog is a valuable resource to her company. In addition to providing a marketing avenue, blogging can provide external advantages like raised awareness, an improved brand image, a method to create new leads, a way to build a fan base, faster communication with consumers (and therefore receipt of feedback), improved brand loyalty, and another means to generate profitability (Griffey, 2014; Mohr, 2016). These advantages can be key for any modern-day entrepreneur in a cottage industry, as is the case with Irish crochet. However, to understand the true depth of the significance in Irish crochet

popularity and its status as a lace, it is important to understand why it is distinguished from crochet in the first place.

Crochet v. Irish Crochet

Crochet is a textile created by a method of interlocking loops, both horizontally and vertically, with previously created rows of interlocked loops, versus only vertically when knitting a similar textile (Karp, 2018). Crochet typically uses yarn or threads spun from both natural and synthetic fibers. Modern contemporary fiber artists even use other resources to crochet with, such as wire, glass, balloons, and plarn (plastic yarn from repurposed shopping bags), as a few examples of the possibilities. The hook size and the thickness of the artisan's material of choice varies greatly, and this versatility is one of the contributing factors to its popularity.

Irish crochet is a specific crochet product that results in a lace-like textile and is considered one of the seven types of Irish lace (Pallisner, 1865/1984). Using finer threads, the closely textured stitches largely resemble Venetian Gros Point lace – arguably one of the most lavish and coveted lace fabrics that has existed to date. Both are a three-dimensional lace, manufactured of fine thread, often of a floral design, and are made without technical constraints (i.e., no hoop or framework is required to hold the work in progress). Venetian Gros Point is a needlepoint lace, and the work is “so fine that even with a magnifying glass, it is difficult to see the stitches” (Earnshaw, 1991, p. 160). It is extraordinarily time-consuming, difficult to teach, and challenging to master. Figure 1 is an example of a slight variation of Venetian Gros Point, using a woven tape for the solid areas. Multiple slight adaptations, such as the tape, were attempted to achieve the same effect in a more efficient manner (Kratz, 1988).

Irish crochet is made with an exceedingly thin steel hook and takes fine thread crocheted around a foundation of multiple threads to create the raised, three-dimensional effect that is seen

in Venetian Gros Point (see Figure 2). The mechanics of crocheted lace made the creation of a lace motif in about a quarter of the time of any needlepoint lace technique at the time. Additionally, Irish crocheted lace was easier to organize and distribute work between multiple workers, allowing for an assembly style manufacturing process, thereby increasing quantity and quality, while, simultaneously, decreasing production time. It was simpler to teach, not only in person, but also as written instructions to follow (Potter, 1990). Time and simplicity were the major contributors to the popularity of this new handmaking method.

Although it was a popular choice of handmade lace purchases, the conditions of its manufacture simultaneously tainted it as low status among its lace counterparts. Pallisner (1865/1984) decisively states Irish crochet as a substandard lace made from wooly cotton thread in the first edition of her book, *History of Lace*, originally published in 1865. Conversely, other publishing on lace histories state differently. Lefébure and Cole (1889) both agreed in their findings that crochet lace hardly required any financial burden, and yet, the results were incredibly sophisticated. They compared how young girls could obtain better lace results with crochet within educational centers, schools, and convents, where needle lace, crochet lace, and embroidery were standard skills to learn. Still, the conflicting opinions of crochet lace as primitive or not as worthy as “real” lace was of little consequence to its increasing dissemination and positive reputation. There was concern, however, among handmade lacemakers with the significant industrial advances that improved machine-made lace as a formidable competitor.

The Rise of the Machine

In the late 18th century, initial models of “lace” machines were altered hosiery stocking frames from the 16th century. These altered frames were first experimented with in the late 18th century when bobbins replaced the hooked needles on a carriage that moved the bobbins (and

thread) to intertwine between multiple threads, like weaving (Kraatz, 1988). These machines could only create a background mesh, a net made from silk or cotton thread, where handmade lace motifs were added onto by skilled embroiderers and lacemakers (Earnshaw, 1994). They were perfected in England in the early years of the 19th century but retained the principle of bobbin and carriage and by the mid-19th century, they were successful at producing a variety of needlepoint and bobbin-style laces (Bensimon, 2019). Continued advances led to hardly discernable imitations of even the most complex lace patterns that made prominent appearances at every Industrial Exhibition throughout the century (Kraatz, 1988). An alternate machine method was developed in 1883 in Germany using embroidery machinery. A lace-like pattern would be embroidered onto a delicate fabric (usually silk) that would later be destroyed with chlorine, or other corrosive liquid, and was aptly named “chemical lace.” This technique left behind just the dense embroidered stitches connected that, even from a short distance, looked equivalent to Venetian Gros Point and Irish Crochet (Earnshaw, 1994; Kraatz, 1988). The advantages were that machine-made lace was more precise, economical, and immensely faster to replicate.

The rise in machine-made lace production facilitated lace acquisition, and lace demand soared. An estimation of over 100,000 hand lacemakers in England existed at the beginning of the 18th century, but those numbers dwindled to less than 10,000 by 1860, with over 150,000 workers making machine lace (Bourke, 1994; Freedgood, 2003). With lace availability increased to the middle and lower classes, aristocratic ladies turned to “antiques” to distinguish themselves from “any ordinary girl in a gown of machine lace” and justify its higher price point (Kraatz, 1988, p. 152).

A cravat of Venetian Gros Point was commissioned by James II for his coronation in 1685, costing £36, and Irish Crochet work, in 1845, was purchased at £90 (Pallisner, 1865/1984). In

modern currency, these sums would equate to over \$7,600, and \$14,500, respectively. In 1895, a 3-yard-long by 18” deep flounce of Irish lace, created by eight lacemakers, sold for £230, a sizable figure of almost \$33,000 today (Helland, 2018). Well into the 20th century, handmade lace thrived in wealthy and royal circles, retaining its aura of privilege, wealth, and social status. However, with machine lace dominating the lace industry, time was a major factor to produce a viable quantity of handmade lace to remain competitive. Irish crocheted lace, although considered less stunning in comparison by some, thrived at the expense of the other needlepoint laces in the handmade industry (Earnshaw, 1994). In use for over half of a millennia, lace has gone through several cycles of popularity in fashion, and it has yet to make a complete exit from the scene.

The Perseverance of Lace in Fashion

There are numerous types of handmade laces falling under two categories. The first, needlepoint lace, resulted from embroidery around 1540, and the second, bobbin lace, derived from weaving and braiding techniques seen in passementerie, with the earliest evidence of the technique in the Zurich pattern book of 1561 (Earnshaw, 1994). By the late 16th century, lace had crept its way into all things fashion, beginning with ruffs edged with lace around 1580. The large lace ruff or a raised lace collar was a distinguishing characteristic of the fashion well into the 17th century (Earnshaw, 1991; Kraatz, 1998). Demand became high as fashion commanded that more lace be prominently displayed. Lace eventually not only adorned ruffs and collars, but also the trimmings of cuffs, hems, dresses, bonnets, intimate wear, and more. While there were changes in the quantity of lace used and who displayed it on their attire, its use remained largely consistent existing in fashion attire throughout most of the rest of the millennia (Earnshaw, 1991).

Census studies show us that the lace industry, in general, was declining after the mid-19th century, as there were only about 40,000 reported English factory lace workers by 1907, and lace

machine numbers had dropped by more than two-thirds (Bensimon, 2019; Bourke, 1994). Despite the industry decline, there were multiple contributing factors to the exponential-like increase in value paid for handmade lace after the mid-19th century. Several societies and guilds were established throughout England and Ireland to support the handmade lace industries, such as the Irish Industries Association under the sponsorship of aristocrats like Ishbel, Countess of Aberdeen, and Theresa, Marchioness of Londonderry (Helland, 2008; Helland, 2018), and the Arts and Crafts Society “aimed to promote and improve the practice of the Artistic Handicrafts in Ireland – and of all the work of an ornamental and decorative character” (Bowe, 1990, p. 175). Several mentions of royalty and high society ladies using “old lace” for prestigious events were common in the press and popular magazines (Burke, 2019; Helland, 2008; Helland, 2014; Helland, 2018). Organization efforts ensured lace commissions, sales, exhibitions in world fairs, press mentions, and magazine marketing.

Private and museum ownership competed to acquire the rarest pieces of real lace throughout Europe. Handmade lace was sought after by the affluent, and by museums who sent their representatives to grow their collections for various exhibitions and entries to world fairs (Bowe, 1990). From 1888-1914, the sales from the Irish Industries Association, from two depots alone, amounted to £230,000, a staggering estimated modern equivalence of \$30M (Bowe, 1990). Additionally, there were several publications of lace work and press that continuously found ways to depict the exquisite workmanship of “old lace” and place emphasis on the lack of artistry found in machine-made reproductions (Freedgood, 2003; Pallisner, 1865/1984). The irregularities that could only be found in something handmade and not in mechanical precision were preferred.

Fashion can be heavily influenced by elite members of society, and during the 19th century, it relied on those held with high regard in terms of wealth, status, fame, and education. However,

lace and crochet popularity had an abrupt market end during the second decade of the 20th century, presumably with the world changes from the Great War. The Jazz Age sparked the appeal and use of lace allowing for it to make a comeback while still maintaining a preference for obtaining old lace over modern creations (Earnshaw, 1991; Kraatz, 1988; Potter, 1990). By the 1940s, crochet and lace were once again a fashion staple in a woman's wardrobe and seen throughout her home (Kraatz, 1988; Potter, 1990). The market for lace abruptly ended with the onset of the Second World War, simplifying fashion as the focus was set on work of national importance in several countries. After the war, lace crept right back into fashion and by the late 1950s, world-renowned fashion designers such as Chanel, Dior, and Yves Saint Laurent were known to use profuse amounts of machine lace on extravagant gowns (Kraatz, 1988). Additionally, the recent invention of the brassiere brought about the lace girdle and textile advancements for elasticated laces. Great female stars, such as Marilyn Monroe and Rita Hayworth, posed in white lace lingerie that propelled the advertising of lace with sex appeal and effectively made it acceptable and arguably, distinctly feminine only (Earnshaw, 1991; Kraatz, 1988). Irish lace was also being promoted as part of distinctly Irish fabrics by celebrities such as Grace Kelly and Jackie Kennedy (Burke, 2018; Burke, 2019).

Increased interest in handmade things during the 1960s pushed crochet as a favored craft and with a public mindset of experimenting with new ideas, the art was taken up by men, causing the creation of larger hooks, new fashionable yarns, and free-form crochet techniques (Potter, 1990). The rise of feminism and its revolutionary actions seemed to have negatively impacted lace usage, resulting in a stark decrease in public consumption in favor of unisex fashions. However, designers continued using it among all collections, and to date, it continues to remain an evergreen

textile of choice in collections and designs for elegant wear and intimate apparel. Fashion designer Chanel noted in 1939 about the enduring qualities of lace that undeniably remain true to this day:

In contrast to so many rich elements which have lost most of their character as luxuries with industrialization, lace in adapting to the economic and industrial exigencies of our time has retained all its qualities of elegance, lightness and luxuriousness. (Kraatz, 1988, p. 178)

Methodology

I used a qualitative method with the intent to analyze the potential impacts the artisan craft of crochet has had and continues to have in the field of fashion. My approach required qualitative sources that included historical analyses of fashion, crochet, lacemaking, lace, and lace's position within the fashion industry. I applied long-standing qualitative resources that continue to be the prevailing authoritative histories of lacemaking in Europe, evident among the most current relevant published research. Due to the historical period of the origins of crocheted lace, I utilized limited quantitative studies to evaluate documented numerical data to determine the monetary value of lace and any known labor figures about the lace industry of the time.

With limited research on the direct relationship between crochet and fashion, an understanding of its indirect relationship relies on analyzing the factors directly affecting the state of fashion and any impact crochet provided within those factors. My approach is like similar research conducted within this field and identifies a relationship between how crochet and fashion exist. Furthermore, it ascertains how the influence of the craft has impacted the lace industry.

In determining that limited quality resources are not readily available for the craft of crocheted lace, I pursued creating a resource as my project to gather related information, educate an interested audience, and express that a blog is a suitable approach to modernize a vintage craft

like crocheted lace. For this project, I am defining the modernization of crocheted lace by identifying its existing applications in the fashion industry and demonstrating how to adapt it to current and upcoming seasons' fashion trends. I opted to vet through multiple sources to select a high-quality resource that acted as my guidebook in the creation of my blog to help manage the amount of time spent on the learning curve for this part of the project even though, there are multiple free resources that could have potentially helped me self-teach.

Production and Analysis

To start my blog, I connected with a handful of modern bloggers who were open to discussing how they approached building their blogs and their entrepreneurial journey. Most admitted that they just stumbled their way through numerous errors until it “just worked” or “clicked” using whatever free resources they could find via another free blog site or specific YouTube videos. I felt that taking the same approach to achieve a fully functional site in a state ready for a public launch by an entrepreneur would result in a timeline that is not ideal for the purpose of my project. So rather than taking a similar route, I opted to invest in a suitable educational program targeted at creating a new blog that would cover the background information and the technical foundation necessary for a functional blog. While there are free resources available, the downside is that the information gathered is either limited or superficial to provide its creator an opportunity to upsell the additional information. Consequently, it required an increased amount of time, which was a limited resource for me, to attempt to find the missing elements to connect the steps from each superficial free resource into a sort of amalgam of information. Additionally, I potentially ran the risk of still missing steps, misunderstanding necessary actions, or overlooking pitfalls. Investing in a credible resource greatly reduced those risks, especially in selecting one that continues to get updated as technology and products are

upgraded and advanced as I did with the “Blog by Number” signature course, by Suzi Whitford from *Start a Mom Blog*, after vetting several others (Whitford, 2020).

Blog creation on its own can quickly become a confusing route as there are several pieces to set up as part of the background before you even have a page to see. Understanding how they interact and coexist to publish a personal, yet public, space on the internet can be technically daunting to anyone without background knowledge in that field. Using the “Blog by Number” course content, I followed the steps to set up the necessary accounts with a hosting platform, a content management system (also referred to as a website creation platform), linking them together and integrating my site with external plugins and a separate business email account. These plugins enhance and facilitate my site’s capabilities such as creating landing pages, and forms, optimizing media uploads, email integration, assessment of search engine optimization (SEO) for each page and blog post, and more. This is likely where an immense amount of trial and error can occur for the blogger who is figuring it out on their own. There are numerous platforms for each step of the way, and some seem indistinguishable over what services are provided, and how well their customer service may be. Additionally, not all platforms are compatible with one another and have varying levels of user-friendliness. Not to mention the sheer volume of plugins available that a new blogger would have to vet through.

The course content also guided me through the visual editing and the various configuration sections for each part of the site – pages, blog posts, headers, footers, colors, and editing layouts. Connecting all these steps together with guidance took a great deal of time. Truthfully, it is still a bit cumbersome to navigate and easily forgotten since they are not steps done regularly while working on the site (unlike writing a blog post for example). Even with the assistance, I encountered my own incidences of trial and error as I was met with a few error pages on the

published site at times. Luckily, being a new blog, there is extremely limited SEO within the site and therefore it is not ranked highly anywhere on any Google searches anytime soon, so I retain the opportunity to edit and format without a major negative impact on my traffic hits.

Late into the project, I was exposed to a resource from Google called Sites which became a drafting area for my posts and content. This tool would have been very useful to quickly get a preview of what a page or post idea could look like live on my site in a safe, unpublished area. Sites had a very short learning curve and creating a draft page or blog post is immensely quicker. It also adds an additional layer of protection from accidentally changing a setting that would affect the site itself while drafting content. A Sites website can be published for the public eye or set as an interim public site with a select few invited to be able to view it. In hindsight, it could have been a very appropriate location for a project such as this and I would likely recommend this platform to anyone considering entering the blogging industry as a test run.

My personal struggle to find reputable sources to improve my lacemaking skills, difficulty in finding historical information about lace crochet itself, linking the craft of crochet with lace history, and the impact crochet has held as an industry inside and outside of fashion led to the categories I selected as the initial backbone for my blog: History & Research, Educational & Tutorials, and Modern Crochet. Material gathered that has been documented, studied, and researched would be shared under a “History & Research” category. The information shared here would be found in areas such as peer-reviewed sources, newspaper (or other reputable media) articles, museum findings, published books, or other similar resources. I decided to have a related but separate category labeled “Educational & Tutorials” that would cover both my knowledge to teach others and share any great sources that would not be directly from a verified source, such as a peer-reviewed journal article, and therefore could be pinned as educational based on my opinion

and expertise. As an example, I would categorize a lace-making tutorial or a post on tips for a beginner to lace and thread crochet here from either my own experience or through collaboration with another lace-crochet designer. Finally, I chose “Modern Crochet” as my third main category to share about crochet designs currently used or shared within fashion and décor, which designers or labels are incorporating them, where it is found in emerging (or declining) fashion trends, and similar content. I could have labeled it as “Crochet in Fashion” but decided that a décor-related trend would still classify the crochet as modern, even though it is not exclusively fashion.

In current investigations of crochet in modern fashion, it is apparent that it is a growing trend, both as a craft and as a fashion staple. The lure to the pastime is presumably largely affected by the recent worldwide pandemic that forced billions to slow down from their everyday hectic lives. Suddenly stuck at home with a limited number of things to do and ideas to try, many took to a new hobby. Crochet, and other handicrafts, were among the popular choices. The rise of crochet in modern trends has been slowly creeping back into the runway, being sporadically spotted over the last decade. However, the last 2 years have positively increased the number of collections that included crochet during fashion weeks around the globe. Additionally, there are even big box retailers carrying seasonal crochet inventory. Their participation in this trend formidably solidifies that consumer demand is present. Unfortunately, it is either faux crochet (made on a knit machine that mimics the look of crochet), or it has been obtained via unethical, or at the very least questionable circumstances, since the sheer cost of labor for handmade crochet can usually eliminate it as a profitable wholesale purchase. These occurrences are happening more frequently as part of the fast fashion global discussion and the fashion industry’s sustainability practices. While fascinating and worth further discussion, it is beyond the scope of this study.

Before this project, there were no resources found that combined the existing research and these topics about the craft in one location for an interested audience. Although the quantity of posts for my final project is low compared to a modern-day extensive blog, the potential for its growth is great and the current information is a solid foundation that would remain a valuable evergreen tool for anyone immersed in the world of crochet and interested in its connection to the history of lace.

Conclusion

In gathering research to gauge interest in my blog content, there was positive feedback from fellow crocheters who seemed interested in the content. They asked questions about my research that could help me formulate future content. I set aside a plan to create an area on the site where readers could provide further data or sources for me to dive into and share. Currently, visitors can leave a comment underneath my individual blog posts. Collections and studies that exist in sources beyond peer-reviewed journals, books, libraries, and museum artifacts could help decrease the gap where I make parallel conclusions, such as the value of crocheted lace during this focused period. I believe the site has the potential to slowly grow into a breathing, living space and become a formidable resource for future readers. The expressed interest I have experienced is beyond what exists in current academic areas of research and warrants further studies.

There are a couple of things that I would have done differently with my project if I had a reset option. As a budding entrepreneur, I have a vested interest in providing valuable information that others may find useful from my journey and knowledge gained. I wanted to include research on artisan entrepreneurship and expose my experience through this journey, the creation of my project, and document that a vintage cottage industry is still a viable way of income in today's modern economy providing insights to others on the same path. The rise in craft entrepreneurs and

handmade consumerism makes for very recent research available to review. Yet it also limited the volume of studies offered, which leaves a need for further findings to construct deeper inquiries and provide a more solid foundation for arguments.

Unfortunately, I realized extremely late into the project that it kept blurring the original intent of my project - a centralized resource on crocheted lace that did not exist. Even if it was properly segmented both in my research and on my blog, the different topics it exposed more than doubled the initial 3 topics I chose to start with, felt distinctly unrelated, and was delaying the completion of my project. I chose to postpone the topic for now and plan for it as a future addition should it make sense to integrate it into the site. The addition would highlight any insight and my experience to act as an inspiration for other creatives who may wish to pursue artisan entrepreneurship. I do not believe the site is so far developed that I will not be able to capture that growth and share the progress and journey with future readers and be helpful to future craft entrepreneurs. In hindsight, however, I would have focused my research in this area and had my project report on the experience of growing this craft-based site into a business site rather than on just the historical content within the site itself. While I do not think my site is not worthwhile, I wish I had taken the energy to delve deeper toward my entrepreneurial goals.

I used crochet as the medium for my study and to examine my modernizing antiquated crafts theory, but it is important to note that should this endeavor be repeated, another skill may produce different results. Even so, I do believe the project shows that with current technology, the availability of research, and the abundance of social media options, a rebranding of a vintage craft is more plausible than ever.

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Figure 1*Pair of Cuffs of Venetian Raised Needle Lace*


Note. Pair of cuffs of gros point de Venise, raised needle lace. Straight cuffs with a Baroque design of scrolling leaf shapes. The cuffs have probably been cut from a single border. Italy, ca. 1650-1700. Victoria and Albert Museum.

Figure 2*Border of Crochet and Silk*

Note. Border of crochet and silk. A long border with 'Vandyke' scallops worked with cream silk in a variety of crochet stitches. Each scallop and the portion of the border above it is decorated with four large flower-like rosettes. Two of the rosettes have padded rings in the manner of Venetian Gros point, one is worked with clusters of raised loop stitches, and the fourth has raised petals of tatting-crochet. The tiny scallops around the edges of the 'Vandykes' are reminiscent of the 'points' of early needle laces. Ireland, ca. 1890. Victoria and Albert Museum.


Appendix

The Dilettante Mama Website (www.thedilettantemama.com)



FREE GUIDE: 7 Secrets to Crochet Lace Like A Pro

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Hi, I'm Livier Olson.

I am a graduate student at Lindenwood University in pursuit of the Master of Science in Fashion Business and Entrepreneurship degree and this blog serves as my directed final project. I am a homeschooling mom of 3, a Navy wife, dog mom to 3, have a side hustle and...well, you get the picture – life gets chaotic. I have way too many interests and not enough time. Watch me dabble in crochet lace, pursue my dreams, and just live through my raw, happy life.

About Me

Latest Posts




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Persistence (or Resistance?) of Crochet

By The Dilettante Mama • April 30, 2022

Seeing this image reminds me of seeing images from the 1970s where the infamous 'Granny Square' had taken over everywhere and everything – home furnishings, decor, accessories and attire. Indeed, the crocheted granny square became a head to toe staple, but would you be surprised to find this cute mod...

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5 Awesome Crochet Designers or Blogs To Follow

By The Dilettante Mama • April 29, 2022

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By The Dilettante Mama • April 3, 2022

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Crochet – The Real Definition

By The Dilettante Mama • March 19, 2022

When I first started my master's program and I had to decide what the heck I was passionate enough about to intensely research and create a thesis around. I have been in love with lace for as long as I can remember and I was dabbling in different databases seeking...

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I would like to help you... see the beauty of lace crochet, learn how to create lace crochet, learn about the fascinating history of crochet lace, and find crocheted patterns.



I am really good at.... dabbling in many different things, hence the name of this blog. Mostly artistic type things though, which is why I keep coming back to crochet the most! I learned as a kid from my grandmother but have never ventured beyond creating blankets & throws with a few adventures in amigurumi. I have been wanting to expand my portfolio to wearables and improve my crochet lace skills to turn some designs I have had piling up in my head into actual physical items.

"That dress is beautiful. You are an amazing crocheter."


Jennifer

I gifted her daughter my first finished crocheted garment that inspired me to want to learn how to create patterns professionally.

For fun, here are a few things about me.

1. I was born in Mexico.
2. My family is my world and I'll do anything for them.
3. I love sleeping in as late as possible.
4. Please don't talk to me before a delicious morning cup of coffee.
5. I would rather have a maid than a private chef.
6. I'm crazy insecure and attempt to hide it well.
7. I am a night owl and a procrastinator at heart. (It's hard work mentally to not let those take over my life daily.)
8. I am a halfway decent plant parent.
9. I homeschool my children and love learning with them.
10. Baked goodies speak to my soul.

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The Learning Curve Project

This page is basically what started this whole process. In one of the first core courses for my degree, I began the journey to figure out how to translate crochet work from design to pattern and also to figure out how to create a functional blog. These posts highlight my experience of those learning curves.



The Learning Curve Project

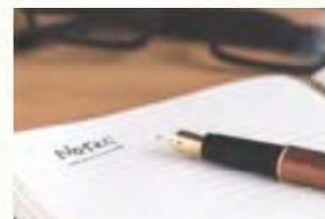
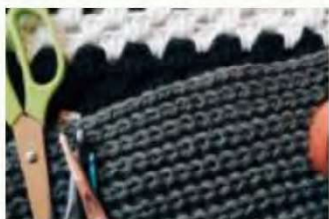
Hello everyone! Welcome to The Learning Curve. This is the obligatory first post that must accompany any blog. This isn't your typical blog but it calls for an introduction nonetheless. I am pursuing the Masters of Science in Fashion Business...

Schematics, Measurements, & Math

The gauge is possibly the most important piece of information provided in a pattern so someone else can recreate the same fabric. Since crocheting is a handmade craft and skill, there are human variables that cannot be accounted for. Two...

First Test!

The time has come! I think I've done everything I've needed up front to actually create (and write!) the pattern. Ironically enough, even though I am showing my progress on an electronic format, I still love using the good old-fashioned...



Pattern Testers & Adjustments

This was a whole other learning curve. I reached out to one of the (large) crochet social media networks that I participate in and asked for volunteer testers. I've seen this type of post numerous times and have even volunteered...

The Learning Curve Project's First Pattern

Voila! My first official pattern. It's been quite the ride. While this pattern is finished and it will produce a functional top as designed, it definitely can be improved. In my opinion, it isn't quite at the standard where I...

Notes for the Aspiring Crochet Pattern Designer

Ahhhh, the moment is finally here. It's time to reflect on the aspects of this project. The benefit of improvement is not the only one when I learn from my mistakes. It saves time, stress, and anxiety in the future...

History & Research



HISTORY & RESEARCH

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Modern Crochet



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Resources

This page is a collection of resources I have found and utilized before and during my studies at graduate school and continue to add as I come across them. These range from YouTube videos and related blogs to peer-reviewed articles, books, online courses, and more. Please note that throughout my blog, you may see me refer to crochet designers or bloggers not listed here that I think would be great to learn something from. However, I am limiting the ones listed on this page to either thread/lace/Irish crochet specific, have presented collections regularly in fashion shows, or are an established brand/label. Some of these resources are personal purchases and are indicated as having a cost with a \$ at the beginning of the citation. While I do have an affiliate disclaimer for my blog, I am not currently affiliated with these resources and do not receive compensation for their recommendation. However, I do stand by their use as they were very helpful in this journey and would still recommend them.

Journals/Articles

Lace/Crochet Related

- Bensimon, F. (2019). The emigration of British lacemakers to continental Europe. *Continuity and Change*, 34, 15-41. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0268416019000067>
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Blog/Entrepreneur Related

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Designers

1. Bailey Prado. <https://www.baileyprado.com/>.

Blogs

1. Irish Historical Textiles. <https://irishhistoricaltextiles.wordpress.com/blog/> This blog has not been updated since 2013 and social media accounts related to its author seem to have been deleted. However, this blog has some great informative posts and links to resources related to Irish fabrics, which of course includes Irish laces!

News/Other Print Media







Future add...

YouTube Channels

1. Julia Tushnicka. <https://www.youtube.com/c/ITHouse>. Ukrainian Thread Crochet Designer/Educator.

Courses

1. \$ Mullet-Bowlsby, S. (n.d.). Crochet Garment Design [Online Course]. Interweave. <https://www.interweave.com/product/crochet-garment-design-with-shannon-mullett-bowlsby/> (Paid Product)
2. \$ Whitford, S. (2020). Blog by number signature course: How to start a successful blog [Online Course]. Start a Mom Blog. <https://www.startamomblog.com/products> (Paid Product)

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Crochet – The Real Definition



When I first started my master's program and I had to decide what the heck I was passionate enough about to intensely research and create a thesis around. I have been in love with lace for as long as I can remember and I was dabbling in different databases seeking studies related to its use in fashion. That research led me down a rabbit hole of the types of lace, techniques and methods of lacemaking. Eventually, I found that one of the various ways to make handmade lace was crochet!

Crochet has been a hobby for me since learning it as a kid from my grandmother. I was honestly dismissive about its artistry and worthiness as rigorous academic study. It was definitely a "clouds split apart and the sun shined down on me with the angels singing" moment. If I'm going to discuss about crochet, I should start with its accepted academic definition, its defining characteristics, and whether there are any variations to that. It's been fascinating to say the least. I believe the information should be more readily accessible, so I'm here to share my awesome finds thus far. However, I plan to update this post and the resources page as I find more studies and relevant research.

Table of Contents

[What is Crochet?](#)

[Origins of Crochet](#)

[Why is crochet important?](#)

[How to get started with crochet](#)

[Tips for success in crochet](#)

[Frequently Asked Questions](#)

[The last thing you need to know about crochet](#)

[References](#)

What is Crochet?

Have you ever paused to consider academic research on a craft exists? It makes sense though when you are analyzing culture, impacts, historical studies, etc. Crochet is a fiber-based artisan craft and it is a derivative from needlework using a hooked needle. It seems a majority of the techniques and knowledge of the skill was handed down through generations of all classes. Crochet is mainly documented in history as an expected and proper pastime for aristocratic ladies, or as a necessary cottage industry for others.

The term *crochet* literally means "small hook". It is french in origin from the 1840s. The accepted definition is "a form of needlework done with a needle having a small hook at one end for drawing the thread or yarn through intertwined loops" (Dictionary.com, n.d.). Truthfully, I'm not sure if any modern-day crocheter would refer to it as a needlework now though. While medium-weight to bulky fibers seem to be the standard medium of choice, plenty of artisans get creative with a plethora of other resources like wire, balloons, and glass among several



others.

Since 1966, in *The Primary Structures of Fabric*, two types of interlooped fabrics have been classified – knitting and crocheting. The difference is that crocheting has loops interact and work with loops both laterally and vertically from the previous row, whereas in knitting, the loops only interact with those vertically from the previous row (Karp, 2018). A most accurate description – and while crocheters recognize the hook as the staple tool, it's interesting to note that defining crochet as a fabric does not have a specified tool annotated as it's maker.

Origins of Crochet

Origins of crochet are somewhat murky and difficult to pinpoint exactly with enough supporting evidence. The identifying term *crochet* shows up in documented publications prior to the 18th century, and there are existing crocheted pieces from different countries and eras (Karp, 2018). Although firmly embedded in European history, it is very possible that the technique existed elsewhere and inspired someone to introduce it back in Europe where it became a very popular method for handmade lace in Europe.

Why is crochet important?

When I first started graduate school, I didn't assume much about my crocheting hobby. I wanted to find studies on lace itself, or its use in fashion. It was during that journey that I found there was a link between the history of lace and the history of fashion, with crochet linking both. The existing research to see that connection or its importance is limited. They seem to focus on economic and sociopolitical conditions of the time period and my study is what eventually spurred the creation of this blog. Historical documentation and studies are done on several other forms of artistry and it's impact or effects – music, painting, etc. Crochet is no different. It too is an artform worthy of study and research, as well as a means of an enjoyable pastime for anyone.

How to get started with crochet

Seriously, all it takes is a hook and a fiber of choice... although I'd recommend a medium-weight yarn for ease of learning. There is a huge range of hook sizes and yarn/thread weights, but what you choose to start with doesn't really matter a ton. You can follow the recommended hook size, or go with a bigger or smaller hook. Some obvious limitations exist, such as trying to use a 1.25mm hook with a super bulky yarn – you won't get very far and just end up frustrated. Bu bottom line is you have a little more flexibility than you think and you can start without too much stress about what to start with. I suggest starting with a light to medium-weight, solid-colored fiber without extra "fancy" elements (snubs, mohair, fuzzy, variegated, etc.). I also recommend starting with either a cotton or similar fiber (nylon, polyester, acrylic blends). Avoid the silkier contents in the beginning to establish your dexterity and preferred tension level. The vast majority of yarn labels have the recommended hook size to use located on its label, making it pretty easy to decide where to start.

Tips for success in crochet

If you are just starting out, resist the urge to splurge on expensive hooks and a whole bunch of yarn. Pick easy, beginner-friendly patterns to figure out if you'd truly love the work you are creating. Take your time and practice to improve your skills. You can make any pattern one color even if the pattern shows multiple colors to simplify. Heck, you could just make swatches of fabric from your thread or yarn. Swatches are literally just sample squares you'd create with either different stitches or by changing hook size. Swatches give great practice to get your tension and technique down. Plus, you also benefit from them by having physical representation for any future design work. In the future, swatches are a great way to warm up your crocheting muscles.

For additional tips or future patterns and announcements, please consider signing up for my [newsletter](#). It's 100% FREE, and to start you'll get FREE access to tips specifically for learning lace and thread crochet!

Frequently Asked Questions

Do I have to be an expert in "regular" crochet to learn how to make lace or thread crochet? ^

Absolutely not! Crochet in general is a very beginner friendly thing to learn! You can absolutely start as a complete beginner with lace and thread crochet. There are tips to make the learning curve smoother, but like any other craft, it just takes practice so if you wish to dive right in with thread, go for it!

What if I don't have money to get started? ^

You can get started for free by reaching out to your community! There are definitely local resources that you may be overlooking or hesitant to reach out to. Friends and family are a great place to start – maybe someone has yarn and hooks stashed from ages ago that they'd be happy to pass on. My favorite local resource outside of my warm circle is to reach out to my local Buy Nothing community, a hyperlocal gifting economy where your neighbors can possibly fulfill your requests. Even if one isn't a part of your area, find out if any other freecycle type of groups exist near you!

Common beginner mistakes are... ^

The most common mistakes are starting off with tricky yarn/thread. You can learn every lace technique with a heavier weight yarn if it

helps you learn the dexterity and fine motor skills to manipulate the fiber and the hook to get the movements down. If you want to dive in straight with thread though, I recommend beginning with a thicker cotton thread like #3 or #10.

The last thing you need to know about crochet

Crochet is an art form that is worthy of study and a delightful pastime for anyone of almost any age. I sincerely hope that you'll give crochet a chance if you've never tried it before. I'd love to hear your thoughts or about any other resources that I can add to the site in a comment below.

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← PREVIOUS

The Dilettante Mama Was Specifically Designed For YOU (and here's why)

NEXT →

Where Did Irish Crochet Originate?

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Where Did Irish Crochet Originate?



This question reminds me of those you used to see on a test as a kid in school where it seemed like it was a trick question. Like the answer is obvious... it's too easy... so then you doubt yourself on whether that is the correct answer or not. Yes, it is that obvious – the origins of Irish crochet are geographically tied to Ireland. But exactly where is a bit more murky.

Irish crochet is a specific crochet-made craft resulting in a lace-like textile and it's considered to be one of the 7 types of Irish lace according to Pallisner. She was a known expert on lace and wrote the *History of Lace* originally published in 1865! Her book is currently on its 4th edition and still considered an authority on the subject matter!

Circling back to understanding why Irish Crochet origins are not more specific, you should probably understand a bit about the conditions of living in Ireland during the mid-19th century.

A Ravaged Country

In the late 1840s, Ireland was shattered by famine and disease. After a combination of several consecutive potato crop failures and harsh winters, a political climate that still required exportation of other crops, there was practically nothing to eat. There was so much starvation that it led millions to either flee the country or risk death. As a result, there were several famine relief projects that had been established throughout the country. One of the most notable were nuns offering lacemaking classes in various regions of the country. It is presumed that this resulted in the creation of Irish crochet.

Clones Lace – One Irish crochet product

Right in the midst of possibly the worst time in Ireland's history, the Reverend Thomas Hand and Mrs. Cassandra Hand settled in Clones in October 1847 from England. The rural areas of Clones was one of the most affected in the country. Clones came to lose about 30% of its population.

Proper upbringing among aristocrat ladies included an expectation for skills in, and spend time in, lacemaking, embroidery, and crochet. With a desire to contribute to the relief efforts, Cassandra Hand established her own famine relief project from her home and provided lacemaking classes to create a source of income for local families. With crochet being the easiest and quickest lace to make at the time, she used some Venetian Point lace as inspiration, helped others adapt their own needles into crochet hooks, and a crocheted lace was born.





Clones lace is highly recognizable by the distinct 'knots' along the diamond mesh that is created to connect the various crocheted motifs.
Photo courtesy of Guild of Irish Lacemakers.

The lace is identified and named after its geographic namesake, Clones lace, and it is one of the 7 types of Irish lace. With connections back to England to provide buyers for the lace produced, Cassandra's efforts resulted in a school built, and extreme hardship was almost non-existent

in the area within the decade. Clones eventually became known as the center of lacemaking for all of Ireland by 1910. Clones was just one of various locations throughout Ireland where Irish lace, crochet made or otherwise, became the established cottage industry that provided employment for a vast number of families to ease the worst from the famine.

Another Possibility

However, not everything about Irish crochet is clear cut. There is conflicting evidence if it truly originated in Ireland to begin with. Mademoiselle Eleonore Riego de la Branchardière, born in England, is one of the generally accepted creators of Irish crochet among historians. She gives claims that crocheted lace did not exist prior to her first publication in 1846. She specified so in a forward of one of her Irish crochet books many years later, claiming that after learning how to make Spanish Point (another type of raised needlepoint lace), she figured out she could produce a similar result with her crochet needle. Since her mother was Irish, Mlle. Riego felt a certain bond with Ireland and held a large interest to help during the Great Famine. She did so by developing new ideas and designs for Irish crochet, and also worked on marketing for the industry on a global scale through new publications and entries to world fairs.

Throughout the second half of the 19th century, Mlle. Riego produced numerous publications about crocheted lace with patterns and directions. In 1887, she was commissioned by Queen Victoria to publish the *Royal Jubilee Crochet Book*. As a result, she is decisively established as the leading expert on crochet lace (and other lacework, knitting and tatting as well) during this time. However, beyond these publications that were mass-produced and distributed across the continent, there is very little evidence of any other direct involvement in the founding of Irish crochet itself.

It is without question that Mlle. Riego had an astute business mind and capitalized on establishing herself as an world-renowned expert. And given what we know about the timeline, it can be argued that perhaps Mrs. Cassandra Hand took a page out of Mlle. Riego's book, using her hook and another lace as inspiration, but there is no true way of knowing if one influenced the other or not. Therefore, a lack of more supportive evidence can likely indicate that Irish crochet was developed by the efforts of several different women who used their knowledge of crochet to help Irish families around the same time periods. This seems more plausible given its massive widespread growth in such a short time frame, along with the slight variations among them, such as the case with Clones lace being the only one with the distinguishing "knots."

Muddying the Waters

As mentioned earlier, there are 7 types of Irish lace, but not all are made using a crochet hook. As a result, it can make distinguishing relevant information difficult without further clarification. For example, Rosslea lace was another Irish lace that used crochet techniques. Others, such as Youghal and Kenmare laces, use needlepoint methods. Additionally, some lacemakers would utilize both a hook and a needle with both types, depending on their skill and technique. With a cunning eye, you should be able to distinguish between them on actual samples. However, when you are digging through historical documentation and references in publications, Irish lace just isn't descriptive enough to know the exact type, method or origin of creation.

I'd love to hear from you if you have a great reference that details more about Irish Crochet and its historical roots beyond what I have listed here and my resources page. Comment below your thoughts, suggestions, or questions and please consider signing up for my free newsletter.

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Is Irish Crochet The Same Thing As Irish Lace?



I come across this question all the time. The answer is both yes and no. Irish crochet is a *type* of Irish Lace. It is one of the 7 types of Irish Lace, according to Pallsiner. She was a leading authority on lace types and productions across Europe back in 1865 when her book *the History of Lace* was first published. Irish Crochet first sprang up sometime around mid-to-late 1840s and boomed as a cottage industry in Ireland largely due to the Great Famine.

A Little Background

There is some debate on whether the official origin was in fact Ireland or if it was inspired and adapted from outside sources, and who exactly was the creator of Irish Crochet. Still, there is no denying that Ireland is where it exploded and therefore, it carries its namesake. It's appearance is quite distinct from crochet in general, although that is more obvious today than it was then. Modern crochet artisans understand that Irish Crochet usually means the use of thread over yarn, and that perhaps there is some level of freeform in its creation.

Living Off Potatoes

In Ireland during the Great Famine, there was an overwhelming percentage of the population suffering from famine and disease due to a combination of harsh winters and multiple, consecutive potato crop failures from 1845-1849. Potatoes were the staple crop that over half of the Irish population depended almost exclusively on the potato for their nutritional needs. This combination of events caused several families to not have means for nourishment nor livelihood. Many families leaned into other methods of finding out how to make an income to provide for nourishment.

During this time, there was various efforts to help the nation find other ways to make a living. One of the ways was teaching the skill of lace-making to anyone willing to learn through schools and convents. Afterwards, the lacemakers could then sell their handmade effects to middlemen transactions who would export the lace to areas of high demand across Europe. Lace was exceptionally popular in fashion and dress during this time that entire families would learn the skill to increase the quantity that could be produced at a time.

Quality of Irish Crochet

After the introduction of the crochet hook as a method to make lace, handmade lace production increased drastically. The reasons were simply an issue of time and difficulty of skill when compared to the standard needlepoint making methods of other popular laces. Crochet-based lace took a fraction of the time that needlepoint-based laces did. It was also far easier to learn and teach, and therefore it was a quicker turnaround to becoming a skilled handmade lacemaker.





Oddly enough, these difference caused some dissent among lace experts at the time as well. Pallisner purposely *printed* into her book that she believed that Irish Crochet was an inferior type of lace. She believed that it was "spoilt because it is made with a woolly cotton thread" (Pallisner, 1865/1984). Conversely, another pair of lace experts, Lefébure and Cole (1889) who published their own book (*Embroidery and Lace: Their Manufacture and History From The Remotest Antiquity to the Present Day*) completely disagreed. They saw the sophisticated results that came from something that required essentially no financial burden on the makers, taking admirable notes for their book.

Other Irish Laces

As mentioned earlier, crochet is considered a type of Irish Lace. Some other Irish Laces that exist are the Carrickmacross, Limerick, and Youghal laces. Carrickmacross is considered the oldest of the Irish Laces and is an embroidered appliqué style of lace. Limerick lace is technically only embroidery based on a machine-made net. Tambour embroidery is thought to be the immediate predecessor of crochet – as it uses hooks to maneuver the thread in and out of the loop. Tambour work was known to have traveled and been introduced from the East (China, Persia, India and Turkey). Youghal lace, a needlepoint that does a decent job to mimic Venetian flat point lace but is easily identified by the quality of the thread chosen.

TL;DR The Bottom Line

Bottom line, while Irish Crochet is in fact Irish Lace, Irish Lace may not always refer to Irish Crochet. Sneaky, sneaky, Irish Crochet.

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← PREVIOUS

Where Did Irish Crochet Originate?

NEXT →

Your Quick Start Guide to Crocheting with Thread

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Your Quick Start Guide to Crocheting with Thread



I'm so excited you're even considering testing out the waters with thread crochet! Crocheting with thread can be a challenge but it is incredibly satisfying upon completion. I'm so proud of any motif I make because it always looks high quality and polished. When I first transitioned into using thread, I had trouble finding decent sources and tutorials to share the secrets or even just a good guide of where to begin. So, I've created this to share what I wished I had known in the beginning. I hope this helps you as you begin your journey to crocheting with thread and creating your own beautiful pieces of lace.

Table of Contents

- [What is thread crochet?](#)
- [Why is thread crochet important?](#)
- [How to get started with thread crochet](#)
- [Tips for success with thread crochet](#)
- [Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- [The last thing you need to know about thread crochet...](#)

What is thread crochet?

Thread crochet is truly not different than "regular" crochet... the only differences are that you use a thread rather than a yarn and a much smaller hook size than you'd typically find your average crocheters using. Sometimes you'll hear it referred to as lace crochet. I've heard others use Irish crochet as examples, but Irish crochet is a very specific type of thread crochet with a rich history and definitive nuances or features to make it distinguishable.

Why is thread crochet important?

There are certain looks created by crochet that are only possible from using thread instead of lightweight yarn. Size and thickness of the motifs created make a huge difference from the fiber selected. It is more practical to take a little lace item as a coverup for a tear in a favorite shirt or jacket since it can be small and inconspicuous or lay almost flush with the original fabric. Or as a fun accessory addition to give something in your closet a pop of color or make it unique. There is something so mesmerizing about the creation of something small and delicate.

How to get started with thread crochet




Nothing to be scared of – just dive right in. Grab the motif you're following. Here you'll find a nice simple free pattern you can follow. Wrap the thread around your non-dominant hand, your thin hook with the other, settle in and go!

Tips for success with thread crochet

Common misconceptions are that it is harder, more challenging, and takes longer. Let me be clear – it is NOT harder, but it does take more practice to get the hang of, especially for a beginner. I think that is because it is more challenging to figure out your hold for the right tension, and therefore people find it difficult. It can be easy to get frustrated and decide it is not for you. However, if you already know how to crochet, you have a slight advantage since you understand what your natural tension feels like and feels right while crocheting. Most people begin with tension too loosely and it can leave you with a wonky looking motif. If you are on the other extreme and have too tight tension, you'll have a hard time getting your hook to smoothly go through the stitches as you work. Thread holds feels differently than yarn and sometimes even requires to be held slightly differently to achieve that just right feel so even those who aren't brand new can still expect a little bit of a learning curve here.

Be patient! Getting used to holding the thread on your hand to get your tension just right takes a while with practice! It'll get better with consistency and time. When I say time, I mean it can take weeks (or months if you're a slow crocheter) to finish off an entire garment... and that's if you are making good quality motifs already. I don't suggest starting off with a project for someone or with a deadline. I.e. don't hold yourself to any high expectations of gorgeous lace ready for a wedding anytime soon. This is a one where it pays off to take your time.


Frequently Asked Questions

Do I have to be an expert in crochet basics? 

Absolutely not! This is a very beginner friendly thing to learn.

Does thread crochet take longer to complete? 

For the most part, a single motif not necessarily. But a whole project? Yes, that takes longer to complete. Mostly just based on sheer size, the bulkier yarn make up more space and vice versa. I like to compare it to crocheted blankets made out of granny squares. You have to make many and then have to join them all. In my opinion though, it gives you a greater appreciation for handmade work from other small artisan entrepreneurs.

What if I don't have money to get started? 

You can get started for free by reaching out to your community! Ask friends and family for any hooks or thread/yarn they may be looking to get rid of. One of my favorite community resources is my local Buy Nothing Group where I can ask my neighbors that exact question. Find out if there is one in your neighborhood or any other freecycle style groups.

Do I have to start with a particular thread? 

You don't. You can also practice any size thread or lightweight yarn with respective hook to start with and get yourself slowly comfortable moving down sizes to the size of thread you wish to use. If you want to dive right in and want a recommend, I'd say start with #3 or #10 cotton thread.

The last thing you need to know about thread crochet...

Biggest tip? Warm up your hand and wrist muscles! You're about to give them a workout so take care of yourself first. Consider warming them up on scrap yarn, making swatches, work on a "forever" project, etc.

Have any tips to add? Please let me know below!








← PREVIOUS

Is Irish Crochet The Same Thing As Irish Lace?

NEXT →

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5 Awesome Crochet Designers or Blogs To Follow



Crochet designers – how many of these incredible people do you know? I’m going to share a few great leaders in the crochet world that really changed my (crochet) life for the better. And by the end of the article, hopefully, you will have discovered a few crochet influencers that have wonderful sites with tutorials or patterns to follow to help improve your basic and/or intermediate crochet skills. Only one of these crochet designers focuses on using thread but practicing “normal” crochet functions just the same. Following and learning from other top crocheters will help you improve your thread results faster! Ready? Let’s dive in!

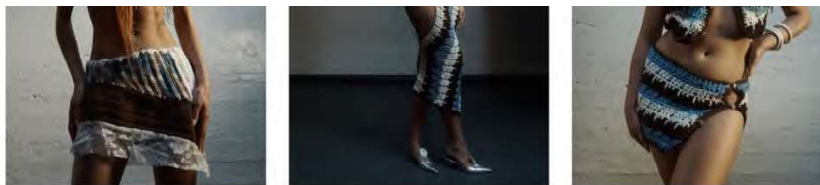


Courtesy of Julia Tushnicka [portfolio](#)

Julia Tushnicka

I have followed Julia as a role model for about two years now since her intricate work and gorgeous dresses are similar to the style of crocheted lace that I love to do as well. She is a designer and maker in Ukraine. I love Julia’s view on crochet as an art form. It is interesting to me that when she first started, she had reservations, as many other handicraft artisans and starting entrepreneurs do. How could anyone use a hobby to create a business? Would there be enough interested people in the world who would care to learn from her? By the time Julia founded JTHouse, she had already created several hundred garments so one could argue she was already a skilled maker and designer. Like most artisans though, Julia thrives and feeds off creativity. She found purpose after acquiring her first handful of students. Through my own personal entrepreneurial journey and seeking leaders in thread crochet and Irish lace techniques, I found my way to Julia. She seems to be in an incredibly unique position for this niche as I have yet find someone else who provides the type of product she does, of such high quality, in English, and works with students from all over the world. Find her and follow her work at: jthouse.net and <https://www.youtube.com/c/JTHouse>.

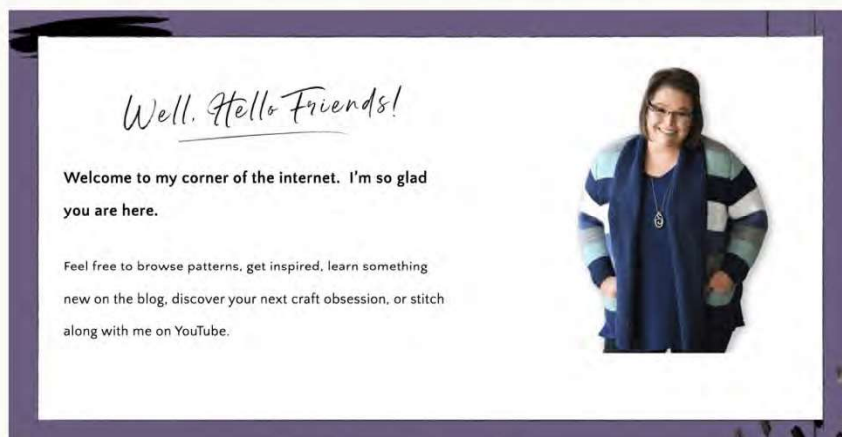




Courtesy of <https://www.baileyprado.com>

Bailey Prado

Bailey Prado is a designer and brand that focuses on modernizing textiles with handmade crochet. While living in London in 2018, her passion for crochet truly came about inspired by the raw and authentic youth culture of the London neighborhoods. Soon after, she established her namesake label in 2019. Bailey Prado emphasizes empowering women of color and aims to promote diversity in the fashion industry while bringing a truly unique style to the crochet world. Pushing the boundaries for modern-day use of yarn and integrating with what's considered formal attire, Bailey Prado is someone to keep an eye on. Learn more about her here: <https://www.baileyprado.com/>.



Courtesy of <https://marleybird.com>

Marley Bird

Marly Bird is an awesome knitwear & crochet designer. She's worked with many well-known yarn brands, companies, and magazines.

Additionally, I love that she shows that life can be well balanced with doing what you love and family life. She learned to crochet from her grandmother in 1999 and learned to knit from a dear friend in 2004. Marley is ultra creative, taking bits and pieces of things and other crafts and then turns around to create something new. Additionally, Marly has an easiness and clarity to her teaching method that she uses in her YouTube channel showing stitches step by step on both HOW and WHY the steps are done a certain way. If you are starting out, picking up after a long pause, or just want to brush up on some skill work, she is a great resource to browse. Connect with her here: <https://marlybird.com/>.



Courtesy of Bella Coco Crochet

Sarah-Jayne Fragola

Sarah-Jayne is the creator (aka the secret sauce!) of Bella Coco Crochet. She is UK-based and started her blog back in 2011 and grew with YouTube in 2013. Basically a crochet educator and crochet designer, she typically makes weekly tutorials with either new patterns or stitches for anyone to grow or practice their crochet skills. Her videos are simple, clean and straightforward. She has since grown her site to now include a Bella Coco Store with her favorite crochet-related items, a podcast, and has a fun crochet subscription box (if subscription boxes are your thing!). She occasionally has guest posts for you to be inspired by her favorite artisans and their creations. I love that her goal is to inspire every crocheter of any skill level. I'll be honest here that I follow her on YouTube more than on her site, but I know I can dive deeper on her site if I need to (which is rare because her videos are that good!). Find out more about her here: <https://bellacococrochet.com/> and check out her channel here: <https://www.youtube.com/bellacoco>.

Petals to Picots
CROCHET. KNIT. CREATE.

Courtesy of [Petals to Picots](#)

Kara Gunza

Kara Gunza is the mastermind behind Petals to Picots. I love the nod to crochet terms in her blog name. Kara is very experienced in her crochet skills since she learned it long ago from her Nonna. However, she is also skilled in other forms of fiber arts that she shares as well, like knitting and felting. Designer and creator, she's been published in several crochet publications such as Simply Crochet, Crochet, and Homespun to name a few. Kara mainly focuses on accessories, baby wear and home decor but they are classy and timeless and the difficulty ranges from easy beginner to intermediate crochet skill levels. The thing that you can be sure to bookmark from her? A resource page on her site that quick links to handy knitting and crochet references (think stitch symbol charts or a hook size chart, etc). Check out her site here: <https://www.petalstopicots.com/>.

And that's that!

Of course there are so many crochet designers and makers now that are very talented and it can be hard to keep up! These are just my favorites and ones I follow regularly to get inspired, feel motivated to add content, create something new, or find a treat to make as a distraction (and skill practice), etc. If you have a favorite crochet designer or blog you love to follow, list them below! I'd love to pay them a visit... you can never have too many favorites!



Persistence (or Resistance?) of Crochet



Ashish Gupta – Sorine/Summer 2019 @ London Fashion Week

Seeing this image reminds me of seeing images from the 1970s where the infamous 'Granny Square' had taken over everywhere and everything – home furnishings, decor, accessories and attire. Indeed, the crocheted granny square became a head to toe staple, but would you be surprised to find this cute mod dress is not from that decade, but rather just a few seasons ago in 2019's London's Fashion Week? Perhaps you're so on trend, you already knew that Ashish Gupta's annual collections almost always graces us with the craft of crocheted wear. However, have you noticed that many other designers have been incorporating crochet more frequently over the past few years?

Crochet has surprisingly taken very few breaks from being a popular fashion technique and trend since World War II. While it took a back seat during the war, the craft didn't completely disappear. Women helping the war effort would collectively make ear warmers and trench caps to send to soldiers overseas as well as use it to embellish the very simple and plain fashion of the time without making extravagant expenditures. After the war, crochet didn't take long to be molded into the familiar silhouettes of the 1950s, followed by a huge global trend in the 1960s. This is when the granny square made its debut, and crochet was deeply integrated into nearly every part of the home and everyone's wardrobe. It was common to be seen on both men's and women's styles. In the decades that followed, the trend diminished as other styles emerged but it has yet to fully disappear from fashion completely. Oddly enough, while crochet is not gender specific, it is more common to be seen worn by women.

Crochet is an exclusively handmade craft. There are no machines that can produce it and for the time being, only one model that can create a knit that mimics the look of crochet. It's pretty obvious why machine-made knitwear is the go-to knit fabrics of choice for most designers given that it's a time and volume problem. But crochet gives a unique handmade essence that cannot be replaced nor replicated. It emits a special aura to appreciate its artistry. It's nuances and differences from actual knit that make



Alberto Ferreri – Spring/Summer

Valentino – Spring/Summer

Nicky Zimmermann – Spring/Summer

it unique visually are only limited by the human imagination. And creatives thrive to blossom their creativity more.

So, you've been seeing crochet pop up in a few places from a handful of collections year after year. While it varies, you'll find it in collections of both garments and accessories. It trickles between well-established labels like Dolce & Gabbana and Dior, down to independent labels, like Lou de Bèto. These last few years, there has been steady increase in the number of crochet sightings amongst designer collections. The Spring & Summer 2022 collections were no different.

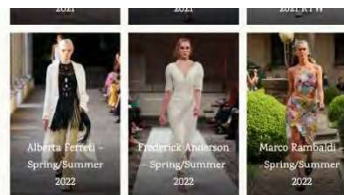
To give an idea of just how much crochet fashion has been trending lately, check out Pinterest's latest stats. Every year, Pinterest makes predictions based on their user activity and promulgates a trend report for the upcoming year in various categories. Can you guess what fashion term has been taking the lead lately? Yup, it's crochet - 'crocheted tops' specifically. It is mentioned in over 316k pins. Maybe that doesn't sound like much when you consider that Pinterest has over 431M active monthly users. However, when you compare it to the second most popular pinned term of 'cut-out dresses' mentioned in just over 88k pins, it's pretty mind blowing. Other terms that could add to crochet's popularity involves variations of the terms 'lace' or 'airy crochet' that would give off that quintessential summer vibe. Pinterest didn't post those specific numbers though. But note that all the latest runway collections seem to fit their predictions quite nicely.

It will be interesting to see how long the crochet fashion trend is sticking around in the main public eye this time. Plenty of celebrities have taken a liking to showing off something crocheted this year, such as Bella Hadid, Dua Lipa, and Rhianna. However, there is bit of concern that its bump in popularity is due to the lingering effects of the COVID-19 global pandemic. Many took up new hobbies while quarantining at home and learning how to crochet was a top contender.

Once you see a style hit mass box retailers like WalMart or Target, it's pretty clear the trend has been growing in popularity. However, this hits a whole new issue of ethical and fair trade based on prices seen at these retailers compared to the amount of labor a crocheted garment is expected to take. Either ways, for now, it seems crochet fashion is undoubtedly here to stay but whether it is sticking around for a passing season, or long-term for several seasons, is yet to be determined. So either go support a local crochet artisan, or pick up a hook and some yarn, and let your imagination run wild.

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← PREVIOUS

5 Awesome Crochet Designers or Blogs To Follow

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The Learning Curve Project



Hello everyone! Welcome to The Learning Curve. This is the obligatory first post that must accompany any blog. This isn't your typical blog but it calls for an introduction nonetheless. I am pursuing the Masters of Science in Fashion Business and Entrepreneurship from Lindenwood University. This blog has been *fashioned* as the directed project for my degree. The goal of this project is to learn the process of creating a pattern for a crocheted garment. The project ends with a polished, tested, and functional pattern with my journey detailed over a series of 6 blog posts. Additionally, it culminates with a newfound confidence on my ability to create crochet patterns.

What is Crochet?

I suppose that it's only fitting to insert a small blurb about crochet as part of my introduction in order to provide a frame of reference for my readers. Crochet is a fiber-based artisan craft that began with using a hooked needle. Having been derived centuries ago from needlework, a majority of the techniques and knowledge of the skill was handed down through generations of all classes, mainly as an expected and proper pastime for aristocratic ladies, and as a necessary cottage industry for others. Origins of crochet are somewhat murky and difficult to pinpoint exactly with enough supporting evidence, both from documented references with the identifying term *crochet* prior to the 18th century, and with existing crocheted pieces from different countries and eras (Karp, 2018).

Many see a knit garment and assume it was knitted. Before crochet became known as we do today, it was found among knitting publications or learned as an added technique for elements of needlework. The two interlooped fabrics are differentiated in *The Primary Structures of Fabrics* from 1966. In crochet, the loops interface vertically with those in the previous row, and laterally with others in the same row, whereas in knitting, the loops only interweave vertically with those created in the previous row (Karp, 2018). Additionally, the tools differ with needles for knitting, and a hook for crochet. While its predecessors lie in the history of knitting and embroidery, crochet has become its own artisan craft known worldwide as a livelihood, and as a beloved pastime.

Design

What makes a crochet pattern successful? It's difficult to say when the question is generalized, as there are numerous categories and items that can be created with crochet. While that is worth researching further in the future (note to self), I conducted a few searches on Etsy and Ravelry, two of the most popular sites that crafters currently use to find their next pattern, using some fixed variables. I limited my initial inquiries to clothing patterns. This resulted in a varying range from women's lacy tops, cozy cardigans, little girl dresses, pullovers, and a plethora of winter accessories in a mixed order. I refined the search further to just child patterns, which clearly indicated that light outerwear (cardigans, pullovers, etc) and dresses were the patterns most sought after. Changing that variable to adult patterns only, placed open front cardigans (both lacy and cozy), classic pullovers, and comfortable close-fit tops. Further refinement in other factors (gender, yarn gauge, etc.), and different combinations of all, still kept sweater designs at the forefront of any search.

In a recent study on crochet sweater design, Yugang and Ting analyze how the very nature of the crocheted sweater design, and construction, make it highly suitable for novelty, individuality, and customization. Being a market-proven evergreen product, new designs must be creative

in order for the crocheted sweater to maintain a high value in the fashion industry (2018). My own searches proved that sweaters (of all kinds) remain popular in any season and across cultures. While I can't wait to get creative and translate my own visions into patterns, it is wise to begin with a simple design to focus on the creation steps rather than the intricate details.

I began with a few sketches to get my ideas flowing, and found that I had to remind myself that baby steps is the best approach multiple times. I settled on a seemingly simple pullover style top with a separate front and back panel. I also opted to have a capped sleeve since the trickiest part of creating the sleeve is the cap that connects to the panel's armholes and the length isn't crucial.



From my experience, I knew I could approach my design in different ways. One seemingly giant panel? Front and back panels with separate sleeves? Top down? Bottom up? Sideways? Again, I had to remind myself that the goal is to be able to create a pattern and to focus on the steps rather than the details. I chose bottom-up with each component as a separate panel to seam together.

Tools & Test Swatches

After having a rough design in my head, I had to determine what kind of "fabric" I wanted. This process took a bit of time with all the variables, such as the yarn I'd like to use (that alone can have a varying number of questions), the size of the hook I'd use, and the type of stitch(es). I chose to have my pattern made for the most common medium weight yarn category and decided on a stitch pattern and using the appropriate sized hooks for it.



Fabric Swatches



Extended Half Double Crochet (RS) & Single Crochet (WS)

With my design and tools selected, it was time to make my swatches to start calculations.

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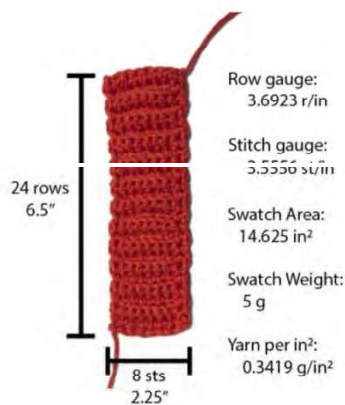
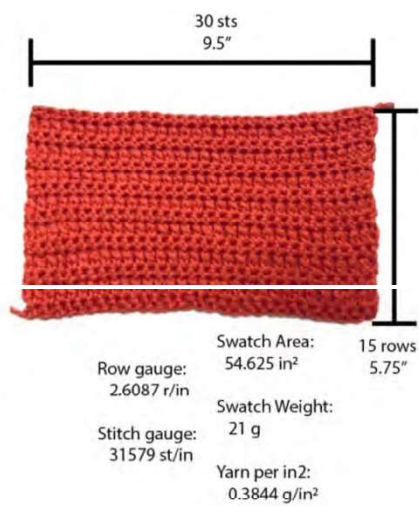
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Schematics, Measurements, & Math



The gauge is possibly the most important piece of information provided in a pattern so someone else can recreate the same fabric. Since crocheting is a handmade craft and skill, there are human variables that cannot be accounted for. Two people can have the same exact tools and step-by-step instructions, but the result will not be the same. Even the same person can create the same pattern twice and the results be slightly different. It's one of the natural attractive qualities of handmade items, no two are identical. After deciding on my fabric and creating my official pattern swatches, some measurements and calculations were the next step.



Swatch 1: main pattern for body and sleeves

Swatch 2: Ribbing

The yarn per inches squared will allow me to determine the amount of yarn necessary for each size of the garment without needing to create each one.

After numerous searches to find out where to learn this information, I found a comprehensive online course from Interweave by Shannon Mullet-Bowlsby. He is a crochet designer, author of multiple crochet garment pattern books, and a sought-after teacher among the fiber arts community. This course is comprehensive with the information broken down into small enough sections making the process easily understood to any aspiring crochet garment creator. I used his course for learning the necessary fundamentals for my directed project, and I follow his blog for continued learning. Still, the next step was a headache and a half. 3 pages of chicken scratches, cross outs, and calculating, finally resulted in a beautiful layout and schematic...for one size. To clarify, calculations for the straight edges wasn't tough, but I am a kinesthetic learner and trying to figure out the shaping calculation proved difficult initially. It wasn't a reflection on the course content. I understood what information I needed and how to complete the calculations, but I was having trouble determining what the measurements for the different components were supposed to be. I had the standard size measurements from the *Standards and Guidelines for Knitting and Crocheting* from The Craft Yarn Council as a guide, but certain measurements aren't detailed or standardized since they pertain to personal fit and design, such as how wide should the shoulder seam be, or what the drop length should be for the neckline. After some frustrating attempts, I chose to utilize graph paper to help double check my work to be sure I was headed in the right direction. As you can see from the image below, I opted to use my daughter's measurements and size for my first test run. If my math holds true for my first creation, then it's plug and play for all further sizing.



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← PREVIOUS

The Learning Curve Project

NEXT →

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First Test!



The time has come! I think I've done everything I've needed up front to actually create (and write!) the pattern. Ironically enough, even though I am showing my progress on an electronic format, I still love using the good old-fashioned paper and pencil method for initial drafts of anything.



I was so excited in getting started with my project, that I initially only wrote the instructions for a child's size 8. I chose this size since I have a little model at home to test my product. Alas, in my excitement, I typed up not only the incorrect number of rows for the length of the panel, but used the stitch count for size 6 and did not realize it until after I crocheted it. I'm not sure where the erroneous row number came from or what caused the mixup, but admittedly, it was perhaps a late night session. It was entirely too short. To be accurate, it was crop-top length short which was clearly not the intended design.

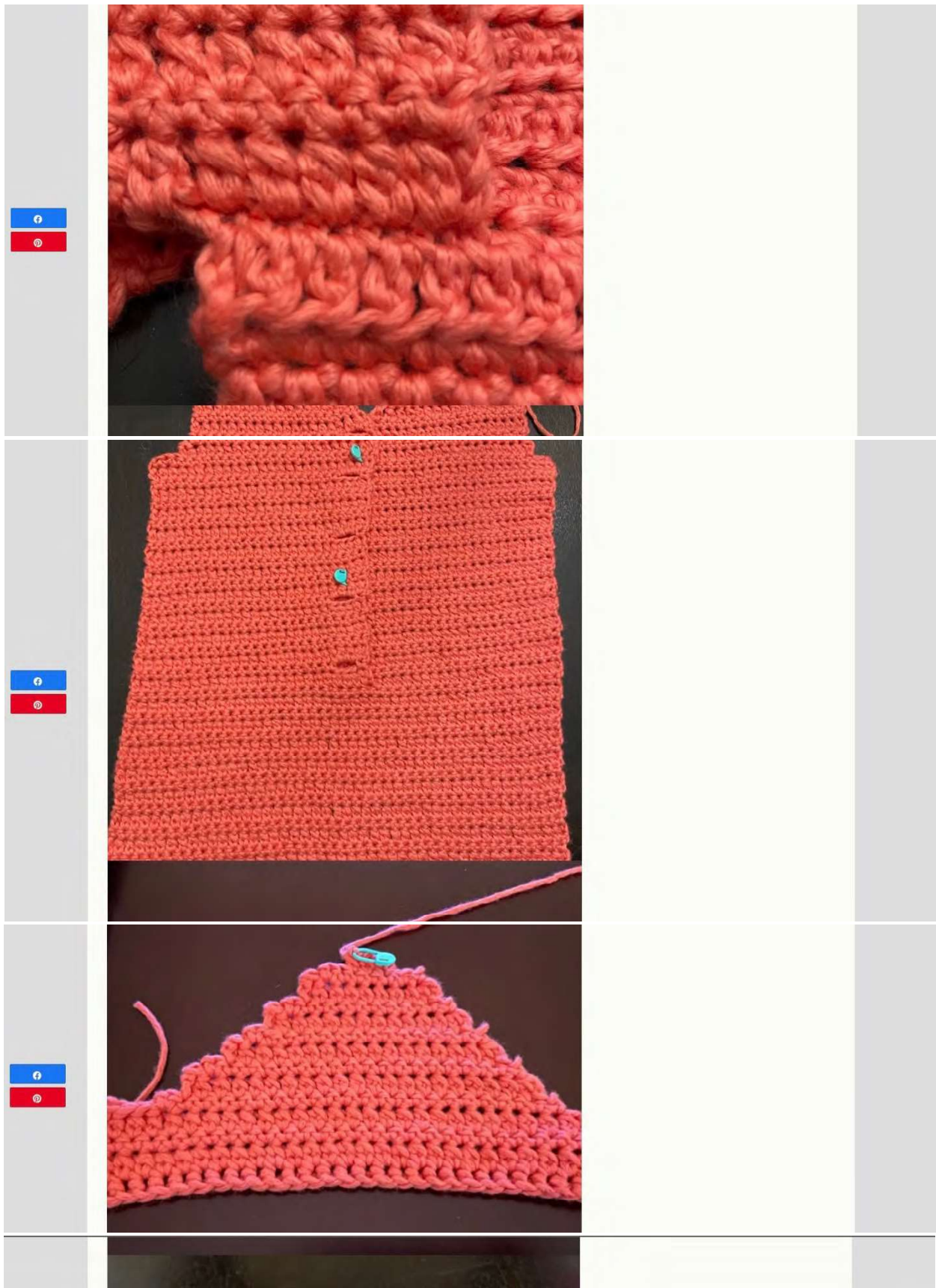


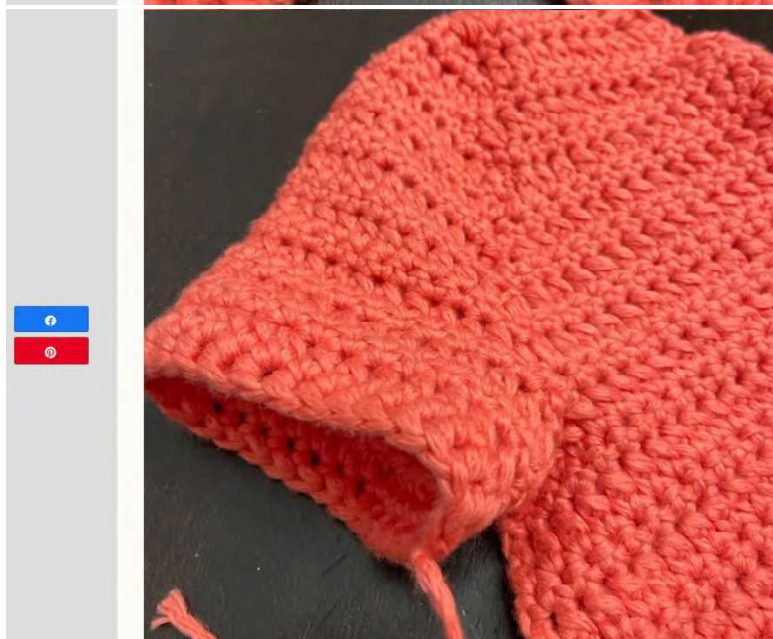
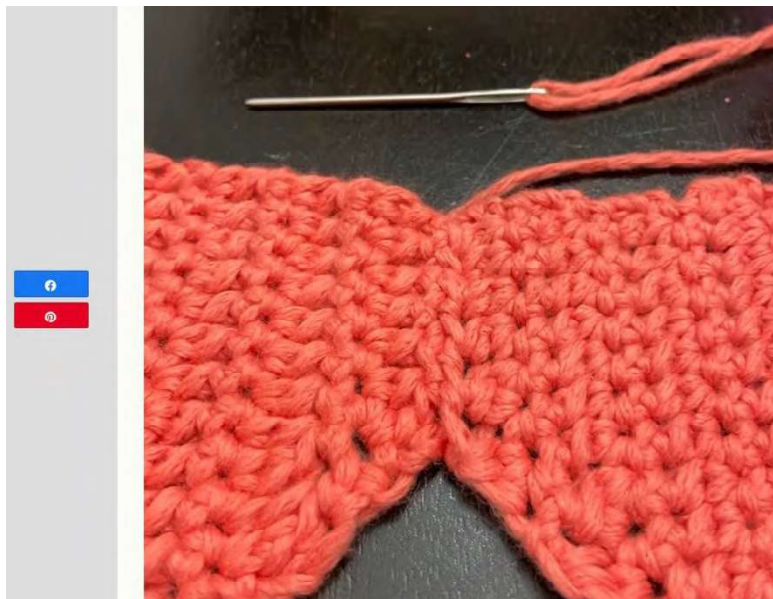
Pictured above is my (hilariously) short first test of my pattern right next to the second test after I realized my mistake.

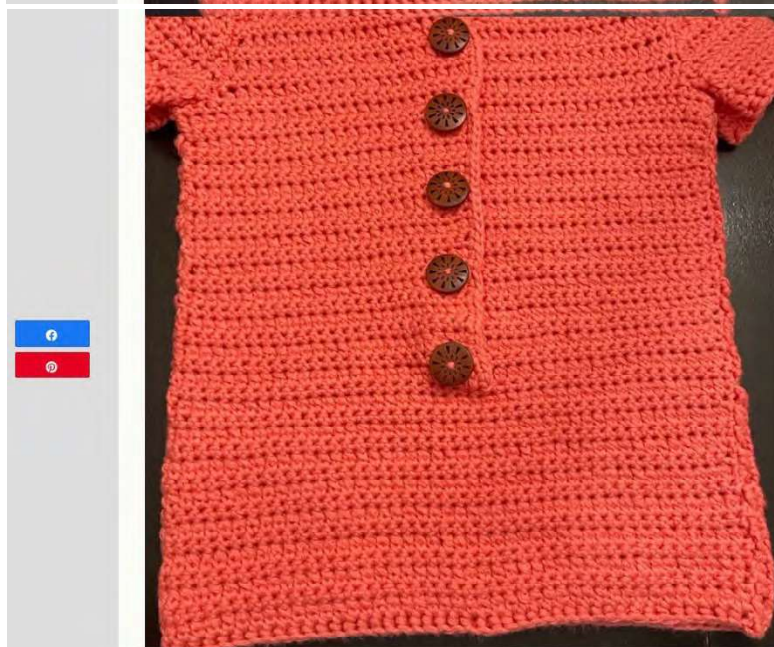
After that fix, things seem to move along fairly smoothly and I was able to create the rest of the panels without a major hiccup. I chose a a step ladder style for my decreases in the sleeve cap and for shaping the armholes. However, for the neckline, I opted to decrease by joining two stitches together in order to avoid a boxy look. You'll notice in my pictures that when I created the split panel for the button band section,

the opening is flipped from the finished panel. I realized, 8 rows into the split panel, that I had crocheted it without considering which side the button flap goes. Interestingly, tradition dictates that women button bands flap right over left (buttons are on her left side), and left over right for men (buttons are on his right side). However, we can cover why that interesting detail exists another time. Seeing as "my client" was my daughter, I decided to frog (crochet term for undoing stitches) my rows back to where I started the split, and switched the loop placement for each side.

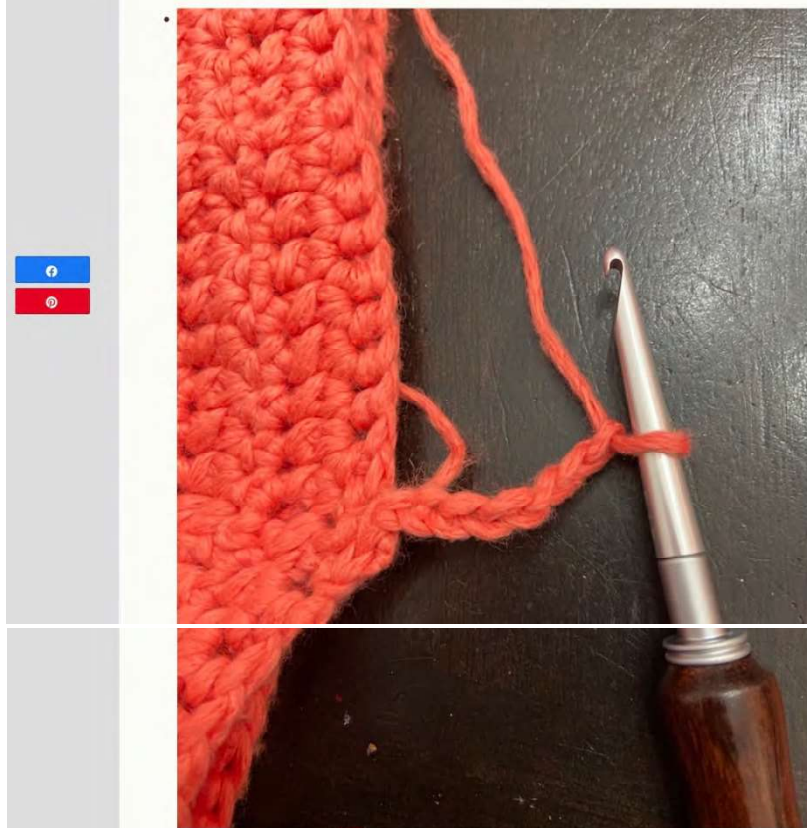


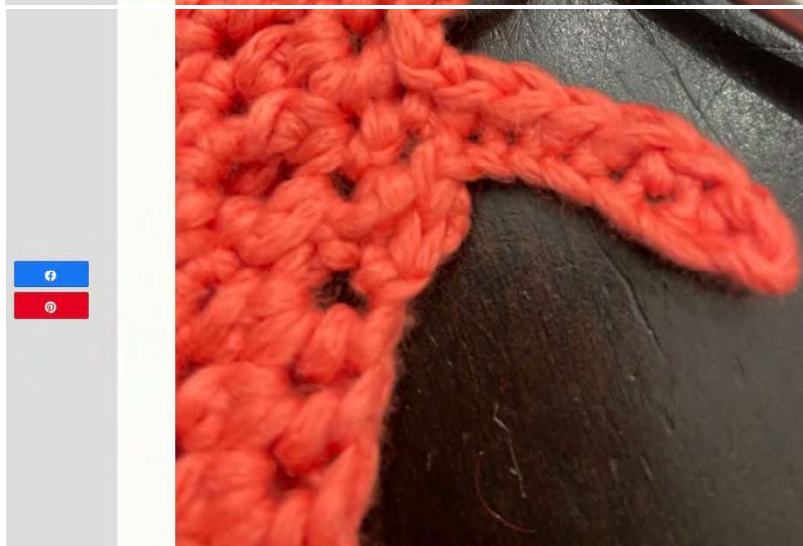


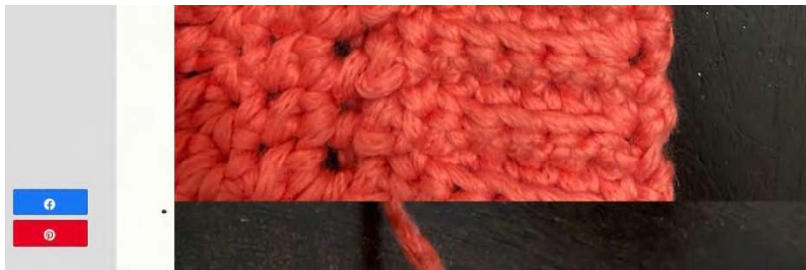
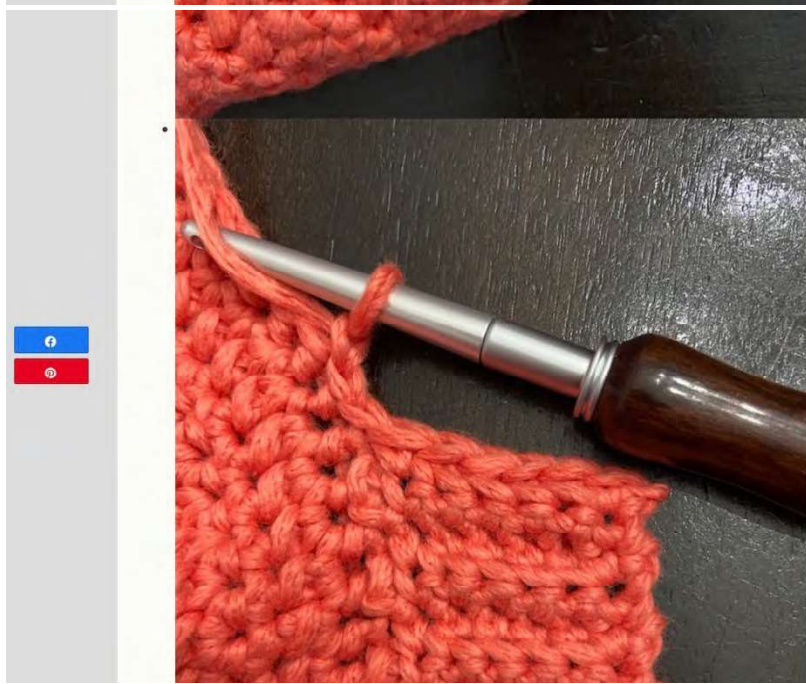
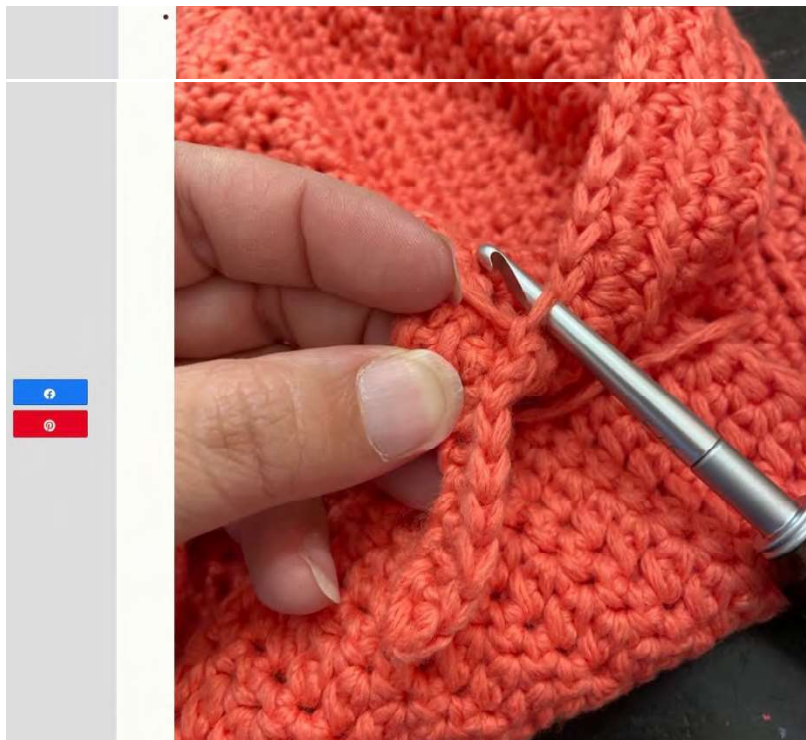




Lastly, I crocheted the ribbed band along the bottom. This part of the pattern is only seemingly the most complex stitch sequence of the whole thing. Once you do the first few rows, you realize it's actually really simple pattern. However, the written version can seem a bit long and potentially confusing to a new crocheter.









During this point in my journey, I was in communication with Suzi Whitford, from *Start a Mom Blog*, after seeing her as a recommended resource for new bloggers several times. Her journey in the blogging world, from her experience in growing her personal blog to converting it into a business that helps others create their own profitable blogging sites, is inspiring. A mentor actively engaged in the learning process for someone inexperienced was an important element for me in researching and selecting my go-to source for my directed project. Her course walks through all the steps to build a blog from scratch in a simple, easy to understand (and follow) format. I expect to continue to use her *Blog by Number* course for reference and guidance for the blog aspect of my directed project.

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← PREVIOUS

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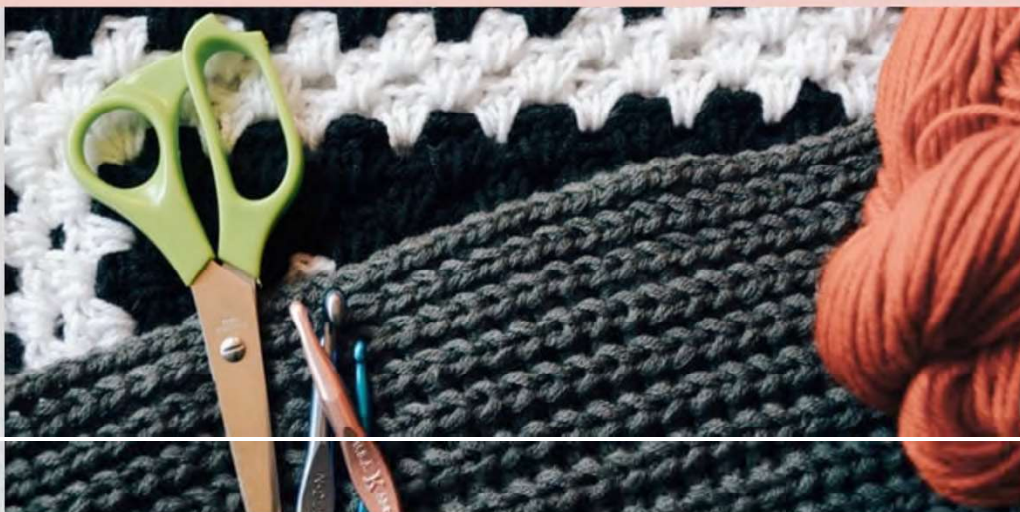
Pattern Testers & Adjustments

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Pattern Testers & Adjustments



This was a whole other learning curve. I reached out to one of the (large) crochet social media networks that I participate in and asked for volunteer testers. I've seen this type of post numerous times and have even volunteered for a couple myself. Many designers have requirements and timelines for their testers and unfortunately, the times I have volunteered, I didn't meet all the demands and therefore haven't participated as a tester for a designer. I chose to keep it simple without too many stipulations and yet, I felt there was still a lot of activity pertaining to my pattern testers. As I continue designing more patterns, I will have to take into consideration any legal conditions in order to protect my future business and brand.

It was more time intensive than I imagined (and hoped) it would be, but it mostly related to time management and where the testers were in the process. I had a couple testers who flaked out after volunteering, while others just needed a nudge to complete in a timely manner so that I could take into account their feedback. I had a total of 8 testers who volunteered and completed 1 or 2 sizes for a total of 11 results, which accounted for 5 sizes out of the 7 I had in my pattern.

I initially intended to include diagrams of the different panels, but ultimately decided not to. I really wanted to vet the written portion well, and determine what was understood without the added visual cues from a diagram. It turned out to be a good choice because I made revisions to a few sections of the pattern where I received the same inquiry for clarification from most of the testers. However, I did include them for the final drafted pattern presented for this project.

I did add photos in the pattern for the areas where I felt the written directions could not be changed for clarity, or the layout due to multiple sizes made the sequence hard to follow, even for myself. Half of my testers said that the photos added were helpful, and another 3 said they

weren't necessary but nice as part of the pattern. I will note however that of those 3, 2 reached out for clarification, so I believe the pictures were validated to have as a reference. The final volunteer indicated she would have liked two of the specific pictures to have added a little detail like an arrow pointing to the stitch that the step was referring to but they were otherwise helpful.

Another alteration was that I did not provide the finished fit information in the draft as several of the testers stated a bit of slight surprise after realizing it was a close-fitted top. The feedback on fit proved that my numbers worked! It was closely fitted as I intended it to have minimal ease (1-2") from the chest/bust standard measurements for each size. However, about 3/4 of my testers said that they would have preferred a looser fit for the medium weight yarns that ranged on the thicker side. Moving forward, consideration on comfort is a must, in addition to fit.

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The Learning Curve Project's First Pattern



Voila! My first official pattern. It's been quite the ride. While this pattern is finished and it will produce a functional top as designed, it definitely can be improved. In my opinion, it isn't quite at the standard where I would feel comfortable setting it up for a retail sale. Nevertheless, it meets the intended goal of this directed project and I can confidently call it a win!

View Pattern Here

So, what's next?

As this project progressed, my level of appreciation for designers has grown immensely. As an aspiring entrepreneur, I wanted to find supporting documentation of the impacts blogging can positively provide for a business. I believe the pros far outweigh any cons. Blogging is an excellent approach for self-promotion and personal branding (Mohr, 2016). In a reflective case study, Griffey blogged daily for a year to launch her successful online artisan business (2014). There are cultural, social and economic resources and influences that make blogging a highly attractive and powerful marketing tool (Pedroni, 2015). Additionally, social media and digitization has opened novel roads into the fashion system, and aspiring fashion designers must understand the power those tools can provide to their success (Laurell, 2017). This blog was originally chosen as the platform for my semester directed project, but overwhelming positive research on businesses that implement blogs has given me much food for thought as to its future.

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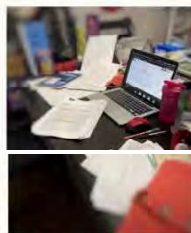
Notes for the Aspiring Crochet Pattern Designer



Ahhhh, the moment is finally here. It's time to reflect on the aspects of this project. The benefit of improvement is not the only one when I learn from my mistakes. It saves time, stress, and anxiety in the future. Additionally, it makes me a better crocheter. Making a connection from a written pattern sequence to an actual piece allows me to improve my ability to visualize a change without trial and error. The more I practice that skill, the easier it will become to understand how all the variables in a crochet design and pattern relate to one another, and be able to master any limitations of the craft. Thus, over time, the design creation process will be smoother and faster. I understand my abilities better, have identified what my strengths are, and conversely, see where they need improvement.

Organization

This is an area where I could always use refinement. For the better part of the 2020 Fall semester, my project, tools and all its associated pieces of paper with drawings/sketches, lists, math calculations, handwritten pattern sections, and scribbles, lived in one quarter of my dining room table. Luckily, my dining room table is quite roomy for my family of four so it was still largely usable (for a whole bunch of other half-finished projects, ha!). Although this is a lesson learned, I haven't quite figured out a way to keep it organized except for keeping the entire pile of papers together with the project. I did keep all project tools together in its own bag. Still, I will admit, my organization isn't great and it's worth mentioning that you need to plan for a creative workspace area that works for you.



My "organized" chaos.

Research, research, research

I don't need to dive too deeply into this one. The right resources and tools are out there for you, so don't settle on the resource if it's missing an aspect. If you feel in your gut that you think it isn't enough, it isn't. If you are having trouble finding something specific, ask your family, friends, and community! There are people who want to help you and wish for you to succeed in your endeavors, even if you are a total stranger to them. Ask for help if you are struggling. Procrastination is no one's friend in going after your goal.



Don't be proud

While I didn't consider myself an expert crocheter, I am more than confident in my abilities to be able to crochet something beautiful. However, as I stated above, this process has shown me where I can improve. I expected to make mistakes, I expected to learn and improve. Still, I was most surprised to find out that regardless of the numerous patterns I've followed successfully, and the vast number of times I've crocheted in free form, I do not maintain an even tension throughout. For most of my panels, when laid flat, they seemed to almost reflect the Leaning Tower of Pisa. I had straight edges, just slanted, like you would see with italicized text. It was most evident in my first several rows and then it would become hardly noticeable. It wasn't so egregious that the blocking process couldn't fix it the issue. Initially, I believed I had written instructions incorrectly or that I was miscounting my stitches. Since final results were successful (with respect to clear directions and fit as designed), I've realized that I need to crochet to warm up my hand and wrist muscles before proceeding with whatever project I'm working on to minimize this leaning effect. I am a big believer in continuously learning and improving yourself, so be open to change. An old dog can always learn a new trick.

Final Thoughts

I am proud of what I have accomplished this semester. I learned multiple new skills in a craft I love, and this blog is something that could (and I believe should) grow. It goes without saying that good things come in time. I have much to learn, much to practice, and much to share.

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← PREVIOUS

The Learning Curve Project's First Pattern

NEXT →

5 Things I Want To Help My Audience With

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5 Things I Want To Help My Audience With



My blog exists to help those with a creative affinity for dabbling in a multitude of things find inspiration and be exceptional in their own way.

- My blog exists to help crochet enthusiasts have a centralized location for crochet lace techniques and history.
- My blog exists to help me document my journey from hobbyist to entrepreneur.
- My blog exists to help inspire artisans nurture their creative appetites.
- My blog exists to help inspire the busy body find ways to focus on their goals and dreams.
- My blog exists to help inspire you to find your own way and be exceptional.

1. Empower crochet artisans with the skills and knowledge needed to make beautiful crochet lace apparel and decor.

The more my interest grew from crocheting with medium to bulky yarns to lace crochet, the more muddled the information became and the more time I had to spend to find great sources or tutorials to find answers to my questions and improving my skills. The further I've dived into my studies, the more gaps I found in existing literature and studies about crochet, lace, their relationship with the craft industry, the fashion industry, and with each other.

If this is something I've struggled with, I would think there are others (maybe at least a few) who also have as well. Others that would love to learn this beautiful skill but are limited by the current sources that exist for them. I hope to create a wonderful resource to empower those with a desire to pick up a hook and learn all about this craft and its rich history.

2. Take the leap, and grow.

Every speck of confidence starts from within. I love my family and want to create a dream life with them and for them. I love creating beautiful things and am ready to share my talents with you. So I am taking a leap of faith, learning, sharing, and growing to get there. I hope to inspire my kids to not be afraid to take chances and make mistakes because their dreams can truly be anything they desire to be.

3. Inspire artisans to nurture their own creative appetites.

Here at The Dilettante Mama, I love all kinds of crafts, I truly don't discriminate and will occasionally dabble in a multitude of others. I am also fascinated about all things that relate to the wellbeing of the mind, body, and spirit.

Maybe one day I can hope to inspire you with tips for personal care, beauty, inspire you with how I'm tackling my weight loss mountain journey, and yes, even any hippy/crunchy view of things to find your inner wellness god or goddess. I'd love to share about other projects I



have, but for now, if you have a natural liking to create, love looking at the creation of beautiful things, be inspired for your own work, no matter the medium, you're in the right place! I hope to inspire you to stick around and grow with me.

4. Provide easy to follow guides and lessons to enjoy this crazy thing we call life and shoot for those personal dreams.

It makes no sense to me to recommend stuff that doesn't work, isn't awesome, or isn't going to make your life better in some way. I only want the best for me and my family that makes sense for us emotionally, logistically, and financially. I'd wager that you do too so during my journey, I will not shy away from sharing all aspects.

I will share about my experiences, choices, and processes. I'll be honest about things or methods that don't work for myself, my business or our family lifestyle, and why. I will talk about what is working, what isn't, the ups and downs, struggles between balancing family and pursuit of a dream, and what I consider victories.

5. Write a weekly blog post to help you realize you don't need to be the exception to be exceptional.

This one is more of a promise. I may or may not have the most thrilling information on a week to week basis, but I promise to show up and continue building this site until it is a wonderful resource for lace crochet enthusiasts and appreciators, crochet artists/designers, and for other niche artisans pursuing their own personal endeavor. I hope to provide for you a safe space and a community to share about your thoughts, ideas, struggles so that this resource can reach its full potential.

Conclusion

I've heard that success never travels alone. A favorite quote is that "Success travels in the company of very hard work. There is no trick, no easy way." - John Wooden, American Basketball Coach/Player. If you've made it this far, I'm so excited that you have a smidge interest in seeing this journey through with me.

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← PREVIOUS

Notes for the Aspiring Crochet Pattern Designer

NEXT →

The Dilettante Mama Was Specifically Designed For YOU (and here's why)

The Dilettante Mama Was Specifically Designed For YOU (and here's why)



I got tired of looking around and seeing a lack of quality guidance on crocheted lace. Many of these vintage techniques are passed down through generational knowledge and has gotten either lost in translation or lost from the sheer time that day-to-day responsibilities have taken up. So many people are struggling with it (okay maybe not a ton of people, but certainly there must be a few out there like myself), and there just hasn't been a solid resource created to help them learn the intricacies of crocheting with lace and thread to make exquisite handmade lace work or provide work to perfect their current skills that grandma taught them.

Welcome to The Dilettante Mama! You are in the right place if...

1. You are a crochet artisan (or enthusiast) with an affinity for lace work.
2. You've been struggling with learning the basics to crochet or wish to learn how to crochet.
3. You are a craft artisan who's interested in making a leap from hobbyist to entrepreneur.
4. You love to learn more about the history of crochet, crocheted lace, lace in fashion, etc.
5. You love to see how lace and crochet is applied in modern fashion and the modern knitwear industry.
6. You love to be inspired by new designs and patterns.
7. You want to learn how to translate your own design into a pattern.

Thank you for visiting! Hope you are one of the above. If not, but still love what you are finding here, leave a comment below!

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← PREVIOUS

5 Things I Want To Help My Audience With

NEXT →

Crochet – The Real Definition