How to Crochet a Granny Square

By Spincushions 2014

This tutorial is for those of you who have never picked up a hook and yarn before. I will show you, step by step how to make your very first granny square.

There are many, many ways to do this granny thing. These instructions are my way. I'm not saying it's the only way, just the way that works for me.

What will I need?
You will need a crochet hook, some yarn, scissors and a yarn needle. A visit to your local $2 shop or craft store will sort you out.

I recommend starting with a H (5mm) hook and light worsted/DK/8 ply yarn.

So what makes a Granny Square a Granny Square?
A granny square is made by completing "rounds". Each round is made on its own. It's not a spiral. You finish one round before beginning the next.
A traditional granny square is made up with 3 crochet stitches. Chain (ch), Treble crochet (tr) and Slip Stitch (ss). I'll be using those abbreviations from now on. Learning these abbreviations is the first step to knowing how to read crochet patterns. Might as well start to learn now I reckon.

Along the way, you will see some optional alternative ways to do things. I recommend you ignore these until you are truly comfortable and really understand the process and pattern of a granny square. I'll mark these bits with a lightning bolt. These options are dangerous to your confidence if you're not ready. I don't want you to get discouraged. Save them to re-visit once you can whip up a Granny Square without referring to notes. Check out the Crochet Alternatives PDF when you're ready.

**Let's look in detail at a standard Granny Square.**

The tr stitches are used to make what are called "shells". 3 x tr stitches = 1 shell.

The ch stitches are used

- to make a ring to start,
- instead of a tr the beginning of each round (I'll explain why later)
- and for spaces between the shells. There is usually 1 ch between shells along the sides, and 2 ch in the corner between the 2 corner shells.

A ss is used to finish off each round, joining your ch stitches to your first shell.
How do I hold the hook?
Just do what feels comfortable. I use what's called "pencil hold" most of the time. It's how you'll see me holding in the pics. It's basically an underhand hold. A lot of people use what's called "knife hold". I use it when using really big hooks. It's basically an overhand hold. There are many variations to each of these and no one "right" way. Just do what feels right to you.

Let's go!
Before you start making your shells, you need to make a ring or circle to crochet into. The traditional way to do this is to ch 4 and join the last ch to the first with a ss.

You do that like this:

Making a Circle Steps

1. Make a slip knot with your yarn and insert your crochet hook into the loop. Tighten the knot until it's firm but not strangling your hook.
2. "Yarn over" - you'll see this term a lot. Sometimes, it is abbreviated to "yo" - it means wrap your yarn over your hook from back to front.

3. Pull that bit of yarn through the slip knot and pull the tail that goes to your ball of yarn to tighten it a bit but not too much.

That's 1 ch made.

4. Now repeat steps 2 & 3 three times. This will mean you have 4 ch.
Now we make this strip of ch into a loop by making a ss into the first ch.

5. Insert you hook into the first ch as shown. You will have 2 loops on your hook.

6. yo, and pull that strand of yarn through the 2 loops on the hook.

You should have a loop to begin your Granny Square now.

There are a few alternatives to this. I like the "magic circle". Go to the Alternatives PDF to find out more.
Making a Granny Square Steps
I start my granny squares with the second half of a corner, ie the second shell.

Round 1
The first round consists of 4 shells, each separated by 2 ch. ie : 4 x shells & 4 x 2 ch.

So on to how to do that :

A tr stitch is quite high. It's a stitch made from the top, so it's not possible to start with a normal tr as we are at the bottom of our ring. We need to get up to the height of a tr before we can begin. This is why our first tr is replaced by 3 ch.

There is an alternative to this. Look to the Alternatives PDF for "false tr"

Round 1 Steps

1. ch 3 just like when we made a loop. This is called a "starting chain" or "st ch" for short.
As we do the next bits, we'll want to hold the loose tail behind the ring and work over it. This will help hide and secure the tail.

2. yo, insert hook into the ring (make sure you go under the loose tail too)

3. yo again, and pull that last strand through to the front. You should have 3 loops on your hook.

4. yo and pull that strand through 2 of the 3 loops on your hook. I like to give the yarn a tug to tighten the stitch at this point. You should have 2 loops on your hook.
5. yo and pull that strand through the last 2 loops.

You've just made your first tr. Go you! It seems long and hard, but it soon becomes easy. Honest.

6. Repeat steps 2 - 5 to create 1 more tr. You've made your first 3 tr shell. (Well technically 3 ch in place of a tr & 2 tr, but you get the idea)

7. Ch 2 (this is our corner space)
8. 3 tr (steps 2 - 5, three times) Second shell made.

9. ch 2 (second corner space)

10.3 tr (steps 2-5, three times) Third shell made.

11. ch 2 (third corner space made)
12.3 tr (steps 2 - 5, three times) 4th shell made

13. ch 2 (last corner made)

14. ss into 3rd ch of our st ch.

See how I've put the needle through the "v" of the ch? You have to try to get your hook into that bit. It can be fiddly. Don't stress too much if you can't do that. Just go into the top loop instead. Having said that, you really should try because being able to do this will be of help when you move on past a granny. I usually use my fingernail and poke the tip of my hook through one loop at a time.
Ok so now you've got your hook through, it should look like this

Now yo and pull through all stitches to finish your ss

There you go. You've finished Round 1.

I like to finish my rounds in the middle of corners. It makes everything just a bit neater. Go to the Alternatives PDF to see how.
Round 2
The second round is where you start the corners, which are 2 shells separated by 2 ch. This 2 ch is called a 2 chain space. ie (3 tr, 2 ch, 3 tr) = a corner. To get to the next corner, you make 1 ch. This is called a 1 ch space.

Here's how you do that:

Round 2 Steps

1. 3 ch (st ch) in place of a tr

2. 2 tr into the 2 ch space of the last round. You are kind of working backwards a little bit. You have to go over the bottom of the 3 ch you just made.

3. 1 ch to get us over to the next corner
4. (3 tr, 2 ch, 3 tr) into the 2 ch space of the round below

First corner made.

5. ch 1 to get to next corner

6. (3 tr, 2 ch, 3 tr) to make next corner into 2 ch space of the round below. Refer to the pics for step 4 if you need to.
7. ch 1 to get to the next corner

8. (3 tr, 2 ch, 3 tr) in 2 ch space of round below (refer to step 4 pics if you need to)

9. ch 1 to get to the last corner

10.3 tr in the same 2 ch space that we did our first 3 tr into on this round in steps 1 & 2.
11. ch 2

12. ss to 3rd ch of st ch (refer to pics in step 14 of Round 1 if you need to)

And that’s it - you’ve completed Round 2.

**Round 3**
The third round is where you start to work the sides. In between your corners, you will work 1 shell into the 1 ch space of the previous round, with a 1 ch before and after this side shell. So you will have 4 x corners (3 tr, 2 ch, 3 tr), 4 x single shells along each side, 2 x 1 ch spaces along each side.

Here’s how:

**Round 3 Steps**

1. 3 ch (st ch) in place of tr and 2 tr in 2 ch space just made to finish the last round.
2. Ch 1, then 3 tr into 1 ch space of round below.

3. Ch 1, then (3 tr, 2 ch, 3 tr) into 2 ch corner space of round below

4. Repeat steps 2 & 3 two times, then repeat step 2 one more time.

5. Ch 1, 3 tr into last 2 ch space that we did our first shell of this round in
6. ch 2 and join with ss to 3rd ch of st ch (refer to step 14 of Round 1 if you need to)

That's it. Round 3 done :)

**Rounds 4 to ?**
The remaining rounds follow the pattern of the third round with the only difference being more single shells along each side. Eg round 4, you'll have 2 single shells on each side & 3 x 1 ch spaces - each shell along a side is separated by 1 ch. Round 5 you'll have 3 single shells along each side & 4 x 1 ch spaces and so on.

You can just keep on going for a classic granny blanket, or you can make squares of the same size to join together into a blanket. The most common sizes are 15 cm (6 inches) and 30 cm (12 inches) but there are no rules. You can do what you want.
Finishing off ad Weaving in the Ends
Now that you've made a granny square, you will need to tie off the yarn and deal with the loose ends. One from the start and one from the end. This is my method. I **REALLY** recommend you do this as you go. Don't leave all your ends hanging until the end of a project. You will hate having to deal with them all at once.

1. Pull up a loop and cut your yarn about 10-15 cm from the square

2. Turn the square over so the back is facing up and pull the tail through the loop loosely - not all the way tight.

3. Put your thumb nail right up under the base of the loop and pull the tail tight towards to centre of the square
4. Now it's time to hide that tail. Thread the tail into your yarn needle.

5. Thread the needle through the back of the stitch below the knot and then through the base of the 3 tr shell. Pull it through, being careful not to pull too tight as you will pucker the edge. Pull it back a bit if you do. Easy fixed at this point.

6. We want to make sure that end isn't going to come out so we need to weave it back and forth a couple of times to secure it. It's worth taking the time. Imagine your distress if your work came undone. Not good. Take the time now and you'll be glad you did.

7. Pull on the tail a bit, then snip it off very close to the stitches. Pulling it a bit as you cut means the cut end will sneak back under the stitches and hide.
8. Now for the tail left at the start. Same process as above. Make sure you weave the tail back and forth a few times to make sure it's secure.

9. Pull on the tail a bit as you snip it close to the stitches.

And you are done! Well done. :) Pat yourself on the back.

Abbreviations:

yo = yarn over - place the yarn over your hook from back to front
ch = chain
st ch = starting chain - a number of chain stitches used in place of a tr to begin a round
tr = treble crochet