



MATS & PILLOW PROJECT

BY THE PLARN FARM

MAKE A MAT & PILLOW FOR THE HOMELESS!



ALL HANDS ON DECK!!!!

The Mat & Pillow project (The Plarn Farm) is a large and specific initiative of the Motor City Mitten Mission that we focus on when we are not out in the field with the homeless. Our mats and pillows are made of recycled plastic bags that are then crocheted into mats with a strap, tie and a pillow. These mats and pillows are ideal for our harsh Michigan elements as they are remarkably comfortable and offer just enough to create a barrier between the ground and the body to help retain body heat while sleeping. Our mats also offer a cleaner way of sleeping as bugs do not like them, if the mat gets wet, they can easily be dried and when it gets dirty, it can easily be hosed off and shaken out. And since they are made of plastic and come with a convenient carrying strap, they are also light and portable. And because the mats and pillows are made from recycled plastic bags, we are also helping the environment. And although we were not the original group to conceptualize the mats, we have perfected and streamlined the process and Gail Marlow is the first one to originate, design, conceptualize the pillow.

This initiative is also an activity that offers a way for almost every type of person of all ages to get involved. While the process of making the mats and pillows is not a complicated one, it is labor intensive that has many steps. But because of this, there is generally at least one step that a person is capable of doing which allows a large, diverse group of people from all ages, disabilities and education to participate. It's a great way to get people of all ages involved in volunteering.

The process to make one mat and pillow is really a 7 step process:

- 1.) Collecting the bags
- 2.) Flattening the bags
- 3.) Counting the bags
- 4.) Folding the bags
- 5.) Cutting the bags
- 6.) Creating balls of Plarn (plastic yarn) – knotting the strips together
- 7.) Crocheting the mat and pillow!

Ideally the Sleeping Mats will be 2-3/4' wide x 6' long and it takes approximately 500 - 700 bags to make 1 mat (that includes the mat, straps and pillow). Pillows will be approximately 15" x 7". We need all kinds of people to volunteer, so if you're interested in helping us out in anyway or have a school, organization or a group that would like to get involved, please let us know!!! Contact: Gail Marlow at 513-264-4581 or email us at: motorcitymittenmission@gmail.com

Please "Like" our Motor City Mitten Mission Facebook Page. We consistently post and provide information, updates, suggestions, answer questions, etc. to make your participation the most beneficial and enjoyable as possible.

<https://www.facebook.com/motorcitymittenmission/>

It's time for a PLARN PARTY!!!!



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DIRECTIONS FOR MAKING PLARN (Plastic Yarn)



Collecting and Sorting

- Collect plastic bags
- Sort bags into groups of 20 bags
(20 bags=1 ball of plarn)

Cutting

- Lay recycled plastic bag out flat
- Fold in half lengthwise then fold in half again
- Cut off top handles and cut off the bottom seam
(The handles and seams can be saved to use as stuffing for plarn pillows)
- Cut bag in strips about 2" wide or as desired
(1 avg. size grocery bag = 4 strips)

Tying Strips Together

- Take two strips and inter-twine together as shown
- Gently pull on ends to knot two strips together
- Connect next strip to last strip in the same manner
- Continue connecting strips until you have a large ball of plarn

Tips

- Pull ends evenly to create a smooth and flat strip
- If you find your strip doesn't lie flat between knots, you didn't pull evenly which creates a bunched strip. Just make sure strip is even before you pull your knot tight between the two connected strips
- To fix a bunched strip, just loosen your knot between the strips then pull on the ends again to make your strip flat and smooth





Working Into the Chain

Once you have worked the beginning chain, you are ready to begin the stitches required to make any crochet project. These stitches are worked into the foundation chain. For practice, crochet six chains loosely.

When counting your chain stitches at the start of a pattern—which you must do very carefully before continuing—note that the loop on the crochet hook is never counted as a stitch and the starting slip knot is never counted as a stitch.

Now stop and look at the chain. The front looks like a series of interlocking Vs (see *illustration 14*), and each stitch has a bump or back bar at the back (see *illustration 15*).

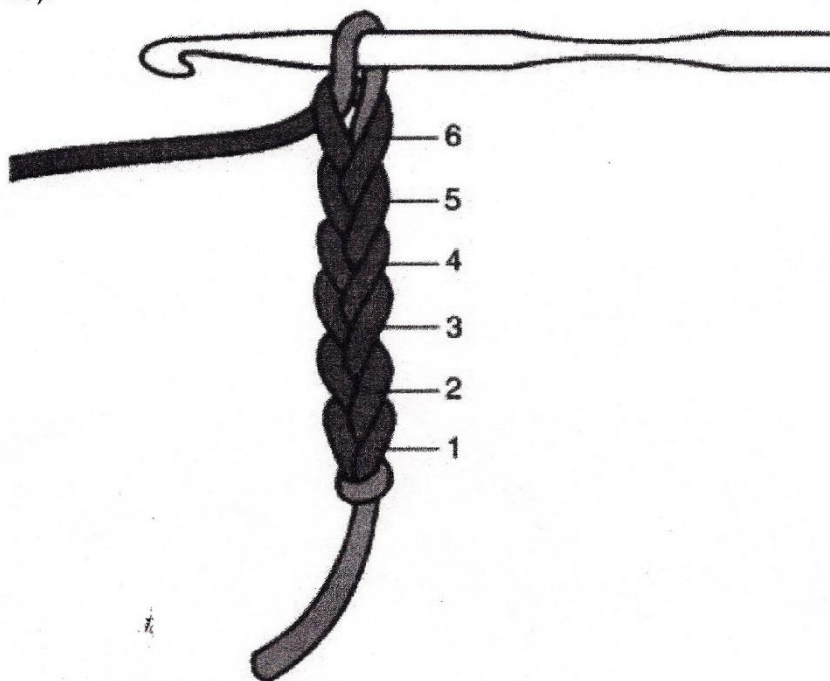


Illustration 14

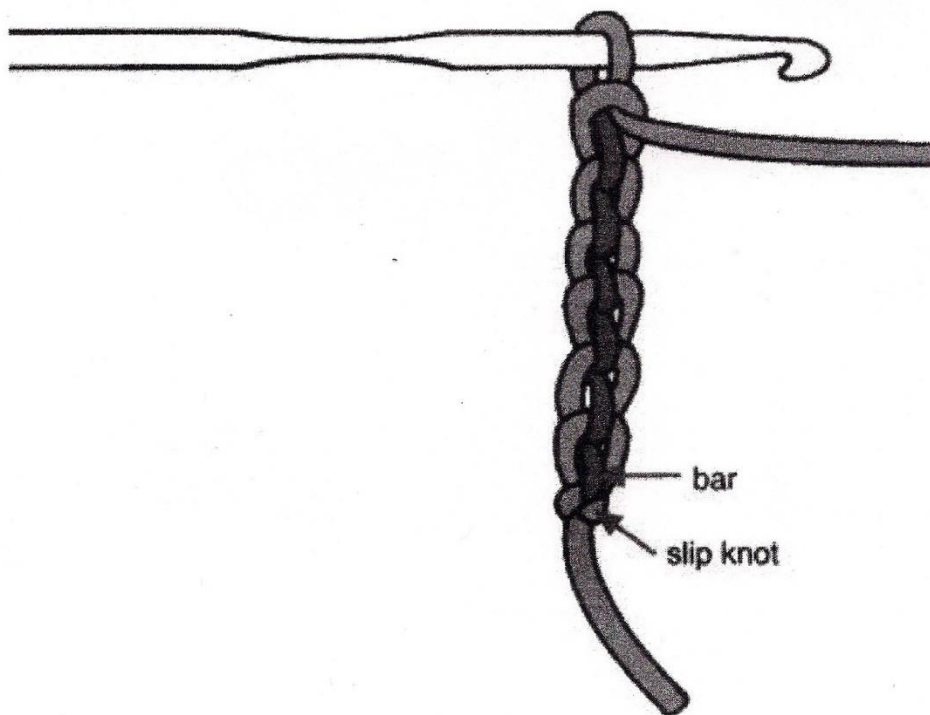


Illustration 15

You will never work into the first chain from the crochet hook unless your instructions state otherwise. Depending on the stitch, you will work into the second, third, fourth, etc. chain from the crochet hook. The instructions will always state how many chains to skip before starting the first stitch.

When working a stitch, insert the crochet hook from the front of the chain, through the center of the V and under the corresponding bar on the back of the same stitch (see *illustration 16a*).

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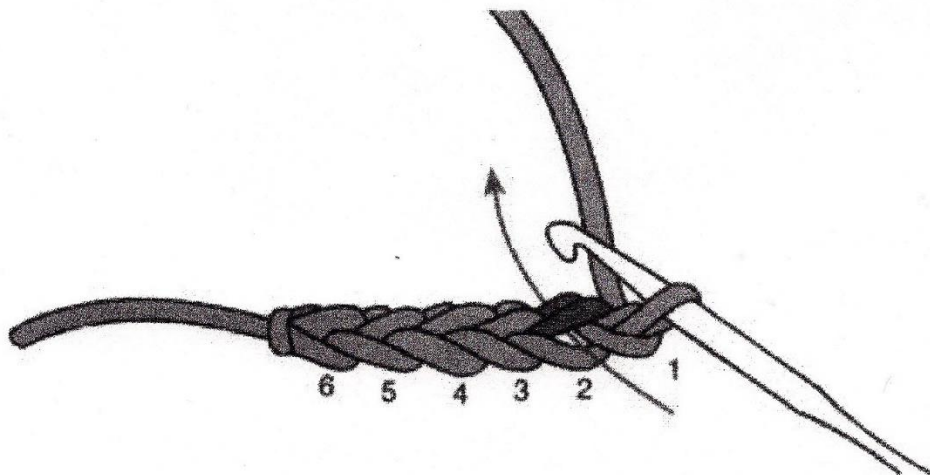


Illustration 16a

Excluding the first stitch, you will work into every stitch in the chain unless the crochet pattern states differently, but not into the starting slip knot (see *illustration 16b*). Be sure that you do not skip that last chain at the end.

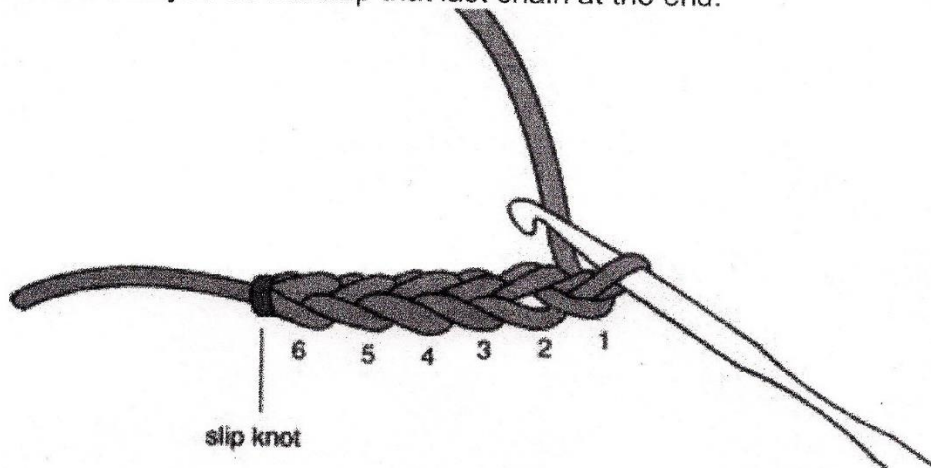
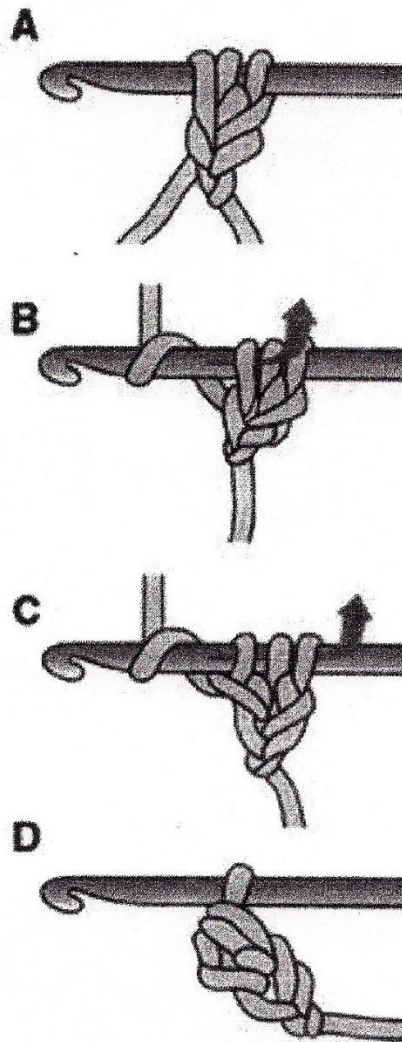


Illustration 16b

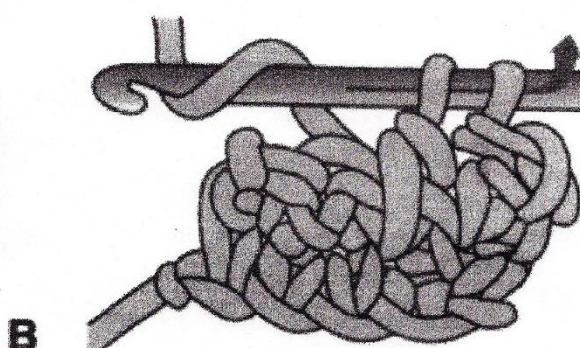
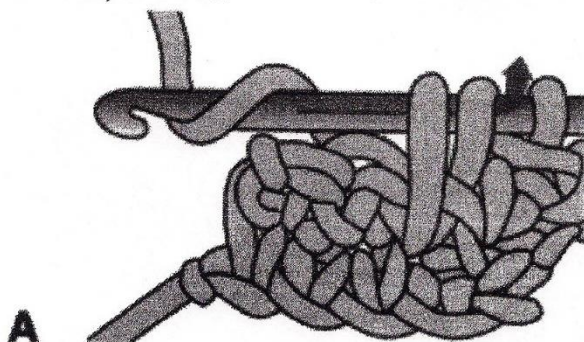


**First Foundation
Half Double
Crochet Stitch**



Long Double Crochet

Yo, insert hook in indicated st or row, pull up long lp on hook, (yo, pull through 2 lps on hook) 2 times.





Turning Chain

Choose a guide...

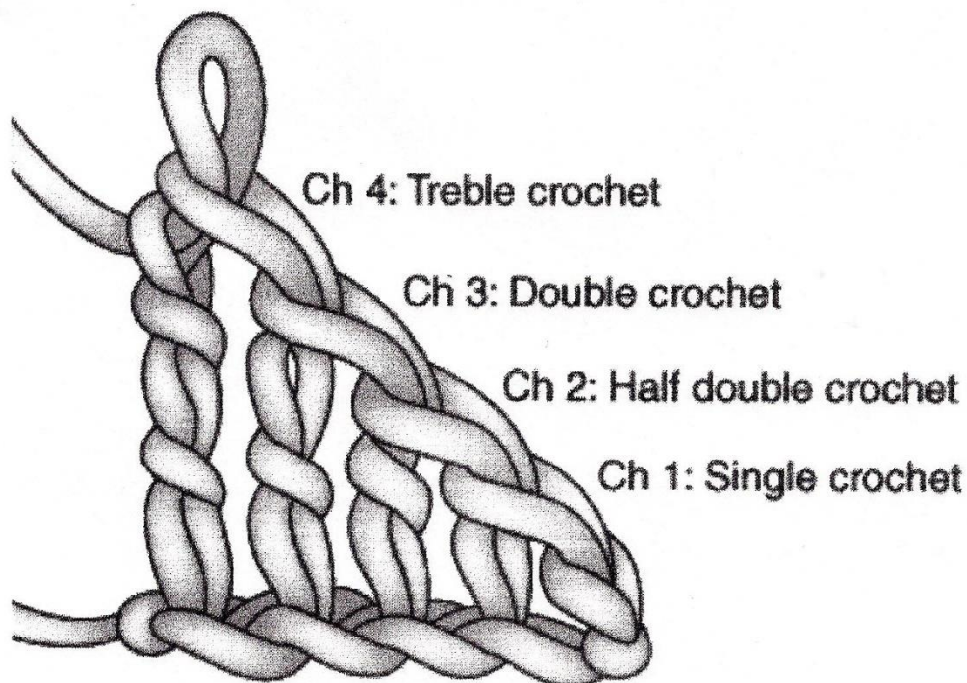
Following a Pattern

normal layout

At the end of each row of a crochet pattern, it will say "turn" so you are ready to begin working on the next row. To turn the work, you do exactly that. The correct way to turn is to turn the work around so that the side that was away from you now faces you and the crochet hook is now at the right-hand side of the work, not the left.

Before you start the next row, you need to raise the crochet hook and working loop up to the same level of the stitch at the beginning of a new row. This is done by working what is called a turning chain. The number of turning chains needed will vary depending on the type of stitch being worked.

It is important to remember that you will never work into the first chain from the crochet hook unless your instructions state otherwise. Depending on the stitch, you will work into the second, third, fourth etc., chain from the hook. The instructions will always state which chain you will work.



Slip stitch: You will work 1 turning chain.

Single crochet: You will work 1 turning chain.

Half double crochet: You will work 2 turning chains.

Double crochet: You will work 3 turning chains.

Treble crochet: You will work 4 turning chains.