

The Cack-Handed Crochet Learner

By Karen Bowden

I have always loved to knit and admired crochet artists with longing. My grandma taught me the art of knitting from a very young age, but she was never a crochet fan and always said that it would be difficult for me as I'm 'cack-handed'. Yes, I'm a leftie! Over the (too many) years I have tried and failed to use my right hand but the left always wins.

I have viewed longingly literally thousands of photos on Pintrest of the beautiful art of Irish Crochet. Wow, the creations are absolutely amazing. So, I finally decided that it was time I learned. Cack-handed or not. I got myself a 2.5mm crochet hook, some cotton-mix yarn and scrolled through dozens of youtube videos.



This is what I aspire to..... How hard
can it be? She says, laughing

It took me some time to work it out as the video's I landed on were all for right handers (I have since found some for us lefties which I will no doubt be spending hours viewing) and my two biggest issues were reversing everything and learning to relax and 'trust' the hook. Initially I found that the hook and yarn I had chosen were just too small for a beginner. The temptation to hold the hook and yarn tightly was making it very difficult slide the hook through the yarn and also to see what I was trying to do. So, I swapped to a larger 6mm hook and the chunky Gerlach yarn and finally I started to get the hang of it. I crocheted myself several meters of 'chain' and I loved it. Yay!



The next step was to turn the chain and learn how to create a 'row'. Again, it took a while to reverse what I was seeing and work in the opposite, but I soon got the hang of it all and started to understand how the hook works. Crochet, it seems, is much more forgiving than knitting. My piece is neither neat nor

professional and is full of errors, but I was pleased that I had finally managed to create something.

As I'm kind of impatient, I didn't want to make a beginner's square so I skipped straight to a flower and here are my results:

My first go the pattern I used called for a magic circle. Another video and I had a go. It is all a bit misshapen but I get the gist of what I am trying to do



This is my first attempt at the flower and time to learn what a 'pop-stitch' is – I think we can all agree that my efforts are quite hideous and not at all what was called for. I didn't put in enough of the pop-stitch and so the petals were too small and out of shape

Trial two and it's at least starting to look a bit like a flower sort of thing. My mistake here was doing a slip stitch back to the first loop instead of taking the hook out, picking up the first stitch and then back through my loop to do the slip stitch. Lesson learned!



Attempt three and although it is almost looking flower like (if you squint your eyes in a dark room), I didn't make enough chains to make the 8 popcorn stitches the pattern requires.

Number five and bingo! All the pennies dropped at once and I realised that when working in crochet it is far more forgiving and I could adapt the pattern to suit (rather arrogant I admit, especially as I am a total beginner). So anyway, I pressed ahead and reduced the popcorn-stitches to make it less 'bunched' up and allow the petals to spread. I think the chunky yarn and large hook have something to do with it not fitting too.



Well now I'm flying and haven't stopped. I have gone on to learn how to make cute little buttons, which I absolutely love, and coaster style rounds as well as leaves. It's all so much fun, although I now have the epic tasks of weaving all the end in!



My aim with *all* my little creations is to try and replicate the Irish Crochet style and put it together using a chain..... but that is for my next blog. Today, I am happy making shapes

I still love to knit but now I love to crochet too. I will also use my new crochet skills to embellish my knitted work. I will also be re-visiting the small hook and gorgeous cotton yarns!

Thank you for reading

The flower pattern I used is from Jenny Dickens at *Autumn Berry Crochet*. The stunning dress is a photo from *Pintrest - Yandex.ru* and the hooks and yarns are from our own *Knitting Pretty Ireland* yarn shop